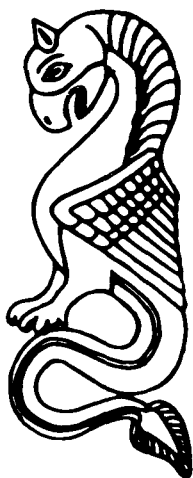


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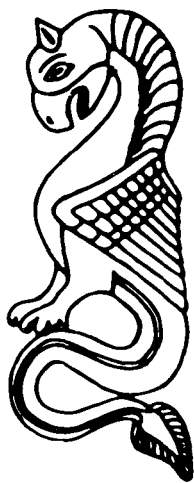
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Edited by

Alfred Hiatt and Andrew Wawn



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Bede's *Civitas Domnoco* and Dunwich, Suffolk

Andrew Breeze

Bede's *civitas Domnoco*, where Felix of Burgundy established his see and converted the people of Suffolk, is a problem for both philologists and historians. Although many identify it as Dunwich (TM 4770), where the sea has washed away the medieval town, others prefer Walton Castle (TM 3235), a Saxon Shore fort (now also under water) near Felixstowe. If the location is uncertain, so is the form. Most read *civitas Dommoco*, but some argue for *Domnoco*. As for the meaning of *Domnoco* (or *Dommoco*), this is obscure as well. It must be Celtic, yet there is no agreement on whether it is from British or Irish, or on what it signifies. But no confidence is inspired by John Morris's astonishing suggestion of a link with St Dyfnog, son of Medraut, and hence perhaps grandnephew of King Arthur.¹

Location, form, and etymology are thus all unclear. Nevertheless, a vital breakthrough has been made by Professor Richard Coates of the University of Sussex, who backs up earlier archaeological arguments with his own linguistic ones.² What follows differs from his conclusions in one point only, though that a significant one. Let us look at what he says.

As regards early attestations the Moore Bede (Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.v.16) has *ciuitas Domnoco*, the St Petersburg Bede has *ciuitas Dommoco*. Historians claim the second is the better reading, and most authorities (though not the Ordnance Survey) identify it with varying degrees of assurance as Dunwich, not Walton Castle.³ Yet Coates very reasonably rejects *Dommoco* on textual grounds, seeing *Domnoco* as the *lectio difficilior*. He also rightly doubts the traditional etymology 'deep (harbour)' from British **dumno-* (cf. Welsh *dwfn*, 'deep'), because *u* here should not appear as Old English *o*. He therefore argues for an Irish derivation, citing Old Irish *domnach* [church] from Late Latin *dominicum* [house of the Lord; church]. It is true that *domnach* is common in Irish

toponyms, as with Donaghmore [great church], near Newry in Northern Ireland, or Donaghpatrick [church of Patrick], near Navan in Meath. But there are grave objections to Coates's derivation of Bede's *-oc* from Old Irish *-ach*.

Even so, Coates is surely correct in seeing *Domnoc* as Irish. It would, however, surely not represent *domnach* [church], but the personal name *Domnoc*. This is well attested. It can be linked with Gaulish *Dumnacus* (the name of a Gaulish leader in Caesar's *Gallic War*), Welsh *Dyfnog* (already cited), and Middle Irish MAIL DOMNA[C] [servant of Domnac], the last on a tenth-century cross from Penally, Pembrokeshire.⁴ Still more to the point is St Domnoc (known too in early Irish as *Modomnoc* [my Domnoc], a hypocoristic form), a pupil of the great St David (d. 601), who taught him bee-keeping. St Mo-Dhomhnóg is associated with the monasteries of Tibberaghny (of which fragments survive) south of Kilkenny, and Bremore north of Dublin. He figures in the twelfth-century Latin life of David, but not the later Welsh one.⁵

Why should an Irish personal name occur on the coast of Suffolk, whether at Dunwich or Walton Castle? Bede himself provides the answer. He refers to Malmesbury in Wiltshire as *urbs Maildubi*. According to William of Malmesbury, Máeldub was an Irish monk who taught St Aldhelm.⁶ Bede likewise mentions Dícuill (otherwise unknown), an Irish monk who established a religious community at Bosham, Sussex. Fursa's monastery at Burgh Castle near Lowestoft is well known. Máeldub, Dícuill, and Fursa all founded monasteries, all had Irish names, and were not the only Irish monks in England whose names come down to us. St Aidan (<Irish *aéd* 'fire') is famous, but Bede mentions as well Foillán (who took over from Fursa at Burgh Castle), Gobán, another Dícuill, and Ultán (a second Ultán figures in the ninth-century Anglo-Latin poem *De Abbatibus*).⁷

Given these Irish forms and the career of St Domnoc, there is reason to take *civitas Domnoc* as 'Domnoc's stronghold'. It would be called after an Irishman of this name just as the unlocated monastery of *Tunnacaestir* (which Bede also locates in a *civitas*) was called after its abbot, Tunna. What Tunna did in Northumbria, Domnoc (of whom we have no other knowledge) did in Suffolk. He would have been an Irishman, presumably a monk, who occupied a Roman fort later handed over to Felix. If he was a monk within Roman walls, he would resemble Bass at Reculver in Kent, Cedd at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex, and Ebba at Ebchester near Durham, all of whom established monasteries in Roman forts acquired as royal gifts.⁸

The above, then, appears to give a simple and cogent explanation of *civitas Domnoc*. Does it help decide whether this place was Dunwich or Walton Castle? It seems it does. There are three points. There is a strong circumstantial case for

Walton Castle, since Bede consistently uses *civitas* for Roman sites, whether cities or forts; Walton Castle was near a centre of royal power at Rendlesham; it had a chapel to St Felix (a rare dedication); and it is by modern Felixstowe. The case for Roman settlement at Dunwich is on the other hand weak, as is (despite Dorothy Whitelock's learning) that for linking it with Felix.⁹ There are also great philological difficulties in deriving the first element of *Dunwich* from *Domnoc*. Finally, Coates in his paper offers an entirely English etymology for *Dunwich*, proposing a meaning 'dune huts, sheds in sandhills'. That disposes of any need to link the toponym with *Domnoc*. Varied historical, linguistic, and archaeological evidence thus suggests we can say goodbye for ever to the association of *Domnoc* with Dunwich (hinted at in one twelfth-century manuