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Alaric Hall

Editorial assistant
Victoria Cooper

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Susanne M. Arthur

1. Introduction

Scribes and readers of the almost sixty extant *Njáls saga* manuscripts occasionally comment on the saga's protagonists, such as Njáll, Gunnarr, and Hallgerðr. Valgarðr inn grái, the father of Gunnarr's and Njáll's enemy, Mǫrðr, is mentioned only seven times in *Njáls saga*. Nonetheless, this minor character captivated the readers and copyists of the saga to such an extent that his soul has been damned to rot in hell in eight *Njáls saga* manuscripts dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.[1] Despite this definite interest in Valgarðr within the corpus of medieval and post-medieval manuscripts of *Njáls saga*, no detailed study of his character exists and he is generally mentioned only in connection with his son Mǫrðr in scholarly research. This article sheds more light on this character — seemingly disregarded by modern readers and researchers — by examining the various scribal remarks concerning Valgarðr inn grái and the reason why he received attention from scribes and readers.

2. Valgarðr inn grái in *Njáls saga*: A Summary

Njáls saga tells that Valgarðr inn grái Jǫrundarson lives at Hof at Rangá and traces his lineage back from his father Jǫrundr goði to Hrærekr slǫngvanbaugi.[2] Some of the same information about Valgarðr's place of origin and ancestry is found in *Landnámabók*, *Kristni saga*, and *Egils saga*.[3] *Landnámabók* and *Egils saga* mention that Þorlaug Hrafnsdóttir was Valgarðr's mother, but the texts provide no further information about him.

[1] Research for this article was conducted as part of my doctoral dissertation on manuscripts containing *Njáls saga*, which is connected to a research project, entitled 'The Variance of *Njáls saga*', a collaborative effort by a group of Old Norse-Icelandic scholars to study the manuscripts and reception of *Njáls saga* from different angles in preparation for a new edition of the text. More information about the project can be found at <http://njalssaga.wordpress.com>.

[2] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 12 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1954), pp. 68–70.

[3] *Íslendingabók. Landnámabók*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 1 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968), p. 351; *Biskupa sögur I*, ed. by Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, Ólafur Halldórsson and Peter Foote, Íslenzk fornrit, 15, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 2003), II, 6; *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, ed.

Njáls saga gives more details about Valgarðr. The text says that Valgarðr marries Unnr Marðardóttir, the aunt of Gunnarr Hámundarson. Unnr enters the marriage agreement with Valgarðr inn grái without consulting her male relatives, a decision that is not well received by Gunnarr and Njáll, since Valgarðr is 'maðr grályndr ok óvinsæll' ('a devious and unpopular man').[4] Ólafur Hansson suggests that Valgarðr's nickname 'inn grái' is derived from *grályndr* 'devious/hostile', and in her study of the color grey, Kirsten Wolf comes to a similar conclusion about Valgarðr's by-name.[5] Wolf argues that the common translation of Valgarðr's nickname as 'the Grey' is inaccurate, since *grái* does not refer to Valgarðr's physical traits, but to his unpleasant character. Valgarðr and Unnr have a son called Mǫrðr, who is 'slægr maðr í skapferðum ok illgjarn í ráðum' ('cunning by nature and malicious in counsel').[6] Jon Geir Høyersten believes that Mǫrðr may have inherited these negative character traits from his father, arguing that Mǫrðr's parents may be responsible for their son's malicious character.[7]

Valgarðr inn grái is mentioned next as a guest at Gunnarr's and Hallgerðr's wedding.[8] He and his brother Úlfr aurgoði, as well as their sons Mǫrðr and Runólfr, are invited to the festivities and seated on the same side of the table as Gunnarr's uncle, Þráinn Sigfússon. Robert Cook points out that 'the seating arrangement, with Njal and his family on one side of Gunnar, and the Sigfussons and their allies on his other side, foreshadows the major conflict in the saga', in which Njáll and his family represent Gunnarr's allies, whereas the people sitting on the side of the Sigfússons will cause Gunnarr's ultimate demise.[9]

Later, the saga reports that Þorgeirr Starkaðarson meets up with Mǫrðr and his father Valgarðr in order to receive help from them to prosecute Gunnarr for injuring Þorgeirr and his father Starkaður and killing many of their followers during a sneak-attack on Gunnarr. Valgarðr and Mǫrðr offer Þorgeirr their support only after receiving a high sum from him. The decision to assist Þorgeirr consolidates their roles as adversaries of Gunnarr and Njáll.

When Gunnarr is successfully outlawed, but refuses to leave Iceland, Gissurr hvíti, Mǫrðr's father-in-law, calls together all of Gunnarr's enemies at the Althing, amongst them Valgarðr inn grái and Mǫrðr.[10] While Mǫrðr is present when Gunnarr is ultimately attacked and killed, the saga does not mention Valgarðr inn grái as being one of the attackers.[11] Nonetheless, his presence at the meeting with Gissurr hvíti indicates at least an indirect involvement in Gunnarr's death.

Valgarðr is mentioned again when Þangbrandr tries (unsuccessfully) to convert Iceland to Christianity. The saga reports that Njáll accepts the new faith, but 'þeir Mǫrðr ok Valgarðr gingu mjǫk í móti trú' ('Mord and Valgard fought hard against the faith').[12] Considering that

by Sigurður Nordal, Íslenzk fornrit, 2 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1933), p. 60.

4 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 70; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Robert Cook (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 43.

5 Ólafur Hansson, 'Grátt', *Mánudagsblaðið*, 7 November 1960, p. 2; Kirsten Wolf, 'The Color Grey in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 108 (2009), 222–38 (p. 234).

6 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 70; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 43.

7 Jon Geir Høyersten, *Personlighet og avvik. En studie i islendingesagaens menneskebilde — med særlig vekt på Njála* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 2000), pp. 100, 136; see also Lars Lönnroth, *Njáls saga. A Critical Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 87.

8 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 88.

9 *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Robert Cook, p. 316; see also Richard F. Allen, *Fire and Iron. Critical Approaches to Njáls saga* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971), pp. 102–3; Lönnroth, *Njáls saga*, p. 26.

10 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, pp. 183–84.

11 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, pp. 185–91.

12 *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 261; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 175.

neither Mǫrðr nor Valgarðr appear in any other account of the Christianization of Iceland,[13] it seems probable that the author adds this information to contrast the ideal Christian character, Njáll, with the two malicious pagan antagonists, who later become responsible for Njáll's death. Einar Ól. Sveinsson points out that some manuscripts of *Njáls saga* leave out Valgarðr's name in this passage.[14]

Valgarðr's last appearance is towards the middle of the saga in chapter 107, which begins by reporting Valgarðr's return to Iceland from abroad.[15] His son, Mǫrðr, recently lost many supporters after Njáll managed to establish a new *goðorð* for Hǫskuldr Hvítanessgoði, his foster son. Hǫskuldr is depicted as a Jesus-like figure, a martyr and saint, whose dying words are 'Guð hjálpi mér, en fyrirgefi yðr!' ('may God help me and forgive you!').[16] This is in stark contrast to the description of Mǫrðr and Valgarðr. Valgarðr is outraged that his son did not take better care of his *goðorð* and lost power and supporters. He demands his son goad Njáll's sons into killing Hǫskuldr, which would ultimately lead to the deaths of Njáll's sons and Njáll himself. Mǫrðr is doubtful about his ability to accomplish this task, but Valgarðr provides him with a plan to gain the trust of Njáll's sons through gifts and therefore turn them against Hǫskuldr by spreading slander. They agree that Mǫrðr will put this plan into action and he does so successfully later in the saga.

After this conversation, Mǫrðr, who appears to have accepted the Christian faith with the rest of the country in 1000 A.D., asks his father to convert. Valgarðr refuses and asks his son to renounce Christianity.[17] Mǫrðr, however, stays true to the new faith. An infuriated Valgarðr destroys all of Mǫrðr's crosses and holy objects. Shortly thereafter, Valgarðr falls ill and dies, a sign of God's supremacy, according to Lars Lönnroth.[18] The composer of *Njáls saga* concludes Valgarðr's story by stating that 'þá tók Valgarðr sótt ok andaðisk, ok var hann heygðr' ('then Valgard fell sick and died and was buried in a mound').[19]

3. Recent Old Norse Scholarship on Valgarðr inn grái and Mǫrðr Valgarðsson

Modern scholarship generally focuses its attention on Valgarðr's son, Mǫrðr, only referring to Valgarðr in connection with his son. Robert Cook points out that Mǫrðr has often been compared to antagonistic characters, such as Iago in *Othello*, Loki, or the devil himself. He mentions, furthermore, that Mǫrðr's name is 'so infamous in Iceland that it fell into centuries-long disuse'.[20] Cook, who tries to paint Mǫrðr in a somewhat less diabolical light than other scholars, mentions that Mǫrðr — to a certain extant — plays an important role in the saga, particularly his goading of the son's of Njáll into killing Hǫskuldr.[21] Nonetheless, he does

[13] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 261 n. 2.
[14] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 261 n. 2.
[15] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 274.
[16] Lönnroth, *Njáls saga*, pp. 114, 148; *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 281; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 188.
[17] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 275.
[18] *Njáls saga*, p. 129.
[19] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 275; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 184.
[20] 'Mörður Valgarðsson', in *Sagnheimur. Studies in Honour of Hermann Pálsson on his 80th birthday, 26th May 2001*, ed. by Ásdís Egilsdótti and Rudolf Simek, Studia Medievalia Septentrionalia, 6 (Wien: Fassbaender, 2001), pp. 63–77 (p. 63).
[21] 'Mörður Valgarðsson', pp. 70–71.

not emphasize the fact that Valgarðr is the one who gives his son the idea in the first place. He mentions Valgarðr's incitement, but without highlighting that this illustrates Valgarðr's important involvement in his son's actions. Cook concludes that Mǫrðr starts out as an evil character, but later redeems himself.[22] It seems no coincidence that Mǫrðr begins to redeem himself only after Valgarðr's death. He carries out his father's last evil plan, but is subsequently freed from his devilish father's influence and ready for redemption.

While most scholars focus their attention on Mǫrðr or Valgarðr and Mǫrðr as a tightly connected father-son duo, some scholars refer to Valgarðr more individually, emphasizing his evil and malicious character. Jon Geir Høyersten describes Valgarðr's plans to goad Njáll's sons into killing Hǫskuldr as 'diabolske instrukser' ('diabolical instructions'),[23] an interpretation that relates to Richard F. Allen's theory that the medieval readership of *Njáls saga* would have associated Valgarðr's plans 'with a pagan malice' because of his refusal of the Christian faith.[24]

Lars Lönnroth maintains that in the father-son duo, Mǫrðr is 'even more villainous' than Valgarðr. Lönnroth considers Valgarðr's behavior 'irrelevant to a fair judgment of his son', arguing that Valgarðr is merely a tool used by the narrator to emphasize Mǫrðr's evil character, since most readers 'are susceptible to such arguments as "like father, like son", and "by their fruits ye shall know them" '.[25] This interpretation might, however, be based on the fact that Mǫrðr plays a larger role in the story. As mentioned above, Mǫrðr must be seen as a product of his father's and mother's bad character traits. Moreover, Lönnroth calls Mǫrðr 'an agent of demonic conspiracies', since his father Valgarðr, who has given his son instructions on how to put an end to Njáll's family, is depicted as destroying Christian objects.[26] The use of the word 'agent' for Mǫrðr, someone who acts on behalf of another (in this case Valgarðr), negates Lönnroth's earlier argument that Valgarðr's behavior is irrelevant, and strengthens the interpretation put forth in this article, that Valgarðr is the diabolical puppet-master, possessed by the devil, whereas Mǫrðr is merely a pawn in his father's hands.

4. Scribal Remarks and Readers' Comments On Valgarðr inn grái

The composer of *Njáls saga* concludes Valgarðr's story by stating that 'þá tók Valgarðr sótt ok andaðisk, ok var hann heygðr' ('Then Valgard fell sick and died and was buried in a mound').[27] Most of the almost sixty extant manuscripts of *Njáls saga* let Valgarðr's life end with these words. In Oddabók (Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, AM 466 4to),[28] a fifteenth-century copy of *Njáls saga*, the scribe, however, adds 'ok fari bannsettr' (fol. 38^{r}) at the very end of the chapter. Sverrir Tómasson very colloquially translates the phrase as 'fuck him',[29] though a more literal translation would be 'and may he be dammed'. Oddabók contains other such variants. Gunnarr's enemies, including Valgarðr's son Mǫrðr, are called

[22] 'Mörður Valgarðsson', p. 75.
[23] *Personlighet og avvik*, p. 110.
[24] *Fire and Iron*, pp. 117–18 n. 19.
[25] *Njáls saga*, p. 87.
[26] *Njáls saga*, p. 131.
[27] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 275; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 184.
[28] Hereafter, all manuscripts are held in Reykjavík's Stofnun Árna Magnússonar unless otherwise stated.
[29] Sverrir Tómasson, 'The Textual Problems of *Njáls Saga*. One Work or Two?', in *On Editing Old Scandinavian Texts: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. by Fulvio Ferrari and Massimiliano Bampi, Labirinti, 119 (Trento: Universitá Degli Studi di Trento, 2009), pp. 39–56 (p. 53).

skækjusynir 'sons of whores' (fol. 25^{v}) when they gather to attack Gunnarr,[30] and Mǫrðr is referred to as a 'þurs(?) ærulaus' ('dishonorable numskull'; fol. 39^{r}).[31]

Jón Karl Helgason considers these variants in Oddabók 'a belated literary revenge for the death of individual saga characters', arguing that 'they testify more generally to the tendency of the Icelandic audience to think about the saga-plot in terms of heroes and villains'.[32] Sverrir Tómasson maintains that 'additional variants or comments are part of the work's reception'.[33]

Valgarðr's reception as an evil old man who shall rot in hell is not only illustrated in Oddabók by the added 'ok fari bannsettr', but also in other, younger copies of *Njáls saga*. AM 396 fol. and AM 163 d fol., both seventeenth-century manuscripts, are clearly related to Oddabók.[34] AM 163 d fol. could be a direct copy of AM 396 fol. or vice versa. Neither manuscript has a precise dating, but my ongoing research indicates that AM 396 fol. is earlier (early-mid seventeenth century), while AM 163 d fol., is later (mid-late seventeenth century). Both manuscripts omit the *skækjusynir*-variant found in Oddabók (AM 396 fol., fol. 118^{r}; AM 163 d fol., fol. 19^{r}), but — like AM 466 4to — refer to Mǫrðr as *ærulaus* ('dishonorable'; AM 396 fol., fol. 127^{v}; AM 163 d fol., fol. 25^{r}). The fact that neither manuscript preserves the noun preceding *ærulaus* is presumably due to the fact that it had become illegible.[35] They show a clear connection to Oddabók in the section where Valgarðr dies. Both manuscripts end the chapter with 'ok var hann þar heigðr hundheiðinn ok þrifist hann alldrei. Bannsettur!' ('and then he was buried in a mound, the despicable heathen, and he will never thrive. Damned one!'; AM 396 fol., fol. 127^{r}; AM 163 d fol., fol. 24^{v}).

Similar sentiments are found in GKS 1003 fol., a vellum manuscript written by Páll Sveinsson in the South of Iceland in 1670, textually related to Oddabók, AM 396 fol., and AM 163 d fol. Páll Sveinsson also lets Valgarðr die with the words 'ok var þar heigðr hundheiðinn og þrifist hann alldrei' (fol. 92^{r}), but omits *bannsettur*, possibly because the manuscript was written as a prestige object for the farmer Jón Eyjólfsson of Múli and other pious men in the Rangárvellirdistrict of southern Iceland.[36] Páll Sveinsson may have regarded such foul language inappropriate for the intended readership of GKS 1003 fol.

[30] See also Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition of Njálssaga*, Studia Islandica, 13 (Reykjavík: Leiftur, 1953), p. 18.

[31] See also Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition*, pp. 18–19. The word *þurs* is almost illegible in the manuscript today, which explains why Einar Ól. Sveinsson relates his doubts about his reading by adding the question mark: *Brennu-Njáls saga*, p. 281 n. 2.

[32] *The Rewriting of Njáls saga: Translation, Ideology, and Icelandic Sagas*, Topics in Translation, 16 (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1999), p. 23.

[33] 'The Textual Problems of *Njáls Saga*', p. 53.

[34] For a printed discussion of the manuscripts of *Njáls saga*, see Jón Þorkelsson, 'Om håndskrifterne af Njála', in *Njála udgivet efter gamle håndskrifter af Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab*, ed. by Konráð Gíslason and Eiríkur Jónsson, Íslendinga sögur, udgiven efter gamle haandskrifter af Det kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab, 3–4, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1889), II, 765–83; *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson; and Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Studies in the Manuscript Tradition*. The participants of the research project 'The Variance of *Njáls saga*' (see n. 1 above), including myself, are in the process of reexamining the relationships of the various manuscripts to establish a new stemma.

[35] See n. 31 above.

[36] For a history of GKS 1003 fol., see Desmond Slay, 'On the Origin of Two Icelandic Manuscripts in the Royal Library in Copenhagen', *Opuscula,* 1 (1960), 143–50; Susanne Miriam Arthur, 'The Importance of Marital and Maternal Ties in the Distribution of Icelandic Manuscripts from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century', *Gripla*, 23 (2012), 201–33 (available at <http://www.academia.edu/2323169/The_Importance_of_Marital_and_Maternal_Ties_in_the_Distribution_of_Icelandic_Manuscripts_from_the_Middle_Ages_to_the_Seventeenth_Century>).

A more poetic way of sending Valgarðr to hell is found in London, British Library, Add. 4867 and Reykjavík, National and University Library of Iceland, Lbs. 222 fol., both written by Jón Þórðarson, likely for Magnús Jónsson at Vigur in the Westfjords of Iceland, between 1690 and 1698. After the mention of Valgarðr's burial, Jón Þórðarson writes the verse: 'en sálin fór í sælu þrot, af sannri trú hafði alldrei not' ('but the soul went to a place lacking salvation (=hell), never having used the true faith'; BL Add. 4867, fol. 58^{r}; Lbs. 222 fol., fol. 302^{v}).

The wording of the unknown scribe of Copenhagen, Royal Library, Kall 612 4to, written in 1753 in Seyðisfjörður (Westfjords), is more straightforward. He simply notes that Valgarðr 'var heigður og fór til skrattans' ('was buried in a mound and went to the devil'; Kall 612 4to, fol. 127^{r}). In a similar fashion, Jakob Sigurðsson, scribe of Copenhagen, The Arnamagnæan Institute, AM Acc. 50 (1770, north-east Iceland), concludes that Valgarðr 'dó l:þar tók skrattinn við eign sinni:l og var hann heigður' ('died l:then the devil took what was his:l and he was buried in a mound'; fol. 82^{r}).

It is possible that the additions by some of these scribes and readers have to do with the fact that Valgarðr refuses to accept Christianity and destroys holy objects. His being referred to as a *hundheiðinn* ('despicable heathen') in AM 396 fol, AM 163 d fol., and GKS 1003 fol. and Jón Þórðarson's short verse in BL Add. 4867 and Lbs. 222 fol., which offers comments on Valgarðr's rejection of Christianity, can be interpreted in this way. Nonetheless, it is likely that Valgarðr's malicious behavior and his indirect involvement in the killing of Gunnarr and Njáll and his family is also responsible for people wishing him a life in hell. This assumption is supported by the fact that three of the seventeenth-century manuscripts, AM 396 fol., AM 163 d fol., and GKS 1003 fol., add or copy another comment. After Valgarðr and Mǫrðr agree to goad Njáll's sons into killing Hǫskuldr Hvítanessgoði and, thereby, eventually cause Njáll's and his sons' deaths, the three manuscripts add in parentheses 'fái þeir skamm báðir' ('shame on both of them'; AM 396 fol., 127^{r}; AM 163 d fol., 24^{v}; GKS 1003 fol., fol. 92^{r}). The eighteenth-century scribe Jakob Sigurðsson directly tells Valgarðr 'l:Bölvaður vertu fyrir ráðin:l' ('be cursed for your advice'; AM Acc. 50, fol. 82^{r}), after Valgarðr orders Mǫrðr: 'vil ek nú, at þú launir þeim því, at þeim dragi ǫllum til bana' ('now I want you to repay them in a way that will drag them all to their deaths').[37] The copyists and readers of *Njáls saga* were obviously enraged by Valgarðr's malevolent character and behavior.

5. Conclusion: The Reception of Valgarðr inn grái

The description of Valgarðr shows that the composer of *Njáls saga* used him as the ultimate antagonist. His refusal of the Christian faith and his attempt to convince his son to revoke his new-found belief portray Valgarðr not only as a mean and hostile man looking for revenge, but as a devil-like figure using his son as a tool in his evil plans. Valgarðr and his son stand in stark contrast to the ideal Christians, Njáll and the messiah-like Hǫskuldr Hvítanessgoði, whose deaths Valgarðr wants to cause. The readers of *Njáls saga*, well-versed in Christian tradition, would certainly have picked up on this contrast of good versus evil.[38] There are even subtle indications that at least one of the aforementioned scribes may have considered Valgarðr and Mǫrðr to be not only bad humans, but in fact evil demons.

[37] *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, p. 275; *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Cook, p. 183.
[38] Jón Karl Helgason, *The Rewriting of Njáls saga*, p. 23.

When Valgarðr is first mentioned in chapter 25 and his son Mǫrðr is born, Páll Sveinsson, the scribe of GKS 1003 fol., adds in the margin: 'illur vættur kemur hér við sögu' ('an evil supernatural being comes here into the story'; fol. 71^{r}). The marginal note likely refers only to Mǫrðr. Nonetheless, the fact that Valgarðr's son is described as a *vættur*, 'a supernatural being', implies that Valgarðr himself was also seen by Páll Sveinsson as an otherworldly being. The citations of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* lists fifty examples of *vættur*.[39] The examples reveal that *vættur* can refer to heathen gods, usually suggesting that these *heiðnar vættir* ('heathen supernatural beings') should not be worshipped;[40] troll-like supernatural beings; and evil spirits associated with the devil. The latter is clear from *Niðrstigningar saga* (*The History of the Descent into Hell*), where *illar vættir* refers to evil spirits living in hell,[41] and in Hauksbók (AM 544 4to), where it says that the sign of the cross is a defense against 'dioflum oc illum vettum' (the devil and evil spirits').[42] Considering the close connection between the devil and his evil spirits (*vættir*) it is reasonable to assume that Mǫrðr and Valgarðr were in a similar fashion linked to Satan by Páll Sveinsson. Other manuscripts, such as Kall 612 4to and AM Acc. 50, make the same connection by relating that Valgarðr 'went to the devil' after his death and that 'the devil took what was his'.

While modern readership and researchers focus their attention merely on Mǫrðr, it appears that medieval and post-medieval readers of *Njáls saga* noticed the importance of Valgarðr and his strong involvement in his son's action. Even though Valgarðr does not play a dominant role in *Njáls saga*, his actions are a driving force behind the saga, since Valgarðr's influence on his son's affairs leads to the deaths of Gunnarr, Hǫskuldr Hvítanessgoði and ultimately Njáll and his sons. While Mǫrðr starts out as an evil character, but has a chance to redeem himself,[43] Valgarðr never achieves redemption and dies — likely due to God's supremacy — after committing his final act of evil: the destruction of holy, Christian objects. It is, therefore, understandable that the readership of *Njáls saga* showed a particular dislike for Valgarðr inn grái, the malicious old man, the pagan, possessed by the devil and responsible for the deaths of the saga's most virtuous heroes, and he was for these reasons damned by scribes and readers to rot in hell for all eternity.

[39] The citations are accessible via <http://dataonp.hum.ku.dk>; the dictionary itself has not yet reached *v-*: *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose/Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* (Copenhagen: Arnamagnæan Commission/ Arnamagnæanske kommission, 1983–).

[40] See, for example, *Hauksbók udgiven efter de Arnamagnæanske håndskrifter no. 371, 544 og 675, 4° samt forskellige papirshåndskrifter*, ed. by Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1892–96), p. 157 (accessed from <http://www.septentrionalia.net/etexts/hauksbok.pdf>).

[41] *Heilagra Manna Søgur: Fortællinger og Legender om hellige Mænd og Kvinder,* ed. by C. R. Unger, 2 vols (Christiania: Bentzen, 1877), II, 5 (accessed from <http://books.google.com/books?id=IAEDAAAAQAAJ> and <http://books.google.com/books?id=emcJAAAAQAAJ>).

[42] ed. by Eiríkur Jónsson and Finnur Jónsson, p. 169.

[43] Cook, 'Mörður Valgarðsson', p. 75.

William Barnes and Frisian Forefathers

Jonathan Roper

Introduction

William Barnes (1801–86) was such a manifold figure, we are still trying to come account with the full range of his interests and activities. His poetry (both in dialect and in 'National English') is increasingly valued, and will achieve one measure of canonicity with the forthcoming publication of Tom Burton and K. K. Ruthven's three-volume criticial edition of his complete poetry with Oxford University Press, while his ethnolinguistic purism, long a source of ill-informed scorn, is undergoing revaluation.[1] Yet there is much more to him and his work; this article is dedicated to establishing his fascination with the Frisian language, and its place in his thought.

It was in his fifty-third year that William Barnes published *A Philological Grammar Grounded upon English*, which, the subtitle tells us, is 'formed from a comparison of more than sixty languages'.[2] Amongst these languages we can find Albanian, Breton, Coptic and 'Hawaiish'. There is, however, but no mention of Frisian, an absence particularly startling in view of the fact that in the last three decades of his life, Barnes was to publish various works either touching on Frisian directly or which drew on Frisian examples. In 1858 he noted in passing that 'the Friesic dialect [sic] … retains most of its old English words and forms'.[3] But by 1862, his knowledge of Frisian had grown (no more talk of it as a 'dialect') and in his study *TIW*, he was able to cite numerous Frisian words and phrases in support of the case he makes there.[4] In the following year, he, on a rare trip outside of Dorset, spoke to the members of the Philological Society in London on 'our elder brethren, the Frisians, their language and literature as illustrative of those of England'.[5] In his 1869 book, *Early England and the Saxon-English*, he devoted three dozen pages to 'the Frisians, the father-stock of the Saxon-English',[6] and in 1877 he published a six-page review of the 1876 English translation

1 Andrew Phillips, *The Rebirth of England and the English: The Vision of William Barnes* (Hockwold-cum-Wilton: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1996); Jonathan Roper, 'English Purisms', *Victoriographies*, 2 (2012), 44–59.

2 William Barnes, *A Philological Grammar Grounded upon English* (London: Smith, 1854).

3 William Barnes, *Notes on Ancient Britain and the Britons* (London: Smith, 1858), p. 43.

4 William Barnes, *TIW; or, A View of the Roots and Stems of English as a Teutonic Tongue* (London: Smith, 1862).

5 'Notices of the Meetings of the Philological Society from November 6, 1863, to June 17, 1864', in the appendix to *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1864), p. 2.

6 William Barnes, *Early England and the Saxon English; with Some Notes on the Father-Stock of the Saxon-English, the Frisians* (London: Smith, 1869), pp. 141–78.

and edition of the nineteenth-century pseudo-Old Frisian *Oera Linda Boek*, which he inclined to think 'untruthful' but of possible linguistic and historic interest.[7] And, last but not least, in the later editions of his *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* there are many Frisian references.[8] Barnes' 'Frisian turn' deserves attention: how did he discover Frisian? And why was it so important for him?

Unfortunately at this stage in our knowledge, we can only speculate on answers to the first of these questions, but there are several possibilities. The first of these is that Barnes' interest had been fired by the activities of De Haan Hettema, the Frisian lawyer and linguist (1796–1873), specifically the articles he contributed to the *Transactions of the Philological Society*, in which he compared Frisian with Old English and with English dialects.[9] We can certainly imagine that the approach taken by De Haan Hettema, which privileges provincial and older varieties of English as better historical witnesses than contemporary Standard English, would have appealed to Barnes, given his own existing interests in both Dorset dialect and in Old English. And given his association with the Philological Society we can well assume that Barnes would have come across these articles; indeed, he refers to the latter one in his writings.[10] But Hettema is not the only influence. An alternative, or supplementary, influence on his Frisian turn may well have been J. H. Halbertsma. Halbertsma (1789–1869) was the key figure in the nineteenth-century revival and reestablishment of Frisian, who during his long life authored, translated and compiled a diverse range of works, from a best-selling collection of popular rhymes and tales to a richly elaborated dictionary of Frisian with Latin as its metalanguage.[11] While Halbertsma's key essay linking Old English with Frisian had been published in the 1830s,[12] it may be, that living in the provinces, Barnes only came across it, or perhaps was only seized by its importance, at a later date. It is also possible that word of the visits of Halbertsma to England in the 1850s may have piqued his interest in the writings of the great man. Be that as it may, we are on surer ground in tracing his Frisian turn when we consider Barnes' participation in Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte's scheme to transpose the Song of Songs into various English dialects. Barnes' Dorset version appeared in 1859.[13] J. H. Halbertsma's translation of the Gospel of Matthew into West Frisian had appeared the

[7] William Barnes, 'The Oera Linda Book', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 210 (April 1877), 461–66 (p. 461) (review of *The Oera Linda Book: From a Manuscript of the Thirteenth Century with the Permission of the Proprietor C. Over de Linden, of the Helder*, ed. by J. G. Ottema, trans. by William R. Sandbach (London: Trübner, 1876), trans. from *Thet Oera Linda bok: naar een handschrift uit de dertiende eeuw, eigendom der familie Over de Linden aan Den Helder*, ed. by J. G. Ottema (Leeuwarden: Kuipers, 1876)).

[8] William Barnes, *A Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect with the History, Outspreading, and Bearings of South-Western English* (Berlin: Asher, 1863); followed by a revised 1886 edition (Dorchester: Case; London: Trübner, 1886).

[9] M. De Haan Hettema, 'Hints on the Thesis "The Old-Friesic Above All Others the 'Fons et Origo' of the Old-English" ', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 3 (1856), 196–215; 'Archaic and Provincial English Words Compared with Dutch and Friesic', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 5 (1858), 143–78.

[10] *Early England and the Saxon English*, p. 167.

[11] For an understanding of the depths of the latter, see Anne Dykstra, *J. H. Halbertsma als lexicograaf. Studies over het 'Lexicon Frisicum' (1872)* (Ljouwert: Fryske Akademy, 2011).

[12] J. H. Halbertsma, 'Ancient and Modern Friesic Compared with Anglo-Saxon', in Joseph Bosworth, *The Origin of the English, Germanic and Scandinavian Languages, and Nations* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1836), pp. 35–80; also in Joseph Bosworth, *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 1838), pp. xxxv–lxxx.

[13] William Barnes, *The Song of Solomon in the Dorset Dialect. From the Authorised English Version* (London: Barclay, 1859).

previous year.[14] Both were printed by the same London printer, George Barclay, and both were funded by the Prince. Bonaparte visited Barnes twice (the Emperor coming to Dorset each time, staying in a hotel in a nearby town), and, on the 12th of September 1859, the Prince gave Barnes Halbertsma's translation. It was a volume that Barnes was to quote from in several of his subsequent writings.

And then again there are other possibilities. Barnes, as an Anglo-Saxonist, may have had his interest in Frisian piqued by Max Rieger's reader, which, while focussing on Old Saxon and Anglo-Saxon, also included Old Frisian readings, and which we can be sure he knew from his references to it in his works.[15] We can compare Barnes' Frisian reading with, for example, what we know of the reading of William Thoms, who is the only other of the nineteenth-century English Frisophiles whose reading is documentable from his published references to it. Doing so, we find that Thoms's Frisian books include the dictionaries of von Richthofen and Hettema,[16] Eeltsje Halbertsma's *De Treemter*, his brother Joast Halbertsma's *Friesche spelling* and *De Scearwinkel fen Joute-Baes*, and their magazine *De Lapekoer fen Gabe-Skroar*.[17] Barnes' reading on the other hand, as references in his own works from the 1860s indicates, encompasses works on North Frisian,[18] Wiarda's book on East Frisian,[19] and in West Frisian,[20] as well as editions and studies of the Frisian laws by Wiarda and Hettema.[21] He also was familiar with J. G. Kohl's 1846 work *Die Marschen und Inseln der Herzogthümer Schleswig und Holstein*, and no doubt with other works he did not directly reference.[22] Apart from the surprising omission of the work of von Richthofen, Barnes' reading is generally more scholarly in topic than that of Thoms, and quite possibly than that of the other nineteenth-century Frisophiles.

Frisian in the works of Barnes

1. TIW

The first of Barnes' books to heavily feature Frisian, and the most unusual, is *TIW* (1862). The work is Barnes' attempt at proto-Germanic etymology without recourse to the strict methods

[14] *Het Evangelie van Mattheus vertaald in het Land-Friesch*, trans. by J. H. Halbertsma (London: n. pub., 1858).

[15] Max Rieger, *Alt- und angelsächsisches Lesebuch. Nebst altfriesischen Stücken. Mit e. Wörterbuche* (Giessen: Ricker, 1861).

[16] Karl Freiherrn von Richthofen, *Altfriesisches Wörterbuch* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1840); M. Hettema, *Idioticon Frisicum. Friesch-latijnsch-Nederlandsch woordenboek* (Leeuwarden: Suringar, 1874).

[17] E. Halbertsma, *De Treemter* (Deventer: de Lange, 1836); J. H. Halbertsma, *Friesche spelling* (Leeuwarden: n. pub., 1834); *De Scearwinkel fen Joute-Baes Mei Ien Oanwizinge om it Frysk to Læzen*, 2nd rev. edn (Deventer: de Lange, 1841).

[18] N. Outzen, *Glossarium der friesischen Sprache: besonders in nordfriesischer Mundart, zur Vergleichung mit den Verwandten germanischen und nordischen, auch mit zweckmässigem Hinblick auf die dänische Sprache*, ed. by L. Engelstoft and C. Molbech (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1837); Bende Bendsen, *Die nordfriesische sprache nach der Moringer mundart: zur vergleichung mit den verwandten sprachen und mundarten*, ed. by M. de Vries (Leiden: Brill, 1860).

[19] T. D. Wiarda, *Geschichte der ausgestorbenen alten friesischen oder sächsischen Sprache* (Aurich and Bremen: Förster, 1784).

[20] Gysbert Japix, *Friesche rymlerye* (Leeuwarden: Tjallings, 1681); Halbertsma, *Het Evangelie van Mattheus*.

[21] T. D. Wiarda, *Geschichte des alten Friesischen Gesetzes* (Amsterdam: [n. pub.], 1820); M. De Haan Hettema, *Het Emsiger Landregt van het jaar 1312* (Ljouwert: Schierbeek, 1830); *Jurisprudentia Frisica, of Friesche Regtkennis* (Ljouwert: Schetsberg, 1834–35).

[22] *Die Marschen und Inseln der Herzogthümer Schleswig und Holstein: nebst vergleichenden Bemerkungen über die*

of comparative historical linguistics, as becomes clear by an early remark that 'the bulk of it [i.e. English] was formed from about fifty primary roots'.[23] Barnes believes that he has 'reached these roots' by his investigation of local English dialects and of cognate languages (sources more conservative than contemporary Standard English). The chief of these cognates is Frisian, as 'Friesic … is less forgone, than is our English, from its old form'.[24] Indeed, there is scarcely a double page to be found without a word followed by the abbreviation '*Fr.*' for Frisian. At this stage, Barnes makes no distinction between West and North Frisian, nor does he make any reference to linguistic period. All his examples, whether drawn from Halbertsma's translation of *Matthew* (e.g. 'Thilde him op'), the work of Gysbert Japicx (e.g. 'myn tomm' in finger klomje'), or from Outzen's dictionary (e.g. 'blügg'), were all marked simply as '*Fr.*'.[25]

It is not only a question of Barnes being indifferent to which variety or period the Frisian words come from. For him in this work it is also immaterial which variety or period of English the words they are supposed to be cognate with are from. Sometimes Barnes justifies his case by linking a Frisian word with a dialect English cognate: Frisian *waase* and northern English *wase* are given as examples of *W*-words of the first branch, those which are meant to represent what is 'weak, yielding in form, or under pressure'. At other times he supports a form he has arrived at by likening a Frisian word with an Old English one: *waegsen* and Old English *weaxan* are given as examples of *W*-words of the second branch, and thus supposedly examples of what 'spring[s] up or out in substance or motion'.[26]

Sometimes the work is quite suggestive. The word 'bling' which sprang to prominence in English in the 1990s seemingly from nowhere designates, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes, 'the visual effect of light being reflected off precious stones or metals'.[27] Barnes' entry for 'bl*ng' in *TIW* refers to its (supposed) radical sense as 'to cast or show light, or any colour or hue' is rather prescient for a word that was only to emerge well over a century later, and shows us the strength of his feeling for words. Overall, however, this whole extraordinary work, with its combination of etymologizing and phonaesthesia, is more the product of Barnes as poet than Barnes as philologist. But it is instructive to look at his motivation: the work is really done to justify the ancient dialects of English as against 'Book English', and it calls upon Frisian (and other sources) to support the primacy of the dialect forms over (what he would have seen as) the loans and corruptions of Standard English. All this chimes in with what he described as 'the many cases in which the folk-speech is full and distinctive, while [Book] English is defective'.[28] If Barnes and Halbertsma had ever met, they would have found themselves in agreement in the importance of the 'folktaal'.[29]

2. Early England and the Saxon English

In 1869, the same that year Halbertsma died, Barnes published *Early England and the Saxon English*. The work as a whole has a epigraph from Isaiah: 'look unto the rock whence you are

Küstenländer, die zwischen Belgien und Jütland liegen, 3 vols (Dresden: Arnold, 1846).

23 p. v.

24 p. 174.

25 pp. 243, 114, 20.

26 pp. 193, 203.

27 *OED Online*, 3rd edn, <http://www.oed.com>, s. v. *bling*, n. and adj.

28 William Barnes, *A Glossary of the Dorset Dialect with a Grammar of its Word Shapening and Wording* (Dorchester: Case; London: Trübner, 1886), p. 60.

29 See Goffe Jensma, *Het rode tasje van Salverda. Burgerlijk bewustzijn en Friese identiteit in de negentiende eeuw*

THE WIFE OF AN IDLE HUSBAND.

Az de bern my to' eare kriytte
As the bairns 'me to ear } cry
to my ear }

Mâm, mâm ytte, ytte, ytte,'
Mammy, mammy, eat, eat, eat, (Food)

In iyk yild nogh yten fiyn
And I money nor food find

Yn miyn pong,* nogh' yn uws spiyn,
In my purse, nor in our larder,

Den tinckt my† miyn hert moat brecke.
Then me-thinks my heart must break.

* Pong, a primary form of poke, sack, pocket, pong, pog, poke.

Figure 1: William Barnes' interlinear rendering of Japicx's *Sjolle Kreamer in Tetke*: *Early England and the Saxon-English*, p. 170, ll. 83–87.

hewn, and to the quarry whence ye are digged', and Barnes clearly considered both 'the Saxon English' and the Frisians as that quarry whence modern Englishmen 'are digged', given that he devotes three dozen pages to 'the Frisians, the father-stock of the Saxon-English people'. In these pages, he gives a potted history of the Frisians up to the fifteenth century, says something about the old Frisian laws and about the poetry of Gysbert Japicx. He gives an excerpt of the latter with an interlinear translation (see Figure 1). Here Barnes tries to use English words cognate with the Frisian, even if they are less common, e.g. 'bairns' for 'berns' (rather than 'children'), 'mammy' for 'mâm' (not 'mummy'), 'me-thinks' for 'tinckt my' (not 'I feel', or 'it seems to me'). In other words, it is quite a *source-language* orientated (or here, frisianizing) translation. But in cases where the meaning of the Frisian words may be more obvious to the English reader, he does not feel it necessary to supply the cognates of 'yild' or 'yten'. In the case of 'pong', he also gives us an anglicizing rather than a frisianizing translation by using the word 'purse'. But in his asterisked footnote he alerts us to dialect and other equivalents of 'pong' in English: *poke*, *pog*, *pocket*. While Barnes would have been quite capable of producing a poetic translation of Gysbert Japicx (indeed of all the 'unwritten books' of the nineteenth century, one of the most intriguing would have been ***The Poetry of Gysbert Japicx, Translated by William Barnes*), this is a translation by Barnes the philologist, someone who is keener to stress the affinity between Frisian and English than to render Gysbert poetically. Barnes's discussion of Frisian and the Frisians in *Early England and the Saxon English*, which now distinguishes between West, North and East Frisian, mutates towards its end into an annotated bibliography on Frisica, including titles he has not himself seen, but knows from a booksellers' catalogue from Nijmegen. Thence it develops into a call for further study by his compatriots of early

(Ljouwert: Fryske Akademy, 1998), pp. 72–79, 197–98.

Frisian laws, Frisian speech, and Frisian personal names, a call which in the short run at least would seem to have had little response.

3. *Glossary and Grammar of the Dorset Dialect*

Barnes wrote a series of glossaries and grammars of Dorset dialect during his life, each one larger than the last.[30] In his earlier descriptions of Dorset dialect, he had briefly chosen to represent Danish and Swedish as close cognates to English: 'the modern Danish and Swedish are so much like English that some sentences of those languages, as uttered by a Dane or Swede, would be intelligible to an Englishman who might not have learnt them'.[31] But with his discovery of Frisian he now had a closer cognate to deploy, which he could discuss in much greater depth. In his third version,[32] references to Frisian begin to make their appearance, and in the fourth and final version, we find numerous mentions of Frisian within the 44-page grammar (both North Frisian and West Frisian, Barnes now distinguishing between the two languages in a way he had not during his composition of *TIW*).[33] In fact, there are more Frisian references in the grammar than to anything else other than Old English. In the glossary, which would have been an easier arena to note comparanda, Frisian cognates are by contrast only mentioned three times, under the words 'Bline-Buck-o'-Deavy', 'Dor', and 'Trant'.[34]

One case in the grammar where Barnes draws on Frisian is when discussing the survival of the plural ending *-en* in a few common words in Dorset dialect. After contrasting his Dorset examples (*cheesen*, *housen*, *pleäçen*) with their 'Book English' equivalents (*cheeses*, *houses*, *places*), Barnes turns to Frisian examples of plural *-en*: *scjippen*, *wolwen*, *slangen*, *douwen*, *hannen*, *fuotten*, *foxen*, *holen*, *nesten*.[35] All of these are drawn from Halbertsma's Gospel translation. It is might seem an unusual move in an English dialect grammar to cite Frisian comparanda (and indeed it might be a unique one), but by showing that this 'good liquid ending' can be found in Frisian as well, Barnes is making an implicit argument (to some degree but not entirely etymologically correct) that the Dorset forms are historically anterior to the Standard English forms, which should not thus have priority over them. Similarly in his discussions of deixis, verbal aspect and phraseology in Dorset dialect he draws on Frisian parallels. Furthermore, Barnes argues that although Dorset English has a large number of diphthongs, this is quite acceptable as Old English itself did and and modern Frisian still does.[36] In other words, his knowledge of Frisian (in this case its morphosyntax) is deployed once again to justify dialectal English as against 'Book English'.

At an early stage Barnes had relied on parallels between Old English and Dorset English to elevate the latter, but now following his Frisian turn he draws on both Old English *and*

[30] William Barnes, *Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect: With a Dissertation and Glossary* (London: Smith, 1844) and its 1847 second edition, 'the dissertation and glossary enl. and cor.'; and his 1863 and 1886 editions of a *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (see n. 7 above).

[31] *Poems of Rural Life* (1844), p. 4.

[32] *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (1863).

[33] *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (1886).

[34] For the sake of completeness, these references are, firstly, to 'buck', as featured in a local name for 'Blind Man's Buff', compared with Frisian 'bokke', in the sense 'the beginner, or main player, for the time, in their [i.e. Frisian] children's games'; secondly to 'dor', in the alliterative phrase 'dum and dor', i.e. dumb and foolish, which garners an unpaginated reference to the *Oera Linda Boek*; and thirdly to 'trant', meaning 'to tramp', which he compares with 'trantie', a word that was used 'in old Friesic … for dancing'.

[35] *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (1886), p. 16.

[36] *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (1886), pp. 5–6.

Frisian parallels to bolster his case. Indeed, in the first example cited here, that of the plural ending *-en*, he draws solely on Frisian parallels, although he would have been able to draw on earlier English examples too.

William Barnes as Frisophile

Most of the English Frisophiles can be considered to belonging to one of three groups: those with Old English interests (like Joseph Bosworth);[37] those with an interest in local English dialects (like John Davies);[38] and polyglots (like John Bowring).[39] Barnes, however, belonged in all three categories! Thus when he finally discovered Frisian, he was very ready to integrate it into his philological work, as we have seen he did in quite a thorough-going way. It should be remarked that his interest in Frisian was at its height in the early 1860s, immediately after his meetings with Bonaparte, a period in which he wrote *TIW*, added most of the Frisian comparanda to his dictionary of Dorset English, and addressed the Philological Society on the subject of Frisian. But his interest in Frisian did not simply disappear: he worked his oral address up into a substantial and well-referenced book-chapter.[40] And the revision of the *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* published in his final year contains newly-added Frisian comparanda.

It might also be noted that his was quite a bookish Frisophilia: he never set foot in Friesland, for example. But then again, for that matter, for all his knowledge of sixty-plus languages he never stepped foot outside England, and indeed rarely ventured outside his home county. While we have seen that the answer to the first of our questions, what caused his Frisian turn, is not entirely clear, the answer to the second question, why Frisian was so significant to Barnes, is much more apparent. Just as Junius's interest in Old English several centuries earlier can been seen as means of elevating the status of Dutch,[41] we can likewise see Barnes' interest in Frisian was a means of elevating his own mother tongue, the Dorset dialect of English.

To close, we might consider the fact that all the other nineteenth-century English Frisophiles had some sort of connection with J. H. Halbertsma.[42] Barnes' concentration on Frisian connections to English in his works, and Halbertsma's concentration on English cognates in his dictionary, suggests they had much in common, and in working an opposite ends of the same problem could even have collaborated. And yet somehow Halbertsma ('Mr Friesland') and Barnes (the Englishman with the greatest knowledge of Frisian) missed

[37] Best known as the author of *A Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (London: Smith, 1855).

[38] The Rev. Davies was the author of an article 'On the Races of Lancashire, as indicated by the Local Names and the Dialect of the County' that appeared in *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 2 (13) (1855), 210–84.

[39] Jonathan Roper, 'Some Varieties of English Frisophilia', in *Philologia Frisica Anno 2008*, ed. by P. Boersma, G. T. Jensma, and R. Salverda (Ljouwert: Fryske Akademy, 2012), pp. 236–49 (p. 237). Quite apart from his political and diplomatic career, Bowring (1792–1872) was famed in his lifetime for his knowledge of a wide range of the languages of Europe and Asia. He published translations from a variety of European languages including German, Dutch, Spanish, Polish, Serbian, Hungarian, Czech, and Frisian.

[40] *Early England and the Saxon English*, pp. 141–78.

[41] Sophie van Romburgh, 'Why Francis Junius (1591–1677) Became an Anglo-Saxonist, or, the Study of Old English for the Elevation of Dutch', in *Appropriating the Middle Ages: Scholarship, Politics, Fraud*, ed. by Tom Shippey, Studies in Medievalism, 11 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), pp. 5–36.

[42] Roper, 'Some Varieties of English Frisophilia', p. 237; see also Alpita De Jong, *Knooppunt Halbertsma. Joost Hiddes Halbertsma (1789–1869) en andere Europese geleerden over het Fries en andere talen, over wetenschap en over de samenleving* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2009), pp. 253–97.

establishing contact with one another! In one sense however, Halbertsma and Barnes did manage to meet, namely via the pages of each others' works. Barnes cited the copy of Halbertsma's *Matthew* that he had been given by Louis Lucien Bonaparte in all three of his major works which drew on Frisian. And Halbertsma possessed some of Barnes' works: he too had a copy of Barnes' rendering of *The Song of Solomon*, as well as his *Hwomely Rhymes*[43] and two copies of the 1847 edition of his *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect*.[44]

Now, while the 1847 version of Barnes' Dorset 'dissertation and glossary' that Halbertsma worked with was produced before Barnes' Frisian turn, and thus has no mention of any Frisian cognates, Halbertsma was, nevertheless, able use that earlier edition for his purposes, as we can see by his marginalia in 2013 TL. He seems to have been particularly interested in tracing examples of Old English /θ/ ([θ] and [ð]) becoming /d/ in dialect, making marks against the entries for the words 'Drub' (i.e. Standard English *throb*), 'Dringe, or Drunge' (which Barnes derives from Old English *þringan*), 'Dred' (i.e. Standard English *thread*), and 'Dick' (which Barnes derives from Old English *þecan*). This sound change had long been of interest to Halbertsma. For example in his essay on Frisian written for Joseph Bosworth he had written:

> may not the English alone boast of having preserved the true sound of the old *etch* (þ *th*), which has disappeared from the whole continent of Europe, so as not even to leave the means of forming a faint idea of the sound of this consonant, without the aid of English?"[45]

But his concentration on words beginning with *d-* might also be due to more practical considerations, as it would seem that Halbertsma turned to his large collection of English dialect dictionaries chiefly when he was working on the letter *D* in his dictionary. If we look at his marginalia in his copy of Thomas Sternberg's *Folk-Lore and Dialect of Northamptonshire*, then we see that of the eight headwords he comments upon, five begin with *D* (while a sixth is an early entry under *E*). Halbertsma made other annotations in Barnes' 'dissertation and glossary', including noting Frisian parallels for the Dorset words 'dent' ('daen') and 'dick' ('dek'). (It seems, however, that a later, anonymous reader thought little of Barnes' discussion of the development of diphthongs in Dorset dialect on page 27, writing 'rot!' next to it, using a pencil rather than Halbertsma's black ink and sharp handwriting.)

Oddly enough, the use Halbertsma made of Barnes' glossary in his posthumous *Lexicon frisicum* does not match up with these marginalia.[46] While Halbertsma does mention 'Drub' as a cognate of *Trobbelje*,[47] for his entry on 'daen' he does not draw on the parallel he had noted next to 'dent' in Barnes' glossary, but chooses rather to cite the entry on 'Dent, dant' in Anne Elizabeth Baker's Northamptonshire glossary. This is presumably for its closer vocalic match, and also for the illustrative quotation she provides from Spenser's *Fairy Queen*. There is only one explicit acknowledgement of Barnes in Halbertsma's work. It comes under 'libben-deá', for which Halbertsma notes as parallel 'Ang. Dorset *dead-alive*; dull, inactive, moping. Barnes' (see Figure 2). Sure enough we find in Halbertsma's copy of Barnes' 1847 glossary that the word *libben-deá'* is written in the margin next to the entry for 'dead-alive'.

Beyond this one explicit notice of Barnes, Halbertsma would seem to have drawn on his work in a few other places too where we find the note 'Ang. Dorset', namely *s.v.* 'drammelje', which he notes has a parallel in 'Ang. Dorset, *drimble*', *s.v.* 'Dikelje', where he notes in passing

[43] *Hwomely Rhymes, a Second Collection of Poems in the Dorset Dialect* (London: Smith, 1859).

[44] These works are now kept at Tresoar in Ljouwert with the call numbers of 2008 TL, 2011 TL, 2012 TL and 2013 TL, respectively.

[45] Halbertsma, 'Ancient and Modern Friesic Compared with Anglo-Saxon'.

[46] Justus Halbertsma, *Lexicon frisicum: A–Feer*, ed. by Tiallingius Halbertsma (Deventer: de Lange, 1872).

[47] *Lexicon frisicum*, p. 598.

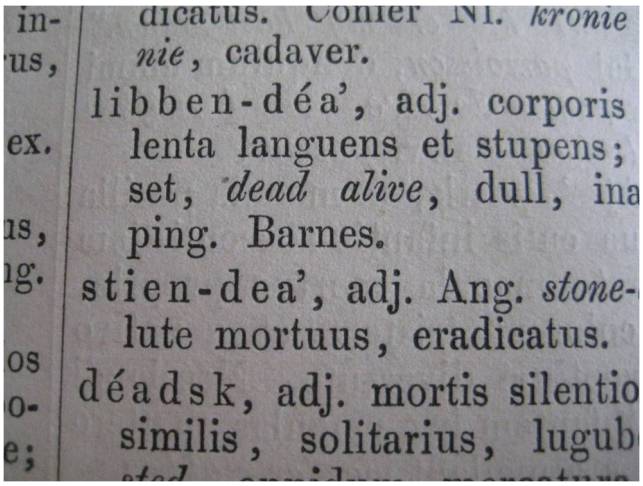
dicatus. Comer NI. *kronie*
nie, cadaver.
libben-déa', adj. corporis
lenta languens et stupens;
set, *dead alive*, dull, ina
ping. Barnes.
stien-dea', adj. Ang. *stone-*
lute mortuus, eradicatus.
déadsk, adj. mortis silentio
similis, solitarius, lugub

Figure 2: Entry for *libben-deá'* in Halbertsma's *Lexicon frisicum*.

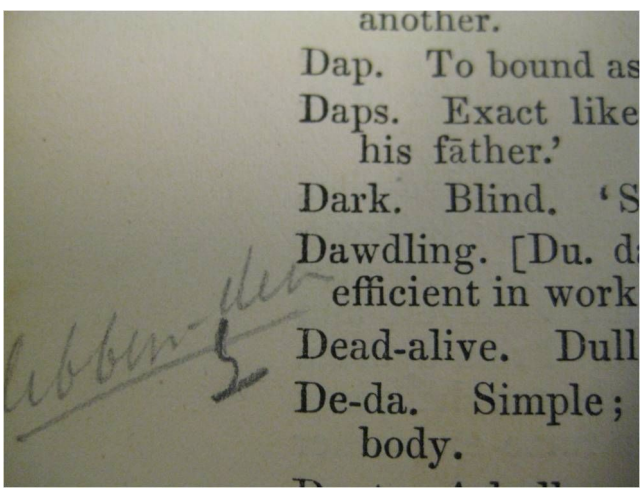
another.
Dap. To bound as
Daps. Exact like
his fāther.'
Dark. Blind. 'S
Dawdling. [Du. d
efficient in work
Dead-alive. Dull
De-da. Simple;
body.

Figure 3: Entry for *dead-alive* in Halbertsma's copy of Barnes' *Poems of Rural life, in the Dorset Dialect*, Tresoar 2013 TL.

'Ang. Dorset *chimp*' (i.e. a young shoot) as a parallel for 'kimpe', and *s.v.* 'et-grow', where he cites 'Ang. Dorset *ee-grass*' (i.e. aftermath, or after-grass).[48] He also cites a Dorset placename that he may have known via Barnes' work: '*Ang*. Badbury, urbs in pago Dorset'.[49]

As mentioned before, while there are many mentions of Frisian grammar in Barnes' final discussion of Dorset dialect, few *words* are mentioned (three in the pages of the glossary itself, together with another one in the introduction). What is particularly striking is that none of the verbal parallels Barnes chooses are to be found among those which Halbertsma had chosen. In one way this is not so surprising as only four words are proposed by Barnes, whereas a thorough investigation of dialect English parallels with Frisian terms, something which has never been undertaken, would throw up a large number of results (consider for a moment the number of parallels Halbertsma working a century and a half ago was able to find just for words begining A–F).

It seems that the Barnes' engagement with Frisian became known finally in the Netherlands when an archaeologist friend of Barnes (based in London but with Dorset connections) contacted J. H. Halbertsma's son Tjalling J. Halbertsma, following the latter's publication of his father's *Lexicon frisicum*, and the latter sent a copy to Barnes in the June of 1873 together with the following words:

> My Dear Sir,
>
> Having heard from your friend, Mr. Charles Warne, the great interest you take in the works of my lamented father concerning the Frisian language, I fulfil herewith a promise made to your friend, of sending you a copy of his *opus postumum*, which no doubt will claim your attention still more than his anterior publications, as he had himself proposed to show the great affinity that exists between the genuine English dialects and the Frisian, from which fact he would probably have deduced another fact — viz., that it was especially the Frisians who, at the time of the so-called Anglo-Saxon invasion peopled a part of England and Scotland.
>
> I hope you will accept of the book I offer you, and remain
>
> Truly yours,
>
> T. J. Halbertsma[50]

In return, Barnes sent some of his dialect poetry to Tjalling Halbertsma, a volume which has also found its resting place at Tresoar, where its call number is 245 TL, where the catalogue describes it as 'geschenk van den schrijver aan Dr. T. J. Halbertsma' ('gift from the author to Dr T. J. Halbertsma'). The latter wrote back to Barnes in words that must have delighted him:

> I immediately perused your poems with great pleasure, and became convinced that the Dorset dialect is a true daughter of the Saxon … as most of the words were almost familiar to me, by their resembling so much Friesic, Dutch and Saxon words.[51]

And yet, at the same time as confirming the West Germanic character of Barnes' dialect, there is also here an implicit correction to Barnes' Frisocentrism. Just as words found in Dorset

[48] *Lexicon frisicum*, pp. 731, 659, 944.

[49] *Lexicon frisicum*, p. 143, *s.v.* 'bade, bate'. The word is cited in connection with Old English *beadu* 'battle, conflict'. Nowadays the first element is generally held to be the personal name *Badda* (which may itself, however, derive from Old English 'beadu', battle or war): *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names, Based on the Collections of the English Place-Name Society*, ed. by Victor Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), s. v. *BADBURY*.

[50] Lucy Baxter, *The Life of William Barnes, Poet and Philologist, by his Daughter* (London: Macmillan, 1887), p. 256.

[51] Baxter, *The Life of William Barnes*, pp. 256–57.

are not only found in that county (for example, Halbertsma's *chimp* is, so the *English Dialect Dictionary* tells us, found in the neighbouring counties of Wiltshire, Somerset, Gloucestershire and Hampshire, as well as in Dorset), so cognates to Barnes' Dorset words are to be found not just in Frisian, but also in Dutch and in Low German.[52] Indeed, the remark 'true daughter of the Saxon' may even suggest that the epicentre of such similarities is not in Friesland itself, but further to the east. T. J. Halbertsma was clearly right to raise the existence of other Germanic parallels. If we consider the word *wase* in *TIW*,[53] Barnes could have, to judge by the entry on *wase* in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, picked out Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, German, or Dutch cognates (i.e. in *any* of the Germanic languages) as well as the single (Frisian) cognate he cites. But this was to be a suggestion that Barnes would not take to heart. He had by now too much of an emotional connection to the Frisians. Throughout his writings we find again and again kinship metaphors employed in relation to the Frisians. They are our 'elder Brethren', 'fore-elders', 'fatherstock' and 'fore-fathers'.[54] And there is also a kinship metaphor to be found in the Latin dedication Barnes wrote in the copy of his poems that T. J. Halbertsma was now commenting on, where he referred to his work as 'hoc opusculum in lingua Dorsetiense, Frisicae venerabili linguae congenere' ('this little work in the Dorset tongue, of the same family as the venerable Frisian tongue'; Figure 4).

But just as much as the note of fellow feeling in his treatment of things Frisian, the second reason that the aged Barnes did not adjust his approach in the just over a decade that remained to him was that his knowledge of Frisian, then unequalled in England, had become too important to his project of showing that 'the provincial dialects [of English] are not jargons but true and good forms of Teutonic speech'[55] for it to be abandoned now.[56]

[52] *The English Dialect Dictionary: Being the Complete Vocabulary of All Dialect Words Still in Use, or Known to Have Been in Use During the Last Two Hundred Years*, ed. by Joseph Wright (London: Frowde, 1898–1905), s. v. 'chimp'.

[53] p. 193, where Barnes also has the forms *waise* and *waze*.

[54] Respectively: Baxter, *The Life of William Barnes*, p. 222; Barnes, *TIW*, p. 147; Barnes, *Early England and the Saxon English*, pp. 141, 147.

[55] *TIW*, pp. xvii-xviii.

[56] I am grateful to Tresoar in Ljouwert to be able to use the image of Halbertsma's copy of Barnes' *Poems of Rural Life*. Thanks to Alderik Blom, Anne Dykstra, Jarich Hoekstra, Goffe Jensma, Alpita de Jong, Jelle Krol, and Jacob van Sluis for help and advice while writing this article. This research was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Center of Excellence CECT).

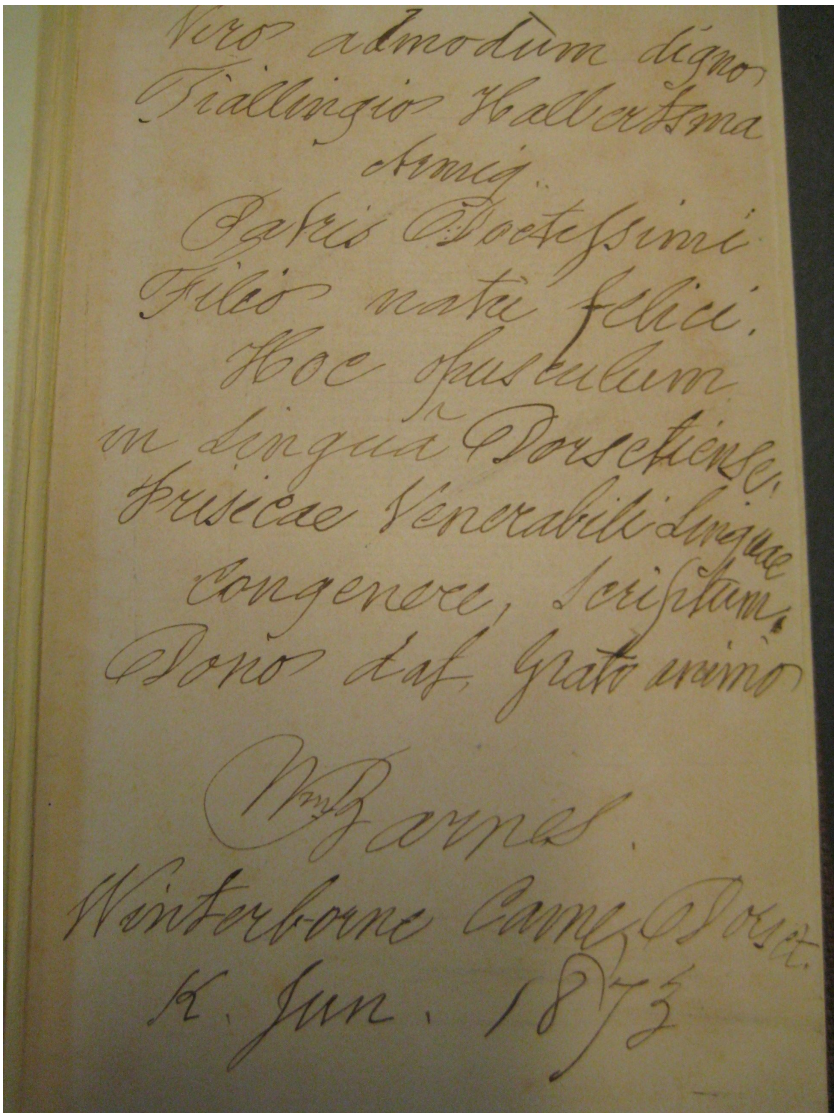

Figure 4: Latin dedication to T. J. Halbertsma written by Barnes in the gift copy of his *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect*: third collection, Tresoar s 245 TL.

What's in a Name? Pinning Down the Middle English Lyric

Anne L. Klinck

I. Perspectives

Approaching the question of genre: why and how

The term *lyric* as applied to Middle English is decidedly problematic.[1] Scholars publishing collections of Middle English 'lyrics' or writing about them tend to avoid the problem of definition by treating the word as synonymous with 'short poem'. The trouble is that *lyric* is not part of the medieval vocabulary and may not have been part of the medieval consciousness,

[1] Middle English poems will be identified by their number in Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: British Library, 2005); see also Carleton Brown, *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943) and *Supplement to The Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. by Rossell Hope Robbins (University of Kentucky Press, 1965). Citations will refer principally, by poem number, to the following editions: *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, ed. by Carleton Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932); *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, ed. by Carleton Brown, 2nd edn rev. by G. V. Smithers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957); *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, ed. by Carleton Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939); *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. by Rossell Hope Robbins, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955); *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. by Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959). Carols will be cited from *The Early English Carols*, ed. by R. L. Greene, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). References to the Brown and Robbins editions will be abbreviated: Brown *XIII*, *XIV*, *XV*; Robbins *SL*, *HP*. In addition to these standard editions, general collections of Middle English lyrics include: *Early English Lyrics: Amorous, Divine, Moral and Trivial*, ed. by E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick (London: Bullen, 1907); *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by R. T. Davies (London: Faber, 1963); *One Hundred Middle English Lyrics*, ed. by Robert D. Stevick, 2nd rev. edn by Robert D. Stevick and Eric C. Dahl (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Theodore Silverstein, *Medieval English Lyrics*, York Medieval Texts (London: Arnold, 1971); *Middle English Lyrics*, ed. by Maxwell S. Luria and Richard L. Hoffman, Norton Critical Editions (New York: Norton, 1974); Thomas G. Duncan, *Medieval English Lyrics 1200–1400* (London: Penguin, 1995); Thomas G. Duncan, *Late Medieval English Lyrics and Carols 1400–1530* (London: Penguin, 2000); and *Medieval Lyric: Middle English Lyrics, Ballads, and Carols*, ed. by John C. Hirsch (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). A collection of European lyrics (languages other than Middle English translated) is offered by James J. Wilhelm, *Lyrics of the Middle Ages: An Anthology* (New York: Garland, 1990). Butterfield's replacement for the Norton Critical Edition by Luria and Hoffman is forthcoming. Recent scholarly surveys include *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. by Thomas G. Duncan (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005); Douglas Gray includes a chapter on lyrics in his *Later Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 355–80; while Ardis Butterfield, 'Lyric', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100–1500*, ed. by Larry Scanlon (Cambridge: Cambridge Unversity Press, 2009), pp. 95–109, emphasises the manuscript context. Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou surveys and quotes a wide variety of poems in her 'Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric', in *Medieval Oral Literature*, ed. by Karl Reichl (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 555–80. See in addition her *'I have a yong suster': Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2002).

although there was certainly awareness of more specialised genres that modern scholars would consider varieties of it. My own interest in lyrical poems in various languages, ancient and medieval, attracts me to this problem, and inclines me to take up the challenge by suggesting some parameters for Middle English poetry. I believe that designating as lyric certain kinds of Middle English short poem — not all kinds — invokes in a useful way both ancient and modern concepts as well as the thought-ways of medieval poets themselves. All the same, I am somewhat daunted by the array of medievalists — notably Rossell Hope Robbins, John Stevens, R. T. Davies, J. A. Burrow, Rosemary Greentree, Julia Boffey, and more implicitly Ardis Butterfield — who have decided that the better part of valour is discretion, and have settled for the catch-all 'short poem' as the meaning of *lyric*.[2]

With lyric we are dealing with what linguists would call a 'fuzzy concept',[3] this latter being a necessary phenomenon in human thought, a point made by Wittgenstein to which I shall return. Being a fuzzy concept, lyric overlaps with other categories, rather than being sharply divided from them, and its constituents can be defined only loosely. But why does it matter whether particular Middle English poems can legitimately be called lyrics or not, since the people who composed them and listened to them wouldn't have cared? I would argue that although it couldn't have mattered in the Middle Ages, it matters to us. We approach the past from the perspective of the present, and can hardly do otherwise. So my emphasis here will not be on how a poetic genre was perceived by medieval poets, but on how *we* can contextualise it. What does medieval poetry gain by the anachronistic application to it of the term *lyric*? The poetry gains nothing, but our appreciation of it does. The classification of poetry tends to be retrospective. Indeed, the word *lyric* was first applied to poetry several hundred years after the Archaic lyric poets of Greece were composing, and thus has always been anachronistic — as we shall see. What we call poems affects our response to them. *Lyric* is a pregnant word with a host of associations. When editors or critics collect and discuss poems under this title they invoke those associations, whatever their disclaimers. Calling poems lyrics implies a generic affinity, and, as Tztevan Todorov said in his *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (1970), genre is the means by which a work is situated (by its author or its listeners/readers) in relation to the universe of literature.[4] Precisely because 'lyric' is loaded with historical baggage, as a literary term it is far more useful to us than 'short poem'. However, the baggage needs to be unpacked carefully, and that is what I want to do.

The definition of poetic genres has tended to be pursued in aesthetic rather than sociological terms, and so was popular between the 1950's and 1970's, when literary studies were still dominated by New Criticism. This kind of genre theory has not been a major preoccupation in recent decades, when scholarship has leaned increasingly towards materialist

[2] Robbins, *SL*, p. v; John Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 9, 203; Davies, *Medieval English Lyrics*, p. 46; J. A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Work*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 64; Rosemary Greentree, *The Middle English Lyric and Short Poem*, Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), p. 37; Julia Boffey, 'Middle English Lyrics and Manuscripts', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. by Thomas G. Duncan (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), pp. 1–18 (p. 1 n. 1); and Butterfield, 'Lyric', pp. 95–96. Robbins says that he is accepting Carleton Brown's definition of lyric as any short poem, but I have been unable to locate the place where Brown actually says this. No such statement is to be found in Brown's three standard editions (itemised in n. 1, above).

[3] See William O'Grady and John Archibald, *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis*, 5th edn (Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2004), p. 232.

[4] '…se met en rapport avec l'univers de la littérature': *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 12.

approaches, and aesthetic criticism has often been castigated. In an article arising from discussion of lyric at the 2006 MLA convention, Rei Terada notes with approval how presenters took it for granted that lyric bore on social issues. At the same time, Terada questions the necessity for 'lyric' as an ontological category, and advocates 'lett[ing] "lyric' dissolve into literature and "literature" into culture'. Bucking the trend, Simon Jarvis, in his response to Terada, insists on the formal properties of verse, and protests, 'let's not let everything dissolve into everything else'.[5]

The fact is that the subject of lyric genre doesn't lend itself very well to sociological and materialist criticism. Sociological approaches indebted to both Romantic and Marxist thought have been applied to genre analysis for a long time, but when one is talking about lyric poetry it is hard to take them very far. Significantly, Terada's article is short, theoretical, and without detailed examples. The pronouncements of the Romantic poets on the social function of poetry can be thought-provoking, and even profound, but they are virtually impossible to apply in detail to particular cases. Wordsworth and Shelley on poetry and society are inspiring, and anything but specific. For them the poet *par excellence* is the lyric poet. Wordsworth proclaims in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* — the title of his collection is significant — 'the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society'.[6] Shelley's 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world' is the ringing final sentence of the *Defence of Poetry*.[7] Less inspirational and more cerebral, Theodor Adorno, in the 1950s, saw lyric as the assertion of an individual subjective being against the collective and the realm of objectivity; but he balked at demonstrating how this might work with the 'unfathomable beauty' ('abgründige Schönheit') of a Goethe lyric.[8] In a medieval context, two eminent Romanists, Erich Köhler and Hans Robert Jauss, in the seventies, emphasised the relationship between the genres of poetry and their real-life context. For example, Köhler offers a rather rigid explanation of the troubadour *canso* as a form which celebrates the harmonising of the interests of the rising lower knightly class and the old-established nobility.[9] More persuasive is Jauss's view of genres in the light of a constantly evolving 'horizon of expectation', a fairly flexible and less narrowly sociological theory.[10] The materialist analyses of our early twenty-first century, emphasising the economic and political determinants of literary production, are not frequently directed to lyric poetry.[11] And, as we see in Terada, current scholarship often seeks to trace relationships

[5] See Rei Terada, 'After the Critique of Lyric', *PMLA*, 123 (2008), 195–200; Simon Jarvis, 'For a Poetics of Verse', *PMLA*, 125 (2010), 931–35 (p. 934).

[6] *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), I, 141.

[7] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley's Critical Prose*, ed. by Bruce R. McElderry, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 36.

[8] The poem is *Wanderers Nachtlied II*. See Theodor Adorno, 'Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft', in *Noten zur Literatur*, 3 vols (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1958–65), I, 73–104 (pp. 81, 91) (repr. from *Akzente*, 1 (1957), 8–26; trans. by Bruce Mayo in *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader*, ed. by S. E. Bronner and D. M. Kellner (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 155–71).

[9] 'welche die Harmoniesierung der Interessen von aufsteigendem niederum Rittertum und altem Hochadel … besang'; Erich Köhler, 'Gattungssystem und Gesellschaftssystem', *Romanische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, 1 (1977), 7–22 (p. 10).

[10] Hans Robert Jauss, 'Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters', in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, ed. by H. R. Jauss and E. Köhler (Heidelberg: Winter, 1972), pp. 107–38, translated as 'Genres and Medieval Literature', in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp. 76–109.

[11] The point is made by Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Lyric Poetry: The Pain and the Pleasure of Words* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 4.

across conventional boundaries, and tends to be sceptical about establishing genre categories. Poet and critic Susan Stewart's attempt to bring the two enterprises, border crossing and genre definition, together, in *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, is heroically sweeping: she claims that lyric 'has as its task the crossing of thresholds among persons, positions, and social groups', and that it may be 'considered as a genre of cultural transformation'.[12] As all these examples indicate, attempts to relate poetry — lyric poetry in particular — to social concerns tend to be either theoretical or procrustean. Depending as it does on aesthetic and formal considerations, analysis of lyric genre is resistant to sociological and materialist approaches. Nevertheless, its importance remains, as a tool for exploring human creativity and a way of understanding the relationship of the present to the past.

Contemporary modern usage understands by *lyric* a short, emotive poem expressive of personal feeling and experience, a sense established in the Romantic period. The adjective *lyrical*, often carrying a touch of irony, is not usually applied to dark or painful subjects and tends to suggest a certain effusiveness.[13] Obviously, these modern uses will not accommodate all the short medieval poems that we call lyrics. But I do believe it is possible to define lyric in a way that respects both modern concepts and medieval phenomena. If lyric is a genre, it is a large, trans-historical, cross-cultural one, overlapping with and including other genres. It might be called a mode, but such a categorisation is rather abstract, and ignores poetic form.[14] On the relationship between genres and particular texts, I find the insights of a couple of theorists helpful. Todorov, in his study of the fantastic, emphasises that a work's genre identification can be neither complete nor exclusive, observing that one should not speak of a particular genre existing in a work, but of the work's manifesting that genre, and adding that a work can manifest more than one.[15] Basing his position on Wittgenstein's family resemblance theory, Alastair Fowler, in *Kinds of Literature*, makes the case that 'representatives of a genre may … be regarded as making up a family whose septs and individual members are related in various ways, without necessarily having any single feature shared in common by all'.[16] Wittgenstein makes his observation about family resemblances (*Familienähnlichkeiten*) with reference to the concept 'game', which he describes as necessarily blurred (*unscharf*).[17] Todorov's and Fowler's approaches relieve us of the obligation to list required features, or to specify a hierarchy of categories, by proposing more fluid ways of dealing with the protean shapes of genres and their interrelationships.

[12] Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 41, 42.

[13] See sense 3 in the *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com>, at the time of writing under 'Draft Additions 1997': 'Excitedly effusive; highly enthusiastic, fervent'. Both Butterfield, 'Lyric', p. 96 and Nicolette Zeeman, 'The Theory of Passionate Song', in *Medieval Latin and Middle English Literature: Essays in Honour of Jill Mann*, ed. by Christopher Cannon and Maura Nolan (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011), pp. 231–51 (p. 233) distance themselves from the word 'lyrical' by placing it in quotation marks.

[14] The major exponent of literary modes, Northrop Frye, does not include lyric among them, but speaks of it as a genre; see *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 270–81. On the distinction between genres and modes, see also Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

[15] 'On devrait dire qu'une oeuvre manifeste tel genre, non qu'il existe dans cette oeuvre . . . une oeuvre peut . . . manifester plus d'une catégorie, plus d'un genre', *Littérature fantastique*, p. 26. For Todorov's theories, see also Tzvetan Todorov, *Les genres du discours* (Paris: Seuil, 1978).

[16] p. 41.

[17] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen/Philosophical Investigations*, ed. and trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe and Rush Rhees, 3rd edn (New York: Macmillan, 1968), sections 66–71.

It is tempting to speak of lyric as a universal genre; however, the resulting generalisations can only be based on one's own frame of reference. Far-flung comparisons may be illuminating, but they may also be hazardous, as Pauline Yu makes us aware when she criticises the unconscious application of Western assumptions about lyric to Chinese *shi*.[18] John Burrow, in a discussion of Middle English poetry, incidentally makes the same point in reverse. He is talking about the Rawlinson lyrics, which we will encounter again below. Burrow notes that these 'poems without contexts' contain symbols readily comprehensible to someone familiar with western European conventions, and offers as an example the blossoming hawthorn standing in for the speaker's sweetheart: 'only a reader from Mars, or perhaps China, could misunderstand'.[19] The symbol is culture-specific. For reasons such as this, objectively describing the manifestations of lyric world-wide, throughout human history, as the entry in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* — thirteen dense two-column pages — bravely strives to do, is an impossible undertaking that, however informative, inevitably ends up being superficial, error-prone, and bewilderingly diverse.[20] Rather than assuming universality, then, I propose to draw on a broad but not global context, tracing the major steps in the evolution of *lyric* as a word and lyric as a concept from ancient to modern times. I will focus on ancient Greece, on Renaissance England, on post-Romantic writers, and on the scholars of the last fifty years, in order to show how our understanding of medieval lyrics fits into this larger pattern.

A preliminary definition of lyric

As a starting point, I am taking a fairly conventional approach, and defining the essential properties of lyric in general as brevity, intensity, focus on the moment, and shaped form,[21] usually involving certain repetitive features. I would understand *lyrical* accordingly, while accepting that the adjective carries with it an additional nuance that isn't appropriate to all lyrics. These terms are necessarily imprecise. Brevity is a relative thing, and one can hardly specify that a lyric poem must be less than a given number of lines. Intensity is similarly vague; I would find it not only in passionate feeling or vivid imagery, but also in exuberance, in the pleasure of play, and in the heightened sensibility that lifts poetry above the humdrum and the everyday. Focus on the moment distinguishes lyric from narrative, but there are poems that manage to be lyric and narrative at the same time. And, of course, there are lyrical passages in long narrative poems — like Milton's passionate apostrophe to light at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, Book Three (lines 1–26), or Wordsworth's visionary moment in *The Prelude* on realising that he has crossed the Alps (6.525–48), to take two famous examples.[22]

[18] Pauline Yu, 'Alienation Effects: Comparative Literature and the Chinese Tradition', in *The Comparative Perspective on Literature: Approaches to Theory and Practice*, ed. by Clayton Koelb and Susan Noakes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 162–75 (pp. 174–75).

[19] J. A. Burrow, 'Poems without Contexts: The Rawlinson Lyrics', *Essays in Criticism*, 29 (1979), 6–32 (p. 6) (repr. in his *Essays on Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), pp. 1–26). Burrow is referring to the poem *Of euerykune tre* (*Index*, no. 2622; Robbins, *SL*, no. 16).

[20] *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. by Alex Preminger and T. V. F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 713–26. This book was first published in 1965, and has not, as far as I know, been re-edited since it appeared as the *New Princeton Encyclopedia* in 1993.

[21] Cf. Silverstein, in the 'Introduction' to his 1971 edition: 'Modern critics … have variously talked of its relation to song, its brevity, its intensity, its selection of significant moment' (*Medieval English Lyrics*, p. 4).

[22] *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. by Helen Darbishire (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); William Wordsworth, *The Prelude (Text of 1805)*, ed. by Ernest de Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

My last criterion raises the question of lyric metre and the relationship between lyric and song.[23] Historically, lyric poetry, and indeed perhaps all poetry, is rooted in song, but in the course of time and with the spread of literacy, text and music moved apart. In western Europe lyric poetry is usually composed in stanzas, with rhyme and often refrain, and a distinction is felt between this kind of more highly-patterned verse and the simpler forms used for narrative or drama. This contrast is observable in ancient Greek, with its stichic (non-stanzaic) metres — hexameters for epic, iambic trimeters for the speeches of the characters in plays, and more elaborate (though not rhyming) sung strophes of various kinds for lyric. To turn to the medieval period, somewhat similar contrasts are observable in Old Norse and Old French. Norse verse is nearly always stanzaic, but the simpler *fornyrðislag* ('old metre') is found in the mythical and heroic verse of the Poetic Edda, as distinct from the four-line-stanza *ljóðaháttr* ('song metre'), and the formally very complex scaldic court poetry. In Old French the epic *chansons de geste* use assonance rather than rhyme, and are composed in *laisses* (irregular verse paragraphs) rather than stanzas. Generally, however, much medieval narrative and dramatic verse was composed in rhyming stanzas, and sometimes sung — as ballads are to this day. This complication, which I will return to later, gives one pause but doesn't make 'lyric form' meaningless, particularly when it involves conspicuous repetition and refrain, and when it is linked to musical delivery. In ancient and medieval as well as later poetry, particular genres, including lyric genres, are often attached to a distinctive verse form.

Lyric can also be defined by what it's not. Versified proverbs, admonitions, curses, mnemonics, and other genres that might be called practical spring to mind. Most of such items can only be admitted as lyric if we allow *anything* short that rhymes.[24] It is possible, though, that occasionally verse of this kind may convey an intensity that transcends its merely practical function. Satire is also unlyrical, at least in its harsher aspects. So is verse where a doctrinaire or didactic function dominates and little aesthetic or emotional satisfaction is offered. As I suggested above, lyric implies a heightened sensibility, a certain 'lift'. Thus, I would exclude from the category of lyric much political, eulogistic, invective, and instructional material. This is precisely the material, often very pedestrian, that Rossell Hope Robbins assembles in his *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, the volume with which he completed the series of standard editions of Middle English lyrics. His decision to dispense with the term *lyric* seems to arise from his sense — very justifiable, I think — that the majority of the poems in this book are not lyrics at all.

The archetypal triad: a misunderstanding of Plato and Aristotle

Lyric is often thought to be one of three overarching genres, the others being narrative (or epic) and dramatic. The classic epic-dramatic-lyric triad, which has venerable origins, has been carefully taken apart by the theorist Gérard Genette, in the seventies, and the Hellenist Claude

[23] A detailed consideration of the musical form of lyrics lies outside the scope of this paper. Significant contributions are *Early Bodleian Music*, vols 1 and 2 [facsimile edition] ed. by John Stainer, vol. 3 [introduction] by E. W. B. Nicholson, 3 vols (London: Novello, 1901; repr. Farnborough: Gregg, 1967); *Medieval English Songs*, ed. by E. J. Dobson and F. Ll. Harrison (London: Faber, 1979); John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and, now, the Medieval Song Network founded by Butterfield and Deeming in 2009: <http://www.medievalsongnetwork.org>, Institute of Musical Research, University of London.

[24] As Butterfield does in her 'Lyric' chapter.

Calame, in 1998.[25] Both Plato and Aristotle comment on the different kinds of expression chosen for three different kinds of poetry: epic, dithyrambic, and dramatic (Plato) or iambic (Aristotle), in the *Republic* and the *Poetics*, Plato considering whether the poet speaks directly, through characters, or in both ways, and Aristotle commenting on poetic words.[26] *Dithyramb*, mentioned by both and probably referring to an energetic song and dance, came to be understood as standing in for *lyric* here, but there is no evidence that this was what they meant. *Lyric* is a Hellenistic term, recorded only since the first century BCE and denoting poems composed 'for the lyre' — or some other stringed instrument. In fact, it was not until the late fourth century CE that the term *lyrikoi*, originally referring to poets, became a term for the genre in which they composed.[27] In classical Greek such poems were called 'melic' because they were designed for a melody. As Genette shows, neither Plato nor Aristotle is really talking about *genres*, but about modes of utterance, that is, the manner in which something is said.[28] It seems to have been only from late antiquity on that their remarks were interpreted in a generic sense, when the fourth-century Roman Diomedes Grammaticus took up Plato's modes of discourse and turned them into *poematos genera* ('kinds of poem'). He specifies that the kinds are three, goes on to enumerate them — the dramatic, the narrative, and the mixed,[29] and then itemises some of their particular 'species' (a *species* being a division of a *genus*). In Diomedes' scheme, epic and lyric are 'species' of the mixed kind. Plato does very briefly allude to the possibility of composing in epic, melic, or tragic verse, and *melic* would have been his word for *lyric*, but he does not elaborate.[30] In the *Poetics* more generally Aristotle is, of course, concerned especially with epic and tragedy, and actually says very little about lyric. At the beginning of the treatise he enumerates various genres, including that for the lyre (*kitharistikē*),[31] but he does not get into the nature of lyric poetry at all. Our triad receives little attention in the Middle Ages, although it does appear briefly, in Diomedes' formulation, in John of Garland's *Parisiana Poetria*, a mid-thirteenth-century handbook addressed to material in Latin and with no direct application to vernacular literatures.[32] In his overview of post-Greek attitudes to lyric, Michael Silk skips right over the medieval period to the Renaissance.

[25] Gérard Genette, 'Genres, «types», modes', *Poétique*, 8 (1977), 389–421, expanded in *Introduction à l'architexte* (Paris: Seuil, 1979); Claude Calame, 'La poésie lyrique greque, un genre inexistant?', *Littérature*, 111 (1998), 87–110.

[26] *The Republic of Plato*, ed. by James Adam, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902–7), 394c; Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. by D. W. Lucas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 1459a 5–10.

[27] See Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pp. 182–83; Bruno Gentili, *Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece*, trans. by A. Thomas Cole (Baltimore: Johns-Hopkins University Press, 1988), p. 243 n. 1 (trans. from *Poesia e pubblico nella Grecia antica* (Rome: Laterza, 1985)); Calame, 'Lyrique grecque', p. 95.

[28] 'Nous n'en sommes pas encore à un système de genres; le terme le plus juste … est … *mode*: il ne s'agit pas à proprement parler de «forme » … comme dans l'opposition entre vers et prose, ou entre les différents types de vers, il s'agit de *situation d'énonciation*' ('Genres, «types», modes', pp. 393–94; Genette's italics). See also Calame, 'Lyrique grecque', p. 96.

[29] 'Aut enim activum est vel imitativum, quod Graeci dramaticon vel mimeticon, aut ennarrativum vel enuntiativum, quod Graeci exegeticon vel apangelticon dicunt, aut commune vel mixtum, quod Graeci *koinon* vel *mikton* appellant'; Diomedes Grammaticus, 'De poematibus', in *Artis grammaticae libri III. Grammatici latini*, ed. by Heinrich Keil, 8 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1857; repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1961), I, 297–529 (p. 482). See also Calame, 'Lyrique grecque', pp. 95–99.

[30] *Republic*, 379a.

[31] *Poetics*, 1447a 15 and 24.

[32] See *The Parisiana Poetria of John of Garland*, ed. and trans. by Traugott Lawler (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 98–100; also Genette, 'Genres, «types», modes', p. 400.

And A. C. Spearing observes that for most modern scholars 'post-classical lyric poetry seems to begin with Petrarch'.[33] Silk notes that the Italian Antonio Minturno in 1559 mentions Plato's 'epic, scenic, and melic' poets. Thereafter, quite a few Renaissance writers theorise the subject.[34] The modern conception of the triad is essentially a Romantic construct, indebted to Goethe, among others, and the idea of three universal *Naturformen* outlined in his 1819 *Divan*, the lyric being characterised as *enthusiastisch aufgeregte* (excited by ecstatic feeling).[35] This threefold division of literature has been enormously influential, is often taken as a given, and is certainly useful, but it remains a construct rather than an independently existing system, and need not be regarded as a kind of holy Trinity of archgenres, presiding over a multiplicity of genres, subgenres, sub-subgenres, etc.

Middle English conceptions of lyric genres

When we turn to Middle English literature we find little interest in formal classification. Middle English, like Old English, is rather vague about words for poetic genres. Old English *lēoð*, related to modern German *lied* and denoting a specifically metrical utterance, fell into disuse, leaving *song* and *yedding*, the latter derived from Old English *giedd*, and defined very capaciously by the *Middle English Dictionary* as 'a poem or song; a saying; also, a recitation (spoken or sung) of a verse narrative'.[36] So it is likely that in earlier Middle English no term more precise than these would be used.[37] The French-derived *carol*, denoting a ring dance and subsequently the song accompanying it, is attested from around 1300.[38] Some modern scholars regard the carol as a genre separate from lyric, but there is no compelling reason why the narrower cannot be accommodated within the wider genre. In England the carol, religious and secular, is a stanzaic song, beginning with a burden which is repeated at the end of each stanza. Most of the Middle English examples are in manuscripts dating from around the fifteenth century.[39] The term *complaint* for a poem of courtly love-longing is found sporadically in the late period. And from the time of Chaucer onwards the *formes fixes* of French lyric are applied to Middle English verse in special metres, i.e., the *ballade*, *rondeau*, and *virelai*.

[33] *Textual Subjectivity: The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 175.

[34] Michael Silk, 'Lyric and Lyrics: Perspectives, Ancient and Modern', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric*, ed. by Felix Budelmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 373–85 (pp. 378–79); this essay forms the Epilogue to the volume. Calame regards the Spanish Francisco Cascales, in a letter dating from 1613, as initiating Renaissance discussion of the triad, discussion in which Milton took part (*Of Education*, published 1644); see 'Lyrique grecque', pp. 92–93.

[35] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, under 'Naturformen der Dichtung' in the *Noten*, *Berliner Ausgabe 3: Gedichte und Singspiele 3.1*, ed. by Siegfried Seidel (Berlin: Aufbau, 1973), 234.

[36] *The Middle English Dictionary*, ed. by Hans Kurath, 59 vols (Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 1952–2001), <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>.

[37] See Karl Reichl, 'Old English *giedd*, Middle English *yedding* as Genre Terms', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Korhammer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 349–70. On *giedd*, see also John D. Niles, *Homo Narrans: The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 16–19; 209 n. 26; 211–12 n. 42. Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, p. 279, believes Middle English *song* could refer to instrumental music.

[38] See *OED* and *MED*, *carol/carole*, sense 1.

[39] Stevens notes that the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were the heyday of the carol (*Music and Poetry*, p. 8).

Even in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, though, it is clear, because of the conventional formulas and motifs used, that poets were aware of smaller genres that we would see as embraced by the larger genre of lyric. *Reverdie* and *spring song* may be modern designations,[40] but the charming natural setting, usually placed right at the beginning, the key words 'lenten,' 'April,' or 'May,' the birds, the blossoms, and the springing of love in youthful hearts, all point to a well-marked genre. Witness the delightful *Natureingang* of *Lenten ys come wiþ loue to toune*,[41] one of the most famous of the Harley lyrics, and the brilliant paean to spring at the beginning of the *Canterbury Tales*, here forming an introduction to a narrative work, but reminiscent of many independent lyrics.[42] Similarly conventional, but somewhat more particularised, the *chanson d'aventure*, in which a male narrator happens upon a maiden, often begins with something like 'als i me rode this endre dai' ('as I rode the other day'), to quote the opening stanza of the early carol better known by its burden, *nou sprinkes the sprai* ('now springs the [budding] spray').[43] The (modern) French genre names reflect the French origins of these particular conventions. Other genres feature woman's voice lyrics of a deliberately uncourtly kind, for instance the *chanson de délaissée*[44] and *chanson de malmariée*, the latter very well documented in France. In late Middle English we find a mini-genre of poems, ranging from the humorous to the pathetic, spoken by girls who have been taken advantage of by a priest or clerk called John, Jankyn, or Jack. Although there is no contemporary term recorded for these seduction lyrics, the recurrence of the name (John and its familiar equivalents), the motifs (the overtures take place on feast days and holidays), and the poetic form (carol) suggests a distinct awareness of a particular type of poem, in this case very likely attributable to clerics.[45]

Throughout the Middle English period, key phrases also distinguish the genres of religious lyric with its Latin origins. Thus, the reproach of Christ to those who pass by the Cross echoes Lamentations 1.12: *O vos omnes qui transitis per viam…* The eloquent eight-line poem *ȝe þat pasen be þe weyȝe*[46] is preceded in the manuscript by an explicit reference to this biblical passage. Lyrics on the fear of death may utilise the refrain from the Office for the Dead *Timor mortis conturbat me*, like John Audelay's touching poem on his blindness and bodily decay,[47] and William Dunbar's powerful 'Lament for the Makaris' — and for himself.[48] Again, a standard scene may be evoked: Mary lulling the infant Jesus in numerous lyrics beginning 'Lullay',[49] or standing at the foot of the Cross — poems in the tradition of the *Stabat mater*,[50]

[40] Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiéval* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), p. 158, mentions that the term *reverdie* appears in Old French in the thirteenth century, and that it is not clear exactly what it meant at the time.

[41] *Index*, no. 1861; Brown, *XIII*, no. 81.

[42] *General Prologue*, lines 1–18: Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 23.

[43] *Index*, no. 360; Brown, *XIII*, no. 62.

[44] The term is Pierre Bec's; see *La lyrique française au Moyen Âge*, 2 vols (Paris: Picard, 1977–78), I, 65–66.

[45] See Robbins, *SL*, nos 25–28; in 24 the seducer is an unnamed clerk, in 29 called Jack but not identified as a clerk.

[46] *Index*, no. 4263; Brown, *XIV*, no. 74.

[47] *Index*, no. 693; Greene, *Early English Carols*, no. 369. The burden of this devotional carol is 'Lade, helpe! Jhesu, merce! | Timor mortis conturbat me'.

[48] *I that in heill wes and gladnes*. *Index*, no. 1370.5; no 23 in William Dunbar, *Poems*, ed. by James Kinsley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958).

[49] For example, Brown, *XIV*, nos 25, 26; Greene, *Early English Carols*, nos 142–55.

[50] See Brown, *XIII*, nos 4, 47, 49; Greene, *Early English Carols*, nos 157–64. The thirteenth-century Latin hymn of uncertain authorship begins *Stabat mater dolorosa* | *iuxta crucem lacrimosa* ('The sad mother was standing | weeping beside the Cross'). For the text see *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, ed. by Guido Maria Dreves, Clemens Blume, and Henry Marriott Bannister, 55 vols (Leipzig: Fues/Reisland, 1886–1922), LIV, 312–18 (no. 201).

Christ pointing to his bleeding heart or his wounds.[51] Even if there is no technical terminology, all these, and many others, are unmistakable topoi, distinct and developed enough to create particular genres.

The status of lyric poetry in Middle English

The absence of formal names does suggest, though, that the authors involved did not think analytically about poetic genres in English.[52] As Nicolette Zeeman notes, there are no *artes poeticae* concerned with lyrics in Middle English.[53] Until the late fourteenth century the English lyric genres, especially in secular verse, seem not to have been taken seriously. Early manuscripts are never devoted to Middle English lyrics alone, and lyric pieces, often fragments, are frequently written on odd spaces: margins, blank areas, fly leaves, and scraps. The Rawlinson lyrics — twelve poems and fragments, two in French and ten in English including the enigmatic *Maiden in the mor lay* — are written, as prose, on an isolated strip of parchment pasted in at the beginning of a manuscript that they have nothing to do with.[54] Early Middle English lyric lacked prestige, since English was definitely not the language of learning, nor yet regarded as the language of the aristocracy, although it was increasingly used by them. Normans were becoming native speakers of English by the mid-twelfth century, but, in Ian Short's words, only with Chaucer did English regain 'the status of an innovative literary medium with a national dimension'.[55] The low status of secular lyric also helps to account for the very small number preserved in Middle English relative to the Continent.[56]

[51] On this *imago pietatis*, common in the fifteenth century, see Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pp. 184–86 and Plate 1: Woolf prints a facsimile of BL Add. 37049, fol. 20r, where a picture of Christ pointing to his bleeding heart accompanies the lines 'O man unkynde | Have thow in mynde | My passion smerte. | And thow schalt me ffynde | To the ryght kynde, | Lo here myn hert'.

[52] A point made by George Kane, 'A Short Essay on the Middle English Secular Lyric', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 73 (1972), 110–21 (p. 120). Alfred Hiatt fairly recently argues for a 'non-system of genre' in Middle English, meaning not that there were no genres, but 'that what existed was more organic, decentred, and unpredictable, than the idea of a system demands': 'Genre without System', in *Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm, Oxford Twenty-First-Century Approaches to Literature, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 277–94 (p. 291).

[53] 'Passionate Song', p. 239 n. 38.

[54] Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D 913, f. 1rv. It is common enough for lyrics to be written in prose, but does suggest they are not regarded as particularly important. The low position of English in the language hierarchy, coming third after Latin and then French, can be detected in trilingual manuscripts. See John Scahill, 'Trilingualism in Early Middle English Miscellanies: Languages and Literature', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 18–32 (pp. 19–20), who infers that Latin was the preferred language for writing, English for oral delivery; also Thomas C. Moser, Jr., *A Cosmos of Desire: The Medieval Latin Erotic Lyric in English Manuscripts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), p. 119, who remarks that in English manuscripts 1100–1400 Anglo-Norman and Latin erotic lyrics 'appear in very nearly equal numbers, with ME a distant … third'.

[55] See Ian Short, *Manual of Anglo-Norman* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2007), p. 12. Similarly Mark N. Taylor, 'Aultre manier de language: English Usage as a Political Act in Thirteenth-Century England', in *Medieval Multilingualism: The Francophone World and Its Neighbours*, ed. by Christopher Kleinhenz and Keith Busby (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 107–26 (p. 109). On English-French bilingualism 'well into the late medieval period,' see *The Anglo-Norman Language and its Contexts*, ed. by Richard Ingham (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2010) (p. 1). On writers in England in the mid-fifteenth century choosing French for 'snob appeal' or for very specific writing contexts, see Douglas A. Kibbee, 'Institutions and Multilingualism in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Multilingualism: The Francophone World and Its Neighbours*, ed. by Christopher Kleinhenz and Keith Busby (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 63–81 (p. 78).

[56] Cf. Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric*, 3rd edn (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1996), p. 65: 'in medieval vernacular lyric England alone shows a striking preponderance of sacred lyrics over profane'. However, Dronke attributes this to

Another factor applying to popular poetry, especially of an amorous kind, is the Church's long history of condemning it as lewd and pagan. The songs performed by young women as they danced are the favourite target.[57] Take, for example, the well-known anecdote, told by Giraldus Cambrensis shortly before 1200, of the English priest who, corrupted by hearing erotic dance songs being performed all night outside the church, very disgracefully said 'swete lamman dhin are' ('[give me] your favour, sweetheart!') instead of 'Dominus vobiscum'.[58] Another instance in the same vein, preserved in a thirteenth-century manuscript, is provided by the ditty, perhaps the burden of a carol, 'atte wrastlinge mi lemman i ches | and atte ston-kasting i him for-les' ('at wrestling I picked my love, and at stone-casting I dropped him'). This little verse appears in variant forms in two sermons.[59] In the version I have just quoted it is introduced with the words 'wild women and men in my region, when they go in the ring, among many other songs they sing that are of little worth, they say thus'.[60] The sermon writers clean up with allegorical Christian interpretations this naughty song, whose remarks, recorded in the other variant, about the young man's failing to stand, are an obvious double-entendre.[61]

For linguistic and cultural reasons, then, early Middle English secular lyrics were not high-status poetry, as they were, for example, in Occitan, where lyric was cultivated by well-known poets and a whole set of genre names subsequently created by theorists.[62] In contrast to

the particularly strong influence of the Franciscans in England. It may be significant that the quantity of Anglo-Norman secular lyric preserved is also very small. See Karl Reichl, *Die Anfänge der mittelenglischen weltlichen Lyrik: Text, Musik, Kontext*, Nordrhein-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften Vorträge, G404 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005), p. 16.

57 Thus the Council of Auxerre, 561–605 CE, forbids the performance of 'secular music or girls' songs' (*saecularium vel puellarum cantica*) in church. The Council of Chalons, 647–53, condemns the singing of 'obscene and shameful songs' (*obscina et turpea cantica*) with choruses of women, at religious festivals: *Concilia Galliae, A.511–A695*, ed. by Charles de Clerq (Turnhout: Brepols, 1964). And the Council of Rome, in 853, complains that there are many people, especially women, who desecrate feast days by dancing and singing 'dirty words' (*verba turpia*) and 'having choruses in the manner of the pagans' (*choros tenendo … similitudinem paganorum peragendo*): *Die Konzilien der karolingischen Teilreich 843–59*, ed. by Wilfried Hartmann, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Concilia, 3 (Hanover: Hahn, 1984), p. 328. See also the following note.

58 *Gemma ecclesiastica*, in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. by J. S. Brewer, Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, Rolls Series, 21, 8 vols (London: Longman, 1861–91), I (pp. 119–20; book 1, chapter 43) (trans. by John J. Hagen, *The Jewel of the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), p. 92). This chapter begins with a reference to the strictures of the Third Council of Toledo (589 CE) against singing and dancing in churches and cemeteries. See *Decretum Gratiani*, Pars 3, Distinctio 3, C. 2, ed. by E. L. Richter in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols (Paris, Imprimerie Catholique, 1855), CLXXXVII (col. 1782).

59 In Trinity College, Cambridge, B.1.45, ff. 41v–12r at 41v (thirteenth-century), and Cambridge University Library, Ii.3.8, ff. 85r–88v at 86r (fourteenth-century). *Index*, no. 445.

60 'Wilde wimmen and golme i mi contreie, wan he gon o þe ring, among manie oþere songis þat litil ben wort þat tei singin, so sein þei þus'. Text of this sermon (from TCC B.1.45) as in Max Förster, 'Kleinere mittelenglische Texte', *Anglia*, 42 (1918), 145–224 (pp. 152–54).

61 The other version reverses the order of the athletic contests, and adds 'allas, þat he so sone fel; | wy nadde he stonde better, vile gorel?' Both versions are printed in the Introduction to Robbins, *SL*, p. xxxix, but are not included among his Texts.

62 See William D. Paden, 'The System of Genres in Troubadour Lyric', in *Medieval Lyric: Genres in Historical Context*, ed. by William D. Paden (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), pp. 21–67 (esp. pp. 30, 32, 44); also, in the same volume, Rupert T. Pickens, 'The Old Occitan Arts of Poetry and the Early Troubadour Lyric', pp. 209–41. On medieval Occitan and Northern French genres more generally, see Zumthor, *Essai*, pp. 157–85, and Bec, *Lyrique française*. On the late-thirteenth-century collection of French lyrics in Bodleian Douce 308 arranged by genre (*grans chans*, *estampies*, *jeus partis*, *pastorelles*, *balettes*, *sottes chansons*, and *motès*), see Lawrence Earp, 'Lyrics for Reading and Lyrics for Singing in Late Medieval France: The Development of the Dance Lyric from Adam de la Halle to Guillaume de Machaut', in *The Union of Words and Music in Medieval Poetry*, ed. by Rebecca A. Baltzer, Thomas Cable, and James I. Wimsatt (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp. 101–31 (p. 118

troubadour and trouvère song, in England, as Butterfield says, 'there is no broad recognizable tradition of high art but a much more diverse, messy and undefined … range of material'.[63] English mingled with French and Latin in the manuscripts, but still for a long time remained a poor relation. To be sure, the three languages interpenetrated each other, producing 'not three cultures but one culture in three voices,' to quote Thorlac Turville-Petre,[64] but these voices were distinct and unequal. The humble status of English as late as Chaucer's time, vis-a-vis the dominant *lingua franca*, is underlined by Butterfield in *The Familiar Enemy*, even as she stresses that the two languages were inseparable, and, with a post-colonial angst reflected in other recent scholarship, rejects a unilingual view of Englishness.[65] Still, in the course of the Middle English period the status of English does rise. This change is reflected in the copying of English lyrics: poems that earlier on would have been treated in a more casual way are given greater prominence and more careful organisation. In Harley 2253, probably dating from the 1340s, the English lyrics are mixed in with other material, including French and Latin, but do 'occur in a rough sequence'; forty or fifty years later, the lyrics in the Vernon and Simeon manuscripts are much more systematically grouped together, most of the Vernon lyrics being refrain poems, in similar stanzas.[66] By the late fourteenth century, although English still came third in the language hierarchy, the composition of English verse could command respect, and be seriously cultivated by major authors, who carefully recreated in English the French-derived *formes fixes*. Only near the close of the medieval period does English lyric receive the stamp of high approval implied by its use in a prestigious single-author manuscript, Harley 682, produced at the end of the long imprisonment of Charles d'Orléans and containing the English version of his poem cycle.

Renaissance use of the term *lyric* in English

I now turn to the Renaissance, which brings explicit recognition of vernacular lyric as a genre with ancient precedents. This recognition occurs earlier on the Continent than in Britain, as we have already seen in Renaissance comments on the lyric-dramatic-epic triad. The actual word 'lyric' is first recorded in English in the late sixteenth century — it appears in French

n. 8).

63 Butterfield, 'Lyric', p. 96. Although England had connections with the troubadours and trouvères through Angevin kings, their production — even that of Richard I — had nothing to do with England and is absent from manuscripts connected with England. See Reichl, *Anfänge*, p. 18; also Peter Erlebach, *Geschichte und Vorgeschichte der englischen Liebeslyrik des Mittelalters*, Forum Anglistik, N. F., 2 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1989), pp. 149–61.

64 *England the Nation*, p. 181.

65 Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 273–74. With Turville-Petre's view that from the late thirteenth century on Englishness as a cultural construct was defined by language (*England the Nation*, pp. 10, 19, 97, 181), contrast the following: Butterfield, who asserts that French includes English and English includes French (*The Familiar Enemy*, pp. 172, 316); Robert Stein, 'Multilingualism', in *Middle English*, ed. by Paul Strohm, Oxford Twenty-First-Century Approaches to Literature, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 23–37 (p. 30), who regards as a later fiction the identification of English writing with writing in English; the beginning of Thomas Hahn, 'Earlier Middle English', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 61–91; and Ad Putter and Keith Busby's explicitly post-colonial 'Introduction' to *Medieval Multilingualism: The Francophone World and its Neighbours*, ed. by Chrisopher Kleinhenz and Keith Busby, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 1–13 (p. 12). Gray, *Later Medieval English Literature*, p. 126, adopts a somewhat more traditional stance.

66 See Boffey, 'Middle English Lyrics and Manuscripts', pp. 9–11 (p. 9); also Butterfield, 'Lyric', pp. 103–4.

in 1495.[67] Three *Oxford English Dictionary* citations of the word, as adjective and noun, date from the 1580s. The earliest is in Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*, where *lyric* and *lyrical* are used with reference to the classification of poetic kinds in antiquity, but also to the songs and sonnets of Sidney's contemporaries.[68] George Puttenham, in *The Arte of English Poesie*, describes 'Lirique Poets' as men who 'delighted to write songs or ballads of pleasure, to be song with the voice, and to the harpe, lute, or citheron', this with specific reference to the lyric poets of Greece and Rome.[69] 'Ballad' here means much the same as 'lyric': a song or song-like short poem.[70] William Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetry* is similarly oriented towards ancient usage. Webbe divides poems into four categories — heroic, elegiac, iambic, and lyric,[71] following the Greek classification of genres by form, different kinds of content being associated with particular metres, and those mentioned here using, respectively, hexameters, elegiac couplets, iambics — for satirical and scurrilous verse, and various sorts of strophe. Actually, the system Webbe is following is retrospective: when Greek poetry in lyric metres flourished in the pre-classical period, the subjects were very various, encompassing not only monody on wine, women (or boys) and song, as well as politics, but also choral odes for celebration and ritual, eulogy and moralising. The Elizabethan theorists looked not to earlier England but to ancient Greece and Rome for their categories, but Tudor lyric was not completely cut off from medieval poetry, as Stevens shows in his investigation of early Tudor music, with particular reference to three songbooks produced in the period 1470–1520, pre-Reformation manuscripts that he finds essentially medieval.[72]

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century views of lyric

Post-Romantic writers on lyric have tended to emphasise its personal aspect, and, similarly, the idea of lyric as an essentially private genre. John Stuart Mill characterised (lyric) poetry as a kind of soliloquy and an inborn skill, as opposed to trained rhetoric; he was drawing on the Latin proverb *oratur fit, nascitur poeta* ('an orator is made, a poet born'). I am putting together two passages here, in two originally separate essays, later published as one: 'What is Poetry?' (January, 1833), where Mill distinguishes between eloquence, which is heard, and poetry, which is overheard, and 'The Two Kinds of Poetry' (October, 1833), where he contrasts Shelley, the natural poet, with Wordsworth, the man of ideas, whose poetry is essentially unlyrical, although the lyric kind is 'more eminently and peculiarly poetry than any other'.[73]

[67] See Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 224.

[68] Written about 1580. See *Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 371. Sidney also applies 'lyric' and 'lyrical' to some eulogistic and narrative poetry: see pp. 218, 230–31, 236, 242, 246. On the possibility that such kinds of poetry may be lyric, see my remarks on the Agincourt Carol, below.

[69] Published 1589: George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: Field, 1589; repr. Amsterdam: Da Capo, 1971), p. 20.

[70] Stevens, *Music and Poetry*, p. 120, suggests that in the earlier sixteenth century *balet* meant 'a courtly song of popular character'.

[71] Published 1586. William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetrie*, ed. by Edward Arber (London: n. pub., 1870), p. 86.

[72] Fayrfax (BL Add 5465), Henry VIII's (BL Add 31922), and Ritson's (BL Add 5665). Stevens argues that only in the folk tradition were lyric and music composed together in the late medieval and early Tudor periods: *Music and Poetry*, pp. 98–115, 329.

[73] The two early versions are included in *Essays on Poetry by John Stuart Mill*, ed. by F. Parvin Sharpless (Columbia,

Northrop Frye took up Mill's insight approvingly, and spoke of lyric as 'pre-eminently the utterance that is overheard'.[74] Similarly, T. S. Eliot defined lyric as 'the voice of the poet talking to himself — or to nobody',[75] the first of his three poetic voices (one soliloquising, one addressing an audience, and one speaking through a persona — Plato's three modes and the subsequent lyric-epic-dramatic triad probably lie behind this). But actually Eliot is unhappy about calling the kind of poetry that uses the first voice 'lyric,' and prefers 'meditative verse,' so, as we shall see, he is really thinking of a very particular kind of lyric poetry.

Modern medievalists on the nature and function of Middle English lyric

Modern scholars have felt the need somehow to balance medieval attitudes to Middle English poetry with the very different perspective of their own time. There is a general consensus that whatever 'lyric' means in a medieval context, it means something different from its usual meaning now. Unless one has decided that the word is to be treated as essentially devoid of meaning — which makes it useless — approaches to the problem tend to limit its meaning to a particular facet. Thus, lyric may be understood as basically song, or as an especially intimate kind of poetry, or as poetry voiced in the first person. Alternatively, one may concentrate on a particular kind of medieval lyric and thus avoid the difficulty of accommodating other kinds that in their different ways correspond to some aspect of what *we* would regard as lyric. Before presenting my own suggestions, let me summarise some influential views.

Peter Dronke, whose two major books on medieval lyric appeared in the sixties, emphasises especially lyric's sung or song-like aspect. In the Preface to the first edition of his magisterial *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, Dronke runs off a list of the vernacular songs that, he believes, must have existed before they were first recorded in the twelfth century: 'dance songs, love-dialogues, aubades, ballads, reverdies, lovers' greetings and meditations'.[76] And in the first chapter of his shorter *Medieval Lyric* (first published in 1968), he seeks to demonstrate the rootedness of medieval lyric in the unrecorded oral songs of late antiquity by quoting in translation from a sermon by St John Chrysostom (347–407 CE), a long and highly evocative passage on the many kinds of song pervasive in the lives of ordinary people.[77] In a later article, making the rather difficult case for a continuity of love lyric from Old to Middle English, Dronke incidentally defines lyrics as 'brief poems of keen emotional intensity, using refrains and other incantatory elements', this with reference to a few Old English pieces.[78] As well as drawing on the typical Romantic view of lyric, Dronke's formulation raises the question of lyrical form which I mentioned earlier, and will return to.

South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1976), pp. 3–22 and 28–43. The later combined version (1867) is edited in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, vol. 1, Autobiography and Literary Essays*, ed. by John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 341–65. Mill invokes the Latin proverb in the second essay, and one guesses it was also in his mind in the first.

74 *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 249.

75 'The Three Voices of Poetry,' in *On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber, 1957), pp. 89–102 (pp. 96–97).

76 Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), I, p. xvi.

77 p. 15; from St John Chrysostom, 'Expositio in Psalmum 41', in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, 161 vols (Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1859), LV, 155–58 (pp. 156–57).

78 Peter Dronke, 'On the Continuity of Medieval English Love-Lyric', in *Latin and Vernacular Poets of the Middle Ages* (Hampshire and Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1991), no. XII, pp. 7–21 (p. 7) (repr. from *England and the Continental Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J. B. Trapp*, ed. by Edward Chaney and Peter Mack (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), pp. 7–21). The Old English poems are *Deor*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Wife's Lament*, and *The Husband's Message*. Citations from Old English poetry taken from *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by G. P.

In her classic study *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (1968), Rosemary Woolf turns away from poetry as song, and also rejects the assumption that lyric must reflect the author's feelings.[79] Instead, she insists on its private nature. She sees herself as writing 'a history of medieval meditative poetry', and distinguishes between the lyric proper, private and intimate, and the carol, which is sung, public, and celebratory.[80] Speaking of the carol, she says, 'its purpose — and probably its ancestry — is dramatic rather than meditative'.[81] Effectively, she has appropriated the genre name for a much narrower genre of devotional verse. She acknowledges a fundamental similarity between this and the meditative English poetry of the seventeenth century, exemplified especially by Donne and Herbert, although, as she points out, the medieval poems avoid the individualism that so sharply distinguishes the later writers.[82] Woolf is talking about religious poetry specifically, but in contrasting the lyric with the carol, as private and public respectively, she is adopting a position that is often applied more widely. She does not define the lyric as personal, but comes close to doing so when speaking of it as private and intimate.

Other scholars do find the lyric a personal genre, in that it uses a first-person voice. Thus, Judson Boyce Allen asserts that the medieval lyric invites its audience to occupy the 'I' of the poem.[83] Somewhat similarly, Douglas Gray in his book on Middle English religious poetry, published a few years after Woolf's, explains that medieval devotional poems in the first person are 'intended for other people to *use*'.[84] This 'generic I' is carefully distinguished from the 'I' as *dramatis persona* by John Burrow in his well known introduction to Middle English literature, *Medieval Writers and their Work*, first published in 1982. Interestingly, Burrow, who, as I noted above, says he accepts the equation of lyric with short poem, at the same time admits that it is impossible to make general observations about lyrics so defined, and then promptly limits his discussion to poems uttered in the first person.[85] A particular kind of first-person voice is also felt to be a defining feature by Rosemary Greentree, who, in the Introduction to her bibliography *The Middle English Lyric and Short Poem* (2001), favours a distinction between the lyric 'I,' addressing one person, and the epic or romance 'I,' addressing a plurality.[86] Actually, this reminds me more of the difference between the monodic and the choral 'I' in Greek lyric. Greentree also provides some all-purpose definitions of lyric in terms of criteria that will by now sound familiar: intense emotion, repetitive and evocative sound, music, and commemoration of an event.[87] She is drawing on critics writing in the fifties,

Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–53). The poems mentioned are all in volume 3, *The Exeter Book*.

79 p. 1

80 pp. 308, 383–84.

81 p. 385.

82 As Woolf admits, pp. 4–7, Audelay's poem, with the refrain 'Passio Christi conforta me', about his blindness and physical decay (*Index*, no. 693; Greene, *Early English Carols*, no. 369) is a notable exception.

83 'Grammar, Poetic Form, and the Lyric Ego: A Medieval *A Priori*', in *Vernacular Poetics in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Lois Ebin, Studies in Medieval Culture, 16 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1984), pp. 199–226 (pp. 208, 211). Allen sees Raymond Oliver's view of the Middle English lyric — 'spoken by types' — as also implicating the ego of the audience (p. 214), referring to Raymond Oliver, *Poems without Names: The English Lyric, 1200–1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 11–40.

84 Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 60; Gray's italics.

85 I refer to the second edition (2008). The section on lyric remains virtually unchanged.

86 p. 12.

87 p. 5.

specifically, Kenneth Burke and Susanne Langer.[88] And she does ultimately decide that to be on the safe side, *lyric* should be taken to mean no more than 'short poem' in Middle English.

Richard Greene's massive edition of the Middle English carols (first published in 1935, and re-edited in 1977) doesn't investigate the definition of lyric, but does go to great lengths to define the carol, with its burden at the beginning and following every stanza. He carefully distinguishes the carol from the ballad, the latter defined by narrativity and objectivity, features which are possible but unusual in carols.[89] Somewhat similarly, the *Medieval Lyric* collection by John Hirsh treats ballads and carols as two genres, with lyric a third. Greene is especially interested in the origins of the carol, which he explains as a development of dance-song performed by young women, with a varying stanza sung by the leader and an unvarying burden sung by the chorus.[90]

Both Greentree and Hirsh, though writing comparatively recently, hark back to the work of an earlier generation. By and large, interest in defining genres has waned in the past thirty years, and scholars have come to stress more material subjects, like manuscript presentation, rather than generic affinities. However, the former has been carefully brought to bear on the latter by Julia Boffey and Ardis Butterfield. In 'What to Call a Lyric?', Boffey demonstrates that the choice of titles for short poems in late Middle English manuscripts has implications for the understanding of genre.[91] She shows that terms for varieties of lyric were used pretty loosely at the time: Latin and French words for 'song,' along with 'tretys' and 'dite,' and in courtly verse 'complaint'. But her findings don't lead to any pronouncements on what *we* should call a medieval lyric. Butterfield also emphasises manuscript presentation and manuscript context. Her chapter on lyric for the 2009 *Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature* arranges its material by the kinds of manuscript involved, showing how closely implicated the English material is with Latin and French. Butterfield doesn't actually define lyric, but does say that in Middle English it includes poetry that would be regarded as lyric by modern critics ('intense, private, and literary') and also poetry that would not.[92]

Three faces of lyric: song, celebration, personal poetry

Taking account of all these views, I'd like now to supplement my preliminary definition of lyric with some further criteria, by focussing on three overlapping aspects in which lyric manifests itself: poems that are songs or song-like, poems that celebrate group festivity, and poems that purport to express personal emotion. I believe that these three aspects, which I call 'faces', help to relate medieval practice to a broader context of poetry and scholarly criticism. The

88 Kenneth Burke, 'Three Definitions', *Kenyon Review*, 13 (1951), 173–92 (p. 174), defines lyric in a nutshell as 'an ordered summation of emotional experience'. Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Scribner, 1953), p. 258, explains the lyric genre as 'the literary form that depends most directly on pure verbal resources'.

89 *The Early English Lyric*, pp. lxv–lxxii.

90 *The Early English Lyric*, p. xlviii. He supposes a wide diffusion and ancient origin for dances of this type (pp. xlvii–xlix). As he acknowledges, he is indebted to the theories of Alfred Jeanroy and Gaston Paris (first voiced around 1890), who traced the whole of European lyric back to these girlish songs. See Alfred Jeanroy, *Les origines de la poésie lyrique en France au Moyen Age*, 3rd edn (Paris: Champion, 1925), p. 445, and Gaston Paris' review of the first edition: 'Les origines de la poésie lyrique en France', in *Mélanges de littérature française au Moyen Age*, ed. by Mario Roques (Paris: Champion, 1912), pp. 539–615 (p. 611) (repr. from *Journal des savants* (1891), 674–88, 729–42; (1892), 155–64, 407–30.

91 Julia Boffey, 'What to Call a Lyric? Middle English Lyrics and their Manuscript Titles', *Revue belge de Philosophie et d'Histoire*, 83 (2005), 671–83.

92 'Lyric', pp. 95–96.

first, song, the only one of the three that corresponds directly to a medieval term, resembles the ancient view of lyric and also Dronke's view of its origins. The distinction between the second and third faces resembles, but is not identical with, that detected by Woolf and others between the carol and the lyric. And the third face draws on a widespread post-Romantic view of lyric, without assuming autobiographical authenticity.

Although song is an extremely important element of lyric, non-lyrical kinds of poetry could be sung — as the Old French *chansons de geste* were, famously the *Song of Roland* at the Battle of Hastings.[93] It is possible, though, as Stevens suggests, that narrative verse was performed with a recitative rather than a fully sung delivery.[94] In Occitan, the verse forms of the courtly *canso* were used for the satirical or moralising *sirventes* — which, like the *canso*, was sung.[95] Song, then, does not preclude non-lyrical genres. Again, it is often unclear whether particular pieces unaccompanied by musical notation were actually intended to be sung.[96] When presented as songs in longer works, like romances, they obviously were. The presence of refrain might also be an indicator.[97] And the snippets included in early Middle English (or Latin) sermons — like *Atte wrastlinge* and its ilk — doubtless came from real songs.[98] Many verse forms originally sung, notably the *formes fixes* mentioned above, came to be literary forms quite independent of music, a development reflected in the differentiation between sung and unsung lyric found in *L'art de dictier et de fere chançons, balades, virelais et rondeaulx* by Chaucer's contemporary and friend Eustache Deschamps.[99] In late Middle English the word *song* often designated texts with no particular musical application.[100] Still, the association of lyric with song is powerful, and has been stressed in some of the most important scholarship on the subject.

Festive or celebratory lyric runs the gamut from reverence to jollity and sometimes combines the two, as in many Christmas hymns and carols — like *Go day Syre Cristemas our kyng*, *Nowell nowell nowell nowell*, and *Welcum be thou Heuen Kyng*.[101] For this reason, and also to define a kind of lyric that is public and collective, my category includes the playful as well as the earnest. The two are usually separated, but I think they can usefully be seen as

[93] See William of Malmesbury, *De gestis regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), I, 454; Wace, *Le Roman de Rou de Wace*, ed. by A. J. Holden, 3 vols (Paris: Picard, 1970–73), II, 183. The words *cantilena* in William, and *chantout*/*chantant* in Wace indicate sung delivery, but possibly aren't used in that literal sense.

[94] Stevens, *Words and Music*, p. 200 n. 3, comments that the alliterative formula *singen und sagen* 'was [sometimes] made to express a distinction between a lyrical and an epic style of performance'. He also distinguishes between the types of melody used for the two sorts of verse, the musical accompaniment for lyric (as exemplified by the *grande chant courtois*) possessing 'full and substantial meaning of its own', that for narrative (epic, ballad, and romance) only 'subdued and subordinate' musical interest: *Words and Music*, p. 130; cf. p. 259.

[95] See n. 62, above.

[96] See Davies, *Medieval English Lyrics*, p. 27. He adds that 'in very round figures, only some two hundred [Middle English poems] survive with musical settings, and, of these, a good half are polyphonic carols'.

[97] As suggested by Brown, *XIII*, no. 35: *for Quanne hic se on rode* ('When I See on the Cross'); see the notes on p. 195. On this poem, see also Karl Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung im englischen Hochmittelalter* (Munich: Fink, 1973), pp. 92–93, 113–14, 488–92.

[98] Alan J. Fletcher suggests that parts of lyrics, and even possibly whole lyrics, were sometimes actually sung during preaching: 'The Lyric in the Sermon', in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. by Thomas G. Duncan (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), pp. 189–209 (pp. 206–8).

[99] *Oeuvres complètes d'Eustache Deschamps*, ed. by Auguste Henry Édouard, Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire, and Gaston Raynaud, 11 vols (Paris: Firmin Didiot, 1878–1903), VII, 266–92 (pp. 270–71).

[100] As shown by Boffey, 'What to Call a Lyric?'

[101] Greene, *Early English Carols*, nos 5, 6, 7.

on a continuum, the ludic type including poems that imply, without specifically mentioning, a context of group merriment. Gray's view of a particular type of lyric expressing 'delight in "game" and festive entertainment' is relevant here.[102] Banqueting and drinking songs join festive carols at the lighter end of the spectrum, as in the late Middle English Boar's Head Carol,[103] sung as that impressive dish was brought ceremonially into the hall, and *Bring us in good ale*,[104] recorded from the early sixteenth and the fifteenth centuries, respectively. At the opposite end of the spectrum is a kind of ambitious composition practised by sophisticated poets over the ages. 'Ceremonial poems uttered in a public voice on a public occasion' are included under *lyric* in M. H. Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms*.[105] Such poems are seen by modern critics as part of a classical tradition. Admired down the centuries, Pindar's splendid epinicians praising the victors in the Games are perhaps the example *par excellence*. In the hands of Pindar and other Greek choral lyricists, this praise poetry was also moral and didactic, though raised above mere preaching by its imaginative grandeur. W. R. Johnson characterises as 'choral' lyric the kind of poetry that involves 'singing for and to the community about the hopes and passion for order, survival, and continuity that they all share'. He uses both 'choral' and 'singing' figuratively, and traces a tradition 'from Pindar to Horace, from Horace to Jonson, from Jonson to Whitman and other modern choralists'.[106] In the Middle English context, poetry of this kind may be simpler and more 'popular', as with the Agincourt Carol, which I will consider more fully below. And it is worth noting that Greek choral lyric was not always edifying; in the comedy it could be quite frivolous.

Poetry of the choral kind can be personal only in a special, collective, sense. Normally, 'personal' means something different. While it is true that the idea of lyric poetry as intensely personal is a Romantic one, the roots of this concept go far back. Paul Allen Miller has found a new personal awareness in literary Latin as opposed to performance-oriented Greek lyric, a point he makes with specific reference to the adaptation of Sappho 31, describing the devastating physical effect on the poet of the presence of her beloved, in Catullus 51, where the subject is the male poet and his feeling for his 'Lesbia'.[107] Notwithstanding this shift, the Roman poets remain comparatively restrained and convention-bound in their outpourings. Even poems of personal anecdote don't really wear their heart on their sleeve. Catullus 10, for instance, neatly captures the poet's embarrassment at a girl's asking him to lend her the eight litter-bearers he claimed to own when really he had nary a one. His discomfiture strikes us as absolutely true to life. But the witty account of it is light-years away from, say, Wordsworth's detailed account of the development of his own mind in *The Prelude*. Going further back and further afield than Miller, E. K. Chambers, in an observation about origins that now strikes us as quaint and patronising but probably has some truth in it, averred that

[102] He includes in this category Christmas songs as well as bawdy verses and good-humoured satire (*Later Medieval English Literature*, pp. 366–67). In his analysis of Middle English poems by social function, Oliver defines a 'celebration' category including both the grave and the jovial — but not the lewd or the mocking (*Poems Without Names*, pp. 14–21).

[103] *The boris hede in hond(es) I brynge*. *Index*, nos 3313 and 3314; Greene, *Early English Carols*, no. 132.

[104] Title from the burden. The first stanza begins *Bring us in no browne bred for that is made of brane*. *Index*, no. 549; Greene, *Early English Carols*, no. 422.

[105] 6th edn (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1993), s. v. These words do not in fact appear in the earlier versions of this progressively longer and more complex entry, but are to be found from the sixth edition on.

[106] W. R. Johnson, *The Idea of Lyric: Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 178.

[107] Paul Allen Miller, *Lyric Texts and Lyric Consciousness* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 1; see also his 'Sappho 31 and Catullus 51: The Dialogue of Lyric', *Arethusa*, 26 (1993), 183–99 (pp. 194–95).

anthropological investigations trace the beginnings of lyric among 'barbarous peoples' to 'the instinct of emotional self-expression'.[108] I would concur with Chambers to the extent that lyric may well originate in oral song, individual or communal, which expresses the feelings of the singer with regard to a specific occasion. This is not the same thing as Ruskin's claim that lyric is 'the expression by the poet of his own feelings'.[109] What is or is not the genuine expression of somebody's own feelings is virtually impossible to determine. Indeed, the question is really a red herring. Often the singer adopts a stage persona, a stage 'self' to which the audience is invited to respond. As Judson Allen notes, this is still the case with popular song.[110] All the same, poetry that lays bare a personal situation in individualistic detail is, by virtue of the determined conventionality of medieval topics and motifs, decidedly unmedieval — and uncharacteristic of the reserve and role-playing of classical verse too.

As we have seen, personal poetry is often equated with poetry spoken in the first person. But I think it is also possible for poetry that speaks of the intimate concerns of the individual human being to be regarded as personal whether grammatically the utterance is couched in the first person or not. Sometimes direct address conveys this personal quality; sometimes the intimacy and urgency of the topic does.

II. The primary materials: Middle English verse

Lyric form in Middle English

I want now to focus on the corpus of Middle English poetry, and to consider the ways in which particular poems embody lyric or manifest elements of it. Formally, the roots of lyric in Middle English are Continental, rather than native. Lyric form as defined by structure, essentially strophic, is unrecorded in the English vernacular before the twelfth century, although it was known to the Anglo-Saxons long before that, as a phenomenon of Latin verse, especially hymns.[111] The new metres are 'an importation from the Latin schools or Romance courts,' influenced by 'accentual Latin verse, stemming from the popular poetry of the latter days of the Roman Empire'.[112] The St Godric songs, simple little compositions in the voice of the Anglo-Saxon saint who died in his nineties around 1110, are perhaps the earliest Middle English text preserved with musical notation; the oldest manuscripts date from around 1200. As E. J. Dobson notes, the melodies are based on plain-song and in a general way the (rhyming) stanza forms are modelled on Latin hymns of the Ambrosian type.[113] Another very early lyric, also

[108] Chambers and Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics*, p. 259.

[109] John Ruskin, *Fors clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain*, 4 vols (New York: Wiley, 1886), I, 167 (in Ruskin's arrangement, vol. 3, Letter 34). Published 1886, dated 1873 by the *OED* in its entry under 'lyric'.

[110] 'Grammar, Poetic Form, and the Lyric Ego', pp. 208, 211.

[111] In Old English, only *The Riming Poem* uses rhyme consistently throughout; there are no poems in rhyming stanzas, and only one, *Deor*, with a real refrain. Both poems in *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by Krapp and Dobbie, III, *The Exeter Book*. On the issue of rhyme, see Michael McKie, 'The Origins and Development of Rhyme in English Verse', *Modern Language Review*, 92 (1997), 817–31.

[112] I quote from Seth Lerer, 'The Genre of the Grave and the Origins of the Middle English Lyric', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 58 (1997), 127–61 (p. 130), and Davies, *Medieval English Lyrics*, p. 39, respectively. Actually, Lerer mentions this opinion in order to qualify it.

[113] *Seinte marie clane uirgine* (*Index*, no. 2988), *Crist and saint marie* (*Index*, no. 598), *Sainte Nicolaes Godes druoð* (*Index*, no. 3031). See *Medieval English Songs*, ed. by Dobson and Harrison, pp. 104–5. Only a few of the 'Ambrosian' hymns of the early Church can be firmly attributed to St Ambrose.

preserved with music, is *Ar ne kuthe ich sorghe non*[114] ('Previously I knew no care'). This poem, a plea to God for release from prison, is written in an English and a French version in the manuscript. Both are contrafacta of a Latin lament by Godefroy of St Victor, *Planctus ante nescia* ('Unaccustomed to weeping before'); that is, they use its tune. It is not uncommon for secular lyrics in the vernacular to share their melodies with sacred songs in Latin. *Sumer is icumen in* and *Maiden in the mor lay* are two well-known examples.[115] These early Middle English poems are all sung, and they all reflect a break with Old English and a turning towards Latin and French models. Even though the alliterative long line persists in some quarters right to the end of the Middle English period, that line is in essence a tool of stichic verse, and lends itself to lyric poetry only when combined with other devices — that is, with rhyme, refrain, and strophe: witness the highly-wrought artistry of *Pearl* and its elaborate stanzas. This poem is too long and too narrative to be a lyric *per se*, but, like the opening to the General Prologue of the *Canterbury Tales* — and the passages from *Paradise Lost* and *The Prelude* that I mentioned earlier — it lingers on lyric moments captured in vivid detail.

Love complaint

The new lyricism is conspicuous in the male-voice love complaint, with its antecedents in the Occitan *canso* and northern French *grand chant courtois.*[116] The full effect of the Romance tradition isn't visible in the earliest Middle English lyrics, but a good example is to be found a little later, in the poem, recorded in the fourteenth century, that begins 'Bryd one brere, brid, brid one brere! | kynd is come of loue, loue to craue'.[117] This little piece consists of three four-line stanzas utilising both rhyme and alliteration. Its conceits and language are highly conventional: the bird apostrophised with a repeated formula, the lover's nearness to death, ('greyd þu me my graue') and, rather paradoxically, his delight in contemplating his lady's stereotypical charms ('hende [gracious or attractive] in halle' is another formula), his wish for a happy constancy — expressed with the well-worn rhyme 'trewe" and 'newe,' echoing 'rewe' ('have pity' [on me]) earlier on. *Bryd one brere* is a graceful song, presenting itself as intimately personal (while being extremely conventional), and is on these grounds a lyric. In a limited way, *Bryd* also exemplifies lyric intensity — which it *lays claim to* rather than really generating. In that respect it is like many other love complaints in Middle English. One of the hallmarks of the courtly love-complaint is its claim to represent intense feeling. The genre is nicely parodied

[114] *Index*, no. 322; Brown, *XIII*, no. 5. Early thirteenth century; text and notes in *Medieval English Songs*, ed. by Dobson and Harrison, pp. 110–20.

[115] *Index*, no. 3223; Brown, *XIII*, no. 6; and *Index*, no. 3037.5; Robbins, *SL*, no. 18, respectively. *Sumer* shares its melody with *Perspice Christicola* ('Take heed, Christian'), *Maiden* with *Peperit virgo* ('A maiden has given birth'). See *Medieval English Songs*, ed. by Dobson and Harrison, pp. 143–45 and 188–96. The melody for *Maiden* is preserved in the Red Book of Ossory, in Ireland, which contains religious verses in Latin composed by Richard de Ledrede, appointed Bishop of Ossory in 1316, to the music of popular English songs.

[116] The former term is medieval, the latter modern. *Canso* comes into use around 1170, replacing the earlier *vers*. See Zumthor, *Essai*, p. 158. *Grand chant courtois* is Roger Dragonetti's term: *La technique poétique des trouvères dans la chanson courtoise* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1960), pp. 15–139. The only two love complaints in Old English are *The Wife's Lament* and *Wulf and Eadwacer*, both in the female voice, and given no title or descriptor in the manuscript. Apart from separation and longing, these Old English poems share no motifs with Middle English lyrics of love-longing in the Occitan-French tradition.

[117] *Index*, no. 521; Robbins, *SL*, no. 147. 'Bird on briar, bird, bird on briar, | nature [animal and human] has come out of love to beg for love'.

in the Chaucerian triple roundel or rondeau *Merciles beaute*,[118] where the pining lover ends up delighted that he has escaped so fat from Love's prison and refuses to languish there lean. *Bryd one brere* was found in 1932 on the back of a papal grant of privileges to an abbey whose revenues later came into the hands of King's College, Cambridge.[119] Copying on this strange medium suggests a curious mixture of negligence and care on the part of the copyist, who probably quickly noted it down, perhaps from memory, on a parchment that was at hand, because he liked it and wanted to preserve it.

Both simpler and more remarkable than *Bryd one brere*, the ever-popular *Foweles in þe frith*, which Abrams quotes entire in the lyric entry in his *Glossary*,[120] condenses to five lines the often-sung restless pangs of the lover in springtime, the narrative element here completely pared away, and the sense of creaturely physicality pressed home by the alliteration:

> Foweles in þe frith,
> þe fisses in þe flod,
> and I mon waxe wod.
> Sulch sorw I walke with
> for beste of bon and blood.[121]

Spring song and love-complaint, intimately personal but without individualistic detail, the artistry of *Foweles in the frith* embodies a medieval but also engages a modern sensibility.

Devotional lyric

The three previous poems — *Bryd one brere*, *Merciles beaute*, and *Foweles in þe frith* — speak through a first-person voice that is both intimate and representative. A similar 'I,' which, in Gray's words mentioned earlier on, is intended 'for other people to use', characterises many pieces of religious verse put forward for the instruction of the reader — or more probably the audience. One of the most striking examples, found in a small early fourteenth-century manuscript of preaching materials in Latin, translates Augustine's famous words about his own former procrastination and spiritual sloth. The Middle English version, which appears right after the Latin original, nicely captures this very human weakness:

> Louerd, þu clepedest me
> an ic nagt ne ansuarede þe
> bute wordes scloe and sclepie:
> 'þole yet! þole a litel!'
> Bute 'yiet' and 'yiet' was endelis,

[118] In Benson's edition, *Merciles Beaute* appears in a section entitled 'Poems Not Ascribed to Chaucer in the Manuscripts', pp. 657–60 (p. 659).

[119] Formerly King's College Muniment Roll 2 W.32; now King's College SJP/50. John Saltmarsh describes his discovery of the poem in 'Two Medieval Love-Songs Set to Music', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 15 (1935), 1–21.

[120] M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 9th edn (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009). This appears in all its editions to date, though not in its predecessor, Dan S. Norton and Peters Rushton, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (New York: Little and Ives, 1941).

[121] Oxford, Bodleian, Douce 139, f. 5r. *Index*, no. 864; Brown, *XIII*, no. 8. 'The birds in the forest | the fishes in the flood, | and I must grow mad. | Such sorrow I walk with | for best of bone and blood'. See *Medieval English Songs*, ed. by Dobson and Harrison, pp. 142–43 (text), 246 (music). Editions usually print 'mulch' in l. 2, but the rather strange letter is an *s*, supported by the alliteration. The error was pointed out by Carter Revard, ' 'Sulch sorw I walke with': Line 4 of 'Foweles in the frith' ', *Notes and Queries*, n.s., 25 (1978), 200.

and 'þole a litel' a long wey is.[122]

We have here a moralising anecdote which through its patterned form and vivid re-creation of a moment of personal experience also becomes a lyric. Whether it faithfully represents an actual incident in the life of St Augustine is irrelevant.[123]

Similar in its concentrated focus is the well known and richly evocative quatrain musing on Mary's sorrowing face as she stands by the Cross, the first poem in Brown's *Thirteenth Century* volume, entitled by him 'Sunset on Cavalry':

> Nou goth sonne under wod —
> me reweth, Marie, þi faire rode.
> Nou goth sonne under treo —
> me reweþ, Marie, þi sone and þe.[124]

These lines are quoted by St Edmund (Rich), Archbishop of Canterbury 1233–40, in his *Merure de Seinte Eglise*, after a passage in Anglo-Norman verse urging the reader (or audience) to think of Mary and her suffering.[125] Edmund simply attributes the piece to 'un Engleis'. Its background is unknown, but it is preserved in many manuscript versions of the *Merure*, some in Latin, some French, and a few in English. Conveying empathy, instead of admonition, *Nou goth sonne under wod*, like many devotional poems composed later on in the Middle English period, expresses an affective rather than a moralistic piety, prompts sympathy and love rather than fear or penitence. Two images are created, the second called up by the first: the sun (or the Son) going down into darkness and death, with *wod* connoting both the trees in a wood and the Cross as tree, and the fair face of Mary, marred by weeping, her *rode* ('(ruddy) complexion') suggesting its near homophone, the rood.[126] Meditative rather than musical, *Louerd þu clepedest me* and *Nou goth sonne under wod* epitomise lyric of the personal and private kind.

[122] *Index*, no. 1978; Brown, *XIV*, no. 5. 'Lord, thou called me, | and I nothing answered thee, | but words slow and sleepy, | "Be patient yet! Be patient a little!" | But "yet" and "yet" was endless, | and "Be patient a little" a long way is'. In the Latin, 'non erat omnino quid responderem … nisi tantum verba lenta et somnolenta: "modo", "ecce modo", "sine paululum". sed "modo et modo" non habebant modum et "sine paululum" in longum ibat': *The Confessions of Augustine: An Electronic Edition*, ed. by James J. O'Donnell, <http://www.stoa.org/hippo>, book 8, chapter 5, section 12 (repr. from *Augustine: Confessions*, ed. by James J. O'Donnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)).

[123] Leo Spitzer, 'Note on the Poetic and the Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors', *Traditio*, 4 (1946), 414–22 (p. 418 n. 8), finds a 'poetic' (i.e. generic) 'I' in Augustine's *Confessions*. Spitzer's distinction between two kinds of 'I' resembles Burrow's, mentioned above. On the *Confessions*, see also Susan Stewart, *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), pp. 203–7.

[124] *Index*, no. 2320; Brown, *XIII*, no. 1. 'Now the sun goes down beneath the trees — | I am sad, Mary, for thy fair face. | Now the sun goes down beneath the Tree — | I am sad, Mary, for thy Son and thee'. Brown prints the text from Bodleian Arch. Selden supra 74.

[125] On *Nou goth sonne* in the context of the *Merure de Seinte Eglise*, see Ardis Butterfield, 'The Construction of Textual Form: Cross-Lingual Citation in the Medieval Insular Lyric', in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Yolanda Plumley, Giuliano Di Bacco, and Stefano Jossa (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2011), pp. 41–57 (pp. 44–48). Expanding her earlier discussion ('Lyric', pp. 99–101), Butterfield here regards the *Merure* as originally composed by Edmund in Latin, and subsequently translated into French by him or another person.

[126] In early Middle English the vowels in *wod* and *rod(e)* are still short (from Old English *wudu* and *rudu*); that in *rod*, 'Cross', would be long (as in Old English).

Contemptus mundi and the *ubi sunt* motif

While many of the typical forms and themes of Middle English poetry represent something new, some of its topics, especially religious and moral ones focussing on the darker aspects of medieval spirituality, continue traditions that flourished in England before the Conquest. *Contemptus mundi*, the product of an asceticism that medieval society embraced and admired — in theory anyway — produces an abundant, if often forbidding, literature in Latin and the vernaculars. It finds expression in horrific evocations of the rotting corpse like those in the Old English addresses of the Soul to the Body[127] and *The Grave*, a transitional text from around 1200.[128] These poems aren't in lyric form, and their content isn't lyrical. But sometimes, when the *contemptus* theme excites nostalgia or intimate concern, it can produce lyric moments. Thus, the early Middle English poem that Carleton Brown picturesquely entitles 'Death's Wither-Clench' ('attacking grip') displays lyric intensity and personal focus, the latter conveyed by empathy and direct address. Lyric also in its formal properties, being constructed in strophes and intended for singing, this piece is accompanied by musical notation in one of its several manuscript versions.[129] It begins with a moralising generalisation, 'Man mei longe him liues wene, | ac ofte him liyet þe wreinch,'[130] here given concrete urgency by terse unadorned wording and a striking rhyme, maintained through two stanzas:

> wela-wey! nis king ne Quene
> þat ne sel drinke of deth-is drench.
> Man, er þu falle of þi bench,
> þu sinne aquench.
>
> Ne mai strong ne starch ne kene
> aȝlye deth-is wiþer-clench.[131] (lines 7–12)

This grim *memento mori* turns into dramatic action in one striking metaphor after another.

Also from the thirteenth century, and equally alarming, *Wen the turuf is þi tuur* translates a Latin original alongside it in the manuscript. I quote the poem in its entirety:

> Wen þe turuf is þi tuur,
> and þi put is þi bour,
> þi wel and þi wite þrote
> ssulen wormes to note.
> Wat helpit þe þenne
> al þe worilde wnne?[132]

[127] *Soul and Body I* and *II* are found in the *Vercelli* and the *Exeter Book*: *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by Krapp and Dobbie, I and III, respectively.

[128] For text, brief commentary, and prose translation, see *Middle English Debate Poetry: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by John W. Conlee (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1991), pp. 3–6.

[129] Maidstone Museum A 13, f. 93v. *Index*, no. 2070; Brown, *XIII*, no. 10.

[130] 'Man may expect a long life, but often encounters a wrench'.

[131] 'Alas! There is no king nor queen | that shall not drink of death's drink. | Man, ere you fall off your bench, | your sin quench'.

[132] Trinity College, Cambridge, B.14.39, f. 47v. *Index*, no. 4044; Brown, *XIII*, no. 30. 'When the turf is thy tower, | and the pit thy bower, | thy well-being and thy white throat | for the benefit of worms. | What helpeth thee then | all this world's joy?' The thrust of the Latin is the same, but the wording is slightly different: '*Cum sit gleba tibi turris | tuus puteus conclavis, | pellis et guttur album | erit cibus vermium. | Quid habent tunc de proprio | hii monarchie lucro?*' See Brown, *XIII*, pp. 191–92.

Here economy is more emphatic than elaboration: the vivid antitheses, picked out by alliteration, say it all.

Another extremely widespread motif, 'Where are the dead of former days?' animates the famous passage in the Old English *Wanderer* (lines 92–96) beginning 'What has become of the steed, the rider, the treasure-giver?'[133] as well as early Middle English poetry. *Were beþ þey biforen vs weren?*, sometimes known by its Latin title *Ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt*, is extant in several manuscripts, with variations in the stanzas and their arrangement; perhaps it shouldn't be regarded as a separate poem, because it tends to be mixed in with the moralistic maxims called *The Sayings of St Bernard*. I describe it here as it appears in the Digby version, where it is set off as discrete.[134] Similarly evocative is a haunting stanza from Thomas of Hales' *Love Rune* ('secret love message'), a 210-line poem that seeks to turn a young woman's desires towards a divine lover.[135] Although the *Love Rune* is too long and too hortatory to be in its totality a lyric, Brown includes it in his *Thirteenth Century* collection.[136] Reflecting on the famous dead, the speaker asks, rhetorically, 'Hwer is Paris and Heleyne … ?' They are all 'iglyden ut of þe reyne | so þe schef is of þe cleo' ('glided out of the rain, like the sheaf from the hill'). The most famous rendition of this theme must be François Villon's fifteenth-century *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*,[137] best known to modern Anglophone readers in Rossetti's version with its familiar refrain 'Where are the snows of yesteryear,' translating *Ou sont les neiges d'antan?*

Ranging from the wistful to the macabre, verse on this theme can produce bursts of concentrated intensity. In Hales' *Love Rune*, the *ubi sunt* stanza climaxes the images of transience in the first half of the poem, the latter part of which consists of somewhat tedious recommendations to preserve chastity. *Were beþ þey biforen vs weren?* is less nostalgic and more severe:

> Hoere paradis hy nomen here,
> and nou þey lien in helle i-fere,
> þe fuir hit brennes hevere.
> Long is ay and long is ho,
> long is wy and long is wo.
> Þennes ne comeþ þey nevere.[138] (lines 19–25)

As in *Wen the turuf is þi tuur*, no punches are pulled in the contrast between the pampered life of the rich, and their miserable fate after death, reduced there to worm-riddled body, here to howling soul in the fire that never stops. Not lyric in its quieter or sweeter aspects and certainly

[133] 'Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago? Hwær cwom maþþumgyfa?' (line 92). See *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by Krapp and Dobbie, III, the *Exeter Book*.

[134] Oxford, Bodleian, Digby 86, ff. 126v–27r. *Index*, no. 3310; Brown, *XIII*, no. 48. In Digby, *Were beth they*, rubricated with its opening line in Latin, follows the *Sayings* and precedes *Stond wel moder ounder rode*. The six extant versions of the *Sayings* are discussed in J. B. Monda, ' 'The Sayings of St. Bernard' from MS Bodleian Add. E.16', *Mediaeval Studies*, 32 (1970), 299–307 (pp. 299–301).

[135] The phrase *luve runes* appears previously in the *Life of St Katherine*, where it translates *amatoria carmina*. See *Moral Love Songs and Laments*, ed. by Susanna Greer Fein (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1998), p. 13.

[136] Jesus College, Oxford, 29. *Index*, no. 66; Brown, *XIII*, no. 43.

[137] François Villon, *Le Testament Villon*, ed. by Jean Rychner and Albert Henry, 2 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1974), ll. 329–56.

[138] 'Their paradise they took here, | and now they lie in hell together, | the fire that burns forever. Long is 'Ai!' and long is 'Oh!' | Long is 'Whee' and long is 'Wo!' | From thence shall they come never'.

not lyrical in the Romantic sense of the word, these poems and passages speak to the deepest fears and anxieties of the individual human being, the message driven home by parallelism, repetition, rhyme, and alliteration.

How lyrical must a lyric be?

The appearance of lyric elements in non-lyric poems raises questions about degrees of lyricism. In the same manuscript as *Foweles in the frith* is preserved another short poem on the subject of love, a trilingual quatrain, in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English:

> Loue is a selkud wodenesse
> Þat þe idel mon ledeth by wildernesse,
> Þat þurstes of wilfulscipe and drinket sorwenesse
> And with lomful sorwes menget his blithnesse.[139]

A cynical definition of love's madness, impersonal and gender-neutral, this quatrain is something like Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, 'The expense of spirit in a waste of shame', but without that poem's passion.[140] Whereas the appearance of *Foweles in the frith*, on a musical stave with a whole page to itself, draws attention to its lyrical qualities, the trilingual quatrain is presented as nothing in particular: jammed up against the entry immediately before it, with which it has absolutely no connection — a description in Latin of the form and weight of the English shilling. The poem is thus treated extremely casually, more so than the Rawlinson lyrics, which at least form a little collection of verse samples, or even *Bryd one brere*, which, though relegated not very tidily to the back of a legal document, is accompanied by music and written on an otherwise empty page. *Loue is a selkud wodenesse* is a clever literary exercise, which can be somewhat doubtfully included as a specimen of lyric because it is a short poem on the subject of love — a favourite lyric subject, but doesn't really satisfy the criteria of intensity and focus on the moment, and lies outside my categories of song, celebration, and personal poetry.

The contrast between *Foweles in the frith* and *Loue is a selkud wodenesse* raises another issue: the question of whether poetic quality enters into the question of genre, and whether a piece of verse should be disqualified from consideration simply because it is poetically unimpressive. Being too grandiose or too trivial — or simply not very inspiring — need not be incompatible with lyricism, but being dull and prosaic definitely is. Siegfried Wenzel frequently implies as much in his *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric*.[141] Here, taking up his discovery documented slightly earlier in *Speculum*,[142] Wenzel shows that some of the items regarded as lyrics and analysed as such by critics are merely the rhymed divisions of a sermon: a sort of versified Table of Contents, and comments especially on the early fourteenth-century poem called by Brown 'How Christ Shall Come'.[143] In this particular case the metrical

[139] 'Love is a strange madness | That leads the idle man through the wilderness, | That thirsts for pleasure and drinks unhappiness | and with frequent sorrows mingles cheerfulness', f. 159r. *Index*, no. 2005; Brown, *XIII*, no. 9. On this trilingual poem and its manuscript context, see Reichl, *Anfänge*, pp. 13–15.

[140] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. by Colin Burrow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.639.

[141] Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 171–72, 250, and *passim*.

[142] Siegfried Wenzel, 'Poets, Preachers, and the Plight of Literary Critics', *Speculum*, 60 (1985), 343–63.

[143] *Index*, no. 1353; Brown, *XIV*, no. 36. See 'Poets, Preachers, and the Plight of Literary Critics', p. 345. Wenzel

clumsiness of the poem — if it can be called that — should have been a tip-off. Being a versified TOC doesn't *per se* disqualify a poem from having the qualities that would make a lyric, but this function is an unpromising start.[144] However, *Loue is a selkud wodenesse* is not poetically negligible; its sharp antitheses are pithy and nicely cutting, especially in the Latin. As epigram it is effective.

Many of the small pieces included in manuscript miscellanies can't be regarded as lyric in any meaningful sense. This is surely true of some of the utilitarian specimens edited by Robbins and cited by Butterfield, who describes them as 'domestic fare' rather than 'high art'.[145] For example, Robbins includes under 'Practical Verse' a versified recipe on the uses of leeks, ending 'It is gud for dronkyn men | A raw lek to ete, & comfortyth the brayn'.[146] Consider too this warning curse directed to bookstealers in Robbins' 'Occasional Verse':

> He þat stelys this booke
> shulbe hanged on a crooke;
> He that this booke stelle wolde
> sone be his herte colde:
> That it mow so be.
> seiþ amen, for cherite.
> Qui scripsit carmen Pookefart est sibi nomen
> Miller jingatur qui scripsit sic nominatur.[147]

The first six, mildly amusing, lines might at a pinch be classified as lyric, but it's a stretch; they are called a *carmen* ('song,' 'poem') in the doggerel postscript. The Latin can be translated 'the name of the person who wrote this verse is 'Pookefart'. 'Miller' is joined to it [*jingatur* for *jugatur*?]. That's what the person who wrote this is named'.

Less prosaic, but coarser, *Hogyn cam to bowers dore* narrates a little story with the same misplaced-kiss plot as Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, and thus combines lyric with *fabliau*. *Hogyn* is found in the eclectic collection compiled by the London grocer Richard Hill, during the first three decades of the sixteenth century.[148] The poem is a song, featuring lyric repetition and refrain, as it gleefully describes Hogyn's little adventure. When the young woman he fancies has 'torned owt her ars' at the window, he replies,

> Ywys, leman, ye do me wrong —
> ywis, leman, ye do me wrong,
> Or elles your breth ys wonder strong,
> hum, ha, trill go bell —
> or elles your breth ys wonder strong,
> hum, ha, trill go bell. (lines 31-36)

notes that even those who found the poem so interesting recognised that it was 'poor poetry' (p. 350).

144 Fletcher rejects verses that had no existence independent of the sermon that uses them to mark its divisions; he comments that though the categories for classifying Middle English lyric may be flexible, 'it is doubtful whether structural verses like these warrant inclusion in any of them' ('The Lyric in the Sermon', pp. 95–97). Butterfield simply includes versified TOC's as a particular kind of lyric ('Lyric', p. 99).

145 'Lyric', p. 106.

146 *Index*, no. 1810; Robbins, *SL*, no. 80. This item, included by Robbins under 'Practical Verse', is followed by recipes in prose.

147 *Index*, no. 1165; Robbins, *SL*, no. 89.

148 Balliol College, Oxford, 354, f. 249v. *Index*, no. 1222; Robbins, *SL*, no. 36.

I quote the last stanza of six. Neither very edifying nor very subtle, but witty and catchy, *Hogyn* displays the delight in play which produces a particular kind of lyric intensity. Probably sung in chorus in a context of convivial merriment, the poem, although not exactly celebratory, can be placed in relation to light-hearted songs of a festive kind — as it is by Gray, in his remarks mentioned above.

Pushing the boundaries of lyric in a different way, *Swarte smekyd smeþes, smateryd wyth smoke* ('Black-smoked smiths, covered with smoke') is rough but not lewd, and full of sound effects though they aren't euphonious. This fifteenth-century alliterative poem recreates the violent activity of a work crew of blacksmiths, banging and clanging, huffing and cursing, and driving the sleepless narrator to distraction.[149] Intense the poem certainly is, and, though it claims to be prompted by extreme exasperation, full of delight in its own energetic virtuosity and its alliteration gone mad: 'þei spyttyn & spraulyn & spellyn many spelles, | þei gnauen & gnacchen, þei gronys togydere'.[150] I would see this, like *Hogyn*, as the kind of genial mockery that would be performed for group enjoyment. However, the blacksmiths poem lacks lyrical form, and wouldn't have been sung. And the alliterative metre, without rhyme or stazaic structure, is 'when thus full-blooded, a style generally unsuitable for lyric poetry,' to quote Davies, who finds this poem 'unique'.[151]

Lyric versus narrative and satire

While lyric is typically a non-narrative genre, occasionally a narrative poem, a ballad, say, may possess lyric elements. Some ballads may qualify as dramatic lyrics, for example *Edward* and *Lord Randall*, both post-medieval, although they may have unrecorded medieval ancestors.[152] The two poems leave their plots of treachery and love-hate relationships in the background, and focus, in lyric fashion, on a moment of terrible realisation, that Edward has stabbed his father to death, and that Randall's sweetheart has poisoned him. Both poems are in dialogue form, with no narratorial intervention. The late Middle English Agincourt Carol, inspired by Henry V's victory over the French and his instatement as an English folk-hero,[153] is ballad-like in its theme and structure, but its carol form makes it lyric of the celebratory kind, in this case with a nationalistic and eulogistic purpose;[154] Robbins includes it in the 'Politics in Song' section of his *Historical Poems*. The poem is preserved in two manuscripts, the more famous of which, the Trinity Carol Roll, is a collection of carols with music, most of them associated with Christmas. The manuscript, though battered, is still handsome, and evidently intended as a collection of music for group singing. Ballad-like in its vigorous narrative, the Agincourt Carol resembles a national anthem in its burden, 'Deo gracias Anglia | Redde pro victoria' ('Give thanks to God for victory, England'), and its final stanza asking God to preserve the king.

To my mind, it is worth making a distinction between the Agincourt Carol and more vindictive poems like those by the fourteenth-century Laurence Minot, which Turville-Petre

[149] Arundel 292, f. 71v. *Index*, no. 3227; Robbins, *SL*, no. 118.

[150] 'They spit and sprawl and utter many curses, | they gnaw and gnash and groan together'.

[151] *Medieval English Lyrics*, p. 34.

[152] *The English and Scottish Popular Ballad*, ed. by Francis James Child, 10 vols (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882–98), nos 12 and 13.

[153] *Owre kynge went forth to Normandy*. *Index*, no. 2716; Greene, *Early English Carols*, no. 426.

[154] On nationalism in the Middle English period, see Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, and n. 65, above.

calls 'hate lyric'.[155] I quote a stanza from Minot's poem on the English victory over the Scots at Bannockburn, *Skottess out of berwik and of abirdene*:

> Rughfute riueling, now kindels þi care,
> berebag with þi boste, þi biging es bare;
> fals wretche and forsworn, whider wiltou fare?
> busk þe into brig, and abide þare.
> þare, wretche, saltou won and wery þe while;
> þi dwelling in donde es done for þi gile.[156] (lines 19–24)

Certainly celebratory, but also satirical and abusive, the mockery heightened by the packed, vivid lines with their insistent alliteration. The poem's intensity might be lyrical, but its vituperative content is not.

A different case is presented by *Hit wes up-on a sceręorsday þat vre louerd aros*. This poem, entitled by Brown 'The Bargain of Judas' and probably dating from the second half of the thirteenth century, is the earliest recorded ballad, an isolated example that suggests the existence of other ballads contemporary with it. In its vivid, and biblically very free, rendering of Judas betraying Christ and Peter denying him, the *Judas* has much in common with the later mystery plays. The poem is found in the same Trinity College, Cambridge manuscript as *Wen þe turuf is þi tuur*, a miscellany of materials including numerous bits of vernacular poetry of a proverbial kind.[157] Significantly, the Judas poem is afforded more dignified treatment than these scraps.[158] It has a page to itself, and is nicely set out, in stanzas. Though regularly included in collections of medieval lyrics, presumably on the basis of its shortness, this poem is thoroughly ballad-like in its narrativity, objectivity, and use of ballad metre. Its intensity and compression can certainly be lyric qualities, but they are equally characteristic of ballads. So overall I wouldn't really consider the poem a lyric. A modern, sung, version, of doubtful authenticity, was collected by John Jacob Niles in his *Ballad Book*.[159] It too is more narrative than lyric.

For a final example, let me take another humorous poem from Richard Hill's commonplace book, like the *Judas* regularly included in collections of Middle English lyrics, but in this case satirical rather than typically lyrical: the light-heartedly misogynist fifteenth-century carol *When nettuls in wynter bryng forth rosys red*, a litany of impossibilia with the burden 'Whane thes thynges foloyng be done to owr intent, | Than put women in trust and confydent'.[160] Satire is essentially unlyrical, but, as well as being in carol form, this poem is charmingly absurd rather than hostile, conjuring up some delightfully outrageous pictures. I particularly like whitings walking forests (stanza 3), and mice moving mountains with wagging of their

[155] 'Political Lyrics', p. 185.

[156] *Index*, no. 3080; Robbins, *HP*, no. 9. 'Rough-footed rawhide boot, now your trouble is starting, | bag-carrier with your boasting, your building (home) is bare; | false wretch and forsworn, whither will you go? | Hurry to Bruges and stay there. | There, wretch, shall you dwell, and curse the while; | your dwelling in Dundee is done with for your guile'.

[157] B.14.39, f. 34r. *Index*, no. 1649; Brown, *XIII*, no. 25. See Reichl's detailed study of this manuscript in *Religiöse Dichtung*, pp. 116–18 and 375–78; also Scahill, pp. 19–23. Brown prints two ballad lines as one, and does not separate the stanzas.

[158] For example, ff. 27v–29v contain 24 little proverbs, in English, French, and Latin, the French and Latin versions on f. 28r apparently squeezed in later among the English entries.

[159] John Jacob Niles, *The Ballad Book of John Jacob Niles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), pp. 91–93.

[160] Balliol College, Oxford, 354, f. 250v. *Index*, no. 3999; Greene, *Early English Carols*, no. 402. Greene prints the

tails (stanza 6) — mowing corn with waving of their tails in another version. This poem is far from central to the lyric genre, but it is displays lyric elements in its songlike form, its vivid images, and its playful exuberance.

Conclusion

What, then, can the word 'lyric' reasonably be taken to imply in a Middle English context? It will be a metrical composition in rhyming stanzas, usually non-narrative, with an aesthetic, rather than merely practical, appeal and a poetic 'lift,' even if its subject is trivial, coarse, or violent. To a greater or lesser degree it will be characterised by the four properties with which I began: brevity, intensity, focus on the moment, and shaped form. Most examples will present at least one of the three faces I selected: song, group festivity or celebration, and personal poetry. Particular Middle English lyrics are likely to be more narrowly defined by one or more of the characteristic topoi, which sometimes assume generic significance in themselves: among others, the love complaint, *reverdie*, *chanson d'aventure*, *chanson de délaissée*, Marian lyric, Crucifixion lyric, Nativity song or lullaby, the meditation on *timor mortis*, *ubi sunt*, or the grave — the last three topics tending to produce moral sententiae although they can be treated lyrically. As well, or instead, the lyric in later Middle English may be defined by a very specific metrical form, notably the carol, ballade, rondeau, and virelai. Lyric passages and lyric elements occur in poems that are not themselves lyrics. Again, lyrics, in Middle English as in other literatures, are by no means always 'lyrical' in the popular modern sense, meaning something approaching 'rhapsodic'. Nevertheless, we should probably not simply throw out 'lyrical'. Its problematic nuance reflects a persistent sense that ugliness, cruelty, and utter despair are inconsistent with lyricism.

In the introduction to his anthology *One Hundred Middle English Lyrics*, Robert Stevick observes that 'the Elizabethan notion of lyrics as poetry composed to be sung and the modern notion of lyrics as expressing intensely personal emotion can be seriously confusing' when used in a medieval context.[161] As we have seen, the Renaissance concept is indebted to the Greeks, the modern one to the Romantics. While Stevick's comment about Elizabethan and modern concepts of lyric causing confusion is perfectly valid — at least for people with more knowledge of Renaissance literature and nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetic theory than of Middle English poetry, these concepts are actually highly relevant; they just need to be appropriately modified and contextualised. Lyric poetry meets similar personal and social needs in different ages with different ways of looking at the world: it expresses love-longing, whether autobiographical or artistic, in Sappho, Catullus, *Foweles in the frith*, and modern popular song; spiritual quest in Augustine and the anonymous Middle English poet who translated his words, as well as in Donne and Herbert; civic celebration and fervour in Pindar, Horace, the Agincourt Carol, and modern national anthems; and, more modest, but not to be passed over, simple *joie de vivre*, in light-hearted songs enjoyed at gatherings for entertainment and pleasure throughout the ages. To appreciate medieval forms of literature and art we do need to take into account the ways in which their contemporaries may have related to them — insofar as that information can be recovered. But we can't replicate the thinking of an

version in the fifteenth-century Bodleian, Eng. poet. e.1, f. 43v, followed by variants.

[161] p. x.

earlier age. What we can do is take advantage of our broader perspective and our hindsight; a judicious use of the word *lyric* is one way of doing that.

An Edition of *Vainglory*

Rosemary Proctor

Vainglory appears in folios 83r–84v of the Exeter Book, between *The Seafarer* and *Widsith*.[1] According to Conner, it belongs to the second, oldest booklet of the Exeter Book, the production of which may have just predated or coincided with the Benedictine reform of Exeter, beginning in 968.[2] To briefly summarize, the fulcrum of the poem is the dichotomy its speaker draws between God's child, whose main virtue is humility, and the devil's child, whose main sin is immoderate pride. This is not to say that *Vainglory* possesses an immediately lucid didactic structure. Notoriously elliptical, the poem is a frustrating read; but one which, I suggest, repays the effort spent. Editors and critics have had to contend with a confounding array of ambiguities: an unnamed 'prophet' and/or 'wise man' who is the original source of the speaker's wisdom; uncertainty as to how many wise men or prophets are referred to; a host of uniquely attested forms;[3] lines which seem to make no sense without emendation; and an apparently paraphrased, assumedly biblical *gyd* (51b), the end of which is not clear, and which may be something completely different from the initial *gealdre* (5a) mentioned. Further, it is difficult to decide what *Vainglory* is, in the main, 'about'. As such, the poem has proven something of a struggle to name. First printed in Thorpe's edition as *Monitory Poem*,[4] numerous titles were then proposed: Ettmüller's *Be monna môde* ('About the Mind

[1] I have used the electronic facsimile in the DVD that accompanies Bernard J. Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501*, Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000).

[2] Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History*, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 4 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 148–49. See also Michael D. C. Dout, 'Possible Instructional Effects of the Exeter Book "Wisdom Poems": A Benedictine Reform Context', in *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers Presented at the International Conference Udine 6–8 April 2006*, ed. by Patrizia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari and Maria Amalia D'Aronco, Textes et Études du Moyen Âge, 39 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 447–66 (p. 452).

[3] Bernard F. Huppé, *The Web of Words: Structural Analyses of the Old English Poems 'Vainglory', 'The Wonder of Creation', 'The Dream of the Rood', and 'Judith'* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1970), p. 8. According to Huppé, the uniquely attested forms are: *sundorwundra* (2b), *ærcwide* (4b), *wilgest* (7a), *mæþelhergendra* (13b), *æscstede* (17a), *ungemedemad* (25a), *fligepilum* (27a), *breodað* (28a), *boð* (29b), *blenceþ* (33a), *hinderhoca* (34a), *hygegar* (34b), *inwitflan* (37b), *symbelwlonc* (40a), *þræfte* (42a), *nearowrencum* (44a), *forðspellum* (47a), *grundfusne* (49a), *ahlæneð* (53b), *neosiþum* (55a); *bælceð* (28a) may be an uniquely attested form or 'represent only an unusual usage.'

[4] Benjamin Thorpe, *Codex Exoniensis: A Collection of Anglo-Saxon Poetry, from a Manuscript in the Library of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter, with an English Translation, Notes and Indexes* (London: Pickering, 1842), pp. 313–18.

of Men'),[5] followed by Grein;[6] Sedgefield's underwhelming *A Bad Character*;[7] Mackie's *A Warning against Pride*, later adopted by Guntner;[8] finally, Krapp and Dobbie's *Vainglory*, followed by all other editors thereafter, excepting Guntner.[9] Huppé has suggested the subtitle *Godes bearn — Feondes bearn*, or *Son of God — Son of Satan*.[10] Roberts was concerned that none of these titles takes into account the role of the speaker's teacher, putting forward *The Wise-Man*, or something similar.[11] *Vainglory* is, in fact, the best of all possible titles, as the poem is essentially a homily on inordinate pride. The 'inordinate' is important, since this is not simply 'A Warning Against Pride', but a warning against excessive and ultimately futile pride.

Several dissertations discussing *Vainglory* were presented in the early nineteen-sixties and seventies,[12] after which the poem experienced a brief surge in popularity. After Huppé's edition (1970) came Markwardt and Rosier's (1972)[13] and Pickford's (1974).[14] The poem was translated in Shippey's *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (1976),[15] and, a couple of decades later, Rodrigues' *Anglo-Saxon Didactic Verse*.[16] Troublingly, Rodrigues often appears to ignore the seventies critics. For instance, an assertion made by Krapp and Dobbie and disproved by numerous later editors that the poem's introductory lines 'seem to bear no organic relationship to the rest of the poem', is echoed by Rodrigues in his short introduction.[17] Regan's (1970) article on the patristic memes drawn upon by the poem made an invaluable contribution to scholarship,[18] but I argue here that *Vainglory*'s 'Germanic psychology' ought too to be acknowledged. Roberts' recent discussion of the poem has done much to collate

5 Ludwig Ettmüller, *Engla and Seaxna scôpas and bôceras: Anglosaxonum poëta atque scriptores prosaici, quorum partim integra opera, partim loca selecta collegit*, Bibliothek der gesammten deutschen national-literatur, 28 (Quedlinburg and Leipzig: Bassius, 1850), pp. 248–49.

6 Christian W. M. Grein, *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*, ed. by Richard P. Wülker, 3 vols, vol. III ed. by Bruno Assmann (Kassel: Wigand, 1883–98), III, 144–45. As I have no German, I have not consulted Grein's translation, in his *Dichtungen der Angelsachsen stabreimend übersetzt*, 2 vols (Göttingen: Wigand, 1857–59), II, 153–55. For a detailed discussion of the poem's history and critical reception, see Jane Roberts, 'A Man "boca gleaw" and his Musings', in *Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach,* ed. by Virginia Blanton and Helene Scheck, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 334/Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, 24 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007), pp. 119–37 (pp. 119–23).

7 *An Anglo-Saxon Book of Verse and Prose*, ed. by W. J. Sedgefield, Publications of the University of Manchester, English Series, 17/Publications of the University of Manchester, 186 (New York: AMS Press, 1928; repr. 1973), pp. 43–44.

8 W. S. Mackie, *The Exeter Book*: *Part 2*, Early English Text Society, o.s., 194 (London: Early English Text Society, 1934), pp. 10–15; J. C. Guntner, 'An Edition of Three Old English Poems: "A Warning Against Pride", "The Wonders of Creation", "A Prayer" ' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970), pp. 59–62.

9 *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie*,* The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), pp. 147–49.

10 Huppé, pp. 1–7.

11 Roberts, pp. 120–21.

12 I have been unable to access H. V. Lutton, 'Anglo-Saxon Poetics: Studies in the "Riddles", "Beowulf", "Juliana", and "Vainglory" ' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1968); D. D. Short, 'Five Homiletic Poems from the Exeter Book, with an Edition of the Text, Introduction, Notes and Glossary' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, North Carolina State University at Raleigh, 1972).

13 Albert H. Markwardt and James L. Rosier, *Old English Language and Literature* (New York: Norton, 1972).

14 T. E. Pickford, 'An Edition of *Vainglory* by T. E. Pickford', *Parergon*, 10 (1974), 3–39.

15 Thomas A. Shippey (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer).

16 Louis J. Rodrigues (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995).

17 Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. xl; Rodrigues, p. 25.

18 Catharine A. Regan., 'Patristic Psychology in the Old English *Vainglory*', *Traditio*, 26 (1970), 324–35.

the disparate scholarly opinions surrounding it.[19] Before this, the latest article devoted to the poem was McKinnell's, published in 1991.[20] The comparative paucity of interest in the poem since the seventies has meant that no comprehensive edition exists which takes all of the work done by its editors into account. New ways of approaching the poem have been put forward, as part of wider studies, by Conner, Magennis and Mize.[21] A reconsideration of the poem, which integrates these into its analysis, is needed.

The edition and translation which I present here are preceded by two essays investigating the connective tissue of the poem — those thematic ligaments which animate its framework. The first essay focuses on the transmission of knowledge from prophet to speaker and the nexus in which the *gyd* exists; the second on the poem's employment of satire and the psychomachia allegory, and its depiction of time and space. Both essays discuss *Vainglory*'s conception of the word. *Vainglory* is frustrating and rewarding in equal measure for the same reason: the poem is essentially preoccupied with *perception* — especially the perception of truth in word — and, accordingly, is an exercise in perceptive and interpretative ability.

The Prophet and the Speaker

'The poem begins simply enough', claims Huppé.[22] A perfunctory glance at the widely varying ways in which its first four lines have been translated proves him wrong. These lines provide the scaffold of authority on which the poem is constructed. They are by no means 'simple', and are in need of reconsideration. This essay aims to provide a plausible re-reading which removes the 'wise man' element, and asserts that there is just one authority figure — a prophet — who has imparted wisdom to the speaker. An elision of prophets in the recurrent noun *witega* (3b, 50b, 81b) will also suit my analysis. I hope to show here that *gealdre* (6a) probably has the same referent as the *gyd* (51b) the speaker later quotes. The *gyd* likely has a source in Luke 14.11, Luke 18.14, and ends at line 56. The prophet may well be John the Baptist; if there is another prophet, he may be Isaiah. This, in Roberts' words, is a text in which 'the reception, interiorization, and passing on of wisdom' is of great concern.[23] Audience or critic must, then, provide the next link in the chain of wisdom set in motion by the *witega*.

The poem's introductory lines are usually taken to mean that the teachings of some authority figure, 'witgan larum' (3b), have been passed on to the speaker by a wise man, or 'frod wita' (1a). A reading involving a wise man encounters difficulty at 81b: 'gif me se witega ne leag' (if the prophet did not lie to me). Line 81b asserts a direct transference of knowledge from the *witega* to the speaker, just as has been asserted in 1–2a. It is reasonable to assume that *witega* refers to the same figure throughout the poem. If this is the case, 81b begs the question, where did the wise man go? Roberts, following Pickford and Hansen, has approached this problem by suggesting that the roles of wise man and prophet are conflated in *witega* at 81b.[24] There need, however, be no wise man at all when *larum* is taken as an

[19] Roberts, 'A Man "boca gleaw" and his Musings'.

[20] John S. McKinnell, 'A Farewell to Old English Elegy: The Case of *Vainglory*', *Parergon* 9.2 (1991), 67–89.

[21] Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*; Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Britt Mize, 'The Representation of the Mind as an Enclosure in Old English Poetry', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 35 (2006), 57–90.

[22] Huppé, p. 9.

[23] Roberts, p. 128.

[24] Pickford, 5; Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry*, McMaster Old English Studies and Texts, 5 (London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 77, 80; Roberts, 128.

instrumental dative, modified by the genitive *witgan*, to form the phrase, 'with the lore of a *witega*'. A man might, in present-day English, apply a bandage with the skills of a professional. He has not been instructed in applying the bandage by a professional: rather, he applies the bandage with the skills that are in accordance with the professional that he is. The phrase 'witgan larum' is attested once elsewhere, in *Exodus* (390b): Solomon builds a temple in accordance with 'witgan larum', the *witega* being David.[25] This opens up the further possibility that, in *Vainglory*, one *witega*, or prophet, is fulfilling the lore of another.

Three types of knowledge are referred to in the first four lines: 'sundorwundra fela' (many special portents [2b]), 'witgan larum' and 'bodan ærcwide' (4b). The *witega* is able to interpret portents; these may be a part of his lore. His lore could be based on what an earlier figure has said or prophesied the *witega* will do. This is transformed into 'bodan ærcwide'. A *hapax legomenon*, *ærcwide* could feasibly mean either 'foretelling' or 'early speech'.[26] Some translations have 'ancient language'.[27] I incline towards the first interpretation, but I would also like to suggest that *ærcwide* is a pun, the secondary meaning of which is 'early speech', recalling the 'witgan larum' which has been utilized to produce the *ærcwide*. This is why 'bodan ærcwide' parallels 'witgan larum' in structure as genitive + dative, and is placed in such a way as to be taken either as appositive to *wordhord* or to 'witgan larum'. As it is singular, I have translated it as appositive to *wordhord*, but have tried to preserve its secondary meaning with the addition of 'long ago'. It is probable that *witega* functions, in *Vainglory*, much as it does in a sermon by Ælfric of Eynsham: 'þa heahfæderas and þa witegan þe embe þone Hælend cyddon, þa wæron þa sæderas þe seowon Godes lare' ('the patriarchs and the prophets made announcements concerning the Saviour; they were the sowers who sowed God's lore').[28] 'Witgan larum' and 'bodan ærcwide' may refer, at the same time, to earlier and later knowledge. They affirm the genealogy of prophecy from which the poem can claim descent.

Hansen and Roberts share the opinion that, at 81b, the poem may question the reliability 'of authors and authorities', although neither think that the *witega* is false.[29] There is little, except the immediately apparent meaning of 81b, to substantiate this claim. The first four lines leave no doubt as to the *witega*'s credentials. *Wordhord*, as Mize has shown, refers to a ring-fenced repository of sapiential, 'ethically positive' discourse within the mind.[30] Further, the *witega* is said to be 'beorn boca gleaw' (4a). Drout, discussing the phrase's appearance in *The Gifts of Men*, has made the point that *boca*, qualifying *gleaw*, further qualifies the man the phrase denotes, as a conveyor of monastic wisdom.[31] A glance at the appearances of 'boca gleaw' in the corpus suggests a generalized meaning of 'religious teacher', similar to the circumlocution 'man of the cloth' for 'priest' in present-day English. The phrase also appears in *Elene* (1211a), *The Meters of Boethius* (Meter 1, line 52a) and *Aldhelm* (2a), referring respectively to Cyriacus, Boethius and Aldhelm.[32] The figures who bear this epithet are all

[25] Cf., for a full discussion of the provenance of this phrase, J. R. Hall, 'Old English *Exodus* 390b: *witgan larum*', *Notes and Queries*, 53 (2006), 17–21.

[26] Muir, II, 538.

[27] Mackie, p. 11; Rodrigues, p. 83.

[28] 'Feria VI in Tertia Ebdomada Quadragesimae', in *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by J. C. Pope, Early English Text Society, 259–60, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–68), I, 286–302 (p. 299, lines 256–57).

[29] Roberts, p. 128; Hansen, p. 80.

[30] Mize, pp. 70–71.

[31] Drout, p. 457.

[32] *The Vercelli Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 2 (New York: Columbia University

agents of conversion, or 'spreading the word', especially about Christ. *Wordhord* proves that there can be nothing mendacious about the *witega* or his knowledge. 'Beorn boca gleaw' indicates that this knowledge will be sacred, and not secular. Line 81b is, in fact, an affirmation of the *witega*'s ultimate authority, to which the speaker defers. It is a didactic tool, the rhetorical employment of an element of doubt which paradoxically asserts validity; a vaguely aggressive challenge designed to provoke submission from a lesson's recipient.

Gealdre (6a) is a word that has caused concern. Guntner states that *gealdor* is 'always associated with pagan sorcery and out of place in a Christian sermon'.[33] Roberts has proven that this is not the case, but concludes that *gealdre* and the later *gyd* need not be equated.[34] I contest this with a few select examples, some referred to by Roberts. In *Christ* a *giedd* made by Job is related: 'Bi þon giedd awræc Iob, | […] ond hine fugel nemde, | þone Iudeas ongietan ne meahtan' ('about [Christ] Job made a prediction […] and he named him "bird', which the Jews could not understand').[35] *Giedd* is functioning here in the same way that *gealdor* does in, for example, *Beowulf*: 'Siððan hie Hygelaces horn ond byman, | gealdor ongeaton' ('after they heard the sound of Hygelac's horn and trumpets'),[36] in Roberts' own words, 'heralding the arrival of a hero about to enter legend'.[37] In *Guthlac B*, *gealdor* refers again to a prediction: 'nis ðe ende feor, | ðæs ðe ic on galdrum ongieten hæbbe' ('your end is not far; I have understood this in [your] divinations').[38] Hrothgar calls the 'sermon' with which he exhorts Beowulf that he should *gumcyste ongit* ('heed virtue') a *gyd* (1723).[39] If it is acceptable, in *The Fates of the Apostles*, for Cynewulf to refer to the same poem with *giddes* (89a) and *galdres* (108a),[40] it is eminently possible that, in *Vainglory*, they have the same referent. *Gealdor*, prototypically magical, imbues *gyd* with supernatural reverberations.

Pickford, noticing the *ond* at 51b, has also concluded that *gealdor* and *gyd* are separate utterances.[41] This all depends on how the *þæt* in 50b is to be taken. Twice in the poem so far, at 26a and 47b, *þæt* has referred to the devil's child. Since 41b–51a, the lines immediately preceding 'þæt se witga song', were a description of the devil's child, it is probable that the *þæt* of 50b is not referring to all that has come before, but the devil's child: his 'sort'. The devil's child is not a delineated character in the text; rather, he is a gnomic *sum* 'one sort' (23b). *Singan* can take a direct object and still possess the implied preposition, 'about', as in the Old English Bede: 'cwæð he: sing me frumsceaft' ('he said: "sing me creation" ').[42] The two verbs *singan* and *awreccan* may denote the separate processes of composition and utterance, which is how I have them in my translation, *gearowyrdig* implying preparedness and readiness with

Press, 1932), p. 99; *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 5 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 154; *The Anglo Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1942), p. 97.

33 Guntner, p. 13.

34 Roberts, pp. 126–28.

35 Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 20 (lines 633–37). Translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

36 *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 58 (lines 2943–44a).

37 Roberts, p. 127.

38 Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 84 (lines 1206b–7).

39 Klaeber, p. 100.

40 Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, pp. 53, 54.

41 Pickford, 26.

42 *The Old English version of Bede's 'Ecclesiatical History of the English People'*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Miller, Early English Text Society, o. s., 95, 96, 110, 111, 2 vols (London: Trübner, 1890-1898), I, ch. XXV, p. 345 (line 2).

words; or they may both refer to either. In neither case need *ond* create a disparity between *gealdor* and *gyd*.

This utterance, however, may potentially remain obscure. Pickford has pointed out that the modifying adjective *sundor* and the noun *gescead* (8b) imply the interpretive processes of separation and distinction.[43] Words must be split, and truth extracted from them. I am in agreement with Hansen when she suggests that the poem's ellipsis 'may reflect the threat of chaos and meaninglessness that words at once control and reveal'.[44] The verb *ongietan* is notably present in all but one of the occurrences of *gyd* and *gealdor* given above. *Ongietan* denotes the processing of sensory information: seeing and hearing on the one hand, but also cognizance — perceiving and understanding — on the other. The verb possesses both connotations simultaneously in the instance of Hygelac's horn and trumpets. Further, when it is used in Hrothgar's *gyd*, it is imperative, implying that its audience may well come away having learned nothing of virtue. *Ongietan* is negative in *Christ*: the Jews cannot discern Christ's coming from the words of Job. Words, even prophetic ones, are fallible, potentially ineffectual media. This is felt with the insertion of *soðlice* 'truly' (5a), and indeed, *meahte* 'could' (5b) to *Vainglory*'s introductory lines. The truth present in the *gealdor*'s words has the potential to remain obscure: to be heard, but not heeded. Whereas a pronouncement on the fallibility of authorities is, Hansen cautiously accepts, 'more like something we would expect from Chaucer, at the earliest, than from an Old English poet',[45] numerous Anglo-Saxon texts express concern about the effective transmission of knowledge through word, *Riddle 47* (whose solution is 'bookworm') being the most obvious.[46]

It is unlikely that the poet has made the *witega* up. *Vainglory* is part of a textual culture in which the imprinting of texts with the watermark of authority for the purposes of 'affiliation and validation' is of immense importance.[47] The *witega*, then, is probably designed to recall a known figure of authority. Regan and McKinnell identify the *witega* as the apostle John.[48] The former considers the poem to draw from 1 John 3. The latter suggests a commentary on 1 John 3, most likely Bede's *In Epistolas Septem Catholicas*, but concedes that *witega* does not ever refer to an apostle; it is most often an epithet for Old Testament prophets, is extant referring to John the Baptist, and, infrequently, to Christ.[49] Roberts puts forward Isaiah.[50] Huppé cannot name the prophet, but notes that patristic commentaries on the Vulgate Psalm 35:12 are in line with the poem's content as a whole.[51] The most compelling argument for the poem's source material is provided by Trahern; this is taken as definitive by Fulk and Cain.[52] Trahern puts forward as a main source Chapter I of *The Rule of Chrodegang*, which is based on Chapter 4 of St Caesarius of Arles' 'Sermo CCXXXIII'.[53] *Rule*, 'Sermo' and *Vainglory* (52–

[43] Pickford, 18, 19.
[44] Hansen, p. 77.
[45] Hansen, p. 80.
[46] Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 205.
[47] Mary Swan, 'Authorship and Anonymity', in *A Companion to Anglo Saxon Literature*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture, 11 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 71–83 (pp. 77–78).
[48] Regan, p. 324, n. 1.
[49] McKinnell, 79.
[50] Roberts, p. 128.
[51] Huppé, pp. 19–20, 24.
[52] R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, Blackwell Histories of Literature (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), p. 135.
[53] Joseph B. Trahern Jr., 'Caesarius, Chrodegang, and the Old English *Vainglory*', in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Literatur:*

56) all distinguish God's child and the devil's by use of the quotation 'omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur' ('everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself shall be exalted').[54] Trahern's argument is the springboard for my own.

I can find two instances in the Vulgate at which the exact verse appears: Luke 14.11, 18.14; in Matt 23.12, the tense is future perfect.[55] A West-Saxon Gospel uses similar vocabulary to *Vainglory*: 'for þam ælc þe hine up ahefð bið genyðerud; and se þe hine nyðerað, se bið up ahafen' (Luke 14.11).[56] The idea expressed by these verses is what Yamasaki calls 'the paradoxical truth: greatness in the Kingdom involves the opposite of what human wisdom would dictate.'[57] Luke 14.11 and 18.14 are sometimes taken by patristic writers to refer back to a prophecy made by Isaiah concerning the ministry of John the Baptist. Meanwhile, Luke 3.4–5 is perhaps alluded to in 'witgan larum':

> Sicut scriptum est in libro sermonum Esaiae prophetae: vox clamantis in deserto: parate viam Domini rectas facite semitas eius. Omnis vallis implebitur; et omnis mons et collis humiliabitur; et erunt prava in directa; et aspera in vias planas.[58]
>
> As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaiah the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain.

Caesarius quotes Luke 14.11 and 18.14 elsewhere, in chapter 4 of 'Sermo CCXVII'. Here, he considers only its first half, as does *Vainglory*. This, Caesarius asserts, is *quod aliis* 'the same thing' as Is 40.4.[59]

John the Baptist only repeats Is 40.3 (cf. Matt 3.3, John 1.23), but it is not unheard of for exegetes to put words into the mouths of prophets. Peter Chrysologus, for instance, holds an imagined conversation with John the Baptist in his 'Sermo CLXXIX'.[60] So too may *Vainglory*'s speaker be entering into a dialogue with John through the scriptures. Pickford has noted the apocalyptic resonance the speaker has added to lines 52–56.[61] The first addition is 'in þa sliþnan tid' ('in that terrible hour' [52b]), amplified by a similar expression, and otherwise unattested form, *neosiþum* ('the ultimate journey'). It is tempting to suggest that *wyrmum* (56b) contains an echo of John's words to the Pharisees in Matthew 3.7: 'progenies viperarum

Beiträge Luitpold Wallach gewidmet, ed. by Karl Bosl, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 11 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1975), pp. 167–78 (p. 175).

54 'Sermo CXXXIII', in *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, ed. by D. Germani Morin, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 103–4, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953), II, 925–31 (p. 927); *The Old English Version of the Enlarged rule of Chrodegang/Edited Together with the Latin Text and an English Translation*, ed. and trans. by Brigitte Langefeld, Münchener Universitätsschriften: Texte und Untersuchungen zur englischen Philologie, 26 (Oxford: Lang, 2003), p. 172 (lines 1–2).

55 All references to the Vulgate are taken from <http://www.drbo.org/>.

56 James Bright, ed., *Euangelium secundum Lucam: The Gospel of Saint Luke in West-Saxon*, The Belles-lettres Series, Section 1 (New York: AMS Press, 1972).

57 Gary Yamasaki, *John the Baptist in Life and Death: Audience-Oriented Criticism of Matthew's Narrative*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, 167 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), p. 117.

58 Cf. Is. 40.3–4.

59 Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, II, 861–64 (p. 863); 'Sermon 217', in *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons*, trans. by Mary Magdaleine Mueller, The Fathers of the Church, 31, 47, 66, 3 vols (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1956–73), III, 120–24 (p. 123). All further mentions of this sermon are from this edition.

60 Alexandre Olivar, 'Sermo CLXXIX', in *Sancti Petri Chrysologi Archiepiscopi sermones*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 24, 24a, 24b, 3 vols (Turnholt: Brepols, 1975–82), III, 1084–88 (pp. 1085–87; chs. 1–3).

61 Pickford, p. 26.

quis demonstravit vobis fugere a futura ira?' ('ye brood of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come?'). Caesarius' 'Sermo CCXVII' may have circulated in Anglo-Saxon England.[62] Whether or not it did, however, it provides a useful demonstration of the exegetical nexus in which these verses exist. Caesarius explores the verses' apocalyptic implications: 'clamor iudicium comminatur' (the shout of judges threatens). The phrase 'veniet tempus' ('a time will come') is repeated. Caesarius' warning that 'Non semper iste, qui nunc est, humanae consuetudinis ordo servabitur' ('the order of man's condition will not always be kept the same as it is now'), parallels that of *Vainglory*: 'biþ þæs oþer swice' ('there will be another outcome' [31b]) to sinful behaviour.

Ælfric, in his 'Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', equates Isaiah 4.3–44 with Luke 14.11 and 18.14 in a passage based on Gregory the Great's 'Homily XX'.[63] He makes two notable deviations from his source. The first is a possible recollection of Isaiah 57.15: 'on hwam gerest godes gæst buton on þam eadmodum?' ('in whom resteth the Spirit of God but in the humble?'), echoing *Vainglory*'s assertion that Christ shall be a *gæst gegæderad* 'spirit united' (80a) within the humble man.[64] The next deviation is of especial interest to this analysis:

> ðwyrnyssa beoð gerihte þonne ðwyrlicra manna heortan þe beoð þurh unrihtwisnysse hocum awegde, eft þurh regolsticcan þære soþan rihtwisnysse beoð geemnode.[65]
>
> Crookednesses shall be straight, when the hearts of perverse men, which are agitated by the hooks of unrighteousness, are again made even by the ruling-rods of true righteousness.

Ælfric employs the same unusual 'hooks' metaphor in another sermon: 'þa worldmen cunnon þa worldcundan snoternysse, and þa yfelan hocas þe se Hælend onscunað' ('those men of the world know secular wisdom, and those evil hooks which the Saviour rejects').[66] This appears between the deployment of two biblical verses, Luke 16.8 and Corinthians 3.9, both of which relate the paradoxical truth. The former asserts that the children of the world ('worlde bearn') are wiser in their generation than the children of the light ('leohtes bearn'), a similar delineation as that between God's child and the devil's. The latter verse states that worldly wisdom is foolishness to God.

Pope surmises that the hooks in 'Dominica X' may be 'something similar' to those in Thorpe's 'Nativitas'.[67] As far as I am aware, it has gone unnoticed that *Vainglory* may be using the same metaphor at lines 33b–34a: 'worn geþenceþ/ hinderhoca'. Immediately following this is a description, crucial to the psychomachia allegory, of missiles which assail the devil's child. Verbs denoting thought govern the metaphor both here and in 'Dominica X'. In 'Nativitas', hooks exist in the hearts of men. The 'hooks', then, are interior. In *Vainglory*, *geþenceþ*

[62] Joseph B. Trahern, 'Caesarius of Arles and Old English Literature: Some Contributions and a Recapitulation', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 105–19 (p. 116).

[63] All further mentions of this sermon correspond to the following page references: 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', in *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, Early English Text Society, s. s. 17 (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 379–88 (pp. 385–86). Identification of the sermon's source material, or lack thereof, is taken from Malcom Godden's *Ælfric's Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, Early English Text Society, s. s., 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 208–9. Translations are taken from 'Nativitas Sci Iohannis Baptistae', in *The Sermones Catholici or Homiles of Ælfric*, ed. and trans. by Benjamin Thorpe, The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, pt. 1, 2 vols (London: Ælfric Society, 1844–46; repr. London: Johnson, 1971), I, 351–64 (pp. 360, 362).

[64] 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', lines 212–13.

[65] 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', lines 213–15.

[66] 'Dominica X Post Pentecosten', in *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by J. C. Pope, Early English Text Society, o. s., 260 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), II, 544–62 (p. 556, lines 218–19).

[67] Pope, II, 875.

is unusually rhymed with the verbs preceding it — 'wrenceþ he ond blenceþ' ('he plots and deceives' [33a]) — implying continuity between intention and action: the plotting and deception refer at the same time to conception and reification. Herein is a schema central to the poem and its employment of the psychomachia allegory: that of 'mind as fortress' and, simultaneously, 'fortress as mind'. The hall is an extension of the mind of the devil's child, so what occurs within his mind will also occur in the hall. Comprised in *hinderhoca* is a chain of knowledge — perception — action. The devil's child plots against his Maker to let the devil into his mind. Rejecting the divine from his mind, and accepting Satan, his world-view becomes false: he plots against, and deceives, himself. This results in the devil's child's bad behavior in the hall, which will also involve plotting against, and deceiving, his fellow man.

Vainglory's prophet has the ability to discern God's child, and to separate him from the devil's child. There is no prophet better equipped to relate both the sensory and cogitative information of God's own child, implied by the verb *ongietan*, than the only prophet who, 'Christum […] videre meruit et tenere; atque pereunti mundo adsignare solus mundi meruit saluatorem' ('was counted worthy of both seeing and holding Christ […] worthy of pointing out to a world that was perishing the Savior of the world').[68] The prophet's knowledge, in *Vainglory*, has, in part, been taken from the interpretation of portentous signs. The prophet has further absorbed earlier prophetic teachings into himself, to produce his own brand of lore. As Caesarius of Arles puts it: 'Sanctus, inquam, Iohannes typum in se legis, quae longe Christum per signa et indicia monstrabat, ostendit' ('St John […] represented in himself a type of the law, which pointed out Christ from afar by signs and evidence').[69] In Ælfric's 'Nativitas', John is called *Stemn* ('Voice'), and Christ *Word*: 'na swilc word swa menn sprecað, ac he is þæs fæder wisdom' ('not such a word as men speak, but he is the Wisdom of the Father').[70] *Christ* was not such a word as men speak, because such words are fallible. *Vainglory*'s speaker challenges an audience to see, as he himself has perceived through John's ministry, the lore sown in the ground of language and, in turn through this, the Word within the word.

This essay has aimed to clarify some of the poem's central ambiguities. The poem contains one foundational quotation, a paraphrase of Luke 14.11 and 18.14. This is both *gealdor* and *gyd*, and expressive of the paradoxical truth. The quotation begins at line 52, and ends at line 56. It is passed from the prophet directly to the speaker, there being no 'wise man', although an earlier prophet's lore may be present in the verse, likely Isaiah's. The poet was probably inspired by the source material Trahern has suggested, but may also have had recourse to other texts which draw out the meaning of Luke 14.11 and 18.14. One prophet is especially associated with these verses: John the Baptist. They are further associated with the discernment of the proud versus the humble, God's child versus the devil's, and their fates at Judgment Day. These verses are also linked to the vernacular 'hooks' metaphor the speaker employs, which is inserted into exposition of the psychomachia allegory. The poet may have been influenced by Ælfric, or vice versa: it is impossible to say. Regardless, these 'hooks' seem to have a relationship with the paradoxical truth, and perhaps with the ministry of John the Baptist. What is more, this relationship seems to be an entirely Anglo-Saxon, vernacular

[68] Olivar, 'Sermo CLXXIX', III, ch. 6, p. 1088; 'Sermon 179', in *St Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons*, trans. by William B. Palardy, The Fathers of the Church, 17, 109, 110, 3 vols (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953–2005), III, 354–58 (ch. 6, p. 358, lines 95–96).

[69] Morin, 'Sermo CXVI' in *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, II, 858–61 (ch. 3, p. 860); Mueller, 'Sermon 16', in *Saint Caesarius of Arles*, III, 117–20 (ch. 3, p. 119).

[70] 'VIII Kalendas Iulii Nativitas Sancti Iohannis Baptistae', lines 190–91.

one. The placement of the poem in vernacular textual culture will be carried over into the next essay. So too will the next essay be informed by the psychic chain of knowledge — perception — action established here, present in *hinderhoca*. Also to be borne in mind is the poem's preoccupation with words. Like the 'special portents' the prophet interprets, words are veiled media, from which truth must be extracted.

The Mind, the Hall, and Heaven

This essay will explore the worlds of *Vainglory*: the cultural world from which it was born, and the interior worlds it contains. *Vainglory*'s lens is in a state of contraction and expansion as it depicts in varying breadths enclosed spaces that are illustrative of the macrocosm. Here, I shall investigate how the spaces of mind, hall and heaven are integrated to produce a universal statement on the nature and outcome of vainglory: those who exalt themselves shall be humbled, and those who humble themselves shall be exalted. The first section of this essay will focus on lines 13–23b, the depiction of the feast before the devil's child is introduced, to argue that this set-piece is functioning as a figure of a world full of opaque speech; a world in which truth may only be perceived if one's interpretive capacities are fully honed. Next, I attempt to identify a satirical element in the poem, especially around the description of the devil's child at 23b–44a. In these lines the hall transforms into a diabolic amplification of the mind of the devil's child. Central to this is the verb *lætan* (10a, 34b, 37b, 40b), which facilitates the psychomachia allegory within the poem illustrative of the psychic chain of knowledge — perception — action discussed in the previous essay, which unifies mind and hall. Finally, I shall discuss how the space of heaven is reflective of both the mind of the devil's child and the hall that that mind perceives, thus bringing together the poem's worlds in macrocosmic fulfilment.

Opinions vary as to whether the depiction of the feast in *Vainglory* is intended to be derogatory. Further, if the speaker intends to denounce the men at the feast, does this amount to a condemnation of feasting and the cultural practices associated with it? For Regan, the feast scene is an example of *ekphrasis*, a didactic tableau favored by patristic writers.[71] Shippey remarks that the tone of the feast scene 'seems intentionally elegiac, even frustrated, rather than wicked', concluding that 'the poet is a trace equivocal in his attitude to the values of heroic society'.[72] Hagen considers the speaker to suffer from no such 'regretful nostalgia'; the noise of the feast is offensive to him.[73] Markwardt and Rosier go as far as to compare the feast scene to Abraham's words on Sodom in lines 2408–18 of *Genesis A*.[74] A refreshing stance is taken by Magennis, who considers the feast scene to be a legitimately 'lively picture of warriors enjoying themselves'.[75] For Magennis, the feast is there to represent 'in heightened form the moral dangers which people must be on their guard against in the world'.[76] The central danger, I propose here, is the inability to perceive truth in word. This accords with Huppé's observation, built into a discussion on the unique form *mæþelhergendra* 'speech-

[71] Regan, 325–26.
[72] Shippey, p. 9.
[73] Ann Hagen, *A Second Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink: Production and Distribution* (Hockwold cum Wilton, Norfolk: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1995), p. 239.
[74] Marckwardt and Rosier, p. 219.
[75] Magennis, p. 99.
[76] Magennis, p. 102.

praisers' (13b), that the poem is concerned with 'the real value of speech, which lies not in speech itself but in the perception of the truth in speech'.[77] The men in the hall, Huppé argues, worship 'speech itself', and are ignorant of its truth.[78]

Mæþelhergendra is sometimes unnecessarily emended to the better attested form *mæþelhegend* 'holding conclave'. *Mæþelhegend* is attested three times: once in *Elene* (279a), to describe a gathering of the wisest people among the Jews, and twice in *Andreas*, first used of the angelic group of seafarers (262b); next of the cannibalistic warrior-council (1096b).[79] *Mæþelhergendra* may well be designed to recall *mæþelhegend*, so similar are the two forms: where men gather, speeches are praised. I follow Huppé in taking *mæþel-* as an implied direct object of *hergend*: 'those who praise speech'. It can also be taken as implied instrumental: 'those who praise *using* speech'. Markwardt and Rosier interpret this as 'boast-lovers'.[80] Pickford also suggests that the compound may refer to 'praising assemblies or speeches'; equally, it may denote 'assemblies for self-praising or boasting'.[81] The poem is never so specific elsewhere. Although others have attempted to ascribe particular cultural practices to the speech in the hall, this can never go beyond speculation. Clover, for instance, has identified lines 13–44a as a description of a flyting.[82] Lines 11–12, in which men, excited by wine, strive to find an *æscstede* ('battlefield' [17a]) in the hall, could refer to an argument, to actual violence, or to the innocuous recounting of past martial exploits.[83] The feast scene seems to have been designed not to depict certain cultural practices involving speech, but speech in general. Rather than denoting a specific ceremony, or to denigrate the men it describes, *mæþelhergendra* establishes instead a world in which speech, especially formalized speech, is revered. In such a world, it is essential to split words, and extract truth. *Mæþelhergendra* contains both an ethical and linguistic tension. The two are, in fact, the same thing: the tension between hearing and heeding.

There is no reason to assume that a Christian value-system is entirely absent from the hall. *Soðgied* 'truth-tales' (15b) is only attested here and in *The Seafarer* (1b) to describe the poem itself.[84] Just as with the *Seafarer*, so may the men in *Vainglory*'s hall be reciting tales with both Christian and Germanic-heroic elements. The speech in the hall is the product of a collective social consciousness into which both Christian and Germanic-heroic values are integrated: a society in which heroic songs were sung at monastic feasts.[85] Amidst the clamor of this society it may be impossible to perceive Christ: the Word within the word. As such, the speech-making at the feast soon descends into a meaningless roar of competing voices: 'breahtem stigeð | cirm on corþre. Cwide scralletaþ, | missenlice' ('the noise mounts, the uproar in the throng. They call out, each with a speech of his own' [19b–21a]). The closest parallel to this occurs in *Guthlac B*, when the saint is assailed by a crowd of fiends: 'hwilum wedende swa wilde deor | cirmdon on corðre' ('at times the raving ones would cry out like wild beasts

77 Huppé, p. 12.
78 Huppé, p. 12.
79 Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*: *Elene* p. 73; *Andreas* pp. 10, 33.
80 Markwardt and Rosier, p. 221.
81 Pickford, 20.
82 Carol J. Clover, 'The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode', *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 444–68 (pp. 445–46, 448–49).
83 Shippey, p. 128, n. 3.
84 Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 143.
85 Stephen Pollington, *The Mead Hall: The Feasting Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England* (Norfolk, England: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2003), p. 115.

in a pack').[86] This is not to say that the noise being made at the feast is demonic; rather, it is as unintelligible as the roar of an animal or the ravings of a lunatic, or indeed, the sound of a harp, which the only other attestation of *scralletan — The Fortunes of Men —* describes.[87] The following assertion, that similarly, minds are divided into types (21b–22a) does not refer to the multiplicity of individual opinion present in the hall, but the contestation of voices there. Just as there are two types of men, equally, there are two types of speech, divine and worldly, but it is almost impossible to distinguish them in the hubbub. God's child and the devil's are made of flesh, and so too is worldly speech made of the same essential matter as divine speech: words.

The idea of the blurring of worldly and divine speech is touched upon by Pickford when he remarks that, amidst the cacophony of the feast, 'it is almost as if the poet is demonstrating the need of an interpreter such as the *frod wita* by whom he was taught'.[88] The feast scene represents the mortal world; like the mortal world, it is a place in which truth may be lost in tale, in which perception must be honed. The devil's child's perception is fatally impaired. He is blind to the disdain of others: 'þenceð þæt his wise welhwam þince | eal unforcuþ' ('he thinks that his behavior appears entirely reputable to everyone' [30–31b]). Further, 'he þa scylde ne wat | fæhþe gefremede' ('he does not know the guilt the enmity he has brought about' [35b–36a]); the other men in the hall do not *like* the devil's child. It is not that the devil's child conforms to hall-culture, but that he *de*forms it. Lines 28b–29 provide the clearest indication of the speaker's permissive attitude to hall-culture. This is the only instance in the poem in which the devil's child and his opposite are said to perform the same action: here, the devil's child 'boð his sylfes | swiþor micle þonne se sella mon' ('talks himself up far more than the better one does'). 'Swiþor micle' suggests that 'se sella mon' does participate in boasting, but to a reasonable and permissible degree. This and the very fact that such a man is present in the hall at all indicate that feasting, and the common cultural practices associated with it, are not necessarily iniquitous to the speaker. The article preceding *sella* implies that this man is someone different from whom it is later said that the devil's child hates, not 'the', but rather, 'his' better: 'feoþ his betran' (36b), which may be a reference to the lord of the hall functioning as a figure for God. This parallels the rebellious angels' rejection of God, 'their' better: 'forsawan hyra sellan' (61a). Just as the angels attempt to subvert the macrocosmic order, so does the devil's child overturn social order in the hall.

Conner has suggested that *Vainglory* is a satire recalling Carolingian models, the influence of which can especially be felt in the description of the devil's child at 23b–44a.[89] Roberts dismisses this, partly due to the unsuccessful parallel Conner draws between the poem and Theodulf of Orléans' portrait of Cadac-Andréas.[90] I do not wish to discount Conner's argument altogether. Just because the parallel with Theodulf proves unworkable does not mean that *Vainglory* cannot possess a satirical element, although I can find no evidence to suggest that it is directly influenced by Carolingian satirical models. The poem, broadly speaking, conforms to both the Mediterranean-Christian and Anglo-Saxon notions of humor. These are not at odds. According to Shanzer, 'Christian laughter' in the early Latin West

[86] Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 75 (lines 907–8a).
[87] Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 156 (line 83b).
[88] Pickford, p. 6.
[89] Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, pp. 156–57.
[90] Roberts, 136; Cf. *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, ed. and trans. by Peter Godman (London: Duckworth, 1985), pp. 160–63, lines 209–34.

'inverted the fate of derisor and derisee'.[91] Shanzer gives the only two examples of *ridere* 'to laugh' in the New Testament (Luke 6.21, 25) as evidence for this.[92] Both refer to the same variation on the paradoxical truth, that those who hunger shall be filled, and that those who weep shall laugh. This is strikingly similar, not only to the prophet's *gyd*, but to Shippey's definition of Anglo-Saxon humor: 'often, indeed usually, *the laugh is on those who laugh*.'[93] In her analysis of medieval parody, Bayless defines satire 'simply as any form of literature, in verse or prose, which ridicules vice or folly'.[94] *Vainglory* affords its audience a satirical laugh at the pride and folly of a man who is not aware of consequence, that 'biþ þæs oþer swice' ('there will be another outcome of this' [31b]). The audience knows what this end will be, and is invited to deride the devil's child, confident that his pride will come before a fall.

Shippey claims that 'a characteristic part of Anglo-Saxon humor is grim amusement from the wise at the expense of those who cannot understand words and do not share their vision of reality'.[95] Further, in Anglo-Saxon humor, 'the joke turns on recognizing the enormous differences of meaning between barely perceptible or imperceptible differences of sound'.[96] *Lætan* is a brilliant illustration of this. The occurrence of the verb at 10a has perplexed editors. Lines 9–12 appear to say that anyone who lets drunkenness and lusts of the mind mar him in his thoughts can easily understand the *gealdor*. Usually, editors resolve this problem by placing a negative particle before *læteð* (10a). Huppé argues that emendation is not necessary, since conflated in *lætan* are two verbs with the separate meanings of 'allow' and 'prevent'.[97] A closer examination of how *lætan* is working in the poem will prove him right. The deliberately obscure choice of verb at 10a is challenging the reader to tread carefully, to contest what he sees as immediately obvious and, instead, to look deeper. Men may easily understand the significance of the *gealdor* if they *prevent* inebriation and 'modes gælsan' ('lusts of the mind' [11b]) from impairing their faculties, when there are many 'speech-praisers' in the hall (9–14): men who, potentially, may take speech only at face-value. The devil's child *leteð* forth a mind-dart (34b), *læteð* missiles penetrate God's fortress (37b–39), and *læteð* out words, inebriated (40b–41). The alternative meaning contained within the verb here casts his actions into stark relief: it implies that God's child withholds mind-darts, prevents missiles from penetrating God's fortress and does not speak too loosely or drink too much. In this sense, God's child and devil's child, who, on the surface, look and sound the same, are both present within *lætan*.

According to Shippey, in Anglo-Saxon humor, 'part of the joke is always on the fool who sees only the obvious meaning',[98] in which case, the joke is certainly on the devil's child, who has, figuratively, apprehended the verb of 10b and used it in exactly the opposite sense to how it is intended there. The joke here may also be on the reader, who takes this verb at face value. *Lætan* is a natural progression of *scyldum bescyredne* (8a): here the humble man's opposite,

[91] Donna Shanzer, 'Laughter and Humour in the Early Medieval Latin West', in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 25–47 (p. 47).

[92] Shanzer, p. 29.

[93] Thomas A. Shippey, ' "Grim Wordplay": Folly and Wisdom in Anglo-Saxon Humor', in *Humour in Anglo Saxon Literature*, ed. by Jonathan Wilcox (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 33-48 (p. 37).

[94] Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition*, Recentiores: Later Latin Texts and Contexts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 3.

[95] Shippey, 'Grim Wordplay', p. 48.

[96] Ibid, p. 45.

[97] Huppé, p. 11. Cf. Stephen A. Barney, *Word-hoard: An Introduction to Old English Vocabulary*, with the assistance of Wertheimer and Stevens, 2nd edn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 46.

[98] Shippey, 'Grim Wordplay', p. 44.

'þone wacran' ('the weaker one' 7b) — is made deprived because of his sins; encoded in the phrase is the secondary meaning of 'deprived of shields'.[99] My translation, 'dispossessed', attempts to preserve this. The devil's child is first a sinner; this makes him spiritually 'deprived'; this, in turn, loses him the protection afforded by the ability to perceive divine truth. He might interpret 8a – another possibly deliberate linguistic pitfall – as has Mackie, to mean 'deprived of his sins', or, even more troublingly, as has Rodrigues, to mean 'shriven of his sins'.[100] One thing that can be stated with certainty is that *lætan* is central to the poem's connective tissue: here is the prophet's wisdom, the satirical element and, further, the psychomachia allegory, which Doubleday has identified as constituting 'a major part' of *Vainglory*.[101] A patristic trope, psychomachia allegory depicts the soul as a fortress commended to man by God, besieged by the devil.

Mize makes the important point that the allegory in this instance does not so much entail the battle for man's soul as for his mind; *æfþonca* (26a), for instance, is formed on the root *þanc*, denoting thought.[102] Mize takes the *wigsteal* 'rampart' (39a), besieged by *inwitflan* 'missiles of deceit' (37b), to refer to the mind of the devil's child.[103] I shall argue here that just as mind is as fortress in the poem, so too is fortress as mind. McLuhan, in his *Understanding Media*, claims that 'tribal man' sees his house as 'a ritual extension of his body'.[104] A similar idea is expressed, specifically relating to Anglo-Saxon feudal identity, by Tom Saunders: quoting Marx, Saunders asserts that 'under feudalism landed property "appears as the inorganic body of its lord' '.[105] Hermann also considers Anglo-Saxon fortresses to be 'material equivalents of the barricaded self'.[106] *Vainglory* is reflective of this sort of cultural idea. The allegory begins, as Huppé has pointed out, at *æscstede*, which foreshadows, with *æsc* 'spear', the projectile imagery that is to come.[107] I follow Muir in my translation of lines 16b–18a in taking *inne* (17b) as 'within (=in their hearts/minds)'.[108] Free-flowing speech and free-flowing wine leave the men in the hall potentially exposed to the devil's missiles which will debilitate their perception, causing the hall to replicate the battlefield occurring in their minds. As such, when the devil's child is pointed out, the hall mutates into an extension of that man's mind. The *burg* element of the compound, *winburgum* (14b), denotes a fortified town, and perhaps the hapax legomenon *burgweal* (38a) has been created to refer back to this, implying that what is being taken over is not just the mind of the devil's child, but his environment.

[99] Huppé, p. 10.

[100] Mackie, p. 11; Rodrigues, p. 83.

[101] James F. Doubleday, 'The Allegory of the Soul as Fortress in Old English Poetry', in *Anglia*, 88 (1970), 503–8 (p. 509).

[102] Mize, p. 81, n. 69.

[103] Mize, p. 81.

[104] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, ed. by Gordon (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003), p. 170.

[105] Tom Saunders, 'Class, Space and "Feudal" Identities in Early Medieval England', in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain,* ed. by Frazer and Tyrrell, Studies in the Early History of Britain (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 209–32 (p. 215); Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts', in *Marx: Early Writings*, trans. by Livingstone and Benton (London: New Left Review, 1975), p. 318.

[106] John P. Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), p. 45.

[107] Huppé, p. 14.

[108] Muir, p. 539.

This is why, when he is assailed with projectiles, 'one cannot tell, so to speak, whether the deadly shafts are coming in or going out'.[109] The devil's child treacherously allows 'feondes fligepilum' (the devil's flying arrows [27a]) into his mind. His ability to form thoughts and perceive reality is thus fatally impaired, causing him to obliviously commit offences, denoted by *hinderhoca*. The fortress that is an extension of the mind — the hall — then falls, through the *hygegar* 'mind-dart' (34b). The *inwitflan* assailing the fortress/mind is the culmination of this process: the man's mind and his vision of the world are simultaneously compromised. In this way, the projectile imagery reproduces the psychic chain of knowledge — perception — action. This is not only realized in terms of battle, but those of hospitality. Regan notes the similarity between 6b–7a — 'godes agen bearn, | wilgest on wicum' ('God's own child, a welcome guest in the places men reside') — and 79b-81a: 'þam bið simle | gæst gegæderad godes agen bearn | wilsum in worlde' ('that one is always accompanied by a spirit: God's own son, delightful in the world'). Regan asserts that 'godes agen bearn' is first 'the virtuous man', then Christ, for 'the individual', in the tradition of the Church Fathers, 'is identified with the one whom he imitates.'[110] If mind is seen as home, and home as mind, then this reading can be taken further. Lines 6b-7a may mean that the speaker is able to identify a virtuous man within dwellings; they can also be taken as an ability to discern Christ within a man's mind or Christ within dwellings. At 79b-81a, all of these meanings are extricated. Christ, if he is present in the mind, shall be present *everywhere* on earth.

In opposition to this, the mind of the devil's child, the hall he inhabits, the space of heaven parallel to this, and the universe itself can be seen as 'anti-halls'. The term 'anti-hall', coined by Kathryn Hume, describes 'a symbolic correlative for various states of misery'. Anti-halls subvert the imagery of a 'real hall', which is a place of protection, fellowship and joy.[111] Within *Vainglory*, hall becomes anti-hall and world becomes dystopia, as amplifications of a diabolically infiltrated mind. The protection that all these spaces afford is removed and they are rendered 'scyldum bescyredne': worthless, hollow and uninhabitable. Significantly, Hume goes on to claim that, in Christian texts, 'we find the true hall as a figuration of heaven, the anti-hall for hell'. Although hell is not depicted as an anti-hall in the poem, a polluted heaven conforms to the model. The depiction of heaven in the poem is, further, a recollection of *fyrngeflit*, 'the old strife', traditionally employed in Anglo-Saxon poetry to identify 'present spiritual conflict within a panoramic time span.' The broken hall, then, becomes macrocosmic. *Fyrngeflit* serves to stimulate a 'Christian warrior's memory of past victories', affirms 'psychic and societal structure', and discourages 'destructive self-assertion'.[112] The description of the rebellion in heaven amplifies that of the hall: just as the devil's child there, rejecting Christ, exalting himself and hating his better, uses that enclosure for his own ends, so do the rebellious angels wish to treacherously occupy heaven and overthrow their superior, God, 'on hyra sylfra dom' ('in accordance with their own judgement' [64b]). Line 64b also occurs in *The Battle of Maldon*, referring to Danish seamen who demand an amount of gold of their own choosing.[113] *Dom* can also describe the judgment of God at the apocalypse, as in *Elene*: 'ðonne dryhten sylf dom geseceð' ('when God Himself passes judgment').[114] My translation attempts to preserve

[109] Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom and Learning*, p. 8.
[110] Regan, p. 335.
[111] Kathryn Hume, 'The "Ruin-Motif" in Old English Poetry', *Anglia*, 94 (1976), 339–60 (p. 359).
[112] Hermann, pp. 39–40.
[113] Dobbie, *The Anglo Saxon Minor Poems*, p. 8 (line 38b).
[114] Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, p. 101 (line 1280).

the dual meanings within *dom* of 'decision' and 'sentence'. The rebellious angels choose to act without God's jurisdiction; in so doing, it is inevitable that they *will* be judged. *Swice* (31b, 61b) means 'outcome' in its first instance and 'treachery' in its second: through the parallelism of the perverted hall and the perverted Kingdom, the outcome of treachery is exposed.

This is a social conflict: one who exalts himself is one who places himself above his station. The devil's child is set upon this earth and placed in the hall. He fails, however, to abide by the 'terms and conditions' required by both his community and by his Maker. Dynamic and assertive, the devil's child, like the rebellious angels, attempts to disrupt the order of things, as opposed to the man who lives in peace with folk (67–72a), and passively turns the other cheek when he is wronged, deferring to the authority of Matthew 18.21–22. The speaker sees no difference between the social order of the hall and the macrocosmic order of the Christian universe. This is where the satirical element comes into play. A destructive agent in society is 'named and shamed' in accordance with both the Christian and Germanic-heroic idea of humor. The psychomachia allegory works in conjunction with the satirical element, identifying the devil's child as the archetypal Anglo-Saxon and Mediterranean-Christian butt of a joke: a man who cannot perceive the truth, and will be humbled for his folly.

Conclusion

The devil's child is not just a proud man, but a vainglorious one, for his pride is futile. The *gyd*'s apocalyptic resonances denote a process without time, 'which can be said to have already been fulfilled as the consequences of the war in heaven show'.[115] He who exalts himself has, then, *already* been humbled. This is an inherently paradoxical concept, one that would not appear to make sense in the mortal world of linear time. The crucial message of *Vainglory* is that truth is not self-evident: things are not as they seem. The poem practises what it preaches: its ellipsis puts an audience through its paces to demonstrate that words and bodies are ultimately signifiers. By holding the identity of the prophet in abeyance, the speaker strands his audience in an interpretive quagmire, and invites them to negotiate their way out using the skills that John the Baptist was born with. *Vainglory* might not appear particularly constructive; as Shippey remarks, it is difficult to ascertain from the poem 'any positive, useful idea of what we are supposed to *do*.'[116] In fact, this is answered in the poem's final admonition to always keep God, our unsurpassable better, or 'þone selestan' in mind (82–84). In so doing, we will be afforded the ability to perceive the divine among the worldly, truth within word and Christ within man. To keep God in mind is to see his imprint on the world, and thus to see through the physical into the metaphysical. The devil's child, 'gode orfeormne' (bereft of God [49b]), cannot understand that the world is really a collection of shadows on a wall, cast by a macrocosmic reality.

[115] Pickford, p. 26.
[116] Shippey, p. 9.

Vainglory: edition

Hwæt! me frod wita on fyrndagum
sægde, snottor ar, sundorwundra fela.
Wordhord onwreah[117] witgan larum
beorn boca gleaw, bodan ærcwide,
þæt ic soðlice siþþan meahte
ongitan bi þam gealdre godes agen bearn,
wilgest on wicum, ond þone wacran[118] swa some,
scyldum bescyredne, on gescead witan.[119]
Þæt mæg æghwylc mon eaþe geþencan,
se þe hine læteð on þas lænan tid
amyrran his gemyndum modes gælsan[120]
ond on his dægrime druncen[121] to rice,[122]
þonne monige beoð mæþelhergendra,
wlonce wigsmiþas[123] winburgum in.
Sittaþ æt symble, soðgied wrecað,[124]
wordum wrixlað. Witan fundiaþ
hwylc æscstede inne in ræcede
mid werum wunige, þonne win hweteð
beornes breostsefan. Breahtem stigeð,
cirm on corþre. Cwide scralletaþ
missenlice. Swa beoþ modsefan
dalum gedæled,[125] sindon dryhtguman
ungelice. Sum on oferhygdo
þrymme þringeð,[126] þrinteð him in innan
ungemedemad mod: sindan to monige þæt.
Bið þæt æfþonca eal gefylled
feondes fligepilum, facensearwum.
Breodað he ond bælceð; boð his sylfes
swiþor micle þonne se sella mon.
Þenceð þæt his wise welhwam þince
eal unforcuþ. Biþ þæs oþer swice,
þonne he þæs facnes fintan sceawað.

[117] onwreah] MS *onwearh.*
[118] wacran] Guntner, 'An Edition of Three Old English Poems', p. 74, posits that this may be for *wacoran* 'the watchful one', an epithet for Satan. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, p. 538, suggests that 'both meanings [of 'weaker' and 'watchful'] may have been intended simultaneously': unfortunately, a translation cannot reproduce this.
[119] witan] MS *witon*.
[120] modes gælsan] This verse also occurs in *Juliana*, 366b.
[121] druncen] MS *drucen*.
[122] se þe hine læteð...druncen to rice] Following Huppé's formula (p. 11), albeit with some reshuffling for idiomatic purposes: prevents {lusts of the mind + too great a drunkenness} impairing-him. The verb *amyrran* takes the accusative, and thus governs *hine*.
[123] wlonce wigsmiþas] This verse also occurs in *The Battle of Brunanburh*, 72a.
[124] soðgied wrecað] This verse also occurs in *The Seafarer*, 1b.
[125] dalum gedæled] This verse also occurs in *Guthlac A,* 54a.
[126] þringeð] MS *þringe*.

Vainglory: translation

Listen! A wise and ancient witness, a clear-sighted emissary,
told me of many special portents in former days.
With the lore of a prophet, this religious teacher
unlocked his word-hoard, the long-ago foretelling of the herald,
so from then on I was truly able to perceive,
by that divine utterance, God's own child,
a welcome guest in the places people reside, and similarly distinguish
the weaker one, dispossessed by his sins.

Anyone might easily reflect on this,
who does not let lusts of the mind
in this frail existence, and too great a drunkenness
in his span of days, impair him in his thoughts,
when there are many speech-praisers:
proud war-makers within the winehalls.
They sit at feast, tell truth-tales,
bandy words. They desire to know
what battlefield might inwardly exist
among men in the hall, when wine whets
a man's heart. The noise mounts,
the uproar in the throng. They call out,
each with a speech of his own. So are minds
divided into types, for men are different.

One sort, in pride,
pushes himself forward forcefully; an unhumbled mind
swells within him: there are too many of that sort.
That sort is entirely filled
with the Fiend's flying shafts of malice, with treacherous wiles.
He bellows and shouts; talks himself up
far more than the better one does.
He thinks that his behaviour appears entirely reputable
to everyone. There will be another outcome of that,
when he beholds the consequence of such treacherous behaviour.

Wrenceþ he ond blenceþ, worn geþenceþ
hinderhoca, hygegar leteð,
scurum sceoteþ. He þa scylde ne wat
fæhþe gefremede. Feoþ his betran:[127]
eorl fore æfstum læteð inwitflan
brecan þone burgweal, þe him bebead meotud
þæt he þæt wigsteal wergan sceolde.[128]
Siteþ symbelwlonc, searwum læteð
wine gewæged word ut faran;
þræfte þringan þrymme gebyrmed,
æfæstum onæled, oferhygda ful,
niþum nearowrencum.[129] Nu þu cunnan meaht,
gif þu þyslicne þegn gemittest
wunian in wicum. Wite þe be þissum
feawum forðspellum þæt þæt biþ feondes bearn
flæsce bifongen, hafað fræte lif,
grundfusne gæst gode orfeormne,[130]
wuldorcyninge. Þæt se witga song,
gearowyrdig guma, ond þæt gyd awræc:
'Se þe[131] hine sylfne in þa sliþnan tid
þurh oferhygda up ahlæneð,
ahefeð heahmodne, se sceal hean wesan
æfter neosiþum niþer gebiged,
wunian witum fæst, wyrmum beþrungen.'
Þæt wæs geara iu in godes rice
þætte mid englum oferhygd astag:
widmære gewin. Wroht ahofan,
heardne heresiþ; heofon widledan;[132]
forsawan hyra sellan, þa hi to swice þohton
ond þrymcyning þeodenstoles
ricne beryfan, swa hit ryht ne wæs,
ond þonne gesettan on hyra sylfra dom[133]

[127] feoþ] MS *feoh*. Pickford has put forward a valiant argument for not emending this (pp. 15, 24). I have chosen to emend, following Mackie (p. 12), as a verb here causes the half-line to neatly parallel 'forsawon hyra sellan' (61a). Since there are many other parallels between the rebellion in heaven and the behavior of the devil's child in the hall, it seems safe to assume that one is intended here.

[128] sceolde] MS *scealde*.

[129] nearowrencum] Uniquely attested, but the form *nearobregd* exists, defined by Bosworth and Toller (p. 712) as 'a wile or trick that brings others into straits'. Cf. *Juliana* (302-304a) in which a fiend in the devil's service explains that he used *nearobregdum* to delude Nero into executing the disciples, Peter and Paul.

[130] gode orfeormne] Shippey (p. 57) translates, 'worthless to God', Huppé (p. 5), 'without sustenance of God'. The sense, however, seems more to be that God is entirely absent in the spirit of the devil's child: I have thus followed the earlier interpretations of Thorpe (p. 316), who reads 'of God devoid', and Mackie (p. 13), who has 'destitute of God'.

[131] Se þe] MS *seþe*.

[132] widledan] MS *wid lædan*.

[133] on hyra sylfra dom] This verse also occurs in *The Battle of Maldon*, 38b.

He plots and deceives, nurtures a great many
sinister hooks, lets fly a mind-dart,
hurls these in tempests. He does not know the guilt,
the enmity he has brought about. He hates his better;
the man, out of spite, lets missiles of deceit
shatter that city-wall which God commended to him
in order that he should defend that rampart.
He sits, ebullient with feasting; overcome with wine,
he artfully lets words go forth,
push pugnaciously, engorged with violence,
afire with spite, evils, treacherous tricks; full of pride.
Now you can recognise him,
if you meet such a man
dwelling in the places people reside. Know by these
few words of instruction that that one is the devil's child,
enclosed in flesh, and that he has a shameful life,
a spirit rushing to hell and bereft of God, the King of Glory.
About that sort, the prophet, a man ready with words,
composed a verse, and uttered that prediction:
'He who elevates himself through pride
in that terrible hour,
exalts himself, jubilant, shall be made lowly
after the ultimate journey, and, brought down,
shall live trapped in torments, encircled with serpents.'
It was long ago that, in the Kingdom of God,
pride arose among the angels:
a notorious struggle. They stirred up strife,
a violent campaign; they made heaven impure;
they scorned their better when they planned treachery,
and to rob the mighty and glorious King
of his throne, as was not right,
and then to establish, in accordance with their own judgement,

wuldres wynlond. Þæt him wige forstod
fæder frumsceafta; wearð him seo feohte to grim.
Đonne bið þam oþrum ungelice,[134]
se þe her on eorþan eaðmod leofað,
ond wiþ gesibbra gehwone simle healdeð
freode on folce ond his freond lufað,
þeah þe he him abylgnesse oft gefremede
willum in þisse worulde.[135] Se mot wuldres dream
in haligra hyht heonan astigan
on engla eard.[136] Ne biþ þam oþrum swa,
se þe on ofermedum eargum dædum
leofaþ in leahtrum. Ne beoð þa lean gelic
mid wuldorcyning. Wite þe be þissum,
gif þu eaðmodne eorl gemete,
þegn on þeode, þam bið simle
gæst gegæderad: godes agen bearn
wilsum in worlde, gif me se witega ne leag.
Forþon we sculon a hycgende hælo rædes
gemunan in mode mæla gehwylcum
þone selestan sigora waldend. AMEN.

[134] Đonne bið þam oþrum ungelice] This line also occurs in *Christ III*, 1262: there, however, it refers to the damned, separated from the virtuous at Judgment Day.

[135] ond his freond lufað … willum in þisse worulde] Cf. Matt. 18: 21-22, 35.

[136] Se mot wuldres dream … on engla eard] Editors sometimes add a preposition before *wuldres dream*, as prepositions precede *haligra hyht* and *engla eard*. The addition of an 'in' before *wuldres dream* is not necessary, as Pickford (p. 28) has pointed out, since *astigan* can take a direct object, in its meanings of 'board' and 'climb', for instance. Yet, the fact that there are prepositions for what, according to this logic, should be other direct objects, indicates that there is a sense of progression here. 73a and 74b have, therefore, been taken as adverbial phrases: by climbing the ecstasy of glory, the humble man may enter what the holy hope for – perhaps a reference to the separation of the virtuous from the sinful at Judgement Day – and then attain the Kingdom. 'To reach', in the translation, is an addition for fluency's sake. Cf. *Guthlac A*: the people worthy of going to heaven are 'oferwinnað þa awyrgdan gæstas, bigytað him wuldres ræste,/ hwider sceal þæs monnes mod astigan' (those who triumph over cursed visitations, and attain for themselves a splendorous repose, to where the mind of man must climb [25-26]).

a splendid land of delight. The Father of Creation
denied them that with war. The fight turned out too dire for them.

But it will be different for the other one,
who lives humble-minded here on earth
and, among folk, always keeps at peace
with every member of his kindred, and who loves his friend,
though his friend may often wilfully have done wrong
by him in this world. This one is able, from here,
to climb the ecstasy of glory, into the hope of the holy,
to reach the land of the angels.

It is not so for the other one who lives in the midst of arrogant, craven deeds,
in the midst of sins. Those rewards will not be alike
with the King of Glory. Know by these things,
if you meet a humble-minded man,
a man among the people, that one is always
accompanied by a spirit: God's own child,
desirable in the world — if the prophet did not lie to me.
So, we must always, resolving upon what is
needful for salvation, at all times keep
that greatest Lord of Victories in mind. AMEN.

Poetic Attitudes and Adaptations in Late Old English Verse

Megan E. Hartman

1. Introduction: Language Change in Late Old English

Throughout most of the Old English period, poets' attitudes towards language change were conservative to a fault. Scholars agree that poetry changed very little during this period and that poetic language probably varied markedly from the ordinary speech of the time, preserving archaic vocabulary and word forms long after they had fallen out of common use. By the tenth century, however, poems began to show the effect of language change, which has allowed scholars to point out clear differences between the composition of these later poems and the earlier ones.[1] I will argue that this necessity bred opposing styles of poetic composition. Some poets took the linguistic changes as an opportunity to be innovative, adapting the verse form to the language and composing poetry that reflected contemporary speech, while others stalwartly preserved the traditional forms and altered their style as necessary to maintain short, contained verses. These various methods of poetic composition suggest that scholars should rethink their mode of analysis for these poems. Rather than judging them primarily on the basis of how well they hold to a monolithic standard of Old English verse, we should examine how and why individual poets develop their style. In the case of late-tenth-century poems, such an analysis demonstrates that as the language changed, poets composed with varying degrees of conservatism and innovation and altered their style to accommodate their view on poetic composition.

For a long time, analysis of late Old English verse has been hampered by critiques on the correctness of the verse; scholars often describe it as defective in one way or another. The defects can be matters of style: Julie Townsend shows that the *Chronicle* poems have been criticized as mechanical, filled with clichés, rambling, doggerel, and generally technically

[1] While dating poetry has always been controversial, the category of 'late poetry' is less so because many poems can be dated to the tenth century or slightly later on non-metrical grounds: *The Battle of Brunanburh*, *The Coronation of Edgar*, *The Battle of Maldon*, *The Death of Edward*, *The Death of Edgar*, and *The Capture of the Five Boroughs*. *The Meters of Boethius* is also closely related to this group as a late ninth-century work. *The Menologium* cannot be dated as conclusively, but it makes references to the Benedictine Rule, which suggests that it should be dated to a period after the Benedictine Reform became prominent in England (c. 965). Another poem that should probably belong with this group is *Judgment Day II*. Although it cannot be dated conclusively, R. D. Fulk demonstrates that the poem shows many of the metrical features that are peculiar to the externally dated poems, so it was probably written at the same time; see *History of Old English Meter* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 251–68.

correct but lacking literary merit.[2] Other critics focus more closely on metrical defects. D. G. Scragg carefully details several ways in which *The Battle of Maldon*, a poem that is often used to characterize the late Old English period, varies from the metrical standard set by conservative poems such as *Beowulf*: defects in alliteration are prominent; the poem shows more deviation in the drops; the distribution of the types has changed, with more frequent types A and B at the expense of types D and E; the caesura does not appear to be as strong, for frequently phrases can be split between two verses of the same line; and the poet repeats syntactic formulas, verses, or even whole lines verbatim substantially more often.[3]

Recently, some scholars have begun to explore the possibility that the poetic tradition was shifting by the end of the Old English period and that a new paradigm needs to be developed to analyze these verses. Both Thomas Cable and Thomas A. Bredehoft analyze various late Old English poems that have often been considered irregular or unmetrical to argue that they appear reasonably organized if the lifts are no longer subject to resolution and secondary stress and the drops are more loosely organized.[4] While their final scansions differ, both scholars argue that the different conventions illustrate changes to the overall poetic system that result from linguistic change, which ultimately lead to the form that alliterative poetry took during the Middle English Alliterative Revival.[5] These arguments go a long way to showing not only how alliterative poetry developed throughout the Middle Ages, but also how we ought to reconsider some of the standards by which we judge late Old English poetry. I would like to argue further that a shift in the poetic standard can be found before the system needed to be reorganized completely. As the linguistic pressures that ultimately transformed Old English poetry into something new were just beginning to take hold in the tenth century, individual poets began to adapt their methods of composition in response while still for the most part maintaining the structure of the alliterative line.

[2] See *The Battle of Brunanburh*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (London: Heinemann, 1938), p. 36; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglass, and Susie I. Tucker (London: Eyre and Spottiswode, 1965), p.77; T. A. Shippey, *Old English Verse* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), p. 186; Derek Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London: Routledge and K Paul, 1977), p. 65; C. L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1983), p. 189; and F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 258–59. For a summary of these articles, see Julie Townsend, 'The Meter of the *Chronicle* Verse', *Studia Neophilologica*, 68 (1996), 143–76. Cf. Donald Scragg, 'A Reading of Brunanburh', in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in memory of Edward B Irving, Jr.*, ed. by Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 109–22 (p. 115).

[3] *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. by D. G. Scragg (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), pp. 28–35.

[4] Thomas Cable, *The English Alliterative Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 41–65; and Thomas Bredehoft, 'Ælfric and Late Old English Verse', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 33 (2004), 77–107, and *Early English Metre* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 70–98. Cable focuses specifically on poems of the eleventh and twelfth century that can illustrate the transition between Old and Middle English poetry: *The Death of Edward, Durham, The Grave*, and the Worcester Fragments. Bredehoft looks at a larger corpus that includes some tenth century poems as well. He adds *The Metrical Psalms, Metrical Charms, Judgment Day II, The Battle of Maldon, Instructions for Christians, An Exhortation to Christian Living, A Summons to Prayer*, and the Sutton Brooch inscription.

[5] Additional work on the topic can be found in *Approaches to the Metres of Alliterative Verse*, ed. by Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter (Leeds: Leeds Texts and Monographs, 2009). In particular, see Jeremy Smith '"The Metre which Does not Measure": The Function of Alliteration in Medieval English Alliterative Poetry', pp. 11–24; Elizabeth Solopova, 'Alliteration and Prosody in Old and Middle English', pp. 25–40; and Geoffrey Russom, 'Some Unnoticed Constraints on the A-Verse in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*', pp. 41–58. Cf. Seiichi Suzuki, *The Metre of Old Saxon Poetry: The Remaking of Alliterative Tradition* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), where Suzuki argues that the linguistic changes that differentiated Old Saxon from Old English and Old Norse similarly created a language that was difficult to accommodate in the alliterative line, so Old Saxon poets restructured the system to fit the structure of the language.

R. D. Fulk demonstrates that the Old English poetic form started to change by the end of the tenth century because Old English was experiencing a general lowering in stress levels. For evidence, Fulk cites such prosodic developments as the lowering of unstressed vowels in medial syllables (which occurs when the medial syllables are not strongly articulated), the growth in parasite vowels (which occurs when the root syllable does not receive a high degree of stress), and the decline in poetic compounding (which occurs when the second element of the compound is no longer clearly distinguished).[6] This shift influenced the language in two ways that are particularly important to the meter: it promoted syntactic change and decreased metical subordination.

The more noticeable influence is the syntactic change: as unstressed vowels began to fall together, English began to shift from being a primarily synthetic language to a primarily analytic one. In a synthetic language such as Old English, while word order is not entirely free, the syntactic role of each word in the sentence is ultimately determined by its case endings. In contrast, the combination of a set word order and auxiliary words such as prepositions define the syntactic role of each word in an analytic language. Although Old English does have some analytic features, it is primarily a synthetic language. Because the reduction of stress near the end of the tenth century resulted in unstressed vowels becoming centralized, which in turn created ambiguity among inflectional endings, a need for a different way to mark the function of a word in a sentence arose, namely the increase of analytic features. The exact relationship between the phonological stress and syntactic change is debatable. Theo Vennemann argues that first the phonological change creates ambiguity in the morphology, and then word order stabilizes to compensate for the change.[7] In contrast, Elizabeth Traugott argues that it is more of a cyclical process, since the inflections would not have been lost if they were conveying necessary information, but that the two are nonetheless related because the endings could only be generalized if word order was beginning to stabilize, and the stabilization of word order would allow the inflections to be further reduced.[8] Either way, though, the two changes are closely related and just beginning to be seen around the late tenth century. While the language does not become primarily analytic until around 1250, several scholars have noted that the shift begins earlier and that Old English shows an increasing tendency to favor SVO word order by the end of the Old English period.[9]

Although the shift in word order itself would not have had a large effect on the meter, other related features that typify analytic syntax could, and Traugott demonstrates that several of these features began to appear with more frequency in late Old English prose. First, the incidence of function words increased to compensate for the loss of inflectional endings; specifically, prepositions and auxiliary verbs became more prominent. Secondly, the subject position in impersonal statements began to be filled more frequently, which makes for more pronouns.[10] As I will show, the growing number of function words in prose diction put an

6 Fulk, pp. 252–56.

7 Theo Vennemann, 'Topics, Subjects and Word Order: From SXV to SVX via TVX', in *Historical Linguistics*, ed. by John Anderson and C. Jones (Amersterdam: Nort-Holland Publishing, 1974), pp. 339–76 (p. 357).

8 Elizabeth Traugott, *The History of English Syntax* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), pp. 110–11.

9 See, for example, Traugott, *The History*, p. 110; and Robert Saitz, 'Functional Word-Order in Old English Subject-Object Patterns' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955), p. 108.

10 Elizabeth Traugott, 'Syntax', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, ed. by Richard M. Hogg, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992–2001), I (1992), 285–56. Cf. Veronika Kniezsa, 'Prepositional Phrases Expressing Adverbs of Time', in *Historical English Syntax*, ed. by Dieter Kastovsky (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), pp. 221–31.

increasing pressure on the poetic line that ultimately caused poets to alter their method of composition.

The difference can be seen most clearly in the way poets organize the drops, both in terms of drop length and the types of words that can appear in drops. Words in Old English can be split into three categories: stress words, clitics, and particles (these terms correspond to the categories *Satzteile*, *Satzteilpartikeln*, and *Satzpartikeln* that were first coined by Hans Kuhn). Stress words, which consist of nouns, lexical adjectives and adverbs, and non-finite verbs, always receive stress. Clitics are the most weakly stressed words, such as definite articles, negative markers, prepositions, or prefixes. They never receive stress unless they are displaced. Particles stand between these two categories and have variable stress. Scholars have debated exactly what words should be considered particles. The most inclusive list encompasses finite verbs, pronouns, conjunctions that join complete clauses, quantitative adjectives (though when they appear attributively, quantitative adjectives are generally treated as clitics), and non-lexical adverbs. Other scholars would prefer to see words that always appear at the start of a clause and therefore must always be unstressed treated differently than the particles that can be displaced.[11]

In traditional verse, drops tend to be relatively short and contain only the most lightly stressed words, if they contain any independent words at all. Poets frequently use only two words in a verse, creating mainly monosyllabic drops that are filled only with the non-root syllables of words, as in *ellen fremedon* (A1: ´ × ◡́ ×) 'performed deeds of valor' (*Beowulf* 3b).[12] When a verse-medial drop does have a separate word, the word tends to be a clitic, as in *geong in geardum* (A1: ´ × ´ ×) 'young in dwellings' (*Beowulf* 13a). Only drops that open a verse frequently contain multiple syllables and particles, though even these tend to consist of no more than three syllables and three separate words. According to Geoffrey Russom's analysis, poets strive for such short verses because poets wanted to keep verses simple so that the audience could understand the metrical patterns. He believes that foot patterns are modeled after word patterns, so the simplest pattern is a verse with two feet filled by exactly one stressed word each. When the poet varies from this norm by including unstressed words in the place of unstressed word-final syllables, he tries to use as few words as possible and only very light words. Only verses that begin with a light foot, or a foot with no stress (these are type B and C verses in Sievers's system), tend to include more words in the drop, which, according to Russom, is because the poet wants to mark this position as an independent foot.[13]

Composing a poem with more function words creates an extra challenge for the poets because the additional words necessitate longer drops. When the additional function words are particles, they can be organized into initial drops, where they would lengthen the verse but still appear rather natural. The placement of clitics such as prepositions and articles is less

[11] See especially B. R. Hutcheson, 'Kuhn's Laws, Finite Verb Stress, and the Critics', *Studia Neophilologica*, 64 (1992), 129–29 (pp. 133–34).

[12] For my scansion, I have adopted the system of Eduard Sievers, as detailed in *Altgermanische metric* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1893). In this system, ´ signifies stress on a long syllable; ◡́ signifies stress on a short syllable, which can be resolved with the following syllable, as in ◡́×; half stress, which can likewise be long, short or resolved, is written as either ̀, ◡ *P*, or ◡×; and × signifies an unstressed syllable. References to *Beowulf* come from *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). All other references to Old English poems refer to *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by George P. Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–53) (*ASPR*). The *ASPR* does not include marks of vowel length in the text, but because they are useful for metrical studies, I have added them here. Translations are mine.

[13] Geoffrey Russom, *Old English Meter and Linguistic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

flexible, however, since they are proclitic to the nouns they modify; when numerous clitics occur in the middle of a verse, they create longer drops in more unusual locations. When poets choose to put particles in those medial syllables, the verse can appear even more unusual.

In addition to initiating a syntactic change, the decrease in prosodic stress had a specific metrical effect as well. Winfred P. Lehmann and Geoffrey Russom argue that a strong primary stress can lead to strong metrical subordination, so that the stronger stress a language has, the more the number of unstressed words in poetry will be limited. To illustrate this point, they compare Old English alliterative poetry to the cognate forms in Old Norse and Old Saxon, demonstrating that Old Norse, which has strong stress and the greatest propensity to maintain long vowels, tends to have very short verses in *fornyrðislag*, while Old Saxon, with its weak primary stress and abundance of short syllables, uses long verses in the alliterative line. Old English stands between the two.[14] Lehmann further shows that as stress began to weaken, the Old English line began to include more unstressed words, perhaps in order to compensate for the weakening and create equally heavy lines, moving the poetic form in the direction of Old Saxon poetry.[15] Thus, the weakening stress may have encouraged the poets to include more unstressed words even as syntactic change presented them with more such words to include.

Significantly, the types of innovations that poets actually employed are not the same across the board. The composition of *Maldon* and *Judgment Day II* appears much as we might expect in light of the syntactic changes. The poets are far more willing to expand each drop, including drops that are restricted in more conservative poetry, and frequently include one or more separate words in at least one drop of the verse. In this way, they show an innovative adaptation of traditionally structured verse forms into a more fluid line that can replicate their own syntax. In contrast to these two poems, some of the *Chronicle* poems retain particularly short verses. To do so, they rely very heavily on the unique Old English poetic feature of variation, adapting it specifically to increase the number of short, noun-heavy verses,

To examine the stylistic choices of late Old English poets, I analyzed *The Battle of Maldon*, *Judgment Day II*, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, *The Death of Edward*, and *The Death of Edgar* and compared them to a sample from *Beowulf* that consists of three fifty-verse sections. I have chosen these poems as the most representative and statistically relevant of poems composed in the late Old English period. I excluded *The Meters of Boethius* because it is an adaptation of a complex philosophical tract, possibly by the amateur poet King Alfred, and therefore displays many atypical metrical patterns.[16] Although not as unusual as the *Meters*, the calendar form of *The Menologium* also puts some constraints on the language and creates metrical patterns that might not otherwise be present. I excluded *Capture of the Five Boroughs* because, at only thirteen lines, it is not long enough to provide reliable statistical data.

For my analysis, I focused on the structure of the drop, which I investigated through a detailed comparison of the length, filler, and adherence to specific metrical regulations among the different poems. Unstressed positions typically receive less attention than lifts in metrical studies because they do not have the same clear constraints; poets seem to be able to expand the drops at will. However, most scholars agree that certain unstressed positions, namely anacrusis and the first drop of a D* verse, are limited in specific ways. Thomas Cable

[14] Winfred P. Lehmann, *The Development of Germanic Verse Form* (New York: Gordian Press, 1971), pp. 80–123; and Geoffrey Russom, *Beowulf and Older Germanic Metre* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1998), *passim*.

[15] Lehmann, pp. 97–101.

[16] See Fulk, pp. 251–52.

and Edwin Duncan also show that all drops are restricted in some ways, and such attention to the unstressed positions is what ultimately led to a clearer understanding of the form of Middle English meter.[17] The development of the drop therefore seems as significant to the metrical development of the line as the placement of the lifts.

The analysis shows that *The Battle of Maldon* and *Judgment Day II* are particularly innovative in terms of verse form, adapting it to language change as needs be, while *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Death of Edward* use a style of variation that allows them to maintain conservative features. *The Death of Edgar* stands in between these two groups of poems. Thus, the poems demonstrate that when the language began to change, poets needed to choose between incorporating those changes into the poetic line and trying to hold on to a more conservative style. Some chose to take a middle road, but many reacted quite strongly, either taking the opportunity to adapt and expand the verse form in innovative ways or turning to a style of variation that would allow them to hold onto the form of the past.

2. The Structure of Late Old English Poems: Composition of the Drops

To analyze the adaptations late poets made to accommodate the additional words that result from the incipient analytic features, I have compared how closely they adhere to various restrictions on the drop that earlier poets maintain and in what ways they break from the conservative verse forms. The restrictions I cite are, of course, not actual rules that poets would have felt obliged to follow as such, since Anglo-Saxon poetry was presumably structured through practice and convention rather than explicit guidelines. Instead, I am referring to "laws" and "rules" that modern scholars have made in order to describe what they have observed about the poetry. While poets would not have conceived of the rules as modern scholars construe them, the poetic conventions cause conservative poets to compose within the limits of these observations most of the time.

2.1 Innovative Composition: *The Battle of Maldon* and *Judgment Day II*

Two poems in this study, *The Battle of Maldon* and *Judgment Day II*, appear the most innovative, eschewing the traditional conventions of Old English composition quite a bit. The most often-cited break in late poetry is probably freer use of anacrusis. Anacrusis is an extra drop that can be added to the beginning of type-A or type-D verses, which normally open with a stressed position, creating a verse with five positions. It is used only rarely in conservative poetry; in *Beowulf* it occurs in fewer than 1% of the verses.[18] It also appears to be a highly restricted position. Most metricists agree that anacrusis comprises no more than two syllables, though normally it is only one. Other restrictions have been proposed, though they are not as universally accepted: all verses with anacrusis ought to have double alliteration, and the subtype of the verse should be one that prefers double alliteration in the on-verse; material that fills the position of anacrusis can only be a prefix or the clitic *ne*; and (though this restriction is the most debatable) anacrusis should only appear in the on-verse.[19]

[17] Cable, *English Alliterative Tradition*, pp. 6–40, Russom, *Old English Meter*, *passim*; and Edwin Duncan, 'Weak Stress and Poetic Constraints on Old English Verse', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 92 (1993), 495–508.

[18] See Jeffrey Vickman, *A Metrical Concordance to Beowulf*, *Old English Newsletter*, Subsidia 16, 1990.

[19] See especially A. J. Bliss, *The Meter of Beowulf*, rev. edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967); Thomas Cable, *The Meter*

Certainly these tendencies should not be considered an inviolable set of rules, because even the most conservative poems contain instances of anacrusis that do not conform. However, since most instances of anacrusis are so restricted, it is probably true that conservative poets attempted to keep the position short and that repeated instances of anacrusis that fall outside of these norms would have been noticeably unusual in classical verse.

Both the *Maldon* poet and the *Judgment Day II* poet compose with much more relaxed restrictions on anacrusis. Overall, they employ anacrusis more frequently: it occurs 30 times (4.62% of the verses) in *Maldon* and 37 times (6.12% of the verses) in *Judgment Day II*.[20] Furthermore, some of the possible restrictions seem to no longer apply. In *Maldon*, 46.67% of the instances of anacrusis appear in the off-verse, and in *Judgment Day II* the incidence is even larger at 64.86%. Because these numbers are both around half, it would appear that the poets have no preference about which verse should receive anacrusis. The filler of the anacrusis seems to be likewise unrestricted. In *Judgment Day II* almost half the instances of anacrusis consist of an independent word and in *Maldon* over three quarters of the instances do. Hence, the poets seem to have no compunction about putting an independent word in the position. Similarly, neither poet restricts anacrusis to verses with double alliteration. Because so many of the anacrustic verses appear in the off-verse, the poets often cannot use double alliteration on many of them. In *Judgment Day II*, the on-verses with anacrusis are almost evenly split between verses with single and double alliteration. Again, the even split suggests that the poet did not have a preference about what sorts of verses could take anacrusis.

While the *Judgment Day II* poet seems completely unconcerned about double alliteration, however, the *Maldon* poet was not. All of the on-verses in *Maldon* with anacrusis do have double alliteration, showing at least a partial desire to employ the more conservative preferences for anacrustic verses. In other ways, as well, both poets restrict the way they use anacrusis to a degree, suggesting that anacrusis is not equivalent to other drops in the line. Although it can occur anywhere, it still has to be relatively short. In the combined 68 verses that contain anacrusis, only one instance has more than one syllable: *and þēr stænt āstīfad* (aA1: ××–́×–́×) 'and stand there stiffened' (*Judgment Day II* 174a). All the rest have only one. In addition, while the poets do not seem averse to using independent words in anacrusis, they mostly use clitics. Particles appear in anacrusis in less than 20% of the instances. By including any particles in this position at all, the poets are demonstrating more flexibility than particularly conservative poets, but they nevertheless show a preference for clitics.

Overall, then, the evidence suggests that poets still restrict anacrusis more than they do other drops, but that they do not maintain the same level of restrictiveness that more conservative poets prefer. The change is not at all surprising given what scholars have shown about the effect of language change on the shape of the line. Jeremy Smith shows that Old English tends toward trochaic rhythm because most phrases are formed from a lexical word plus the inflection, while Middle English tends to prefer iambic rhythm because the phrases

and Melody of Beowulf (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974); and Seiichi Suzuki, 'Anacrusis in the Meter of *Beowulf*', *Studies in Philology*, 92 (1995), 141–63.

[20] The verses in question are *Maldon* 7a, 11b, 14a, 23a, 32b, 49b, 55b, 66b, 68b, 72b, 84b, 90a, 96b, 136a, 138a, 146b, 179a, 182a, 185a, 193a, 200a, 202b, 212a, 223a, 228a, 240a, 240b, 242b, and 282b, and *Judgment Day II* 6b, 11b, 12a, 20a, 22b, 57a, 66a, 70b, 75b, 77a, 87b, 92a, 110b, 122b, 123b, 134b, 138b, 144a, 170b, 174a, 184a, 191b, 224b, 232b, 233b, 234b, 236b, 243b 262b, 267a, 267b, 271b, 275a, 289a, 297a, and 285b.

consist of a lexical word preceded by an article, preposition, or auxiliary.[21] Verses in Middle English alliterative meter therefore frequently start with an unstressed position. The more flexible form of anacrusis in these late Old English poems appears to be the precursor of that fully realized position.

Even drops that are not limited to the same degree as anacrusis seem more variable in these two poems than in *Beowulf*. First, the late poems permit a longer drop, as Table 1 shows. In *Beowulf*, just under half the verses contain polysyllabic drops, while in *Maldon* and *Judgment Day II* the number of polysyllabic drops increases sharply. The drops in *Maldon* in particular stand out because a large number of them are quite long. Although *Beowulf* has long drops with up to six syllables, drops over three syllables long are relatively rare. *Maldon* contains one drop that is seven syllables long, and it also has substantially more verses with four and five syllables in the drops. Thus, polysyllabic drops become more commonplace in these two poems.

Syllables	2	3	4	5	6	7	total
Beowulf (sample)	33.33	12.00	1.33	1.33	1.33	0.00	49.32
Maldon	40.22	13.71	7.24	4.01	0.62	0.15	65.95
Judgment Day II	53.05	12.24	2.15	0.50	0.33	0.00	68.27

Table 1: Percentage of verses with a polysyllabic drop in *Beowulf*, *Maldon*, and *Judgment Day II*

Secondly, the late poems differ from *Beowulf* because they tend to use more separate words in each drop. As a rule, conservative poets try to keep the number of separate words in each drop to a minimum, so that the stress words predominate in the verse. Of course all poems must employ separate words to some degree, and in individual instances *Beowulf* can have as many words in a single drop as any of the late poems. More frequently, though, when the *Beowulf* poet uses unstressed words in a verse, he includes just one or two, while the *Maldon* and *Judgment Day II* poets frequently use more, as is evident in Table 2.

Words	1	2	3	4	5	total
Beowulf (sample)	27.33	14.67	7.33	1.33	0.67	51.33
Maldon	17.26	29.28	12.94	5.24	0.31	65.02
Judgment Day II	40.50	18.68	6.94	1.32	0.50	67.93

Table 2: Percentage of verses with drops containing one or more unstressed words in *Beowulf*, *Maldon*, and *Judgment Day II*

Maldon has fewer drops with a single independent word than *Beowulf*. However, in contrast, *Maldon* has almost twice as many verses with two and three independent words in the drop and almost four times as many verses with four. *Judgment Day II* has fewer verses with more than three independent words in a drop, but regarding drops with one or two independent

[21] Smith, p. 12–14. Cf. Larry Benson, *Art and Tradition in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1965), pp. 112–14; and Geoffrey Russom, 'The Evolution of Middle English Alliterative Meter', in *Studies in the History of the English Language II: Unfolding Conversations*, ed. by Anne Curzan and Kimberly Emmons (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 279–304 (pp. 296–97).

words, it has more instances than *Beowulf* in both cases. Overall, the number of verses with independent unstressed words is much higher in both of the late poems. These differences follow logically from the language change in process; the larger number of lightly stressed words in the language and greater motivation to put them in the poetic line would encourage poets to compose longer drops that can contain multiple unstressed words.

Perhaps because of the lack of tight restrictions on the drops, neither of these poems organizes the particles according to the two so-called laws set out by Hans Kuhn, a set of metric-syntactic properties that describe the treatment of particles within the verse clause. Kuhn's first law states that all particles must be stressed unless they appear in the first metrically unstressed position (which can occur either before or after the first stress) of a syntactic clause.[22] His second law states that a clause upbeat, by which he means an unstressed position that opens a clause (not all clauses necessarily have one), must contain at least one particle.[23] Not all verses organize particles as Kuhn describes, which has led to some controversy over whether or not Kuhn's laws are in fact valid, as well as proposals for alternate ways to explain Kuhn's observations.[24] However, even if Kuhn was wrong about the motivation, scholars do agree that his observations are largely accurate, particularly where the first law is concerned. Conservative poems tend to adhere quite closely to Kuhn's first law: in *Beowulf*, fewer than 1% of the verses contain a violation.

In contrast, 22 verses (3.39%) in *Maldon* and 23 (3.64%) in *Judgment Day II* are not composed in accordance with these principles.[25] Exceptional verses in these poems can take many forms. Kuhn himself explains that violations of his first law commonly occur when the first lift falls on a particle, especially a finite verb; he in fact does not even consider these verses problematic. Therefore, Kuhn would not consider a verse such as *hē līehte þā mid lēodum* (B2: ×–´××–´×) 'he alighted then with the people' (*Maldon* 23a) a violation of his law, even though *þā* falls outside of the first drop, because *līehte* is a particle. Five of the verses

[22] Hans Kuhn, 'Zur Wortstellung und -betonung im Altgermanischen', in *Kleine Schrigten 1* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969; repr. from *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 57 (1933)), pp. 1–109 (p. 8).

[23] Kuhn, p. 43.

[24] Haruko Momma reviews the consistency and applicability of both laws to test their validity. She supports Kuhn's first law because she argues that it applies equally to all particles, affects a large number of verses, and is violated relatively infrequently, but argues that Kuhn's second law is too inconsistent to be considered valid; see *The Composition of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 56–75. Due to the number of exceptions, other scholars have tried to explain the patterns Kuhn observed with alternate methods, most of which advocate abandoning the combination of meter and syntax that characterizes Kuhn's laws and explaining the phenomenon through constraints posed by either one or the other. For purely metrical solutions, see Geoffrey Russom, 'Purely Metrical Replacements for Kuhn's Laws', in *English Historical Metrics*, ed. by C. B. McCully and J. J. Anderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 30–41; and Thomas M. Cable, *The English Alliterative Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 16–26. For purely syntactic solutions, see P. R. Orton, 'Anglo-Saxon Attitudes to Kuhn's Laws', *Review of English Studies*, n. s., 50 (1999), 287–303; Robert P. Stockwell and Donka Minkova, 'Kuhn's Laws and Verb-second: On Kendall's Theory of Syntactic Displacement in "Beowulf" ', in *On Germanic Linguistics: Issues and Methods*, ed. by Irmengard Rauch and others, Trends in Linguistics Studies and Monographs, 68 (Berlin: Mouton, 1992), pp. 315–37; and Rachel Mines, 'An Examination of Kuhn's Second Law and its Validity as a Metrical-Syntactical Rule', *Studies in Philology*, 99 (2002), 337–55. Daniel Donoghue reviews several alternate solutions in 'Language Matters', in *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 59–78. He argues that while each of the theories can explain part of Kuhn's observations, it takes a combination of meter and syntax to explain them in their entirety.

[25] The verses in question are *Maldon* 7a, 23a, 40b, 41a, 55b, 66b, 72a, 72b, 85a, 98a, 136a, 138a, 173a, 179a, 212a, 240b, 242b, 254b, 276a, and *Judgment Day II* 12a, 15a, 17a, 24a, 49b, 57a, 65a, 73a, 77a, 80a, 92a, 95b, 110b, 123b, 187a, 195b, 213b, 216a, 224b, 243b, 273a.

in *Maldon* and six in *Judgment Day II* take this form.[26] However, Kuhn argues that such verses conform to his laws because the verb is a more lightly stressed word that can be considered part of the initial group of particles, and many of his supporters, following Bliss, argue that the particle need not be stressed at all, even though it alliterates, and the verse can be realized as another verse type. In the case of *Maldon* 23a, the verse could be realized as a type A3: ××××× –́×. However, for seven of the eleven verses with a particle in the first lift in these two poems, such a reanalysis would not be possible because of the alliteration. For example, in the verse *hē lēt him þā of handon* (aA1: ×–́××× –́×) 'he caused it [to fly] then from his hands' (*Maldon* 7a), the alliteration is on *l*, so the verb *lēt* must be stressed.[27] Such verses are highly unusual since they violate Sievers's law of precedence, which describes the convention that a particle should not alliterate in preference to a stress word, yet they occur frequently enough in these poems to suggest that the poets were comfortable putting a high degree of stress on these alliterating verbs, making them stand out from the group of particles around them. Thus these instances of unstressed particles that appear outside of the first drop do not show a particularly strong break with more conservative poems, but they do suggest a slightly different treatment of particles overall.

Furthermore, although some of the exceptional verses are those regularly explained away by Kuhn, which even the most conservative poets allow in their verse on occasion, others are less typical. First, a large number of verses have a stress word rather than a particle in the first lift, such as *and þæt ēce ic ēac* (B2: ×× –́×× –́) 'and I also [fear] that eternal [anger]' (*Judgment Day II* 17a).[28] This verse in fact presents particularly unusual particle placement because the particle appears in the second drop of a type-B verse. Particles do not often appear there because the second drop tends to be short and contain only very light words or syllables, while the opening drop is an ideal place for particles. In this case, the poet could have put the pronoun in the first drop with the rest of the particles; by not doing so, he shows that he does not seem to have a particular concern for any principles that might have governed the placement of particles in earlier verses. Secondly, a large number of the verses in *Judgment Day II* have a particle in a verse that does not open the clause.[29] Typically, when conservative poets include unstressed particles outside of the first drop of the clause, they appear in the second drop instead, still in the first verse. Using unstressed particles in later clauses shows that the *Judgment Day II* poet organized the particles in his poem much differently.

Similarly to the use of unstressed words overall, the treatment of unstressed particles can be related directly to language change and the willingness of these poets to include more function words in their poetry. A large number of unstressed words makes limiting the drop in any way difficult. In this regard, late Old English poets were facing some of the same difficulties as the *Heliand* poet in the Old Saxon tradition. Kuhn argues that one reason the

[26] The verses in question are *Maldon* 7a, 23a, 136a, 212a, and 240b, and *Judgment Day II* 12a, 15a, 24a, 65a, 77a, and 80b.

[27] See also *Maldon* 240b and *Judgment Day II* 12a, 15a, 65a, 77a, and 80b.

[28] See also *Maldon* 55b, 66b, 72b, 138a, and 254b, and *Judgment Day II* 57a, 92a, 123b, 187a, and 243b.

[29] The verses in question are 49b, 73a, 95b, 110b, 195b, 213b, 216a, 224b, and 273a. *Maldon* might also have one such verse in the line *wē willaþ mid þām sceattum* (A3: ××××× –́×) | *ūs tō scipe gangan* (C2: ×× ◡́× –́×) 'we wish with the coins to take to our ships' (*Maldon* 40). In this case the particle *ūs* is unstressed in the second verse of the clause. However, Fulk and Pope propose a different verse division for this line: *wē willaþ mid þām sceattum ūs* (B1: ××××× –́× –́) | *tō scipe gangan* (C2: × ◡́× –́×). If the line is divided this way, the poem would not contain any such verses (*Eight Old English Poems*, ed. by John C. Pope and R. D. Fulk, 3rd edn (New York: Norton, 2001), p. 16).

Heliand poet does not observe the same careful placement of particles as Old English poets is that the function words create additional drops that would not have appeared in a more metrically conservative poem.[30] The late Old English poems show some identical patterns. For instance, one pattern Kuhn points out is the increased use of determiners. In a verse such as *þā flotan stōdon gearwe* (aA1: × ◡ × × × – ×) 'the sailors stood ready' (*Maldon* 72b), the verse opens with a definite article in anacrusis, and then *stōdon* stands unstressed in the second drop of the clause. More conservative poetic syntax would not have required that article, so the poet might have left it off, creating a type A1 verse without anacrusis and shifting the first drop to the other side of the first lift. By composing verses such as this one, the *Maldon* poet is showing a preference for using the natural syntax that is familiar to him over maintaining the conventions of particle placement. Ultimately, then, all of the changes to the organization of the drop lead to this same conclusion: late Old English poets chose to allow contemporary linguistic change to appear in their poetry and adapted the structure of the verse in various ways in order to fit the necessary function words in the line.

2.2 Conservative Composition: The Poems of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

While *Maldon* and *Judgment Day II* show some clear differences as regards the organization of the drops, the *Chronicle* poems as a group compose the drops with the same standards as more conservative poets. Bliss's study of the meter of *Beowulf* describes different verse patterns in such minute detail that he is able to posit a set of restrictions on such metrical patterns as what types of verses could appear in the on- or off-verses, which verses were apt show double alliteration, and what types of verses could receive anacrusis. Townsend (1996) argues that, as a whole, the *Chronicle* poems are very regular because they follow the conventions of traditional poetry that Bliss posits. Not only do they contain very few remainders (i.e., verses that cannot be categorized as any type in Bliss's metrical system), they also place the different verse types within the line and follow the trends for double alliteration that Bliss records in *Beowulf*. Townsend notes that this feat is quite impressive because many of the lines include place names and other words that make it impossible for the verses to be wholly borrowed from earlier formulas, so the poets must have had a solid understanding of the principles of versification.[31] The significance of these findings is not just that the poets follow the particularly conservative practice of the convention, but that they must have made a concerted effort to do so in this linguistic context that would make employing those conventions difficult. As I will show, the poets not only organize the different verse types in conventional ways, but also reproduce the succinct verse structure that most conservative poems exhibit and other late poems do not. The distinction between the *Chronicle* poems and other late poems suggests that the *Chronicle* poets valued the conservative conventions of the Old English poetic tradition and composed with the conscious goal of maintaining that form in the face of linguistic change.

In a manner similar to more conservative poems, the *Chronicle* poems show a trend towards strict regulation of the drops. Anacrusis in these verses is rare, perhaps not as rare as in *Beowulf*—two of the three *Chronicle* verses, *Brunanburh* and *The Death of Edgar*, each contain two examples and *The Death of Edward* contains one, which puts the incidence of anacrusis between one and three percent in these poems—but still rarer than in poems such

[30] Kuhn, pp. 15–16.
[31] Townsend, p. 153.

as *Maldon* and *Judgment Day II*. In most cases, the anacrusis is also more strictly regulated: it appears in the on-verse, it occurs on verses with double alliteration, it consists of exactly one syllable, and it is formed by a verbal prefix. The one exception is the verse in *The Death of Edward*, *befæste þæt rīce* (aA1: × ˊ × × ˊ ×) 'established that kingdom' (29b), which occurs in the off-verse with single alliteration. *Beowulf* likewise has a few verses that do not follow all the general tendencies that verses with anacrusis exhibit, so anacrusis in these poems is treated almost exactly as it is in *Beowulf*.

The length and filler of the rest of the drops in *Brunanburh* and *The Death of Edward* also appear to be regulated as strictly as, if not more strictly than, in *Beowulf*, though they are less so in *The Death of Edgar*. In terms of polysyllabic drops, both have fewer instances than *Beowulf* does overall, with the number in *Brunanburh* significantly lower, as Table 3 illustrates. Similarly, the filler of the drops is limited. Again, *Brunanburh* and *The Death of Edward* are comparable to *Beowulf* in terms of the overall number of verses with unstressed words, with *Brunanburh* using even fewer. In particular, both poems avoid two or more unstressed words in a single drop to a greater degree than the *Beowulf* poet does, as Table 4 shows.

Syllables	2	3	4	5	6	7	total
Beowulf (sample)	33.33	12.00	1.33	1.33	1.33	0.00	49.32
Brunanburh	30.13	6.16	2.05	1.37	0.00	0.00	39.71
Death of Edward	42.42	3.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	45.45
Death of Edgar	55.41	8.11	0.00	1.35	0.00	0.00	64.87

Table 3: Percentage of verses with a polysyllabic drop in *Beowulf* and the three *Chronicle* poems

Words	1	2	3	4	5	total
Beowulf (sample)	27.33	14.67	7.33	1.33	0.67	51.33
Brunanburh	28.08	10.96	4.11	0.68	0.00	43.84
Death of Edward	48.48	1.52	1.52	10.00	0.00	51.52
Death of Edgar	39.19	20.27	5.41	1.35	0.00	66.22

Table 4: Percentage of verses with drops containing one or more unstressed words in *Beowulf*, *Maldon*, and *Judgment Day II*

As might be expected, this close regulation of the drop makes for much more tightly regulated verses in terms of the placement of unstressed particles. *The Death of Edward* has no violations of Kuhn's laws. *Brunanburh* has one: *mid hira herelāfum* (C2: × × × ◡ × ˊ ×) 'with their group of survivors' (*Brunanburh* 47a). This verse opens a clause with a clause upbeat, and so according to Kuhn's second law it should have at least one particle in that unstressed position, but it does not. Of the two, however, Kuhn's second law is the more contentious, and many scholars argue that the tendency to include at least one particle in a clause upbeat is a byproduct of other poetic and syntactic regulations and therefore nothing that poets might have striven for. Including only this one, minor violation, then, means that the *Brunanburh* poet regulates the placement of the particles carefully in his poem.

While rigid verse construction seems like a general trend for the *Chronicle* poems, it is not absolute, because *The Death of Edgar* looks more like *Maldon* than the other two poems in the *Chronicle* group. Significantly, the change in style is not simply a result of further language change over time. *The Death of Edgar* was written for the year 975, which is later than the year of *The Battle of Brunanburh* (937) but earlier than that of *The Death of Edward* (1065). Although anacrusis in this poem is well regulated, other drops are longer and contain more words. Polysyllabic drops occur approximately as often as they do in *Maldon*. In terms of words per drop, *The Death of Edgar* does not have as many particularly long verses as *Maldon*, but it does have as many verses with independent unstressed words overall. Still, the poem is not as relaxed as the other late poems, for in spite of the longer drops, it does not show any violations of Kuhn's laws. Together with the stricter application of anacrusis, the adherence to Kuhn's laws suggests that the *Death of Edgar* poet, like the other *Chronicle* poets, valued the traditional form of the poems to a greater degree than other late Old English poets. At the same time, the differences illustrate the extent of the diversity of compositional styles in these late poems. Some adapt the lines to suit the change in the language and some remain as strict as possible, but these poems do not represent two distinct options; instead, they create a sort of continuum, on which *The Death of Edgar* stands in the middle.

3. Stylistic Adaptations in late Old English Poems: Syntax and Variation

The differences between the two conservative *Chronicle* poems and the other late poems show that the linguistic changes that were taking place did not have an inevitable effect on the composition of late poetry but instead created an environment in which poets could make a choice about how much they would maintain the conservative stylistic features of the alliterative long line and how much they would adapt it. In terms of style, one of the most salient features of Old English poetry is that it tends to be very heavy in nouns. This trend does not change in late Old English verse. In all cases, the poets try to fill the stressed positions predominately with stress words. For the most part, they succeed in doing so. In the three sections of *Beowulf*, the poet averages a stress word in 67.3% of the lifts. *Judgment Day II* uses fewer stress words, averaging a stress word in only 62% of the lifts, but all of the rest of the poems contain stress words in 70% of the lifts or more. In both conservative and innovative verse, the rest of the stressed positions are filled mostly with particles; only rarely do any of the poems use a displaced clitic to bear stress. The standard usage of the different classes of words therefore seems to have remained, for the most part, intact.

In order to maintain a high number of stress words in stressed positions while also employing more function words, most poets alter a second compositional standard: the tendency to keep the verses short. However, as shown above, the *Brunanburh* and the *Death of Edward* poets go against this trend and manage to use verses with no separate words in the drop over half the time. The ability to construct so many two-word verses does not result from any distinctive linguistic properties of the two poems, but rather a stylistic difference that distinguishes these late poems from *Beowulf* and the other late poems. Specifically, the *Chronicle* poets employ a large number of concise, noun-heavy instances of variation. This controlled use of variation helps them to maintain a high percentage both of nouns and other stress words in stressed positions and of verses with only two words.

Arthur Brodeur defines variation in Old English poetry as 'a double or multiple statement of the same concept or idea in different words, with a more or less perceptible shift in stress: […] the second member, while restating essentially the same concept or idea, may do so in a manner which emphasizes a somewhat different aspect of it'.[32] He analyzes variation in *Beowulf* in depth and notes that it can take a variety of forms, such as multiple words or short phrases with parallel structure to an initial word, entire clauses in variation with each other, or even clauses that stand in variation with individual words. The *Chronicle* poets tend to use a large amount of variation, but they mostly rely on the most common form: noun phrases in variation with each other. While some critics may think that the repeated use of such simple variation is the sign of an inartistic poet, it also serves to create numerous short verses that allow the poets to highlight the noun-heavy diction that characterizes traditional Old English poetry.

The following passage from *Brunanburh* (lines 13b–17a) illustrates the manner in which the *Chronicle* poets typically employ variation:

siðþan sunne upp
(B1: ××́×́)
on morgentīd, mǣre tungol,
(B1: ×́×́) (A1: ́××́×)
glād ofer grundas, godes condel beorht
(A1: ́×××́×) (D4: ◡́×́×̀)
ēces drihtnes oð sīo æðele gesceaft
(A1: ́×́×́×) (B2: ××◡́×××́)
sāg tō setle.
(A1: ́×́×́×)
from when the sun in the morning-time, the glorious star, glided up over the ground, the bright candle of God, of the eternal lord, until the noble creation sank to the ground.

This passage has three examples of variation: *mǣre tungol* and *godes condel beorht* stand in variation with *sunne*, followed by *ēces drihtnes*, which is in variation with *godes*. In all cases, the concept that is reformulated is a single noun, the variation is formed with a single verse, and the verse consists of only a noun and its modifiers (all stress words). In addition, the verse *glād ofer grundas* is similar to variation in that it provides another verse about the sun, although in this case it describes the sun rather renaming it. Longer phrases or clauses that contain function words like this one do exist in variation in these poems, but, as they do in this passage, the short noun phrases dominate.

This particular style of variation helps the poets to replicate the style of traditional heroic poetry because it creates many short verses and a large number of nouns. Every time the poet uses a verse such as *ēces drihtnes* in variation with a previous noun, he composes a verse with monosyllabic drops and no extra clitics. Because the poet uses many of these, he reduces the number of unstressed words in the poem. While the number of function words in each clause may have increased to some extent, the effect on the poem as a whole is not as noticeable because the function words are spread out over longer clauses, and each clause also contains a large number of short verses. Certainly the variation is not the only reason the drops remain short; even where these *Chronicle* poets do place function words in a drop, the drop tends to be shorter and contain fewer function words than the larger drops in *Maldon* (for example, in

[32] Arthur G. Brodeur, *The Art of Beowulf* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 40.

the first 50 verses of each poem, *Maldon* has six times as many pronouns as *Brunanburh* and seven times as many definite articles). Nevertheless, the variation seems to be one tool that the poets rely on to help them compose a large number of particularly short verses that facilitate the noun-heavy diction of poetry.

This particular style of variation contrasts with the style used in *Beowulf*. In his analysis of *Beowulf*, Brodeur explains that although the most common type of variation is likewise multiple noun phrases in variation with each other, the *Beowulf* poet uses a greater variety of constructions of variation as well.[33] For example, the following passage (lines 301–10) contains several different types of variation without any instances of a single noun phrase in variation with another:

> Gewiton him þā fēran; flota stille bād,
> (A3: ××××××́×) (D4: ◡́×́×̀)
> seomode on sā̆le sīdfæþmed scip,
> (A1: ◡́××́×) (E: ́̀×́)
> on ancre fæst; eoforlīc scionon
> (B1: ×́×́) (A2k: ◡́×̀◡×)
> ofer hlēorber[g]an gehroden golde,
> (C1: ××́́×) (C2: ×◡́×́×)
> fāh ond fȳrheard; ferhwearde hēold
> (A2b: ́×́̀) (E: ́̀×́)
> gūþmōd grīmmon. Guman ōnetton,
> (A2l: ́̀́×) (D1: ◡́×́̀×)
> sigon ætsomne, oþ þæt hȳ [s]æl timbred
> (A1: ◡́××́×) (C1: ×××́́×)
> geatolīc ond goldfāh ongyton mihton;
> (A1: ◡́××́×) (C2: ×◡́×́×)
> þæt was foremærost foldbūendum
> (C2: ××◡́×́×) (D1: ́́̀×)
> receda under roderum, on þām se rīca bād;
> (A1: ◡́××××◡́××) (B1: ×××́×́)
>
> They betook themselves to go — the ship remained still, the roomy ship remained on the rope, firmly on anchor. The figures of boars shone over the helmets, decorated with gold, variegated and fire-hardened — the one of warlike mind held guard over life for the grim ones. The men hurried, moved together, until they could see the built hall, splendid and ornamented with gold; that was the most famous of buildings to earth dwellers under the heavens, in which the mighty one resided.

In this passage, the first verse stands by itself. After that, the next four verses are all related. Verse 301b contains a single complete clause, followed by a second clause in variation, which fills a whole line. The subsequent verse provides another instance of variation, but in this case it does not repeat the entire clause, only a prepositional phrase: *on ancre fæst* for *on sāle*. Later on, the poet puts an additional clause in variation: *sigon ætsomne*, which repeats the concept of *Guman ōnetton*. In other places, the poet augments his descriptions, as when he describes the warriors' helmets as both *gehroden golde* and *fāh ond fȳrheard*. These examples are not strictly variation—since they are descriptors that work together to create a whole picture but

[33] Brodeur, pp. 42–44.

are nevertheless distinct qualities, they are what Brodeur would call enumeration[34]—yet they are similar to variation because they add related material that serves mostly to re-emphasize a point. These different examples illustrate the range of content and syntactic structures that the *Beowulf*-poet chooses to employ in variation.

Furthermore, while the poet uses variation repeatedly in the passages, some of the clauses do not contain any element of variation. The poet can compose several concurrent verses without it, as when he says *þæt was foremārost* | *foldbūendum* / *recede under roderum* | *on þēm se rīca bād*. The first three verses form a single clause with no repetition of any noun or action, and the final verse makes up its own relative clause which further describes the hall but nevertheless contains an independent idea. The passage therefore shows a heavy use of variation, which adds to the formality of the moment while also aiding the poet in alliterative concerns, but it also shows that the poet sometimes chooses to form clauses, both long and short, that do not include variation.

Some scholars, including Brodeur, have argued that this complexity of variation makes *Beowulf* a superior poem to the *Chronicle* poems. Certainly it creates more variety. However, while the variety might increase the aesthetic value of the poem in some ways, it does not as readily facilitate increasing the traditional poetic features by creating concise, conservative verses. By using longer phrases and clauses, rather than single noun phrases, the *Beowulf* poet includes more verses that employ unstressed function words. For instance, when he puts *on ancre* in variation with *on sāle* in the passage above, he includes a second preposition, making for an additional verse with an independent word in the drop. When an entire clause stands in variation, there is potential for even more unstressed words, because another verb must be used. In some cases, the verb can be stressed, but in other cases it might appear in the drop. Several subsequent clauses without variation also tend to contain several independent words, since they may employ function words to fulfill grammatical roles such as a subject, a verb, and any number of connectives. For example, *þæt wæs foremārost* (*Beowulf* 309a) contains a pronoun for the subject and a copula in the opening drop, and *on þēm se rīca bād* (*Beowulf* 310b), opens with a preposition followed by a relative pronoun. Although these verses are perfectly regular and well formed, they would not increase the number of noun-heavy verses with short drops the way that the variation in the *Chronicle* poems does.

The effect of the different styles of variation on the shape of the line becomes clearer when looking at late Old English poets who compose variation similarly to the *Beowulf*-poet. Neither *Maldon* nor *Judgment Day II* contains as much variation as the other poems under discussion, but both poems have some, and longer instances, especially clauses in variation, are common. Consider the following short passage from *Maldon* (22–24a):

> Þā hē hæfde þæt folc fægere getrymmed,
> (B3: ××××× ́) (A1: ◡̀ × ×× ́×)
> hē līhte þā mid lēodon þǣr him lēofost wæs,
> (aA1: × ́ ××× ́×) (B1: ×× ́× ́)
> þǣr hē his heorðwerod holdost wiste.
> (C3: ××× ́◡̀×) (A1: ́× ́×)
> When he had encouraged that host well, he alighted then with the people where it was most pleasing to him, where he knew his most loyal hearth-band to be.

Here the first four verses contain three clauses with no variation at all; the first two verses form a single dependent clause, followed by the single-verse main clause and another single-verse

[34] Brodeur, pp. 41–42.

relative clause. The subsequent line is another clause, but this one stands in variation with *þǣr him lēofost wæs*. This instance of variation might add to the solemnity of the moment, similarly to the way variation often does in *Beowulf*, but it does not create any short, conservative verses. The clause in variation, *þǣr hē his heorðwerod | holdost wiste* (*Maldon* 24a), includes not only the connective *þǣr*, but also the pronoun *hē* and the possessive *his*. Thus the developing syntactic features here become emphasized through repetition. An earlier poet might have included the pronoun *hē*, since it is the subject of this clause but not the previous clause, but then again he might not because the previous clause has an impersonal subject, and it is clear from the context that the subject is returning to the previous subject, Byrhtnoð. Possessive pronouns are even rarer in conservative poems when the context is clear, so it is more likely that *his* would not have been used by an earlier poet. Thus, the contrasting styles of variation have very different effects on the shape of the line, which shows that the choice of style might be a result of the divergent goals of the individual poets.

The Death of Edgar stands in between the other *Chronicle* poems and the less conservative late verse because the poet mixes the styles of variation. The poem still has more single nouns in variation than *Beowulf*, but it does not always use the variation to fill single verses. Sometimes the original noun and subsequent variation can come in one verse, as in *Ēadgār, Engla cyning* 'Edgar, king of England' (D*4: ´×´×◡̲×) (*Death of Edgar* 2a). At other times the variation might not fill an entire verse, as in lines 24b–25:

dēormōd hæleð
(A2k: ´◡̲´◡×)

Ōslāc, of earde ofer ȳða gewealc
(A1: ´××´×) (B2: ××´××´)

the courageous saint, Oslac, [was driven] from the native place, over the rolling waves.

In this case, *Ōslāc* stands in variation with *dēormōd hæleð*, but the verse includes an additional prepositional phrase. Sometimes the variation itself also can contain a prepositional phrase. The poet places *men on moldan* 'men on the earth' (*Death of Edgar* 5a) in variation with *lēoda bearn* 'children of men' (*Death of Edgar* 4b). The turn of phrase is by no means unusual, but the other *Chronicle* poems do not tend to include prepositional phrases in variation. In addition to these different uses of variation, *The Death of Edgar* does not use variation consistently throughout, as the other *Chronicle* poems do. Mixed in with the variation are several clauses that do not include any repetition. Instead the poet uses a larger number of shorter clauses and many more consecutive prepositional phrases. By filling the verses with these other options, the *Death of Edgar* poet uses more verbs, connectives, and prepositions, thereby including a larger number of unstressed words.

The difference in variation does not account for the different length of the drops entirely. In those places where the *Death of Edgar* poet uses unstressed words in a drop, he uses multiple words more frequently than the poets of the other two *Chronicle* poets, who generally limit the drops to one extra word when they do employ them. Thus, even if the poet did use variation similarly to the other poets, he would still place more unstressed words in each drop. Nevertheless, the style of variation in the other two poems facilitates the shorter drops, so the comparative lack of the same type of single-noun variation in *The Death of Edgar* cuts down on one easy mechanism for composing two-word verses. The difference suggests a different attitude on the *Death of Edgar* poet's part; while he seems to have appreciated the variation that creates a more formal diction, he did not avoid the contemporary speech patterns to the same degree.

Although I did not focus on *The Menologium* for this study, it is interesting to note how it can also show the influence of the style of variation on the organization of the drop. The poem uses a large amount of variation, yet it is similar to *The Death of Edgar* in terms of length of the drops. The poem is not as compact as *The Battle of Brunanburh* or *The Death of Edward* because, as a type of calendar, *The Menologium* frequently uses more function words in the average verse, as in *on þȳ eahteoðan dæg* (B2: ××́××́) 'on the eighth day' (*Menologium* 3b) or *and þæs embe āna niht* (B1: ××××́×́) 'and one night after that' (*Menologium* 19b). Because the poet must constantly identify on which day events happen, he uses numerous articles as deictics to point to particular days and prepositions to link the day and the event. The frequent use of variation allows the poet to compose more verses with only two words than the *Maldon* poet does, but not as many as the most conservative *Chronicle* poems.

4. Conclusions

The various compositional styles show how all of the poets were adapting to changes in the language and especially how those changes could affect the treatment of unstressed positions in different ways. However, even though poets allowed language change to affect their poetry to differing degrees, the effect is still there in all cases, and the poets all made some sort of allowance to compensate for the change. In a certain sense, the two *Chronicle* poems, *Brunanburh* and *The Death of Edward*, seem to illustrate the simplest adaptation. They both contain only a small number of especially long drops, organize the drops according to conservative restrictions, and use a large number of two-word verses. Yet in spite of these metrical regularities, many scholars have dismissed these poems as inferior and pat. Perhaps the methodical use of variation is what prompted such scholarly opinion of the poems. Because the variation is relatively simple, the poets may not appear as adept as the *Beowulf* poet. Nevertheless, the variation does not seem without thought, since the use of variation as a stylistic adaptation allows the poets to maintain the traditional line length and diction. *Maldon*, though still critiqued by many for its metrical irregularities, has received less criticism because the poem resembles *Beowulf* to a greater degree. The syntax is more varied, and at times the poet uses the more complex versions of variation that give variety to the poem. Because the poet composes with less traditional diction and syntax, however, he does not maintain the shorter lines. He expands the drops in order to fit the extra function words into the line. *Judgment Day II* expands the drops to an even greater degree, with less regard for any conventions that might govern their form.

These different modes of poetic composition reveal the great extent to which poetry was necessarily changing in the late Old English period, as well as the high degree of variability and ingenuity with which the poets adapted to these changes. Clearly the line was variable enough at this point, and the poets adept enough, that a single standard with which to judge all Old English poetry is not sufficient. Therefore, instead of evaluating poems on the basis of how well they adhere to a traditional form, we should analyze why poets fashioned the verse form as they did. In the case of these poems, analysis of the poets' individual styles reveals opposing values towards poetic composition. Certainly the poets of this day were not striving for an individual voice in the same way that modern poets do, but they still could have been motivated by different concerns. Some of them seemed to value natural language and variety of expression and so adapted the traditional structure of the verse accordingly, while others preferred to maintain the traditional compactness of form and manipulated the style of the

diction and variation to adhere to those standards. These motivations must be kept in mind when judging the poem. Certainly the *Chronicle* poems seem to be focused on preserving the past as they record it, showing the respect the authors had for history and their ability to sustain its traditions. As a poem that harkens back to a traditional heroic ethos that had become politically obsolete, one might expect *Maldon* to be equally conservative, yet it is not. Perhaps the poet here was less intent on preserving the past and more focused on bringing his message to the present-day audiences. While he used the Germanic code of loyalty to one's lord to remind the current Anglo-Saxon warriors of their duty, he did so with a modernized syntax that makes the message clearly contemporary.

Chaucer's *Melibee*: What Can we Learn from Some Late-Medieval Manuscripts?

Kate Jackson[1]

Introduction

As is well known, Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* is a translation of Renaud de Louen's *Livre de Mellibee et Prudence* (c. 1337), which itself is a redaction of a Latin text, Albertano of Brescia's *Liber consolationis et consilii* (1246).[2] The story of Melibee and Prudence was popular across medieval Europe, as is evident from the large number of extant manuscripts of Albertano's *Liber* and its many translations, including Renaud's.[3]

The Tale of Melibee seems designed to fashion a high degree of authority for its teller. While the date of its composition remains uncertain,[4] there are indications that its place in the *Canterbury Tales* carries particular significance. Not only does Chaucer reserve its narration for his pilgrim persona, but the early manuscripts of the story collection, produced by Chaucer's near-contemporaries, link him to the tale. Hengwrt, possibly the earliest extant manuscript and usually dated soon after Chaucer's death in 1400 and sometimes earlier,[5] introduces it with 'here bigynneth Chaucers tale of Melibeus' (f. 216r).[6] Ellesmere, 'made probably soon after 1400',[7] does the same (f. 153v). It also gives the text of *Melibee* special

[1] A grant from the University of Leeds Brotherton Library Scholarship Fund enabled me to consult manuscripts at the British Library as part of my research for this article. I wish to record my thanks for this funding.

[2] All references to Chaucer's texts, unless otherwise indicated, are to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987): henceforth *Riverside*; line references will be given in brackets, in the body of the essay. For Renaud's version, see William Askins, 'The Tale of Melibee', in *Sources and Analogues of The Canterbury Tales, 1*, ed. by Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), pp. 321–408; henceforth Askins. I use Askins' references when quoting from Renaud's text.

[3] See Askins, pp. 321–22, on the popularity in England and elsewhere of Albertano's *Liber* and Renaud's *Livre* by Chaucer's time.

[4] *Riverside*, p. 923, although it gives 1386–90 as 'most likely'. Helen Cooper, *The Canterbury Tales* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), points out that 'reasons have been educed for dating it to each of the last three decades of Chaucer's life, but hard evidence is lacking' (p. 312). Askins does not consider the date of Chaucer's translation.

[5] *The Hengwrt Chaucer Digital Facsimile*, ed. by Estelle Stubbs (2000), Introduction, n. 1: http://www.canterburytalesproject.org/pubs/HGEdintro.html.

[6] *The Canterbury Tales: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Hengwrt Manuscript, with Variants from the Ellesmere Manuscript*, ed. by Paul G. Ruggiers (Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), p. 859.

[7] Daniel Woodward, 'The New Ellesmere Chaucer Facsimile', in *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays In Interpretation*, ed. by Martin Stevens and Daniel Woodward (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1995), pp. 1–13 (p. 3).

treatment; further, its portrait of Chaucer is larger than that of any other pilgrim and shows him pointing to this tale.[8] Alan Gaylord argues that by adopting these features, Ellesmere introduces 'the author as *auctor*', and that the portrait should be seen in iconographical terms, as a representation of a wise old man, a 'true poet', rather than an actual likeness.[9] Donald R. Howard argues that the portrait of Chaucer in Ellesmere suggests his 'living presence' in the *Tales*, of which *Melibee* is 'a major structural unit'.[10] *Sir Thopas* is also introduced as Chaucer's tale but although it precedes *Melibee*, it is not accompanied by a portrait of its narrator. Nor does its narrator seem to have a commanding presence. The Host appears to have barely noticed him, asking, 'What man artow?' (695), and goes on to describe him as 'elvyssh' (703) and 'a popet' (701). He then cuts short Chaucer's contribution, castigating its 'drasty speche' (923) and 'rym dogerel' (925), thus suggesting his story-telling incompetence. While *Sir Thopas* is a skilful parody of popular romance — something the Host fails to appreciate — it is *Melibee* which Chaucer the pilgrim introduces at some length and *Melibee* with which Chaucer as an authoritative figure is closely associated in Ellesmere.

Melibee's importance extends beyond the fourteenth century. As well as appearing in most fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, it survives independently in five other manuscripts: in Arundel 140, Sloane 1009, Pepys 2006, Stonyhurst XXIII, and HM 144.[11] Only the *Clerk's Tale* has more witnesses outside the story collection.[12]

Albertano, an Italian jurist, addressed his *Liber* at least nominally to one of his sons but according to David Wallace, his wider aim was to promote civic values in an emerging city-state culture.[13] Renaud, a Dominican friar, translated Albertano's text for 'the instruction and profit' of elite males.[14] In doing so, he re-conceptualised Albertano's Prudence, reducing her political and intellectual role and presenting her as being primarily concerned with how her husband and his advisers think.[15] He thus turned Albertano's work into a mirror for princes. The general thrust of Chaucer's *Melibee* is clear enough; it emphasises the need to exercise

[8] Richard K. Emmerson, 'Text and Image in the Ellesmere Portraits of the Tale-Tellers', in *Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, pp. 143–70, analyses the portraits of all the pilgrims in the manuscript and concludes that the portrait of Chaucer was not only 'the best' (p. 151) but also the only one painted by this particular artist.

[9] Alan T. Gaylord, 'Portrait of a Poet', in *Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, pp. 121–42 (pp. 121, 121 n. 1, 124, 138). Gaylord demonstrates that the portrait has much in common with the portrait of an earnest-looking and elderly Chaucer in Thomas Hoccleve's *Regement of Princes* (BL. MS. Harley 4866, f. 88r), where it appears alongside part of the text dealing with the wisdom of taking advice, so linking the poet with old age, wisdom and good counsel.

[10] Donald R. Howard, *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 14, 309; Howard argues that 'the man and the poet' in the Chaucer portrait 'loom over the fictional pilgrim precisely as in the work itself, one imposed on the other, neither one fully distinguishable from the other' (p. 15).

[11] The full references are: BL. MS. Arundel 140 part 2; BL. MS. Sloane 1009 part 1; Cambridge, Magdalene College MS. Pepys 2006 part 2; Whalley Bridge, Lancs, Stonyhurst College MS. B. XXIII; and San Marino, Huntingdon Library MS. HM 144.

[12] The *Clerk's Tale*, with six witnesses outside the story collection, 'represents the most frequently copied work among the *Tales*': Daniel S. Silvia, 'Some Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*', in *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins*, ed. by Beryl Rowland (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974), pp. 156–63 (p. 155).

[13] David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (California: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 217. Albertano wrote three treatises, one for each of his sons: Askins, p. 321.

[14] Renaud prefaces his translation with an address to his patron, his 'dearest lady': 'I have translated a little treatise for the instruction and the profit of my dearest lord, your son, and all the other princes and barons who might want to heed it and to study it': Askins, p. 331.

[15] Askins, p. 324.

prudence, to take good advice, to eschew wilfulness, to work within the law, and to show mercy to one's enemies. Yet there is no clear consensus on how it should be interpreted.

Although some twentieth-century assessments find *Melibee* comic,[16] and Edward E. Foster contends that it was 'never meant to be read — only known',[17] recent critics regard it as a serious tale. It has been examined in terms of its style,[18] and of international and domestic politics.[19] It has been seen as 'a kind of writing that was thought to be of particular relevance to youth'.[20] It has also been interpreted in terms of gender or marriage. Carolyn Collette sees *Melibee* as 'part of a group of texts designed to instruct aristocratic women', and she cites the Host's response to the *Tale* in support of her argument.[21] Wallace associates the tale with both Chaucer's authority as a writer, which others find in the early manuscripts, and his representation of gender. He argues that *Melibee* demonstrates how 'the wife in the household may prevent masculine violence from disrupting the public domain' and is 'the most extensive authorial signature of the *Canterbury Tales*'.[22]

This article offers an understanding of Chaucer's *Melibee* based on manuscript evidence. It begins by considering the tale in the context of the framing elements found in the early manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* — not just the Host's response, which for ease of reference I will sometimes refer to as the tale's *Epilogue*, but also the *Prologue*.[23] I argue that the framing elements invite multiple responses to the text. The *Prologue* suggests that the tale can be seen in relation to translation and literary theory and to Chaucer's promotion of

[16] Dolores Palomo, 'What Chaucer Really Did to *Le Livre de Mellibee*', *Philological Quarterly*, 53 (1974), 304–20, thinks that 'Chaucer deliberately created an overly rhetorical style for purposes of parody, so that the *Melibee* might become a mischievous companion to the *Rime of Sir Thopas*' (p. 309). For other critics who find *Melibee* a joke, see *Riverside*, p. 924.

[17] Edward E. Foster, 'Has Anyone Here Read *Melibee*?', *Chaucer Review*, 34 (2000), 398–409 (p. 408): while *Melibee* is conceptually central to the *Tales* in that it unifies the themes of common profit and personal salvation, 'it did not have to be read to make its point — and probably would not be except by the most earnest moralists' (p. 408).

[18] Diane Bornstein, 'Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee* as an Example of the *Style Clergial*', *Chaucer Review*, 12 (1978), 236–54, argues that in *Melibee*, Chaucer imitated French and Burgundian stylistic models. J. D. Burnley, 'Curial Prose in England', *Speculum*, 61 (1986), 593–614, finds examples of curial prose in the English vernacular and touches, briefly, on *Melibee* in this context.

[19] V. J. Scattergood, 'Chaucer and the French War: *Sir Thopas* and *Melibee*', in *Court and Poet*, ed. by Glyn S. Burgess (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1981), pp. 287–96, sees *Melibee* as making a pacifist case (p. 288). Lynn Staley, 'Chaucer and the Postures of Sanctity', in *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval Culture*, ed. by David Aers and Lynn Staley (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 179–259, sees it as 'a shrewd piece of political analysis and advice' in relation to the domestic situation of the late 1380s' (p. 227).

[20] Lee Patterson, ' "What Man Artow?": Authorial Self-Definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 11 (1989), 117–75 (p. 149).

[21] Carolyn P. Collette, 'Heeding the Counsel of Prudence: A Context for the *Melibee*', *Chaucer Review*, 29 (1995), 416–33 (pp. 419, 425). Other critics interpreting *Melibee* in terms of gender include Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), who emphasises Prudence's role as that of a mediating queen (p. 111), and Alcuin Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), who has 'no doubt that the gender implications [of Albertano's treatise and *Melibee*'s ultimate source] attracted Chaucer's notice' (p. 23).

[22] Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity*, pp. 5, 214: in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer is concerned with 'defining and justifying his own profession of authorship … He trusts that the *Melibee* in prose, especially when complemented by the prose of the *Parson's Tale*, will win him an authority that is both urbane and religious in its appeal: that will both anchor and licence his poetic fictions' (p. 220).

[23] In Hengwrt, the *Epilogue* to *Melibee* begins on a new quire and this quire has been bound between the *Summoner's Tale* and the *Prologue* to the *Man of Law's Tale*. This is clearly a mis-placement, as the *Epilogue* to *Melibee* begins, 'whan ended was my tale of Melibee' and so should follow the tale.

his own prestigious literary identity. The *Epilogue* suggests that *Melibee* might offer advice about wifehood but it can also be interpreted as a fabliau version of the tale and as a comment about the reception of stories.

I then examine the glosses to *Melibee* in the two early manuscripts. While glosses to some of the *Tales* have been examined,[24] those to *Melibee* in Ellesmere have been noted but not analysed in detail,[25] and those in Hengwrt have barely been mentioned. Yet tracing the progression from Hengwrt to Ellesmere reveals how the later manuscript defines the status of the tale. Examining the glosses to the *Parson's Tale* in both manuscripts and comparing them with those to *Melibee* demonstrates how Ellesmere brings these tales into a closer relationship than is the case in Hengwrt, so strengthening the moral authority this manuscript gives to the 'makere' of the *Tales*. I argue that far from embracing the plurality of response which *Melibee* and its framing elements invite, the glosses prompt an understanding of the tale as advice literature and construct Chaucer's identity as a figure of authority.

I go on to explore how the five extant fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Melibee* outside the story collection shed light on the tale's reception, and compare late-medieval manuscripts containing Renaud's and Chaucer's versions of the story. Although fifteenth-century manuscripts containing Chaucer's work have been examined for indications of how his writing was received,[26] manuscripts of *Melibee* outside the story collection have been neglected, and have not been compared with manuscripts containing Renaud's version. Where critics have interpreted *Melibee* in the context of other contemporary vernacular texts, they have considered manuscripts written in French for a predominantly French audience, but not the English manuscripts in which *Melibee* appears outside the *Canterbury Tales*. Patterson notes that in six manuscripts, Renaud's *Livre* features alongside collections of proverbs and other school texts and argues, from this, that *Melibee* is a pedagogic work.[27] He also contends that in contrast to the manuscripts containing Renaud's translation, those featuring *Melibee* outside the story collection 'can tell us very little: the few times that the *Melibee* does not appear with the other *Canterbury Tales* it is either alone or in the company of *The Parson's*

[24] Daniel S. Silvia, Jr., 'Glosses to the *Canterbury Tales* from St. Jerome's *Epistola Adversus Jovanianum*', *Studies in Philology*, 62 (1965), 28–39, argues that the glosses deriving from Jerome in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and the *Franklin's Tale* may be Chaucer's notes to himself to enable possible later revision. Graham D. Caie, 'The Significance of the Early Chaucer Manuscript Glosses (with special Reference to the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*)', *Chaucer Review*, 10 (1976), 350–60, argues that the glosses to the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* in the early manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* are contemporary comments pointing out the Wife's shortcomings. Charles A. Owen, Jr., 'The Alternative Reading of *The Canterbury Tales*: Chaucer's Text and the Early Manuscripts', *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, 97 (1982), 237–50, finds that the glosses and marginalia in Hengwrt and Ellesmere 'confirm the close relationship' between the two manuscripts (p. 238). Graham D. Caie, 'The Significance of the Marginal Glosses in the Earliest Manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*', in *Chaucer and the Scriptural Tradition* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1984), pp. 75–88, argues that the glosses to the *Man of Law's Tale* make the reader critical of the narrator.

[25] Gaylord, 'Portrait of a Poet', says that the *auctoritates* citations add to 'the textual richness' of the tale's presentation in Ellesmere (p. 124).

[26] Silvia, 'Some Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts', examines the contexts in which Chaucer's tales appear in fifteenth-century manuscripts. He finds that fifty-five manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* survive with reasonably complete texts of the tales; individual 'moral' tales (such as *Melibee*) or 'courtly' tales (such as the *Clerk's Tale*) also feature in anthologies. Paul Strohm, 'Chaucer's Fifteenth-Century Audience and the Narrowing of the "Chaucer Tradition" ', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 4 (1982), 3–32, finds that Chaucer's fifteenth-century audience was 'more widely distributed geographically and more disparate socially than Chaucer's primary audience' (p. 18) — which he identifies as 'a group of persons in social situations rather comparable to his own' (p. 6) — but had narrower, more conservative, tastes.

[27] Patterson, ' "What Man Artow?" ', p. 151, 151 n. 114.

Tale, a predictable and uninformative conjunction'.[28] Collette's argument that Chaucer's tale is a story of female virtue depends not only on her interpretation of the Host's response but also, and to a large extent, on seeing it alongside advice books for aristocratic women written by the Ménagier of Paris, Christine de Pizan, and Philippe de Mézières.[29]

Examining the five fifteenth-century manuscripts which contain *Melibee* leads me to different conclusions. I find that in its dissemination in manuscripts written in French for a French audience, the story of Melibee and Prudence was sometimes re-contextualised as a conduct text for wives, but this is not a feature of the English tradition. All the surviving English manuscripts are of a functional nature and *Melibee* always appears in collocation with religious or instructional texts. I argue that such consistency of reception suggests that from the start, advice on self-governance — the need for an individual of whatever social status to develop an awareness of ethical and social responsibility — was central to understanding Chaucer's tale. I also find that the glosses in the two extant fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Melibee* which have textual affiliations with Ellesmere — Arundel 140 and Sloane 1009 — reveal that Ellesmere remained influential well into the fifteenth century.[30]

Melibee and its framing elements in the early manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*

The early manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* indicate that Chaucer deliberated over, and revised, how he would introduce *Melibee*; it may be that in an earlier plan of the story collection, the Man of Law would have been its narrator.[31] Both the *Prologue* and *Epilogue* seem to have been added when *Melibee* was incorporated into the *Canterbury Tales*. Although the date of the *Prologue* has rarely been considered,[32] there are indications that the *Epilogue* may have been a relatively late addition. The Host's words to the Monk (1941–62) are similar to those in the *Epilogue* to the *Nun's Priest's Tale* (3447–62), 'which perhaps Chaucer cancelled' when he linked *Melibee* and the *Monk's Tale*.[33] The Host's response to *Melibee* — 'I hadde levere than a barel ale / That Goodelief, my wyf, hadde herd this tale' (1893–94) — may rework his response to the *Clerk's Tale*: 'Me were levere than a barel ale / My wyf at hoom had herd this legende ones!' (IV 1212c–d). These repetitions suggest that when Chaucer was writing the *Epilogue* to *Melibee*, he had not finished revising the framing elements of the tales.

[28] Patterson, '"What Man Artow"', p. 149. I should point out, parenthetically, that in HM 144, *Melibee* appears alongside the *Monk's Tale*, and that in Pepys 2006, it appears with the *Parson's Prologue* (as well as his tale) and the *Retraction*.

[29] Collette, 'Heeding the Counsel', contextualises Chaucer's tale through reference to the work of the Ménagier and de Pizan. In 'Chaucer and the French Tradition Revisited: Philippe de Mézières and the Good Wife', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 151–68, Collette adds de Mézières to the French writers alongside whose work *Melibee* can be interpreted.

[30] See Charles A. Owen, Jr., *The Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), pp. 59 and 107 for the textual affiliation of Arundel 140 with Ellesmere, and p. 112 for Sloane 1009's textual affiliation with Ellesmere.

[31] The Man of Law's claim that he will speak in prose when his *Prologue* and tale are in rhyme royal is usually taken to mean that at one stage, Chaucer intended the lawyer to tell *Melibee*: see *Riverside*, p. 854.

[32] Neither *Riverside* nor Robinson mentions a possible date; nor does Cooper, *Canterbury Tales*.

[33] *Riverside*, p. 928.

Consideration of the framing elements leads to a realisation that Chaucer opens up *Melibee* to a variety of interpretations. To begin with the *Prologue*: Chaucer the pilgrim says he will 'telle a litel thyng in prose' (937) that has been told 'in sondry wyse / Of sundry folk' (941–42). He explains that in the Bible, the evangelists narrate different parts of Christ's passion but their 'sentence', their essential meaning, is the same. Although he will add proverbs to his tale and use different words from those in his source, he asks his listeners not to blame him as the meaning of his 'litel tretys' (957) will be unchanged. The claim that the tale is a sense-for-sense translation retaining the 'sentence' of its source is traditional; defence of 'sense for sense' translation was familiar from Jerome onwards.[34] The argument that although the words of the evangelists differ, their meaning remains the same, was 'reiterated in generations of commentaries on the Evangelists'.[35] The disclaimer 'blameth me nat' (961) identifies Chaucer as a 'compilator' rather than an 'auctor', for 'whereas an *auctor* … bore full responsibility for what he had written, the *compilator* … accepted responsibility only for the manner in which he had arranged the statements of other men'.[36] If primary translations call attention to 'their dependence upon — and service to — the original text' whereas secondary translations 'tend to define themselves as independent textual productions',[37] Chaucer sets up *Melibee* as a primary rather than a secondary translation, and presents himself as merely one in a line of people telling the same story.

Such self-presentation need not necessarily be taken at face value, however, since Chaucer often writes as though he is a 'compilator' rather than an 'auctor'.[38] Indeed, the same terms which make apparently modest claims for *Melibee* also imply that it will have prestige and authority. The references to Biblical models and the moral nature of the tale (940) indicate that it should be taken seriously. The use of established translation vocabulary aligns Chaucer's work with that of notable writers and places its narrator in respected company.[39] The *Prologue*

[34] See 'Jerome: Letter to Pammachius', trans. by Kathleen David, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti, 2nd edn (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 21–30 (pp. 21, 28). For contemporary defence of 'sense for sense' translation which seems very similar to what we find in the *Prologue* to *Melibee*, see the *General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible*, chapter 15, in *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Anne Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 67–72, where the writer, in the 1390s, recommends translating 'aftir the sentence and not oneli aftir the wordis' (p. 68, l. 37); and John Trevisa, *Epistle to Thomas, Lord Berkeley*, in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280–1520*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1999), pp. 130–38, where Trevisa, writing in 1387, says that although he will sometimes 'sette worde for worde' and sometimes change the 'ordre of wordes', 'the menyng shal stonde and nought be ychaunged' (pp. 134–35, ll. 143–48).

[35] Alistair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984), p. 167.

[36] Minnis, *Medieval Theory*, p. 192; he also says (pp. 193–94) that Ralph Hidgen adds his initial R to the statements for which he accepts personal responsibility and regards his *auctores* as 'schelde and defens'; Trevisa too shows a desire to avoid 'blame', noting his own *assertiones* with his name.

[37] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Translations and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 94.

[38] In the *General Prologue*, for instance, he adopts the stance of reporter and presents the *Tales* as a compilation, disclaiming responsibility for what he writes (725–46). In the *Miller's Prologue*, he says he must 'reherce' the words of the Miller if he is to tell the tale faithfully (3172–75). He also claims to be only 'a lewd compilator' in the *Prologue* to the *Astrolabe* (61–62). Yet in the *Retraction* to the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer revokes some of his oeuvre, accepts responsibility for his work, and implicitly acknowledges his manipulation of the role of compiler.

[39] I am thinking here of John Trevisa, who translated both secular and religious works from Latin into English for Lord Berkeley, and the writer or writers of the *General Prologue to the Wycliffite Bible*. Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), thinks that Trevisa may have been one of the translators of the English Bible (pp. 2, 72). Chaucer can be seen,

also tentatively places Chaucer's writing in the prestigious academic tradition, since 'mateere' (958) corresponds to the *materia libri* of scholastic literary discussion. It also indicates the range of Chaucer's ambition, something which is suggested in the part of the tale dealing with causation (1393–1426), where Prudence tries to make Melibee examine what his enemies have done and to accept responsibility for what has happened to him. She advises: 'Thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou has receyved hath certeine causes, / whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*: this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause' (1394–95).[40] Chaucer's reference to clerks and his substitution of Latin terms for Renaud's French set up resonances of the Biblical commentary tradition, where the language of the *duplex causa efficiens* was a commonplace. In this way he aligns his work with prestigious models.[41] The *Prologue* suggests, then, that *Melibee* is an authoritative text and that Chaucer is musing on the nature of literary authority.

None of this seems to have any impact on the Host, however, whose only response to the tale is to compare his wife unfavourably and extensively with Prudence (1891–1907):

> … As I am feithful man,
> And by that precious corpus Madrian,
> I hadde levere than a barel ale
> That Goodelief, my wyf, hadde herd this tale!
> For she nys no thyng of swich pacience
> As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
> By Goddes bones, whan that I bete my knaves,
> She bryngeth me forth the grete clobbed staves,
> And crieth, 'Slee the dogges everichoon,
> And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon!'
> And if that any neighebor of myne
> Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
> Or be so hardy to hire to trespace,
> Whan she comth hoom she rampeth in my face,
> And crieth, 'False coward, wrek thy wyf!
> By corpus bones, I wol have thy knyf,
> And thou shalt have my distaf and go spynne!'

Collette considers Harry's response to be 'perhaps the most convincing textual evidence for the argument that Chaucer told this story as a story of female virtue rather than as a compendium of authority'.[42] She contextualises Chaucer's *Melibee* through the work of the French writers mentioned earlier, and argues for Prudence as a female, as well as a male, virtue.[43] Yet Harry's focus on exemplary wifehood can be interpreted in a different way.

The vignette quoted above appears at first sight to represent a marriage but a close reading suggests that it constitutes a parodic version of the tale, and comments on it by deploying stock misogynist motifs. Both *Melibee* and the Host's response are about anger, violence and retaliation. The issues which provoke Goodelief, however, are trivial compared to the attack

then, to position his translation alongside the work of contemporary serious-minded translators and prestigious contemporary literary projects.

40 Renaud's text reads 'tu dois savoir que l'injure qui t'a esté faite a deux causes ouvrieres et efficacies: la loingtaingne et la prouchainne' (37.1).

41 The Latin terms and their translations in *Melibee* also promote English as an equivalent to other languages — an idea under contemporary discussion and one which Chaucer addresses in the *Prologue* to the *Astrolabe* (28–33).

42 Collette, 'Heeding the Counsel', p. 425.

43 Collette, 'Chaucer and the French Tradition Revisited', p. 159. Collette, 'Heeding the Counsel', p. 419.

on Melibee's wife and daughter. The social 'trespace' of which she complains hardly compares to the 'trespas' (1357, 1771, 1824, 1825) committed in *Melibee*. Goodelief's violence centres on the beating of servants and the perception of social disparagement, whereas the beating of Melibee's wife and daughter (971) almost precipitates war.

There are further thematic and linguistic parallels between Goodelief and Melibee. She is not patient (1895). Nor is Melibee, as we are repeatedly told, and as is suggested by the only proverb added by Chaucer to Renaud's text: ' "he hasteth wel that wisely kan abyde" and "in wikked haste is no profit" ' (1054). Goodelief wants her husband to avenge ('wrek') her; Melibee's strong desire for revenge is noted at 1009, 1051 and 1547. Goodelief is a formidable woman, 'byg in armes' (1921), while Melibee is 'myghty' (1366) and 'of myght' (1019). Goodelief calls her husband a 'coward' (1905, 1910) who is 'overlad' (1911, browbeaten) by everyone. Prudence advises Melibee: 'I sey nat thou shalt be so coward that thou doute ther wher as is no drede' (1327). Goodelief makes Harry stand up for her 'lik a wilde leoun' and be 'fool-hardy' (1916); Melibee behaves 'lyk a mad man' (973) and Prudence asks, 'why make ye yourself for to be lyk a fool?' (980).

The high seriousness of *Melibee* gives way, in the Host's response, to fabliau-like comedy. Gender roles are inverted: Goodelief's behaviour masculinises her and feminises both Melibee and the Host. Whereas Melibee weeps (975, 979), she cries out in anger (1899, 1905). Melibee takes advice from his wife but does not fear her; Harry is frightened of his wife and cannot stand up to her. The references to Harry's 'knyf' and Goodelief's 'distaf' are obvious plays on gender at Harry's expense: the former reference might be seen as phallic and the latter as a traditional image of womanhood.[44] Choice of vocabulary contributes to the change in register: the weapons used by Melibee's enemies remain unspecified but Goodelief produces 'grete clobbed staves'; Melibee's enemies are his 'adversaries' whereas Goodelief calls their servants 'dogges'. We learn the name of Harry's wife for the first and only time in the *Epilogue*; its incongruity, given her behaviour, provokes a comic response. If Chaucer knew the Flemish saint of the same name who patiently endured years of misery in marriage before being murdered at her husband's instigation, he showed 'wicked humour' naming the Host's wife after her.[45] Although on the surface Goodelief appears to be presented in realist terms, she is an amalgam of anti-feminist stereotypes: the shrewish, angry wife who gains mastery over her weak husband; the loud and aggressive speaker whose speech instigates violence; and the vain woman bothered about social status. The social snub perceived by Goodelief is reminiscent of the Wife of Bath's complaints about wives in the parish going 'to the offrynge' (*General Prologue* 450) before her. In establishing a similarity between Goodelief and the Wife, as contrast to Prudence, Chaucer prompts those who knew the description of Alison in the *General Prologue* to respond to the gender politics of the story.[46]

[44] Frances M. Biscoglio, ' "Unspun" Heroes: Iconography of the Spinning Woman in the Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 25 (1995), 163–84, argues: 'iconographic evidence indicates that since its origins spinning has always been gender-determined: it is an exclusively feminine task … When a man is pictured with a distaff and spindle, he is being either ridiculed or burlesqued' (pp. 163–64).

[45] Ethel Seaton, 'Goode Lief My Wife', *Modern Language Review*, 41 (1946), 196–292 (p. 201).

[46] There are other times when Chaucer uses the Wife as a means of complicating response and suggesting that there are various ways of interpreting texts — at the end of the *Clerk's Tale* about patient Griselda, for instance. The Clerk notes Petrarch's view that the tale is addressed to everyone. He then proclaims the difficulty of finding wives like Griselda nowadays, implying that the story is indeed about wifehood. He goes on to invoke the Wife of Bath and her 'heigh maistrie' (1172), to tell 'noble wyves' (1183) and 'archewyves' (1195) not to behave like Griselda, and to invert many of the anti-feminists tropes which appear in the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*. The oblique reference

Yet comedy can have serious intent and the *Epilogue* comments on the tale; there is, perhaps, a parallel with the juxtaposition of the *Miller's Tale* and the *Knight's Tale*. If marriage can be seen as political society in miniature, the *Epilogue* might depict what happens in society if violence remains unchecked. While Melibee eventually learns not to exact revenge and the dispute is peaceably resolved, the Host seems powerless to restrain his wife and to prevent violence from escalating. Goodelief's anger and hastiness show that she lacks prudence yet Harry has none to offer her and no way of addressing the problems of their marriage. Sophie might recover but Harry might end up committing murder. If *Melibee* presents the ideal of behaviour — act with prudence, take good advice, eschew wilfulness, work within the law and act with mercy — then the violence in the *Epilogue*, presented in fabliau mode, implicitly supports the argument for rapprochement which is embedded in the tale. Yet it also suggests its unlikelihood; what is desirable might not be possible.

The *Epilogue* also deals with the reception of stories. The Host is unable to dissociate the tale from his own marital relations, to see anything but the literal. He interprets *Melibee* only in line with his experiences as a husband — the same way that he responds to the *Clerk's Tale*, quoted above, and the *Merchant's Tale* (2419–40), where he focuses on women's 'sleightes and subtilitees' and calls his wife a 'labbyng shrewe' who has 'an heep of vices mo'. These stories confirm what he already thinks about wives and women. Through these comments by Harry, Chaucer demonstrates that when people read, they do so in line with their prejudices. The Host's response, then, is not only about exemplary wifehood. It also refutes Foster's contention that *Melibee* was 'a tale never meant to be read — only known', for the *Epilogue*'s account of marital conflict is enriched by detailed knowledge of the tale, which, in turn, prompts further consideration of *Melibee*.

As individual elements, then, the *Prologue* and *Epilogue* enable Chaucer to explore areas beyond the narrative substance of the tale. The *Prologue* allies *Melibee* with the work of contemporary translators and the academic tradition, and enables consideration of the nature of literary authority. The *Epilogue* offers a fabliau version of the tale and plays with the reception of stories. Chaucer the pilgrim introduces *Melibee* as a translation and a moral tale, whereas the Host interprets it as a text from which his wife could learn. There is nothing in the *Prologue* to suggest that *Melibee* is about marriage or gender, and nothing in the *Epilogue* to indicate that it is a translation. The *Prologue* invokes contemporary translation practice and literary theory, while the *Epilogue* purports to be documentary realism. Since the framing elements bring into play various interpretive possibilities rather than present mutually confirming views of *Melibee*, they constitute ways whereby Chaucer plays with meaning, encouraging a particular interpretation only to discourage it or suggest its inadequacy.

The fragmentary nature of the tales at Chaucer's death supports the view that he was less interested in resolution than in dialectic.[47] Ellesmere is obviously a polished production and

to Alison in the Host's response to *Melibee* similarly brings into play the question of interpretation. Here, then, as elsewhere in Chaucer's work, gender politics are not a discrete category.

[47] Critics have sought to explain the lack of fixed meaning in Chaucer's writing. Derek Pearsall, *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), ascribes the 'deflective and evasive strategies' he finds in Chaucer's work to the fact that he was a newcomer to his class (pp. 147–48). Paul Strohm, 'Politics and Poetics: Usk and Chaucer in the 1380s', in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530*, ed. by Lee Patterson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 83–112, argues that Chaucer's 'formal principle of contrastive juxtaposition' is a literary restatement of his varied social and political experience, especially his experience of political faction (p. 111). Mary Flowers Braswell, *Chaucer's 'Legal Fiction': Reading the Records* (London: Associated University Press, 2001), finds that the law influenced Chaucer, since he 'forces his readers

gives the appearance of a completed story collection but the early editors had no copy-text to rely on and were not certain how to order the fragments they inherited.[48] The tale order in Ellesmere is different from that in the earlier Hengwrt, and even the Hengwrt order is 'scribal and not Chaucerian'.[49] It seems that Chaucer was either still pondering over the order in which to position his stories and groups of stories or had abandoned the idea of imposing a definitive order. However, where editors and scribes inherited stable fragments of tales, including links between them, they kept them, as in the *Melibee* sequence.[50] Since this sequence prompts different responses, we can see that Chaucer's 'most extensive authorial signature' is linked to plurality of response in the early manuscripts.

The Glosses to *Melibee* in the Early Manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*

Owen usefully identifies three kinds of gloss in Hengwrt and Ellesmere: first, indexing marginalia, including *notae*, names from the text and summary titles of subject matter; second, those which clarify the meaning of an obscure or ambiguous word; and third, Latin commentary giving sources, parallel passages and background information.[51] There are also glosses of a fourth type: those which comment on the text and/or aim to shape response.

Comparing the sparse glossing to the Hengwrt *Melibee* with the systematic programme in Ellesmere reveals how the later manuscript defines the status of this particular tale. Tracing a similar development in the *Parson's Tale* shows how it also brings these two tales into closer alignment. The effect, I will suggest, is that Ellesmere downplays the possibility of varied response which the *Melibee* sequence invites, prompts an unambiguous reading of the tale, and constructs Chaucer as a 'makere' of moral authority.

In Hengwrt, *Melibee* is very lightly glossed, with only seven glosses in the hand of the manuscript scribe.[52] One belongs to the second category identified by Owen: at 1264 (f. 223r), where we read 'the proverbe seith that to do synne is mannysh', the word 'humanum' is written above 'mannysh', presumably to clarify that the proverb does not apply only to men. Five others can be classified as indexing marginalia, *notae* and names from the text. There is the simple marginal note 'Seneca', the *auctoritas* mentioned in the text at 984 (f. 216v).[53] When Melibee is speaking at 1233 (f. 222v), a pointer in the margin draws attention to this line of the text.

to search among the links and tales for evidentiary scraps before rendering a verdict' on his characters or arriving at the 'truth' (pp. 17, 20). My own view is that Chaucer's tendency to invite different interpretations of his work has a parallel with, and may derive from, legal reasoning, from the legal interest in debate rather than resolution; see Kathleen Maria Jackson, 'Chaucer's Representation of Marriage: To Have and to Hold' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 2009). This part of the article, however, is less interested in explaining Chaucer's thinking than in considering its results.

48 Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, explains how, 'by judicious spacing and the consistent use of *explicits* and *incipits* between the fragments', for instance, the editor of Ellesmere 'minimized the appearance of incompleteness' (p. 13).

49 N. F. Blake, 'The Ellesmere Text in the Light of the Hengwrt', in *Ellesmere Chaucer: Essays in Interpretation*, pp. 204–24 (p. 212). Blake adds that the Hengwrt order 'has no more validity than any other' (p. 212).

50 Fragment 1, again with linking elements, is another stable authorial unit preserved in the manuscripts; the *General Prologue* is followed by tales of the Knight, Miller, Reeve and Cook. Here too, juxtaposition affects meaning, as reading one tale prompts reconsideration of another.

51 Owen, 'Alternative Reading', pp. 238–39.

52 Although line references are to the tale in *Riverside*, I also give folio numbers for Hengwrt. Ellesmere does not provide folio numbers.

53 To be strictly accurate, the gloss reads 'eneca' since the edge of the leaf is torn.

There are three Latin equivalents to parts of Chaucer's tale: alongside the reference to Ovid and 'his book that cleped is the Remedie of Love' (976; f. 216r), we read 'Ovidius de remedio amoris'; where we read that 'Jhesu Crist, oure lord, himself wepte for the death of Lazarus hys freend' (987; f. 216v), the marginal note says 'qualiter Iesus fleuit propter mortem lazari'; and when Prudence refers to the advice given by 'the apostle Paul' writing 'unto the Romans' (989), the gloss (f. 216v) reads 'Paulus ad Romanus'.

Finally, there is an intriguing gloss which looks at first to be a parallel passage in Latin to part of *Melibee*, and thus to belong straightforwardly to Owen's third category, but on further scrutiny seems to be a playful comment, perhaps drawing attention to the divergence of Chaucer's translation from Renaud's *Livre*. We find it on the same folio as Chaucer's words 'What is better than gold? Jaspre. What is better than jaspre? Wisedoom. / And what is better than wisedoom? Womman. And what is better than a good woman? Nothyng' (1107–8; f. 219v). Renaud's text is a straightforward translation from Albertano's Latin: 'Quele chose vault mieux que l'or? Jaspe. Quele chose vault plus que jaspe? Sens. Quele chose vault mieux que sens? Femme. Quelle chose vault mieux que femme? Riens'.[54] By adapting his source and distinguishing between 'woman' and 'good woman', Chaucer subtly dilutes Prudence's defence of women and implies that women are not necessarily better than wisdom. The Latin gloss in Hengwrt reads: 'Auro quid melius. iaspis. quid iaspide, sensus. / Sensu quid. amber. quid muliere. michil'. What are we to make of this, the only gloss to *Melibee* to be placed at the bottom of the manuscript leaf, to be in slightly smaller script than the text, and to diverge from Chaucer's text by alluding to amber, another precious stone? It seems to suggest that the scribe has noticed something unusual about Chaucer's translation. Apparently, such verses were popular and had many variants;[55] perhaps the scribe is joining in the literary game and offering a variant of his own.

How can we sum up the Hengwrt glosses? To begin with the obvious: there are very few and *Melibee* is a relatively long story. The distribution of glosses is uneven and unsystematic, since four of the seven appear alongside the first twenty-two lines of the tale. If we leave aside the single *auctoritas* citation and the single pointer, the annotations of the manuscript scribe are in Latin and usually repeat what appears in the tale; they give no additional information which would enable the reader to locate the relevant parts of the Bible or Ovid's work. One gloss, however, moves away from a faithful repetition of what is in the tale, possibly engaging playfully with Chaucer's subtle modifications to do with gender politics.[56]

When we turn to Ellesmere, we find a remarkable expansion in the number of glosses to *Melibee*, even allowing for the fact that the manuscript was designed with wide margins to accommodate annotations. Where Hengwrt has seven, Ellesmere has one hundred and seventy-six. Further, every leaf has at least one gloss, a characteristic shared only with the *Parson's Tale*. All are indexing marginalia, *notae*, names from the text or summaries of subject matter. Four of the seven glosses in Hengwrt are repeated in Ellesmere, at 976, 984, 987 and 989, and the speaker at 1233, Melibee, is highlighted through a marginal note rather than a pointer. The Latin gloss which may be responding to the subtlety of Chaucer's translation

[54] Renaud, 5.10; see Askins, p. 341.

[55] See the note to 1007–8 of *Melibee* in *Riverside*, p. 925 (although it incorrectly gives the Latin gloss as a parallel passage, failing to notice the mention of 'amber'), and the note to Renaud, 5.10, in Askins, p. 341.

[56] Hengwrt has three further glosses not written by the manuscript scribe, two in English (alongside 1186; f. 221v, and 1479–83; f. 227v) and one in Latin (1846; f. 234r), all staying close to the text of *Melibee*. These are not incorporated into Ellesmere, which suggests that they were probably written after Ellesmere was produced.

is absent, as is the interlinear gloss clarifying meaning; there is nothing which might suggest humour or the provisionality of texts.

Speakers are identified in the margins: 'Melibee' or 'Melibeus' appears twenty-three times, and Prudence twenty-two. One hundred and twenty-four marginal annotations cite *auctoritates* mentioned in the text, for example Solomon, Seneca, Tullius or Apostulus, or draw attention to what is said, for example 'memorandum de Job' (remember Job; 999), 'nota secundum Salomonem' (note according to Solomon; 1057) and 'nota de Rebekka' (note according to Rebecca; 1098). As in Hengwrt, there is more information in the tale than in the gloss; no further information is provided which would direct the reader to specific parts of the texts mentioned.

The large number of marginal notations and the presence of at least one on every leaf mean that the glossing is more consistent and systematic than in Hengwrt. Only two long passages have hardly any glosses. The section where the surgeons, physicians, advocates and old folk offer advice to Melibee (1004–44) has only one. Since some of the advice offered is in line with the prudence which Melibee eventually learns to incorporate — the wise old man's advice against war (1038–42) for instance — the lack of glossing here suggests that it is advice which comes with the status and weight of *auctoritates* behind it which is stressed rather than advice per se. The second passage is at 1349–1403, where Tullius is mentioned six times but there are no marginal notes. However, at this point, Prudence is repeating and referring back to advice given by Tullius at 1200–2, where we find the gloss: 'how a man shal examine his conseillours after the doctrine of Tullius'. Tullius as advice-giver had already been noted.

One difference between the manuscripts is that Ellesmere has glosses in English — something we will also see in the *Parson's Tale* in both Hengwrt and Ellesmere. In addition to the one just mentioned, alongside 1086 we read, 'of iij thynges that dryuen a man out of his hous'; at 1121, 'of iij thynges that been contrariouse to good conseil'; at 1148, 'how a man shal tellen his conseil'; at 1173, 'of conseillours that a man oghte to eschue'; at 1224, 'how a man may chaungen his conseillours withouten repreve'; and at 1336, 'nota of the strongeste garnysoun that may be'. These summarise the subject matter of the tale, sometimes using the third person, and use the vernacular as a mediator of advice.

The rudimentary glossing of *Melibee* in Hengwrt gives way, then, to a systematic programme in Ellesmere, in which nothing detracts from the tale's serious purpose, and its meaning as advice literature is emphasised. Given the importance of glossing in the Middle Ages, and given the high prestige of texts which were glossed, the Ellesmere *Melibee* gains in status, as, by implication, does its narrator.

Although rather more than half of the *Parson's Tale* in Hengwrt has been lost, a comparison of what remains — the first five hundred lines — with the corresponding part in Ellesmere is instructive. There is a similar expansion in the number of marginal glosses in the later manuscript, and similar evidence of a systematic approach. Of the thirty extant leaves of the *Parson's Tale* in the earlier manuscript, thirteen have no gloss and seven have only one, whereas in the later manuscript, every leaf is glossed. In Hengwrt there are fifty-two marginal notations in the hand of the manuscript scribe: five are in Latin, forty-four are in English, two are numbers, and one is unintelligible. These are in addition to Latin chapter heads, incipits and explicits. In Ellesmere the number of marginal glosses increases to one hundred and twenty-nine and they are more evenly distributed: twenty-one are in Latin, one hundred and five are in English, and there are three hybrids. The hybrid glosses demonstrate

the scribe's evident ease in moving between languages; for example, alongside 484 we read, 'what Enuye is secundum Philosophum et secundum Augustinum' (what envy is according to the philosopher and according to Augustine).[57]

All the marginal glosses to the *Parson's Tale* in Hengwrt belong to Owen's first category. The vast majority identify or summarise what is in the tale: for example, 'what bihoueth to penitence' (107; f. 236v); 'the iiij mevere to contricioun' (231; f. 240r); and 'bakbityng' (493; f. 249r). The third person is used only once (133; f. 237v). There are a few *notae* but no *auctoritates* citations such as occur in the Hengwrt *Melibee*, albeit in small numbers.

In Ellesmere, all but one of the glosses to the *Parson's Tale* also belong to the first category but in addition to identifications, summaries and *notae*, there are now more than twenty *auctoritates* citations. To give some examples: 'nota secundum sanctum Gregorium (note according to Saint Gregory; 92), 'Iob ad deum' (Job to God; 176) and 'dominus per Ysayam' (the Lord by means of Isiah; 210). The third person is also used frequently. Only one gloss is a comment; in the part of the tale dealing with sin and contrition, Solomon says, 'likneth a fair womman that is a fool of hire body lyk to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a soughe' (155). Alongside this is the marginal note: 'notate vos muliers et cauete' (take heed, you women, and beware), which is surely the written equivalent of a male authority figure wagging the finger at women, especially beautiful women. Unlike the 'jasper/amber' gloss in the Hengwrt *Melibee*, which is not replicated in Ellesmere, this stern response reinforces what is in the text.

Ellesmere, then, develops the glosses to *Melibee* and the *Parson's Tale* along similar lines. Both tales become more heavily and more systematically glossed. They also feature glosses which almost exclusively fit Owen's first category; only one comments on the text, the admonition in the *Parson's Tale*, but this too reinforces what is being said. The glossing brings the tales into closer alignment since they come to share more characteristics so far as glossing is concerned. English is used in the Hengwrt *Parson's Tale* and is adopted in the Ellesmere *Melibee*. *Auctoritates* citations appear in the Hengwrt *Melibee* and are introduced into the Ellesmere *Parson's Tale*. The use of third person notation is developed in the Ellesmere *Parson's Tale* and appears in the Ellesmere *Melibee*. Given the orthodox morality of the *Parson's Tale*, the strengthened relationship between the tales enhances the moral stature of *Melibee* and its narrator.

The glossing in Ellesmere also distinguishes *Melibee* and the *Parson's Tale* from the rest of the *Tales*. Not only are these the only ones to have at least one gloss on every page but the development of glossing is not characteristic of the other stories. Parts of some other tales are heavily glossed in both manuscripts but a systematic development of glossing has not been put in place. While it is a commonplace to acknowledge that the later manuscript is more heavily glossed than the earlier, it has not been sufficiently acknowledged that most of the increase can be accounted for by *Melibee* and the *Parson's Tale* and that the glossing of these tales brings them into closer relationship.

Reading *Melibee* in the Ellesmere manuscript has an effect on our understanding of the tale since it is impossible to avoid noticing the glosses. The heavy use of *auctoritates* citations encourage a reading of *Melibee* as a compilation and hence a perception of its narrator as a compiler. The glosses thus make more sense in relation to *Melibee*'s *Prologue* than to its

[57] The other hybrid glosses are alongside 193, where we read, 'of defaute of tresor vnde dauid' (of default of treasure, of which David [says]) and 322, where we read, 'of spryngynge of synnes secundum Paulum' (of springing of sins according to Paul).

Epilogue and suggest that the editor takes the *Prologue* at face value. The *Epilogue* may as well not have been written, so far as the glosses are concerned. They offer no acknowledgement of the plurality of response which the framing elements invite. In conjunction with the Chaucer portrait, mentioned earlier, they draw attention to the serious nature of the tale and bolster the gravitas and moral authority of the 'makere' of the *Canterbury Tales*.

Late-Medieval Reception: The Manuscript Tradition

If the number of extant manuscripts indicates popularity, Renaud's and Chaucer's versions of the Melibee/Prudence story were popular in the late medieval period. As mentioned earlier, as well as appearing in most fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer's story features independently in five fifteenth-century manuscripts — and many more copies existed.[58] Renaud's version survives in thirty-four manuscripts; three date from the fourteenth century, thirty from the fifteenth, and one from the sixteenth.[59] Comparing the contents and material nature of the extant manuscripts of Chaucer's *Melibee* with a sample of the manuscripts containing Renaud's story discovers differences between French and English reception and sheds light on how Chaucer's version was understood. Examining the glosses in the two fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Melibee* which have textual affiliations with Ellesmere reveals the continuing influence of this prestigious manuscript.

Renaud's story is included in the *Ménagier de Paris*, a conduct book for wives, written c. 1394, roughly contemporaneous with Chaucer's *Melibee*.[60] Although the author does not mention Renaud, he incorporates his tale of Melibee and Prudence 'virtually without alteration'; he also includes Petrarch's story of Griselda, again with only 'minor modifications'.[61] Three high-quality fifteenth-century manuscripts of the *Ménagier* survive, all with links to the Dukes of Burgundy: two appear to have been owned by the Dukes; the third probably belonged to Marguerite de Ghistelles (1415–98), whose husband was connected with the dukes.[62] The link with the Burgundian court is strengthened by the identification of the Ménagier as Guy de Montigny, a knight once in the service of the Duke of Berry.[63] We see here, in a French manuscript produced for a French audience, a connection between costly manuscripts, French aristocratic patronage, and the tale as a conduct books for wives.

The author of the *Ménagier* re-contextualises Renaud's story, explicitly using it to show wives how to manage their husbands. He introduces the story of Melibee and Prudence with words of advice to wives when their husbands behaved foolishly: 'doulcement et sagement vous le retrayer de ses folyes. Gardez que par bonne pacience et par la doulceur de voz paroles vous

58 Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, p. 107.

59 For a list of manuscripts of Renaud's *Livre*, and their dates, see Askins, p. 329. Albertano's three Latin treatises were also popular. Angus Graham lists twenty-one English manuscripts which contain his *Liber*; one dates from the thirteenth century, one from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and the rest from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. See 'Latin Manuscript Sources' on the Albertano of Brescia resource site (accessed 13.01.2013): http://freespace.virgin.net/angus.graham/Albertano.htm. Chaucer certainly knew Albertano's work; he drew on his *Liber de amore Dei*, as well as his *Liber consolationis et consilii*, at the start of the *Merchant's Tale*, and on his *De arte loquendi et tacendi* at the end of the *Manciple's Tale* (see *Riverside*, pp. 884 and 954 respectively).

60 Georgine E. Brereton and Janet M. Ferrier, eds, *Le Ménagier de Paris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), date it from internal evidence (p. xxi).

61 Brereton and Ferrier, eds, *Ménagier*, p. xxxviii.

62 Brereton and Ferrier, eds, *Ménagier*, pp. xii-xvi.

63 Nicole Crossley-Holland, *Living and Dining in Medieval Paris: The Household of a Fourteenth-Century Knight* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), p. 7.

occiez l'orgeuil de sa cruaulté … Et s'il est plus estrange, si le refrenez sagement'[64] (sweetly and wisely keep his follies in check. Ensure that by good patience and sweet words you overcome his proud cruelty…And if he is angry with those outside the family, use your wisdom to restrain him).[65] After telling the tale, the author again makes a direct address to wives and gives a clear moral:

> Et pour ce je vous dy que ainsi sagement, subtillement, cautement et doulcement doivent les bonnes dames conseiller et retraire leurs mariz des folyes et simplesses dont elles les voyent embrasez et entechez, et non mye cuidier les tourner par maistrise … Car cuer d'onme envis se corrige par dominacion ou seigneurie de femme; et sachiez qu'il n'est si povre homme ne de si petite valeur, puis qu'il soit marié qui ne veuille seignourir.[66]
>
> (And so I say to you that good ladies should wisely, subtly, cautiously and sweetly counsel and restrain their husbands from the foolish and silly behaviour which they see inflames and affects them and not think to change them by masterful means…For the heart of a man considers himself corrected if a woman assumes domination and lordship; and know that no man is so poor or of such small value that he would not be lord and master when he is married.)

The story does not instruct husbands to be less foolish or angry nor teach a non-gendered audience about self-governance. It teaches exemplary wifehood and directs its advice to wives.

Renaud's story of Melibee and Prudence also appears in two fifteenth-century French manuscripts from the Royal Collection now in the British Library: in the mid fifteenth-century BL. MS. Royal 19 C. VII, as a conduct text for women, and in the early fifteenth-century BL. MS. Royal 19 C. XI, as a mirror for princes. Neither has a secure connection with England at the time of production. Royal 19 C. VII was recorded in an inventory of Henry VIII's library in Richmond Palace in 1535,[67] and may have been acquired by Henry VII.[68] The connection of Royal 19 C. XI with England comes even later, with an English inscription in the manuscript dating, according to the British Library, from the early seventeenth century. While we do not know how or when these manuscripts came to England, we can say that in general, French manuscripts passed into English hands through gift-giving, marriage and conquest,[69] and that the fifteenth-century English court is known to have turned to the Continent for high quality manuscripts rather than patronise English talent.[70] It seems likely, then, that these manuscripts were produced in France for a French audience.

64 Brereton and Ferrier, eds, *Ménagier*, p. 112.

65 The translations in this section of the article are my own.

66 Brereton and Ferrier, eds, *Ménagier*, p. 113.

67 James P. Carley, *The Libraries of King Henry VIII* (London: British Library, 2000), p. 3. Carley lists it as item no. 84. The British Library's website has a slightly different numbering system.

68 The inventory of 1535 lists manuscripts, mainly Flemish, formerly owned by Edward IV, and manuscripts and printed books acquired by Henry VII; some items are known to have belonged to Edward IV but Royal 19 C. VII is not listed among them. Henry VII is known to 'have inclined towards the French taste' rather the Flemish work favoured by Edward IV: J. M. Backhouse, 'Illuminated Manuscripts associated with Henry VII and members of his immediate family', in *The Reign of Henry VII: Proceedings of the 1993 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), pp. 175–87 (p. 179). There is, however, no evidence that conclusively links Royal 19 C. VII to Henry VII.

69 Scot McKendrick, 'A European Heritage: Books of Continental Origin collected by the English Royal Family from Edward III to Henry VIII', in *Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination*, by Scot McKendrick, John Lowden and Kathleen Doyle (London: British Library, 2011), pp. 43–65 (p. 63).

70 Carol M. Meale, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 201–38 (pp. 202–4).

In Royal 19 C. VII, Renaud's story of Melibee and Prudence appears between *Le Livre que Fist le Chevalier de la Tour pour lenseignement de ses filles* and *The Tale of Patient Griselda, translated from the Latin of Petrarch*; all items in the manuscript are in French.[71] The leaves are vellum, the first story has a colour illustration the width of the text, and there are other initials in gold and colour. The illustration features a garden setting and a man reading to three young women with his finger raised, as though he is using the book as a means of instruction. This is presumably meant to depict the Knight reading to his daughters, since the Knight's prologue makes explicit that his book is 'vn livre et vn exemplaire pour mes filles aprendre a romancier et entendre comment elles se doiuent gouuerner et le bien du mal sauoir' (a book and an example so that my daughters may read the stories and understand how they should govern themselves and know right from wrong; f. 2r–v).

Griselda's story (f. 150ff) is Philippe de Mézières's translation, which he included in his *Livre de la vertu du sacrament de mariage*, a book he wrote 'pour le confort et reconfort principaument des dames mariees' (chiefly for the comfort and solace of married women), although he did not exclude men from his readership.[72] In Royal 19 C. VII, although not in Philippe's *Livre*, the story of Griselda is followed by Petrarch's epilogue (f. 163v–164r) which maintains that the story is directed at readers generally, not just married women. There is then a colophon which reveals that the story is, in fact, directed at wives: 'ci fine listorie du mirouer des dames mariees, cestassauoir de la haulte et merueilleuse vertu de pacience obedience et vraie humilite et constance de Griseldiz marquise de Saluces' (here ends the story of the mirror for married ladies, that is to say of the great and marvellous virtue of patience, obedience and true humility and constancy of Griselda, marquise of Saluce; f. 164r). It is worth pointing out that whenever de Mézières writes about Griselda, it is in the context of exemplary wifely conduct. In his *Epistre au Roi Richart*, where he advises Richard II to make peace with France, marry a French princess and embark on a crusade with the French to retake the Holy Land, he mentions Griselda's story, written by Petrarch, and recommends that the king choose a wife like her.[73] Whether or not the colophon in Royal 19 C. VII derives from de Mézières, it gives the last word to Griselda's exemplarity as a wife.

Le Livre de Mellibee et de Dame Prudence is Renaud's story.[74] It has no title, prologue or epilogue to suggest how it should be read but its placing between two explicitly moralised stories slanted towards women indicates that an aristocratic female audience is addressed here too. The absence of Renaud's prologue, which says that the story is for men, also suggests that the story here is directed at women. Some names of authorities are written in red — for example, those of Seneca, Solomon and Job — but there are no marginal glosses. The longest

[71] *The Tale of Patient Griselda* has no title in the manuscript; I give the BL's title here. There is a fourth item: 'le codicille maistre Jehan de Meun', a devotional poem of 88 lines beginning, 'Dieux ait lame des trespassez / Car des biens quilz ont amassez'. This is in a different hand from the rest.

[72] Philippe de Mézières, *Le livre de la vertu du sacrament de mariage*, ed. by Joan B. Williamson (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), p. 46.

[73] Philippe de Mézières, *Letter to King Richard II: A Plea made in 1395 for peace between England and France*, trans. by G. W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1975), p. 42, where he says 'may it please God, worthy Prince, for the furtherance of peace in Christendom and the comfort of your royal person, to grant you a wife such as Griselda, the wife of the Marquis of Saluzzo, who was but the daughter of a poor working man, yet, according to the authentic chronicle of the said Marquis of Saluzzo and Griselda his wife, written by that learned doctor and sovereign poet, Master Francis Petrarch, there is no record, from the beginning of the world until today, apart from the saints, of a woman of such great virtue, nor so loving towards her husband, nor of such marvellous patience, as this same Lady Griselda'.

[74] Carley, *Libraries of King Henry VIII*, p. 22.

part of the text to be rubricated shows the scribe making yet another variation of the 'jasper' verse discussed earlier: 'quelle chose vault mieux que or Jaspre Quelle chose vault mieulx que jasper femme Que chose vault mieulx que femme Riens' (what is better than gold? Jasper. What is better than jasper? Woman. What is better than woman? Nothing; f. 128r). How were aristocratic women readers meant to read this, with its omission of the reference to wisdom? Did the scribe just simplify Renaud's text? Was the omission accidental or a subtle implication that women could not be better than wisdom? However we might interpret this divergence from Renaud's text, the fact that this part is rubricated further indicates that the story of Melibee and Prudence in this manuscript is meant to have a special meaning for women.

Royal 19 C. XI is not aimed at women but it too is courtly and moral, on vellum, with sixteen colour miniatures; all texts are clearly set out in double columns and have decorated initial letters. It has a more learned focus than Royal 19 C. VII, which may be connected with the gendered nature of its audience. The *Tale of Melibeus* is the second item in the manuscript and follows Jean de Vignay's translation of *De Ludo Scaccorum*. The *De Ludo* prologue establishes a royal connection for the text by dedicating the work 'a tresnoble et excellent prince Jehan de France, Duc de Normandie et aussi filz de Philipe par le grace de dieu Roy de France' (to the most noble and excellent prince John of France, Duke of Normandy, and also son of Philip, by the grace of God king of France; f. 1r).

The game of chess as political allegory is made explicit in the prologue, for de Vignay states that the text comes from authorities, doctors, philosophers and ancients who 'sont rancontez et sont appliquiez a la moralite des nobles hommes et des gens du peuple selon le gieu dez eschez' (have encountered the morality of noblemen and their people and have applied it to the game of chess; f. 1r). He repeats his purpose in translating the *De Ludo* in a colophon: 'je frere Jehan de Vignay hospitalier de lordre de hault pas ay translate de latin en francois ce liure de la moralite des nobles hommes et des gens de commun peuple sur le jeu des eschez' (I, brother John de Vignay, hospitalier of the Order of Hault Pas, have translated from Latin into English this book of morality of noblemen and their people in accordance with the game of chess; f. 51r). The political allegory is underlined by the hierarchical nature of the illustrations, including those of the king, queen, judges, knights and bishops. The *Tale of Melibeus* is Renaud's translation. Although it lacks Renaud's prologue referring to his intended princely audience and goes straight into the tale, its collocation with the *De Ludo*, explicitly a mirror for princes, suggests that it can also be read in this way.

The manuscript also has a *Philosophia* of Guillaume de Conches, articles of faith and a translation of the Latin *Elucidarius*. All these items are in French; there are also psalms, prayers and hymns in Latin. The *Philosophia* and the *Elucidarius* suggest an interest in secular knowledge and spiritual growth respectively. The manuscript's mix of French and Latin, and its learned focus, suggest a male audience; the *de Ludo* is a mirror for princes, and its prologue explicitly establishes a royal connection. Because of its collocation with the *de Ludo*, *Melibeus* can be seen to belong to the same genre. In the French tradition, then, Renaud's story of Melibee and Prudence appears in costly manuscripts and is linked with aristocratic patronage and audience. It was re-contextualised in the late fourteenth century as a conduct text for aristocratic women and, in the fifteenth century, as a conduct text for aristocratic women and as a mirror for princes.[75]

[75] Examining the 34 manuscripts listed by Askins which contain Renaud's Prudence/Melibee story would be a study

Chaucer's *Melibee* was popular in fifteenth-century England. As mentioned earlier, five copies witness that the story circulated independently of the *Canterbury Tales*.[76] All five surviving manuscripts date from the second half of the fifteenth century,[77] and they suggest that *Melibee* had a wide geographical reach. The scribe of Arundel 140 probably came from the borders of the East Midlands and East Anglia; Sloane 1009 may have been connected with Ludlow, and its scribe with South Herefordshire; Stonyhurst XXIII and its scribe may have been connected with the north west Midlands; HM 144 may have been associated with Berkshire or West Surrey; and the scribe of Pepys 2006 writes in a standardised south east Midlands dialect.[78] The story also appears in a variety of contexts. Sloane 1009, for instance, appears to have been associated with a religious household, as it has a mix of Latin and English, a preponderance of religious material (including some addressed to clerics) and various religious references. In contrast, Arundel 140 appears to have been directed towards a secular audience and looks like a book for a domestic household, since its contents are all in English and are generically diverse, ranging from romance to texts of spiritual and moral instruction.

The relative plainness of all five manuscripts indicates their functional nature, distinguishes them from French manuscripts of the Melibee/Prudence story, and suggests a different audience. Stonyhurst XXIII is parchment and has rather more decoration than the others but is not a lavish production;[79] the other four are paper. In some cases — in Arundel 140, Sloane 1009 and HM 144 — *Melibee* was originally produced in booklet form.[80] In Arundel 140, it is the last item in the manuscript and different in format and script from the texts it accompanies. M. C. Seymour dates the first part of the manuscript to the early fifteenth century, and *Melibee* to the second half of the century.[81] The Arundel 140 *Melibee* is incomplete and fragile. It lacks two leaves between folios 177 and 178 (lines 1459–562 of the

in itself. My initial research reveals that the story almost always appears in vellum manuscripts, and that it more often features in collocation with moral or philosophical material than with texts offering advice to women. An example of the former is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr., 578, where it appears after the *Consolacion de Boece* and is followed by *Le Livre sur le Jeu des Eschacs*, *Epistola beati Bernardi*, *Le Testament maistre Jehan de Meun*, and a *Paraphrase des IX leçons de Job*. See *Catalogue des Manuscrits Français, I* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1868), p. 58. An example of the latter is Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3356, where it features between *Le Livre que fit le chevalier de la Tour* and Christine de Pizan's *Le livre des troys vertuz a l'enseignement des dames*. See *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, III* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1887), pp. 345–46.

[76] The following analysis is based on examination of the two manuscripts at the British Library which feature *Melibee* outside the *Canterbury Tales* (Arundel 140 and Sloane 1009). For analysis of the other three, I am indebted to M. C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts, I: Works Before the 'Canterbury Tales'* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995) and Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*.

[77] Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, I*, dates them as follows: Arundel 140 1450–75 (p. 137); Sloane 1009 1475–96 (p. 145); Pepys 2006 1475–1500 (p. 136); Stonyhurst XXIII 1450–75 (p. 154); Huntingdon HM 144 after 1482 possibly c. 1500 (p. 153).

[78] Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, I*, pp. 137, 145, 154, 153, 136 respectively. *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, 4 vols, ed. by Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels and Michael Benskin (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), says that Arundel 140 is written in the language of S. Lincs, but mixed with various different dialectical components (I. 105), and that the language of Sloane 1009 is probably S. Herefords (I. 116).

[79] Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, 1*, p. 154, describes the decoration in Stonyhurst XXIII as 'provincial work'.

[80] On the original booklet format of *Melibee*: for Arundel 140 see Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, I*, p. 137 and Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, p. 107; for Sloane 1009, see Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, I*, p. 144 and Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, p. 111; for HM 144, see Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, I*, p. 152 and Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, p. 117.

[81] M. C. Seymour, 'The English Manuscripts of *Mandeville's Travels*', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions, IV, 1955–1971* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Society, 1974), 169–210 (p. 184).

text) and the last folio (181b) ends mid sentence, the last words being: 'And therefore I asiontze [assent] And' (*Riverside*, line 1777). All the folios (166–81) also show signs of damage, which becomes more extensive towards to the end of what has survived. The *Melibee* in Sloane 1009 also shows signs of wear; it is torn at the front and incomplete at the end, concluding (f. 48v) with 'his goode name for it is written' (*Riverside*, 1845–46). It seems likely that if these copies of *Melibee* had not been incorporated into manuscripts, they would have perished. In the fifteenth century, then, copies of *Melibee*, including those now in Arundel 140 and Sloane 1009, were produced in booklet form and read almost to pieces. Their material nature indicates that their readers and patrons were of a different class from those of the French manuscripts which contained the story of Melibee and Prudence.

In no case — unlike in the French tradition — does the story of Melibee and Prudence appear alongside that of Griselda or any other good wife. The *Clerk's Tale* was certainly popular in the fifteenth century but was not paired with *Melibee*:[82] the only items from the *Canterbury Tales* to appear alongside *Melibee* in these manuscripts are the *Parson's Prologue and Tale* and the *Retraction* (in Pepys 2006), and the *Monk's Tale* (in HM 144). Nor do any of the five manuscripts which abstract *Melibee* from its *Canterbury Tales* context include its epilogue, with its comments on wifehood, either in full or in part; the opportunity to re-inscribe the Host's comments about his wife or to suggest that different kinds of wifely behaviour are exemplified by Prudence and Goodelief is not taken up.

In all five manuscripts, *Melibee* appears alongside religious or instructional texts. In Pepys 2006 — the only manuscript under discussion where explicit identification with Chaucer is apparent — it accompanies Chaucer's *Parson's Prologue and Tale*, Chaucer's *Retraction*, and nine of Chaucer's minor poems. There is 'some Latin indexing and even occasional translation into Latin of the text' but all this is 'very unevenly distributed'.[83] In HM 144, the whole text of *Melibee* is called *Prouerbis*, has small Latin translations of English phrases, and appears alongside Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*, which here is entitled *The falle of Princis*.[84] This manuscript also includes items of a religious nature: Lichfield's *Compleynt betwene God and Man*, Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, the *Gospel of Nichodemus*, and the *Stations of Jerusalem*. Secular items include extracts from Trevisa's *Polychronicon*, and some of Lydgate's works.[85] In Stonyhurst XXIII the items alongside *Melibee* are the *Three Kings of Cologne*, the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* together with the *Charter of the Abbey*, and *Four Feathers*.[86]

Sloane 1009 has strong religious resonances, having a mix of Latin and English, as well as overtly didactic texts.[87] It contains, in this order: a piece of English prose beginning 'penance is the seconde medycyne'; *Recusorium anime* in English prose beginning 'we knowyth welle by comyn sapience'; *De contemplacione* in English prose beginning 'a grete Clerke Richard of Seynt Victores'; *Nonnulla de hominum natura prava* beginning 'cur fecit deus homines'; a piece in English prose on the six religious duties beginning 'ther be vi. Thynges'; a

[82] See Silvia, 'Some Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts', pp. 155, 157.

[83] Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, p. 116. Owen gives no further information.

[84] Neither Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, nor Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, 1*, mentions any marginalia.

[85] Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, 1*, pp. 152–53.

[86] Again, neither Owen, *Manuscripts of 'The Canterbury Tales'*, nor Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, 1*, mentions any marginalia.

[87] Information about Sloane 1009 has also been collated by Rebecca Farnham in *Manuscripts of the English West Midlands: A Catalogue of Vernacular Manuscript Books of the English West Midlands, c. 1300–c. 1475*; project director Wendy Scase. See http://www.hrionline.ac.uk.

Latin prayer beginning 'o vos sacerdotes'; Chaucer's *Melibee*; *De vita et honestate clericorum*, which Seymour identifies as *Speculum sacerdotis*; *Computacio Danielis prophete* in Latin; and *Somniale*, Latin verse beginning, 'apis videre vel capere lucrum significat'.[88]

Sloane 1009 has, then, a mix of English and Latin, an obvious didactic emphasis, and sophisticated religious material. Some items, 'O vos sacerdotes' and *De vita et honestate clericorum*, seem to be addressed to clerics. Inspection of the manuscript reveals a number of Latin marginal glosses: for example, in the margins of the first text, we read 'respice sapience' (f. 7), 'de corpore et sanguine Jhu xpi' (f. 6) and 'de fide' (f. 8). There are also several signs of the cross in red within this text, presumably suggesting moments at which a blessing would be given. On f. 57 there is a memorandum of small sums paid to ' "the Coll" of Lodelowe'.[89] The Latin titles and texts, the items addressed to clerics, the religious symbols, and the religious references suggest that Sloane 1009 may have been connected, and perhaps originated, with a religious or ecclesiastical household. The emphasis on penitence and contemplation in the English items would support this interpretation. The fact that *Melibee*, produced originally as a booklet, is placed alongside specifically religious material suggests that it has been included on account of its general moral dimension.

Comparing the marginal glosses to *Melibee* in the Sloane and Ellesmere manuscripts reveals a strong correspondence in both their number and nature. As mentioned earlier, Sloane 1009 is incomplete but if we compare what remains with the corresponding part of the tale in Ellesmere, the Sloane *Melibee* would have one hundred and fifty-five glosses if the glossing were identical in the two manuscripts.[90] In fact it has one hundred and thirty-one; almost all occur alongside the same parts of the text as in Ellesmere and are virtually identical. Apart from a few *notae*, all identify speakers or cite *auctoritates*. Variations are infrequent and very minor: whereas in Ellesmere at 989 we read, 'Apostulus paulus ad Romanos', Sloane 1009 has 'paule' (f. 29v); at 1098, where Rebecca is giving advice to Jacob, Ellesmere has 'nota de Rebekka' and Sloane 1009 has 'Jacob' (f. 32r). The most notable difference between the two manuscripts is that with one exception (the citation of 'Seynt Jerome' 1595; f. 43r), English does not appear in any of the glosses in Sloane 1009; those in Ellesmere where English is used as the language of advice do not feature. The glosses in the Sloane *Melibee* highlight the status of the tale as advice literature and reveal that the textual influence of Ellesmere continues into the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

Arundel 140 may have been connected with an urban household; I use Hajnal's definition of an urban household as a site where, typically, men in their late twenties marry women in their mid twenties and establish a separate household.[91] In Arundel 140, *Melibee* is bound with *Ypotys*, *Mandeville's Travels*, *The Prick of Conscience*, *Gy Earl of Wewyke* and the *Seven Sages*. If the number of surviving manuscripts indicates the popularity of texts, all these

[88] Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, 1*, pp. 144–45.

[89] Seymour, *Chaucer Manuscripts, I*, p. 145, identifies this as the collegiate church of St. Lawrence, Ludlow; he notes other references of a religious nature on the same folio.

[90] Sloane 1009 is incomplete at the end; after this point in Ellesmere, there are five glosses. The beginning of Sloane 1009 is torn and some rubrics may have been lost; at this part of Ellesmere, there are another five glosses. The Sloane manuscript also lacks lines 995–1034 of *Melibee*, where Ellesmere has eight glosses. It omits 1189–90 (where Ellesmere has one gloss) and 1215–17 (where it has two). Since the total number of glosses to the Ellesmere *Melibee* is one hundred and seventy-six, the extant text in Sloane 1009 would have one hundred and fifty-five if the glossing in the two manuscripts were identical.

[91] J. Hajnal, 'European Marriage Patterns in Perspective', in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, ed. by D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley (London: Arnold, 1965), pp. 101–43, although he suggests that this pattern did not exist in the Middle Ages (p. 134).

were popular.[92] The *Prick of Conscience* directly addresses the salvation of the soul and the necessity for righteous living. The other texts are more secular and entertaining and can be broadly categorised as romance; *Ypotys* and *Gy* are among the 'romances of prys' mocked in *Thopas* (897–99). Felicity Riddy sees *Guy* in the context of late-medieval patterns of family and marriage and as part of a literate if unlearned lay culture centred on the home.[93] Perhaps *Melibee* was added to the miscellany to complement the emphasis on salvation, and on proper ethical and social conduct, found in the *Prick of Conscience*.

Inspection of Arundel 140 reveals that the marginal glosses to *Melibee* are very similar to those which accompany the text in Ellesmere. The Arundel *Melibee* is incomplete but has one hundred and eight glosses where the corresponding part of the text in Ellesmere has one hundred and forty-five.[94] Some of its glosses are indecipherable because of manuscript damage but the overwhelming number are identical to those in Ellesmere. As in Sloane 1009, there are a few *notae*; the rest largely name Melibee and Prudence as speakers and cite Latin names of biblical and classical *auctoritates*. There are a few variations from Ellesmere. Alongside 1200 in Ellesmere we read, 'how a man shal examine his conseillours after the doctrine of Tullius'; in Arundel 140 the gloss is simply 'bono' (f. 172v). Ellesmere has 'nota de Rebekka' (1098), where Arundel 140 has 'nota de bono consilio Rebekka' (note the good counsel of Rebecca; f. 170r). On folio 170r there are also two glosses which do not appear in Ellesmere:[95] at 1103 there is 'de creacione Ade' (on the creation of Adam) and at 1107, alongside the 'jasper' distich discussed earlier, 'nota de quodam clerico versifactore' (note what a certain clerk says in his verse). Both these glosses draw attention to what is in the text and so are of the same kind as those found elsewhere in the manuscript, as well as in Ellesmere and Sloane 1009. Latin is used except on one occasion.[96] Apart from the almost complete absence of the vernacular, the glosses to the Arundel *Melibee* show continuity from Ellesmere and highlight the status of the tale as advice literature.

Arundel 140 has less in common with the French manuscripts, described earlier, than with the devotional miscellanies and 'common profit' books which circulated among London merchant families from the early fifteenth century onwards.[97] A comparison of *Melibee* with a particular household book, Westminster School MS. 3, reveals some similarities. Westminster

[92] There are 6 surviving copies of *Ypotys*: C. Horstmann, *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden* (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1878), p. 511; 32 copies of *Mandeville's Travels*: Seymour, 'English Manuscripts of *Mandeville's Travels*' (pp. 170–71); 115 copies of the *Prick of Conscience*: Robert E. Lewis and Angus McIntosh, *A Descriptive Guide to the Manuscripts of the 'Prick of Conscience'* (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediæval Languages and Literature, 1982), p. 1; 3 copies of *Guy*: Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100–1300* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), p. 104; and 8 copies of *Seven Sages*: Jill Whitelock, ed., *The Seven Sages of Rome (Midland Version)*, Early English Text Society, o.s., 324 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. xiv–xv.

[93] Felicity Riddy, 'Middle English Romance: Family, Marriage, Intimacy', in *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. by Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 235–52.

[94] The Arundel *Melibee* lacks two leaves (lines 1460–562, where Ellesmere has twenty glosses) and is incomplete at the end (where Ellesmere has a further eleven).

[95] My thanks to Dr. Oliver Pickering for his help in deciphering these glosses.

[96] This is on f. 170v, where we read: 'iij thynges … contrarius …'. Despite the manuscript damage, it seems reasonable to conclude that it repeats what is in Ellesmere: 'of iij thynges that been contrariouse to good conseil' (1121).

[97] Amanda Moss, 'A Merchant's Tales: A London Fifteenth-Century Household Miscellany', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 156–69, discusses the fifteenth-century fashion for common profit books among London merchant families (p. 158). Kellie Robertson, 'Common Language and Common Profit', in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 209–28, also discusses the production of common profit books in London in the early years of the fifteenth century.

MS. 3 was written in English, in the early to mid fifteenth century, and was originally in booklet form;[98] *Melibee* was also produced in booklet form, although no examples survive from the early fifteenth century, and, in the case of Arundel 140, was added to a miscellany of English texts. Westminster MS. 3 was probably owned by a London citizen in the 1470s, and a manuscript of the early fifteenth century, Cambridge University Library Ff.6.31, was financed through the estate of Londoner John Colop for a 'comyn profite'.[99] It seems reasonable to assume that *Melibee* first circulated in London. Westminster MS. 3 provided both 'religious and conduct advice for the various members of a lay household'.[100] *Melibee*, a secular text, straddles the secular/religious divide; its high moral tone justifies its inclusion in a specifically religious as well as a more secular manuscript.

Westminster MS. 3 is, however, a 'handsome' household book 'copied onto vellum',[101] and was probably put together for an elite London merchant family. The *Melibee* in Arundel 140, dating from 1450–70 and originating in the East Midlands/East Anglia borders, is a far more basic production. The demand for instructional vernacular material and the interest in the proper ordering of the self was not confined to the capital in the early years of the century, as the geographic spread of *Melibee* shows. Nor, if the material nature of the manuscript related to the prosperity of the household in which it was read, was it confined to the kind of elite merchant households which produced the 'handsome' Westminster MS. 3.

The manuscript evidence presented here suggests that there were important differences between French and English reception of the Melibee/Prudence story. In French manuscripts written primarily for a French audience, concerns about marriage and appropriate gender relations were arguably central to its reception and interpretation in some cases. The fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Melibee*, however, demonstrate that it was popular in the English tradition but not as a conduct book for women. Rather, they suggest that *Melibee* was understood to be about morality and self-governance: the implications of the tale for marital and gender relations, which are taken up in the French female courtesy tradition, are not apparent. This leads me to conclude, given the consistency of reception witnessed to in the fifteenth-century manuscripts, that from the start, Chaucer's tale was not seen as a conduct book for wives. I would, then, revise Collette's contextualisation of Chaucer's *Melibee* through reference to the writings of the Ménagier de Paris, Philippe de Mézières and Christine de Pizan, which links to her argument that Prudence is a female virtue. Findings based on part of the French tradition should not automatically be transposed to *Melibee*. Examination of the manuscripts of *Melibee* outside the *Canterbury Tales* also leads me to revise Patterson's view that they 'can tell us very little' since they reveal the popularity of the story in the fifteenth century, its wide geographical reach, and its use in both secular and religious households alongside religious and instructional texts. The glosses to *Melibee* in Arundel 140 and Sloane 1009 suggest that the influence of Ellesmere continued well into the fifteenth century.

Conclusion

The framing elements of *Melibee* prompt various responses to the tale. In the *Prologue*, Chaucer the pilgrim presents *Melibee* in terms of translation and literary theory, so associating

[98] Moss, 'A Merchant's Tales', pp. 156–57.
[99] Moss, 'A Merchant's Tales', pp. 157–58.
[100] Moss, 'A Merchant's Tales', p. 160. The manuscript's contents are listed pp. 156–57.
[101] Moss, 'A Merchant's Tales', pp. 169, 156.

his work with prestigious models. The Host's response, when interpreted as documentary realism, indicates that we are meant to keep wifehood in mind but it can also be seen to comment variously on the *Tale* and the reception of stories. The *Prologue*, *Tale* and *Epilogue* together employ and exemplify a principle which informs the *Canterbury Tales* whereby multiple meanings are suggested and no single response seems to be privileged.

Although Chaucer left the *Canterbury Tales* in a fragmentary state at the time of his death, he left his 'most extensive authorial signature' as part of a stable sequence which encouraged plurality of response. Yet the glosses to *Melibee* in Ellesmere suggest that the editor of this prestigious manuscript was keen to construct the 'makere' of the *Canterbury Tales* as a figure of moral authority rather than a writer who suggested multiple interpretations. The glosses to those fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Melibee* with textual affiliations to Ellesmere show that Ellesmere influenced the *ordinatio* of the tale well into the fifteenth century and perhaps also prompted its understanding as a compendium of advice literature.

The manuscript witnesses of *Melibee* outside the *Canterbury Tales* do not suggest that Chaucer's tale was seen to be primarily about exemplary wifehood or prescriptions about gendered behaviour. The story of Melibee and Prudence was sometimes re-contextualised as a conduct text for wives in French manuscripts produced primarily for a French audience, but this was not the case in the English tradition. The material nature of the English manuscripts, and the collocation of *Melibee* with religious or instructional literature in all instances, suggest that despite the tale's wide geographical reach and its appearance in a variety of contexts, advice on self-governance may have been central to understanding Chaucer's *Melibee*.

‘Caplimet’ in *Seinte Margarete* and ‘Eraclea’ in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*

Andrew Breeze

Seinte Margarete is a saint’s life from Herefordshire or thereabouts; the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* is a drama from Suffolk. The first is of the thirteenth century, the second of the fifteenth, and they might seem to have little in common. Yet identification of ‘Caplimet’ in one and ‘Eraclea’ in the second suggests how textual emendation may cast unexpected light on each.

First, the Middle English life of Margaret of Antioch. When she suffered martyrdom, so did others:

> At the time this happened five thousand men were converted to our Lord, and this not counting women and children; and all of them were, as the governor commanded, beheaded at once in Christ’s royal name, in a city of Armenia called Caplimet [*in a burh of Armenie Caplimet inempnet*], all honouring God with upraised voices, and all ascended as martyrs joyfully to heaven.

This massacre, uneasily foreshadowing genocide of Armenians in the twentieth century, has as yet been mysterious, since ‘Caplimet’ has been unidentified. Millett and Wogan-Browne follow Frances Mack in taking it as perhaps Limenia.[1] But that cannot be, since Limenia is on Cephalonia, an island west of Greece and nowhere near Armenia; it is a small place, whereas the thousands of Christians in ‘Caplimet’ show it was a metropolis; and it does not explain *Cap-*. More recent accounts of *Seinte Margarete* give no lead on the matter.[2]

However, maps of the ancient world allow a way forward. The Romans distinguished Armenia Major (east of the Euphrates) from Armenia Minor to the west of it. The latter became part of Cappadocia, and on its edge was Melitene, near a strategic crossing of the Euphrates. Melitene, the ancient Hittite capital of Milid, became vital for imperial defence. Trajan gave it municipal status; Justinian rebuilt its walls. It was still a city during the Crusades (when the cult of St Margaret was growing in western Europe). Thanks to its position on natural routes, Melitene is now the Turkish railway junction of Malatya.[3]

[1] *Medieval English Prose for Women*, ed. by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 76, 77, 217.

[2] Karen Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 24–29; Helen Phillips, ‘Nation, Region, Class, and Gender’, in *The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: To 1550*, ed. by Roger Ellis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), pp. 45–69.

[3] E. W. Gray and Stephen Mitchell, ‘Melitene’, in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn, ed. by Simon

Although its Armenian population is now a remnant, Melitene or Malatya allows emendation of 'in a burh of Armenie Caplimet inempnet' ('in a city of Armenia called Caplimet'), which must be corrupt. If we posit an original Latin *in civitate Armeniae Cap(padociae) Melit(ene) vocata* 'in a city of Cappadocian Armenia called Melitene', this makes sense. The source would have located the place west of the Euphrates in Armenia Minor, and so in Cappadocia. No Latin textual critic will be surprised to see *Melit* as 'Limet', a corruption aided by the verticals of *Melit(ene)* in early script, which would confuse scribes, especially those unfamiliar with Armenian geography. If the source had abbreviated *Cap(padocia)*, its obscuring a toponym that it was meant to clarify will be a further commonplace textual error.

The text of *Seinte Margarete* adds freely to its Latin original.[4] The account of the Armenian martyrs will be one of the translator's additions. If his source is discovered, it may hence vindicate the explanation of 'Caplimet' proposed here. If it does, it provides an unexpected link between Armenia and England, showing that Melitene in Cappadocia, where Armenian Christians died for their faith, was known (if in mangled form) to the far-away author of *Seinte Margarete*, writing somewhere on the border of Wales.

After Armenia, Spain. Some years ago this writer identified 'Hyspalensy' in one early English text as Seville, and 'Mawltryple' and 'Flagott' in another as Martorell and the river Llobregat, near Barcelona.[5] What follows does much the same for 'Eraclea' in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*. The piece, surviving in a sixteenth-century manuscript, presents the miraculous conversion of a Jew who tried to destroy a consecrated Host. Its colophon claims that this happened in 1461 'in the forest of Aragon, in the famous cité Eraclea'.[6] The play itself must be from Bury St Edmunds, as it refers to Babwell (now a Bury suburb), site of a Franciscan friary.[7] It also mentions a performance at Croxton, surely the village north of Thetford (and not those by Fakenham in north Norfolk or on Cambridgeshire's western fringe). The play is often seen as a challenge to Lollards.[8] One may doubt, however, if they warmed to its astounding, surreal combination of orthodox eucharistic teaching and knockabout farce.[9]

If the piece's East Anglian provenance is clear, the whereabouts of 'Eraclea' has not been.[10] But the colophon calls it a 'famous cite' and we know it had many Jews. Now, the 'forest' of Aragon is the northern part, going up into the Pyrenees. A map of its medieval Jewish communities shows one possibility only for 'Eraclea'. This is Urgel, in the Catalan part of the kingdom of Aragon.[11] It is a historic place of Romanesque buildings and a bishop who (with the French president) is Andorra's head of state. Its Jewish community was important and has

Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 954.

4 J. A. W. Bennett, *Middle English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 281–83.

5 A. C. Breeze, 'Caxton's *The Book called Caton* and Seville', *Notes and Queries*, 243 (1998), 434, and '*The Parlement of the Thre Ages* and Martorell, Spain', *Notes and Queries*, 245 (2000), 295–96.

6 E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), II, 427.

7 E. K. Chambers, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), 45; Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Suffolk*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 153–54.

8 Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 106–7.

9 Seth Lerer, 'The Culture of Spectatorship in Late-Fifteenth-Century England', in *Bodies and Disciplines*, ed. by Barbara Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 29–62; Douglas Gray, *Later Medieval English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), pp. 576–79.

10 See now *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, ed. by John T Sebastian (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2012). It is an excellent edition, even though Dr Sebastian takes Eraclea as an 'imaginary town' (p. 66).

11 Béatrice Leroy, *Les Juifs du bassin de l'Èbre: témoins d'une histoire séculaire* (Biarritz: J & D Éditions, 1997), p. 10.

left a major archive; one Catalan scholar observes that it 'mereix una monografia'.[12] Hence the continuing research in *Urgellia*, a learned journal with a Latin title meaning 'Urgel'.[13]

Urgel's situation in the kingdom of Aragon's uplands, its wealthy Jewish quarter, and its Latin name *Urgellia* allow us to identify it as 'Eraclea'. Despite corruption, the sequence of vowels and of *r-c/g-l(l)* lets us take the forms as the same. Urgel's status as cathedral city also accounts for the bishop who baptizes Jews *en masse* at the play's end. It is true that Urgel is eighty miles from the sea and that 'Eraclea' has a harbour (where Aristorius the Jew sends his clerk). But the play's allusion to Babwell shows we must not demand narrow geographical realism. Finally, the forms *Urgellia* and 'Eraclea' indicate use of a Latin source, which suits the play's frequent use of Latin, its ending in a *Te Deum*, and its claim that Rome had authenticated the miracle. If the 'Eraclea' of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* is accepted as Urgel, a Pyrenean city that once had a major *judería*, it opens the way for investigation on how a tale of miracles in Spain reached a playwright in Suffolk; perhaps the 'R. C.' who signed a note on the text, saying of its twelve characters that 'IX may play it at ease'.

[12] Carme Batlle i Gallart, *La Seu d'Urgell medieval: La ciutat i els seus habitants* (Barcelona: Dalmau, 1985), pp. 101–8.

[13] Carme Batlle i Gallart, 'Els primers jueus prestadors a la Seu d'Urgell', *Urgellia*, 15 (2002–5), 337–414.

REVIEWS

Earl R. Anderson, *Understanding 'Beowulf' as an Indo-European Epic: A Study in Comparative Mythology*. Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010. 10 + iv + 594 pp. ISBN 978-0-7734-3755-5. £89.95

Anderson describes in his Introduction the three approaches to *Beowulf* that he offers in this book in terms of the following claims: that its narrative voice is mythopoeic; that the world it reflects belongs to a Romano-Celto-Germanic cultural environment; and that it makes use of migratory typescenes. These approaches may be illustrated by an account of his treatment of each of the three monsters in the poem: Grendel, Grendel's mother, and the dragon.

By *mythopoeia* Anderson means an acceptance of the view that universals, such as justice, exist separately from their specimens, i.e. individual acts of justice, in a supernatural domain, and are animated by supernatural forces. Grendel is to be seen as such a force, and because of this Hroðgar cannot be accused of weakness in failing to repel his ravages. Only God (another such force, cf. p. 70), or a godsend such as Beowulf, can do this, as Hroðgar recognizes in his words to Wulfgar at ll. 381b–84a of the poem. According to Anderson, this approach obviates the need for discussing the poem in terms of rigid distinctions between, for example, the natural and the supernatural, and the pagan and the Christian: Grendel may be seen as 'simultaneously demonic, human, and monstrous' (p. 105) and Hroðgar as neither an idolatrous pagan nor a Christian, but a monotheist (pp. 126–27).

Anderson's argument that *Beowulf* reflects a Romano-Celto-Germanic cultural environment is perhaps best illustrated by his discussion of the chiastic parallel 'mægþa cræft, wiggryre wifes' ('maidens' strength, martial power of a woman'), used in relation to Grendel's mother at ll. 1283b–84a of the poem. It forms part of a simile that Anderson sees as comparing Grendel's mother to an Amazon-warrior, a type of figure referred to only obliquely in Old English literature (here and by way of metaphor in the poems *Judith* and *Juliana*, see p. 285). Anderson's main examples (pp. 276–80) are Roman (Tacitus's *Annales* and *Agricola*); Celtic (the Irish sagas *Tochmarc Emire*, *Aided Áenfir Aífe*, and *Táin Bó Cúailnge*); and Germanic (the *Nibelungenlied*, the eddic poem *Atlamál in grœnlenzku*, the Icelandic *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs*, and the *Gesta Danorum* of Saxo Grammaticus). His reason for citing these examples is presumably that he sees the stories and motifs they reflect as potential supplements to the narration of this part of *Beowulf*, giving added meaning and effectiveness to the simile involving Grendel's mother when the audience calls them to mind.

The migratory typescenes are scenes of a conventional type (involving battles, feasts, quests, exchanges — friendly and otherwise — welcomes and farewells, etc.) that recur

frequently in the heroic literature of many different traditions. As narrative units, according to Anderson, 'they embed meaning by virtue of formal resemblance to past and future texts' (p. 27; future here being presumably contained in time past). Consideration of such a scene in *Beowulf* in relation to its equivalents in other heroic traditions will thus increase our understanding of its function in the poem. This may be illustrated by Anderson's discussion of Beowulf's fight with the dragon in relation to the Indo-European tradition of the cattle-raid, known from Indic, Iranian, Armenian, Greek, Roman, and Irish literature. Anderson presents the cattle-raid as 'a heroic typescene, with four signature themes' (p. 483), each of which is represented in *Beowulf*: (1) the theft of the cattle is contrasted with the armed combat of the hero (cf. the theft of the cup from the dragon's hoard, *Beowulf* ll. 2214b–20, 2280b–83a, and Beowulf's subsequent fight with the dragon); (2) the hero tracks a monster or villain to his remote cave (cf. *Beowulf* ll. 2401–13a); (3) the cattle-raid is sometimes a rite of passage for the hero (cf. the dragon fight as a rite of passage not for Beowulf, but evidently for Wiglaf, who assists him in the fight, *Beowulf*, ll. 2625b–27); and (4) the hero wins the cattle for the benefit of his people (cf. *Beowulf*, ll. 2794–98, where Beowulf gives thanks for having won the dragon's treasure for his people). Part of the point of adducing this supposed parallel seems to be that it directs our attention to the lines just cited in which Beowulf refers to the treasure as intended for his people, lines that discourage us from thinking, as we might be inclined to do from reading ll. 2508b–9, 2535b–37, 2747–51 and 2799–2800a of the poem, as well as Hroðgar's warning to Beowulf at ll. 1748–50a, that in winning the dragon's gold Beowulf has succumbed to avarice (cf. pp. 444, 495).

These approaches will strike many readers as far-fetched. It is doubtful whether it is necessary to construct such an elaborate argument — even more elaborate than my summary suggests — to explain Grendel's triple nature or to clear Hroðgar of the charge of weakness, or whether it is necessary to journey so far afield in order to emphasise the effect of the simile about Grendel's mother or absolve Beowulf of the sin of avarice. Analogues (cognate parallels) and analogies (coincidental ones) are always interesting, however, and there is no doubt that those adduced by Anderson in relation to *Beowulf* are (in the words of the Icelandic *Ragnars saga*) *betra … at hafa en án vera* 'better to have than to be without.'

I must not give the impression that the book deals solely with the monsters. It has twelve chapters, in which hardly any stone is left unturned: in addition to the chapters on mythopoeia (ch. 2), Grendel and his mother (ch. 3), Grendel's mere (ch. 4), and the dragon's treasure (ch. 12), there are chapters on Scyld, Beow, and Hygelac (ch. 1); Æschere and Hroðgar (ch. 5); 'symbolic politics' (ch. 6, covering Beowulf's reception in Heorot and adoption by Hroðgar); 'family charisma' (ch. 7, covering the passages of lament by surviving fathers for their sons); and chapters on the poem's rhetoric (ch. 8), its digressions (ch. 9), its battlefield typescenes (ch. 10), and the concepts of *wyrd*, *ellen*, and *geþyld* (ch. 11). There are also two appendices, one developing the Virgilian notion of *aornos* (Avernus) as a birdless place in relation to Grendel's mere, and the other dealing with epic antithesis in *Beowulf* and *Finnsburh*. Nor must I give the impression that it is only Indo-European examples that Anderson adduces in his support: Mayan, Sumerian, Semitic, Mongolian, Turkish, and Finnish examples are also pressed into service, to an extent that makes the author's title for his book seem not only modest, but also somewhat misleading.

It should be noted that in this book, published in 2010, Anderson has not been able to to make use of *Klaeber's Beowulf*, fourth edition, edited by R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles, and published (by University of Toronto Press) in 2008. Anderson's remarks

on Queen Þryð on, for instance, pp. 253 and 311, now need to be modified in the light of this edition's findings.

There are many errors in the book, trivial for the most part in themselves, but sufficient in number to distract the conscientious reader from following its argument. The author seems strangely insensitive to the different languages with which he is dealing. It is true that he avoids on p. 4 the mistake *consolation mortis* made on p. i. by Mary P. Richards in her Foreword, but on p. 313 we find *reduction ad absurdum* occurring twice in the same line. Saint Augustine would not have been pleased with the spelling *De civitas Dei* on p. 95, and the spelling *a forteriori*, occurring on pp. 121, 313 and elsewhere, gives a strange impression. Mistakes of this kind are all the more irritating when the author sometimes makes them and sometimes does not: we find *rex inutilus* on p. 4 but *rex inutilis* on p. 165, and *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (to give an Irish example) spelt correctly on pp. 277 and 370 but incorrectly on pp. 114 and 354 (cf. also p. 483). The author's linguistic insensitivity shows itself further in what might be called interlingual anacoluthon: the syntactical and grammatical clashing of one language with another when the two are juxtaposed. It looks odd to see, on p. 177, the Old English dative form *þæm ahlæcan* used as the subject of a present-day English clause, and no less so to see, on p. 290, present-day 'into' (motion towards) followed by a dative form in Old English, (*flodes*) *æhte*, where the accusative would be expected — quite apart from the fact that this is a misquotation from *Beowulf*, l. 42a, where accusative *æht* is found.

Anderson is very prone to error where Icelandic is concerned: we find *Skjöldunga saga* misspelt (differently) on pp. 25 and 36, *Vafþrúðnismál* misspelt on p. 29,'Grettir Asnundarson' on p. 45, etc., and, worst of all, 'Thorolf, his favorite daughter' (referring to Þorgerðr, the daughter of Egill Skalla-Grímsson) on p. 250. Here it is not clear whether we are dealing with a spelling mistake or a confusion of identities, as in the case (to return to Old English) of Hyld, referred to as Hygelac's queen on p. 311. Misquotations from Old English, giving an impression of only a superficial knowledge of the language, are frequent in the book: witness *on fæder bearm* (p. 41, for *on fæder bearme*, cf. p. 40), *onsend Hygelac* (p. 62), *him alumpe wæs* (p. 108), and *cnihtwesendne* (p. 208). Anderson's translations from Old English are often shaky, giving the same impression: on pp. 101 and 106, for instance, it looks as though he is mistaking the genitive and dative singular feminine adjectival ending *-re* (in the cases of *beorhtre* and *wanre* respectively) for a comparative form. On the other hand he is correct, where so many other translators are in my view incorrect, in translating *on* as 'in' (as opposed to 'on') at *Beowulf*, l. 1366a: *fyr on flode* 'fire in the water' (pp. 129, 135). His own use of English is at times incorrect, witness 'he lay Hreðel's sword in Beowulf's lap' on p. 52 (cf. 'he lay down his life' on p. 140), and his strange use of 'does' in the sentence 'an epic equivalent would be the hero's journey to the edge of the world and back, as Gilgamesh does' (also on p. 140), which finds another example on p. 189, in footnote 77. Nor do such colloquialisms as 'kicked him out of the novel' (p. 76), 'savvy critics' (p. 120), and 'photo-ops' (p. 200) seem to me appropriate to their contexts.

There are, finally, occasional instances of bibliographical carelessness. Ward (1968), referred to on p. 11, footnote 18, does not seem to have been included in the Bibliography (it is presumably Donald Ward, *The Divine Twins: An Indo-European Myth in Germanic Tradition*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), and on pp. 210–11 Anderson, quoting at length from the *Odyssey* in translation, appears to switch from one translation to another, but neither the footnotes nor the Bibliography seem to give any help in identifying the second translation.

It is difficult to be irritated with Anderson for long, however. His writing style is uneven and at times slapdash, but never lacks life, and his book may give the impression (long though it is) of being a rushed job, but it leaves no doubt as to his enthusiasm for his subject. And the enthusiasm is infectious. We may not agree with all his ideas and comparisons, but he has given us a wealth of comparative material on which to base our disagreements, and a stimulus to develop our own ideas on that basis.

RORY McTURK UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2: From c. 1035 to c. 1300. Edited by Kari Ellen Gade, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 2. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009. cvi + 916pp. ISBN 978-2-503-51897-8. €140

The second of eight projected volumes to be published from the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages project, itself published in two parts, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas* is the companion to *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythic Times to c. 1035*, edited by Diana Whaley. The project aims to produce a new edition of the corpus of skaldic and runic poetry with English translations and relevant apparatus.

As in other volumes already published in the series, this volume contains much introductory material, including lists of abbreviations and of the sigla used in the volume, and a glossary of technical terms. The introduction includes an exhaustive discussion of the manuscripts and editions of the kings' sagas used in this project, a summary of metre and poetic diction, and biographies of kings and other dignitaries who are the subjects of the poetry. This material is useful and generally well laid-out, although I found the choice to order the biographies of kings alphabetically (by name) rather than chronologically (by reign) confusing, making the editor's summaries of royal succession and dynastic disputes unnecessarily complicated.

What is missing in the introductory material is a sense of the political and cultural context. Gade provides a somewhat cursory examination of the prose context of the kings' sagas, for the most part rehearsing an old discussion of the role of poetry to corroborate or verify the prose accounts of kings' sagas. She does suggest a further use for the poetry, in creating an official narrative for events subject to multiple points of view. However, she does not discuss the effect of political and cultural developments from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries on the style or function of the poetry that chronicled this period. Even her royal biographies have a very narrow focus, concentrating on the events described in the poems. As a result, they fail to contextualise these events within the history of Scandinavia or the rest of Europe. This lack is particularly jarring given that the poetry deals primarily with matters of high politics, from the battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066 and the First Crusade to the emperors of Byzantium.

In the realm of cultural history, this corpus provides fruitful evidence for the contact between Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. Three *lausavísur* from *Orkneyinga saga* in honour of Ermengarde of Narbonne, a prominent patron of courtly literature, point to the growing importance of courtly romance in the Norse-speaking world. As such, this corpus is a reminder that the period in question was a time in which the Scandinavian rulers looked increasingly southwards, and became firmly involved in the political and cultural developments of the high Middle Ages.

The goal of the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages project is to replace Finnur Jónsson's standard edition, *Norsk-islandske Skjaldedigtning*, with a modern edition of the skaldic poetry corpus. This edition attempts to displace Finnur's single, authoritative readings with fidelity to manuscript sources, as well as an awareness of the ambiguity and multiplicity of many of these sources. The edition is thus based on a thorough assessment of all known manuscript evidence, as well as a review of previous editions and commentaries. The project also includes a searchable electronic edition where further material, including manuscript images, is available. In its printed form, of course, the thoroughness of this editing project can become overwhelming to the non-expert. To take a straightforward example, the poetry is examined stanza by stanza, with appended translation and commentary; a broader readership might find it more helpful to be presented with entire poems. All in all, however, this edition is another fine product of a meticulous and painstaking editorial project, a remarkable achievement, and a testimony to the dedication of its editors.

ERIKA SIGURDSON THE ÁRNI MAGNÚSSON INSTITUTE FOR ICELANDIC STUDIES

Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care: Essays in Honour of Bella Millett. Edited by Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker. Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2009. xx + 217pp. ISBN 9781903153291. £50

These thirteen essays dedicated to Bella Millett, aptly described by Derek Pearsall in his warm-hearted preface as a 'wonderful scholar' (p. xiv), are complemented by a list of publications by the dedicatee on pp. xv–xvii. In their equally warm introduction Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker refer to Millett's approach as 'magisterial, thorough and correct, yet acknowledging variations; never boastful but always respectful of her material; never assuming knowledge in her readers; but never patronizing' (p. 1). Anyone who has had the privilege of being associated with Bella Millett or of using her publications will easily endorse this view. In these publish-or-perish times when far too much is produced far too early without adequate time for the ripening of ideas or the full testing of hypotheses one is struck more by the quality and impact (to use a modern buzzword in its proper sense) of her publications than their quantity — though this is not unimpressive, either. Bella Millet has never shied away from the difficult or the intractable in her work, and many of us who share Pearsall's view of *Ancrene Wisse* as being 'one of the great achievements […] of all English prose' (p. xiv) are grateful for the time and scholarly energy she has spent editing this and related works both in traditional and electronic modes. The contributions here largely succeed in continuing this tradition of exacting scholarship.

The essays are set out in a broadly chronological order and seek to reflect Millett's own interests as well as representing some of the best of the work being currently produced. Because the volume has a theme (even if sometimes loosely interpreted), it does not suffer from the usual problem that besets *Festschriften*, where well-meaning contributors produce material that has been lying about in their bottom drawers waiting for some opportunity to be published but bears no relation to the dedicatee. The book opens with E. A. Jones's ' "Vae Soli": Solitaries and Pastoral Care' and closes with Alexandra Barratt's ' "Take a Book and Read": Advice for Religious Women'. In between there is a wide range of material: 'Scribal Connections in Late Anglo-Saxon England' (Elaine Treharne); 'Gerald of Wales, the *Gemma*

Ecclesiastica and Pastoral Care' (Brian Golding); 'Time to Read: Pastoral Care, Vernacular Access and the Case of Angier of St Frideswide' (Jocelyn Wogan-Browne); 'Lambeth Palace Library MS 487: Some Problems of Early Thirteenth-century Textual Transmission' (Ralph Hanna); 'Pastoral Texts and Traditions: the Anonymous *Speculum Iuniorum* (*c.* 1250)' (Joseph Goering); 'Reading Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum* as Pastoral Literature' (Cate Gunn); 'Middle English Versions and Audiences of Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum Religiosorum*' (Nicholas Watson); 'Terror and Pastoral Care in *Handlyng Synne*' (Robert Hasenfratz); 'Prophecy, Complaint and Pastoral Care in the Fifteenth Century: Thomas Gascoigne's *Liber Veritatum*' (Mishtooni Bose); 'Pastoral Concerns in the Middle English Adaptation of Bonaventure's *Lignum Vite*' (Catherine Innes-Parker); and 'Prayer, Meditation, and Women Readers in Late Medieval England: Teaching and Sharing through Books' (C. Annette Grisé).

Throughout the book the reader is enlightened by all sorts of thought-provoking arguments, from Treharne's superlative consideration of scriptoria and localization in late Anglo-Saxon times to Barratt's genuinely insightful consideration of prescribed (and proscribed) reading for women religious. There are engaging asides at every turn: for instance, Goering's illuminating comment that the author of the *Speculum iuniorum* was probably a Dominican because of his repeated use of the term 'frater', which is 'a term not used of the Franciscan friars' (p. 91). The authors do not shy away from the difficult or the unfashionable, as seen in Bose's essay on Gascoigne, an author more known about than read. Here she bracingly engages with Gascoigne's longest dissertation on reform, the *Super flumina*, in a robust attempt to demonstrate 'how capacious a discourse orthodox reform remained in England during this period' (p. 154).

Some authors pursue their themes with a relentless drive: for example, from his opening arresting sentence '*Handlyng Synne* is a scary text' (p. 132) Hasenfratz concentrates on Mannyng's use of exempla to promote servile fear, which is surely far from unique. Hanna's goal too is clear from the outset with his crude upbraiding of M. R. James who 'made a complete dog's breakfast of the collation' (p. 82) of London, Lambeth Palace Library, 487. Those of us who grew up on Dobson's 'AB language' have to pay close attention to this densely and tightly argued essay in order to decide whether we are convinced that the Lambeth example disrupts such theories of close textual communities.

Overall it is hard to be critical of these essays and it might only be said that parts of some need a little refining. For instance, Jones's essay, which ranges admirably broadly, also unfortunately engages in some odd chronological leaps. Despite some interesting local details, it is unnecessarily coy about the manuscript identity of John Gysborn's book, London, British Library, Sloane 1584, which contains the *Rule of St Celestine* (p. 18). Other essays need a little more application. For example, Grisé's essay, which is otherwise fluently argued, is sometimes derivative and insufficiently nuanced. In noting how London, Lambeth Palace Library, 546 'shows us women taking active roles in their devotions — as healers, scribes, visionaries, witnesses and practitioners' (p. 187) she draws a veil over the important part played in this manuscript by male scribes such as Willam Darker, the Carthusian of Sheen.

Some of the most rewarding essays are those that introduce little-known material (or at least little-known to this reviewer) or give new information about familiar texts. In the first category are Golding's clear and focused discussion astutely reappraising the scholarly credentials of Gerald of Wales in his *Gemma ecclesiastica*, long held to be simply a pastoral work for Welsh clergy, and Wogan-Browne's clear explanation of the ways in which the Augustinian canon Angier fitted out his 20,000 lines of French verse translation from

Gregory's *Dialogues* for his multiple audiences. In the second is Innes-Parker's comparison of the well known Passion text in Cambridge, St John's College, G. 20 (and New York, Columbia University, Plimpton 256) with its now identified Latin source, Bonaventure's *Lignum vite*. Equally engaging are the two essays by Gunn and Watson that give different perspectives on essentially the same topic: Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum religiosorum* in its Latin and English incarnations.

As with any collection of essays there are a few minor typographical errors, but editors feel uncomfortable enough when they find mistakes themselves without reviewers compounding matters by pointing them out. I mention just one, not so much for the editors as for the publishers. Repeatedly (for instance, pp. xiii and xv) we have to suffer the affront of '*Hali Meithhad*' minus its eth. It is about time that a reputable publishing house like Boydell and Brewer should consistently use the full range of Old English and Middle English letter-forms. It is particularly unfortunate to see this 'modernization' in a volume dedicated to a scholar who values accuracy and authenticity above all. This aside, the editors, the contributors, and the publisher are to be congratulated on a fine volume worthy of a fine scholar, Bella Millett.

VERONICA O'MARA UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Tory Vandeventer Pearman, *Women and Disability in Medieval Literature*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010. xiv + 206 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-10511-9. £55

This book is an interesting and worthwhile contribution to the growing field of Medieval Disability Studies, covering a wide range of late Middle English texts. After a mildly polemical but interesting introduction, the chapters are concerned with reproduction as disability in Chaucer's 'Merchant's Tale' and *Dame Sirith*; disabilities that result from domestic abuse in the *Book of the Knight* and 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue'; physical disability resulting from punishment in supernatural texts like *Sir Launfal*, *Bisclavret*, and Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*; and a final return to disability and the procreative body in the *Book of Margery Kempe*. Throughout the book, Pearman does an exemplary job of delineating the parameters of the various debates informing and complicating her project, and locating herself explicitly within those debates (as in the very good discussion of reproduction, disability and the grotesque that opens the first chapter).

Pearman's project's 'main objective is twofold: by using the gendered model, it theorizes the ways in which medieval authoritative discourse produces the categories of "woman" and "disabled" as inevitably linked, and it examines how those links function within and even shape the production of literary texts' (p. 13). This emphasis on the combination of the Aristotelian idea that women were 'undercooked' men with the tradition of specifically Judeo-Christian misogyny rooted in ancient stories of apples and gardens is not really new to Pearman: she acknowledges that Rosemarie Garland Thomsen and Felicity Nussbaum have worked in this area. What is new in Pearman, perhaps, is the turn to the literary as a way of getting at complex issues of gender, health, and representation. Of course, Pearman is not alone in this, following the work of scholars like Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell.

This generally excellent book shows signs of a growing and problematic split between the British and American academies in medieval Disability Studies. Surely Pearman's chapter on reproduction as disability would have benefitted from engaging Irina Metzler's discussion of

the same, just as her discussion of the deafness of the Wife of Bath on pp. 67–70 benefits from Metzler's work.[1] One of her few moments of engagement with Metzler's book is to declare it a 'defense of the power of such a small component of medieval society', the 'small component' here being the authors of medical texts, which is a little mystifying (p. 6). Chasing the reference only leads to Metzler's discussion of the problems and benefits of using said sources as historical documents, a discussion necessary in most historical studies, and to the question of whether such a small sample size can lead to a secure understanding of medieval medical discourse (Metzler, p. 66). One suspects that Pearman's phrase is simply an unfortunate one, but since she then rehearses something of the discussion without further referencing Metzler, it sounds as though Metzler has been dismissed. Other infelicities occur: for example, she mistakes the British scholar Myra Stokes for the non-existent "Myra Tokes" throughout her discussion of *Sir Launfal*, and in the bibliography.

However, overall this is a smart, socially engaged addition to both Disability Studies and medieval literary criticism.

CORY JAMES RUSHTON ST FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY

The Doctrine of the Hert: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Commentary. Edited by Christiania Whitehead, Denis Renevey and Anne Mouron. Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2010. Lxxv + 234 pp. Hardback ISBN 9780859898218, £55. Paperback ISBN 9780859897785, £16.99

The Doctrine of the Hert is a fifteenth-century Middle English translation of the thirteenth-century *De doctrina cordis*, a treatise which was disseminated widely in Latin (in more than 200 manuscripts in different formats) and several vernacular languages. However, despite its importance as a pan-European devotional phenomenon in late medieval Europe, the treatise has escaped widespread scholarly attention. The authorship of *De doctrina cordis* is still debated, though opinion tends to favour either Hugh of St-Cher (d. 1263), a Dominican theologian from Paris, or the Cistercian Gerald of Liège. Scholars agree that it is likely to have been written in Liège or its environs in the mid-thirteenth century.

Although the editors register their indebtedness to Mary Patrick Candon's edition, '*The Doctrine of the Hert*, Edited from the Manuscripts with Introduction and Notes' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fordham University, 1963), which used Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 330 as the base manuscript, their newly edited Middle English text is innovative, not only in its different choice of base manuscript, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam, MS McClean 132, but in how it illuminates the devotional context and significance of a comparatively neglected Middle English translation. The text is accompanied by a full textual commentary, which includes meticulous comparison with the Latin text (with acknowledgement to Guido Hendrix for the references in support of Hugh of St-Cher's *Postillae* as a potential source), and is followed by modern English translations of Latin and medieval French extracts—accurate work by Anne Mouron. Together with this commentary and useful Middle English glossary, the edition should prove invaluable for both advanced scholars and readers new to late medieval devotional writings.

[1] Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking about Physical Impairment During the High Middle Ages, c. 1100–1400*, Routledge Studies in Medieval Religion and Culture, 5 (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

The reader will also find much of interest in the introduction, which deals with a variety of topics ranging from the structure and content of *De doctrina cordis* to its devotional context. Since the field of vernacular religious writings has received increasing scholarly attention in recent years, the introduction contextualises the Middle English *Doctrine* in the translation culture of late medieval Europe. By means of comparative analysis with its source, the editors come to the conclusion that the Middle English *Doctrine* is 'an adaptation rather than a translation of the Latin text' (p. xi). For example, the translator omits patristic references, and frequently makes changes in the English translation that suggest he had a non-*litteratus* audience in mind. Moreover, the Middle English text invites the reader to simply read rather than meditate: reading the Middle English text was 'not so much an intellectual exercise demanding reflection and meditation as a practical one' (xxxvii). Indeed, the Middle English *Doctrine* was written for a female audience. As most of the manuscript evidence indicates, it was directed in particular to religious sisters ('mynchen[s]'). The Middle English prologue substituted for its Latin prologue explicitly addresses a community of nuns, 'unkunnyng', simple souls. Also of interest to researchers into female lay piety is the recording of a (now lost) manuscript of the *Doctrine* in the will of a Norfolk gentry widow, Margaret Purdans.

Structurally, the *Doctrine* follows the Latin treatise's division into seven books: each book describes a means by which the heart should prepare for God, which is linked to one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The first book, which comprises more than half of the *Doctrine*, deals with the preparation of the nun's heart through the Spirit's gift of dread. It is followed by books on guarding the heart with the gift of pity (although in *De doctrina* the heart is guarded by the gift of *scientia*, p. 138, n. 1), opening the heart with the gift of knowledge, keeping the heart stable with the gift of fortitude, giving the heart to God with the gift of counsel, elevating the heart with the gift of understanding and detaching the heart with the gift of wisdom. Organization of the Latin *doctrina* around the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit recalls preaching material and evinces the influence of thirteenth-century academic practices and the treatise's function as a catechetical aid. Even as an adaptation of this arguably more rigorous theological enterprise, the *Doctrine* reveals generic affiliations with devotional prose, penitential writings, sermons and guides for the spiritual life.

Various themes and images in the treatise are of particular interest from an aesthetic and devotional perspective. A bewildering and sophisticated array of allegories representing the heart helps us to understand medieval conceptualizations of spiritual interiority and consciousness. Some of these images — the heart as household, as besieged castle, and as book — are familiar. More startling perhaps is the *Doctrine*'s use of culinary imagery, which culminates in the roasting of the devout heart for Christ, as honoured guest, to eat (pp. 22-26), which invites us to appreciate a sophisticated interplay of eucharistic symbolism and popular piety.

It is noteworthy that the editors have also edited an accompanying volume of critical essays, *A Companion to The Doctrine of the Hert: The Middle English Translation and its Latin and European Contexts*, edited by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2010), which explores the Latin and vernacular versions of *De doctrina cordis* in a pan-European devotional context. The edition and the *Companion* together deepen our understanding of the 'hert' in its various manifestations in the devotional literature of late medieval Europe. On the whole, this edition will prove its value not only to those who are interested in vernacular translation but to anyone who investigates late medieval devotional texts, their translation and readership, and the politics of vernacular theology. Last (but not

least), we have to thank the scholarship and teamwork of the three editors, for producing not only a fine critical edition, but an illuminating account of Middle English devotional translation.

NAOË KUKITA YOSHIKAWA SHIZUOKA UNIVERSITY

Sandra Ballif Straubhaar, *Old Norse Women's Poetry: The Voices of Female Skalds*. Library of Medieval Women. Cambridge: Brewer, 2011. 158 pp. ISBN 9781843842712. £60

This volume brings together an extensive collection of verse attributed to women poets in Old Norse-Icelandic texts from a wide range of sources and periods. We find stanzas from *Heimskringla*, *Hjálmþés saga ok Ǫlvis*, old and young skaldic verse, eddic poetry and almost everything between, spoken by queens and ogresses alike, demonstrating the breadth of the extant poetry attributed to women. The translations — first, poetic and figurative verse, and second, literal and straightforward prose — are generally accurate, and, moreover, they ingeniously convey to a non-specialist not only the content of the verse, but the characteristic features of *dróttkvætt* and eddic metre. For all these reasons, this volume, which entices the reader into the intriguing world of Old Norse-Icelandic women's poetry, lucidly introduced and translated by Straubhaar, will be valuable for a number of audiences.

The book is arranged into six sections with verses by women from a continuum of categories, ranging between those who probably existed and did compose the stanzas attributed to them in the sources; 'quasi-historical' women, mainly from the *Íslendingasögur*; legendary figures such as Brynhildr and Hervǫr; and those many elusive female characters from across the corpus who are in some way 'Other', such as human women uttering magic spells and prophecy, or those depicted as monstrous, such as giantesses and even *finngálkn* (a hybrid horse-human creature). There is a special chapter for women's dream-verse, containing doom-laden poems from the *Sturlunga* compilation, a relatively neglected source, both with regards to female characters and poetry. A brief introduction outlines the collection's scope and approach, as well as basic aspects of eddic and *dróttkvætt* style and metre, and the book also includes a glossary of names and a timeline of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. These tools are intended to assist students and novices to the field to analyse the verses, whereas they are also encouraged to seek them out in their original saga context. In fact, it is doubtful if much of the poetry makes sense without it, and the full exchanges — often with men — that give rise to the verses, but Straubhaar does her best to solve this problem by giving brief background information and narrative context before each poem. The gist of each stanza is also distilled in a line or two, followed by a double translation in verse and prose, with the aim to communicate both the complexity of the metre and the poems' content and poetic diction (their kennings and *heiti*). At times, Straubhaar unpacks ambiguous words, comments on the style or speculates further on the poet's background, e.g. in her lively discussion of Jórunn *skáldmær*; these informative and engaging passages illuminate the verses, and I found myself wishing there had been more of them, with fuller and more up-to-date references to secondary literature.

The book's two greatest strengths are its translations, and its breadth of sources. It thus succeeds first on a practical level, compiling in one volume, and translating into English, women's poetry from all over the Old Norse-Icelandic corpus — a collection which would otherwise be a huge undertaking even for a specialist to access. Second, bringing together

poems from texts that have traditionally been categorised into discrete genres of varying academic prestige seems potentially fruitful and in line with current scholarly trends. The chapter division, thematic rather than genre-based, has the effect of bringing into direct conversation poetry that otherwise would not necessarily have been obviously related, e.g. verse uttered by trollwomen in the *fornaldarsögur* and Bragi Boddason's skaldic verse, or 'magic-workers' from *Vǫluspá*, *Qrvar-Odds saga* and *Bósa saga*. This juxtaposition has the tantalising potential to facilitate new connections and comparative insights, whether between individual verses or with non-Norse material. Thus the volume will be useful for both scholars and students of Old Norse-Icelandic literature and culture, and, because of the reliable translations, those from outside the field.

Also welcome are verses that have been marginalised by editors, such as those uttered by Unnr Marðardóttir in *Njála* about her husband Hrútr's predicament and its effect on their marriage, preserved in manuscripts belonging to the so-called X branch, but relegated to the appendix of the Íslenzk fornrit edition on the basis that they were considered later additions to the saga (*Brennu-Njáls saga*, ÍF 12, 1954, CLIV and 24). However, such close attention to manuscript preservation is regrettably not always present: for example, *fóstra* 'foster-mother', the last word of a verse spoken by a homesick Helga in *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, is astonishingly, and despite manuscript evidence to the contrary, emended by all its editors to *fóstri* 'foster-father', as Helga Kress discussed at length in her article 'Fyrir dyrum fóstru' (*Tímarit Háskóla Íslands* 4 (1989): 133-44; reprinted in the eponymous collection of articles by Helga, 1996). This inaccurate rendering of the word by previous editors is silently retained by Straubhaar, thereby changing the meaning of the stanza, and arguably writing women and their existence beyond male relationships out of the saga. As the author states, it would have been beyond the scope of this volume to go through the manuscript witnesses and textual history of every stanza printed, but instances such as Helga's verse, where editors have been unnecessarily invasive, could have prompted a discussion of editorial approaches and the attitudes to gender that underpin them.

Although the division of female characters in the first two chapters might suggest otherwise, Straubhaar quite rightly mostly stays away from questions of historicity of the women poets featured, which in her words are 'unsolvable, and ultimately uninteresting' (4). All that we know is that the scribes who committed these verses to vellum, and thus probably their sponsors and audiences, saw it as entirely possible that women should compose and perform poetry in the settings described in the sources, or regarded these figures as productive literary vehicles and mouthpieces for verse with prophecies, curses, incitement speeches, laments, warnings, threats, and flattery. Somewhat disappointingly, however, especially considering the goal of the Library of Medieval Women series as not only to 'offer texts (in translation)' but also (according to the publisher's website) 'interpretive essays illuminating women's intellectual and spiritual life', Straubhaar does not take the opportunity in the introduction to discuss the themes and preoccupations of these poems in much detail. Although the distinction between the private and public spheres are not always clear-cut in Old Norse-Icelandic literary sources, few women are portrayed as breaking out of their traditional *innan stokks* 'domestic sphere' roles. Guðrún P. Helgadóttir argued in her pioneering *Skáldkonur fyrri alda* (1961, 15–16) that, as a result, women's poetry, with a few exceptions, tends to be short occasional verse (*lausavísur*) preoccupied with the personal. Thus, do the poems have something in common — distinguishable from men's poetry — because they are ostensibly by women? Or do they resist generalisations, suggesting that

Old Norse-Icelandic female characters and their roles are varied and multi-dimensional — conditioned not only by their gender but by other variables including age, social and economic status, race, physical attributes, and so forth? Are women poets distinct from other female characters in any way? These are only a few of the questions this volume prompts, and it seems that Straubhaar would have been expertly placed to pick up where Guðrún Helgadóttir left off and offer some comment on the themes found in the poetry, and perhaps the idea of women's subjectivity more widely, but readers are left to draw their own conclusions on that subject.

This volume is intended 'to give voice to [*Laxdœla saga*'s Bróka-]Auðr and her sisters … whose exploits, poetic and otherwise, were considered memorable enough to record in the Middle Ages' (p. vii). Straubhaar certainly succeeds in her admirable goal, and the book's inclusion in the Library of Medieval Women series, and its accessibility, will hopefully draw the general medievalist's attention to this remarkable poetry. Norse specialists will continue to use the more philological *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* editions and their commentaries as their primary sources, but they will also benefit from reading the verses in a different context, with poems from different genres, composed and uttered by women of all kinds of backgrounds, side by side.

JÓHANNA KATRÍN FRIÐRIKSDÓTTIR

THE ÁRNI MAGNÚSSON INSTITUTE FOR ICELANDIC STUDIES
and
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature: The Compilation of the Four Branches of the 'Mabinogi'*. Lewiston, Queenston, and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009. viii + 570pp. ISBN 978 0 7734 4710 3. £99.99 to libraries, £39.50 (inc. p.& p.) to individuals

Count Tolstoy, kinsman of the great novelist, has long been a conspicuously brave and principled figure in English public life. With his study of these famous tales from the *Mabinogion* he again enters the arena, and with some success. The volume, given the Adèle Mellen Prize by its publishers, also won a Welsh Book of the Year award for 2010, and comes with a foreword by Nicolas Jacobs of Jesus College, Oxford. Readers will hence ask if the book's controversial arguments deserve such recognition and have permanent importance. As this is especially so for non-specialists unwilling to enter the cross-fire of Celtic Studies, we shall sum up what the book tells us, and then say if we agree.

The Oldest British Prose Literature has two qualities that compel respect. It is the most ambitious attempt ever made to provide definitive answers for the date and origins of these four classic tales of love, magic, and adventure. It is also scrupulously fair in citing critics with whom Count Tolstoy disagrees. It has eight chapters, full bibliography, and selective index.

We start with questions of composition and structure, and the significance of 'four branches'. Then we go on to the problem of date, where linguistic and historical factors are to the fore. Chapter three looks in detail at the second tale, of Branwen. It says much on historical aspects of the 'Crown of London' with which Branwen's brother Bendigeidfran is invested, and on the more nebulous subject of Bendigeidfran or Brân as pre-Christian psychopomp, who (like Egyptian or Greek equivalents) guides mortals over the waters of death. Chapter four continues analysis of the tale of Branwen and its Irish elements. Special attention is

given to identifications, both of the river (Liffey or Shannon?) that blocks the path of Welsh invaders who have come to liberate Branwen, and of possible links between Britain's King Brân and Ireland's King Brian Ború (d. 1014), hero of the Battle of Clontarf. The latter theme is taken further in chapter five, which seeks parallels between the narrative as we have it and Irish history in the Viking Age. Chapter six moves to the third tale, that of Manawydan, which has been the least regarded of the four, but where Count Tolstoy sees references to the oppressions of King Knútr or Canute and the hostility of Anglo-Scandinavians to the Welsh. Thereafter is an account of history and heroic literature. The eighth and last chapter sums up views on the author of the tales, taken as an eleventh-century Dyfed man. Here Count Tolstoy is in flat opposition to this reviewer, whose *The Origins of the 'Four Branches of the Mabinogi'* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2009) argues that the author was a twelfth-century Gwynedd women. Clearly, two such different views cannot co-exist. Before long, one must gain the ascendancy. *The Oldest British Prose Literature* thus presents ample opportunity for disagreement and debate. Like Shakespeare's sonnets, the *Four Branches* provoke bewildering disunity and disaccord amongst critics. As such the study merits praise. Not only does its detailed, learned, and almost exhaustive study of the problems command attention, but it has the virtue (essential to freedom) of challenging orthodoxies and obliging anyone ready to listen to think again. For this it deserves its readers.

Now for special points. The author claims (p. 109) that the concept of London as Britain's royal capital long predates the *Four Branches* and Geoffrey of Monmouth. This is dubious. London does not figure at all in such early Welsh sources as *Historia Brittonum* and the Harleian *Annales Cambriae*. No king was crowned there until 1042, when the Confessor came to the throne. Harold, the Conqueror, William Rufus, and Henry I all imitated him. The 'Crown of London' in the *Four Branches* is thus hardly an old expression, since it cannot predate 1042. After London, Oxford. The author describes the episode in the third branch where the hero Pryderi goes there to render homage to the usurper Caswallon (p. 123), as 'brief', 'incongruous', and unaccountable. We disagree, as it supplies artistic and political closure for the Armageddon of the second branch. It in any case accords with dating of the *Four Branches* to the 1120s or slightly later, because Oxford had no political significance before then. In 1086 much of it was derelict, as Domesday shows. Only in the 1120s, when Henry I came to Woodstock, built Beaumont Palace (north of Gloucester Green), and began issuing charters, did Oxford become a centre of royal power, explaining why the author of the *Four Branche*s then (in our view) saw it as a place for attendance upon a British ruler.

Other points concern logic rather than knowledge. The narrator's intimate familiarity with Gwynedd landscape causes problems for Count Tolstoy, who sees him as a Dyfed man, which leads to the comment (p. 209 n. 109, and cf. p. 468) 'there is no reason why a South Walian author should not have repeated local lore from Gwynedd of which he possessed no direct knowledge'. This is to multiply epicycles. Why, then, do the tales say so much of Gwynedd and Dyfed, including their political advancement (where the narrator shows extreme tact when the two go to war), and almost nothing of Powys, Glamorgan, or Gwent? This reviewer has an explanation: that the author belonged to the royal house of Gwynedd, but married into that of Dyfed. Hence the familiarity with the geography of both regions and concern for territorial advancement (at the expense of other Welsh realms). It is submitted that this case has cogency, as others do not. It means that we simply disagree with the further claim (p. 225) that the author 'possessed little direct knowledge of the northern kingdom', when the text points rather to profound acquaintance with Gwynedd. There is an error on *Cogwy* (p. 252),

which was not the Welsh name for the battle of the Winwaed (near Doncaster) or *Campus Gai* in 655, but that of Maserfelth in 642. As for the dating of the tale of Pwyll to about 1018 (p. 471), this faces grave linguistic objections, especially in its use of borrowings from French, such as *pali* 'brocaded silk'. Anglicists know that French loans in English are rare until as late as the 1130s, the evidence being set out in Alistair Campbell's *Old English Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 221. Why should we find French loans in eleventh-century Welsh, when they are virtually absent from eleventh-century English?

Nevertheless, anything that prompts interest in the *Four Branches* is to be commended. For that alone, *The Oldest British Prose Literature* thoroughly deserves its prize from the Welsh Arts Council. It is already attracting comment from professional scholars, as in Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (reviewed below). In short, Count Tolstoy is to be congratulated on having assembled a mass of material for consideration and debate.

ANDREW BREEZE UNIVERSITY OF NAVARRE, PAMPLONA

Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. xii + 425pp. ISBN 978 0 19 958865 7. £65.00

More than thirty years have gone into the making of this book, which has twelve chapters. They discuss Irish influence on the earliest Welsh texts; terms for the Other World; the 'Slavic antithesis' narrative technique (with 'Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Superman!' as a modern epigone); the riddling 'watchman device' on mysterious oncomers; and Irish elements in *Culhwch and Olwen*. There follow four studies on the *Mabinogi* tale of Branwen. They deal with its presentation of Ireland's geography; Irish royal submission and Henry II; Irish giants; and accounts of a death-trap Iron House, assassins hidden in bags, and the benign severed head. We end with three analyses of Welsh tradition and its supposed allusions to Cú Chulainn, Finn mac Cumaill and Deirdre, and Irish literary criticism. Much of this material has appeared in books and journals from the 1970s onwards, and its author now brings it together as he approaches retirement.

After nearly four decades in academia, this reviewer has never read a monograph more ambitious in its learning than this. The footnotes are copious. Sometimes they fill more than half a page. The actual text ends on p. 339, with pp. 340–425 (a fifth of the book) devoted to an admirable bibliography and index. In word-count, the references equal what they refer to. Nor has this reviewer found one misprint or misquotation in a volume that embodies a lifetime's research on Celtic Studies. Normally, one might then welcome it as the definitive statement on matters discussed in Cecile O'Rahilly's *Ireland and Wales* (London: Longman, 1924) or Proinsias Mac Cana's *Branwen, Daughter of Llŷr* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1958). This would be especially so, given its sober verdict (p. 339) that scholars have exaggerated Irish influence on Welsh literature, 'but neither was it negligible'.

Nevertheless, this imposing volume will be controversial. The main reason for that is tucked away at p. 19 n. 105, in the terse comment 'here may be mentioned the theory that Gruffudd [ap Cynan]'s daughter Gwenllian [d. 1136] composed *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*', citing this reviewer's *The Origins of the 'Four Branches of the Mabinogi'* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2009). Professor Sims-Williams's judgement is, alas, less than his

learning, and his inability to take any account of arguments in *The Origins* is unfortunate. He cannot defend himself on the recentness of its appearance. The case was put in the reviewer's *Medieval Welsh Literature* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), a book that Professor Sims-Williams appears quite unaware of.

Many readers will, therefore, find *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* a curious work. They will think of its author, as Lord Macaulay said of Horace Walpole, that what is great seems to him little, and what is little seems to him great. Throughout the study one encounters, not errors of fact, but errors of judgement, so that readers by the end will feel that they have gone through a gallery of distorting mirrors, which confuse and baffle the visitor. Here are a few instances. *Ynys Wair* (p. 66) is not Lundy or Wight and has nothing to do with *gwair* 'hay'. It is Orkney, by the great bend (*Gwair*) of Duncansby Head. It is inappropriate (p. 119) to spot an allusion to the Song of Songs in words of Branwen, whose story is singularly devoid of scriptural and clerical traits, as one would expect of a tale authored by a layperson. It is a mistake to regard Glewlwyd's boast of being in 'Caer Se and Asse, in Sach and Salach, in Lotor and Fotor' (p. 136) as 'high-sounding' nonsense, when it instead presents corrupt allusions to Syracuse, Arachosia (in Afghanistan), and the river Ottorogora (in south-east Asia). These names appear together in Orosius's *History*, which was a source for *Culhwch and Olwen* (a narrative that does have clerical symptoms, as the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* do not). The date 'tenth-century(?)' for the poem *Armes Prydein* 'Prophecy of Britain' (p. 160) is vague. Professor David Dumville and the reviewer have both published papers allowing a dating to 940, in the immediate aftermath of Wessex's capitulation that year at Leicester to the Vikings. There is no basis whatever (p. 286) to link the tale of Branwen, which is quite secular in its ethos and allusions, with an author amongst the Celtic monks of Ferns in Ireland or Clynnog Fawr in Gwynedd.

Despite its ambitious scope and the privileged aegis of a major learned press, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* will not enjoy assiduous use. As the years pass, it will instead become a seldom-visited monument on the highway of learning. Life will be found in other places, particularly where investigators discuss that question to which Professor Sims-Williams gives the minimum possible attention, as to whether the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* are, or are not, the work of a female member, active in the earlier twelfth century, of the royal house of Gwynedd.

ANDREW BREEZE UNIVERSITY OF NAVARRE, PAMPLONA

Constructing Nations, Reconstructing Myth: Essays in Honour of T.A. Shippey. Edited by Andrew Wawn, with Graham Johnson and John Walter. Making the Middle Ages, 9. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007. 382 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-52393-4. €70.00

This welcome book honours Tom Shippey by presenting a series of investigations into topics close to his scholarly heart. A visual clue to these interests is provided by the fact that the image on the front cover of the Festschrift is not of Shippey himself, but of the Grimm brothers. After reading the warm words of Wawn's introduction, we find that the work consists of sixteen contributions, divided into three sections: 'Nations and Nationalism', 'Philology and Philologists' and 'Myths and Mythology', with Shippey's academic bibliography rounding the work off. The book proper begins (as so much else did) with Ossian. But the citation-heavy

apologia for MacPherson found here adds little new. This is followed by Martin Arnold's intriguing chapter which tells the story of north European Romanticism, and especially the question of Dano-German relations, via the prism of portrayals of Thor in the works of Klopstock, Ewald, Grundtvig, Grimm and Uhland. Arnold underlines the presence of political attitudes and arguments within the poetry and philology, most notably the whole Schleswig-(or Slesvig-) Holstein question. John Hill's contribution discusses the ways nineteenth-century editions and translations of *Beowulf* from Kemble to William Morris also presented views on the supposed identity (Scandinavian, Anglian or Teutonic) of the poem and on the Christianity (or lack thereof) of its author. Keith Battarbee provides a solid account of the rise of Finnish from peasant tongue to *Kultursprache* that draws freely on the work of Kaisa Häkkinen. In the course of his chapter Battarbee makes the useful distinction between Jacob Grimm's *reconstruction* of Germanic mythology and Lönnrot's *reworking* of Finnish mythology. This opening section on nations and nationalism is rounded off by Hans Frede Nielsen's sceptical discussion of the supposedly close relationship between Jutlandic and English. His brief account is perhaps the seed from which a more substantial account could emerge on this important question, which would, as he suggests, involve viewing Jutlandic and English in a much wider perspective, and which would emphasize linguistic data primarily rather than the research history of the topic.

The section on 'Philology and Philologists' opens with Terry Gunnell asking 'How Elvish were the *Álfar*?', and answering 'not very'. Although Gunnell criticizes the Grimms for their excessively coherent and variation-poor account of Germanic mythology, he notes that they 'were also the founding father of modern folkloristics, in which … the concept of local variation is fundamental … Jacob Grimm may have led us up the wrong road, [but] he and his brother also unconsciously [via their collections of local and comparative source material] provided us with the map and the methodology to get back on the right track'. Robert Fulk, one of the team who produced the revised fourth edition of Klaeber's *Beowulf*, provides a fascinating and at times quite detailed account of Klaeber's editorial practice, which concludes with a statement of the principles which his team's edition goes by. Andrew Breeze gives an account of the history of research into the *Mabinogion*, in which he shows that 'sub-Grimmian attitudes' survive to this day. Rory McTurk reprints Samuel Ferguson's 1833 version of the *Krákumál*, together with his own stricter translation, by way of investigating the reception of Norse mythology. Keith Busby, Andrew Wawn and Jonathan Evans provide the last three chapters in this section, which focus on three philological and folkloristic researchers, Roquefort, Baring-Gould and Tolkien, and their relation to Grimm. These researchers and relations are highly varied. While Busby's account of the Grimm-Roquefort correspondence casts the latter as (to quote from Busby's title) 'a bit of a lad', Andrew Wawn's sympathetic and persuasive vindication of Sabine Baring Gould, on the other hand, casts him as 'the most influential provincial English Grimmian of his generation'. Evans's long, learned but rather inconsequential discussion of Tolkien's use of 'ent' and of what it might echo concludes this section.

The third and final section, on 'Myths and Mythology', opens with perhaps the most original of the chapters here, that of Peter Orton, who applies cognitive metaphor theory to the Old Norse concept of poetic mead. Orton seems to hold much greater scepticism about the value of Grimm's ideas and practice than many of the other contributors, commenting that the imaginative power released by Grimm's piling up of comparisons (and the connections back in time which they imply) can also make 'us forget how little comparativism really reveals', in

this case about the origins of the Old Norse myth of the poetic mead. Joyce Tally Lionarons then provides a discussion of Old Norse narratives where both weaving and witchcraft occur, which is followed by Paul Battles' chapter, which begins as an exploration of the meaning of 'Middle Earth' and its cognates in Old English verse, in the *Edda* and Tolkien, before morphing into a comparison of Tolkien and John Milton.

David Elton Gay, in the final chapter of the book, provides us with an exposé of the Grimmian assumptions underlying the work of the twentieth-century students of Estonian mythology Mattias Eisen, Oskar Loorits and Ivar Paulson. In particular, Gay reveals how their ignoring of or hostility to the Christian aspects of the nineteenth and twentieth century folklore records they built their reconstructions from led to serious distortions in their work.

Overall, Andrew Wawn and his helpers should be commended for producing a Festschrift that possesses a unity found in few works of this type, and which also contains much which relates to the work of the book's honorand.

JONATHAN ROPER UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

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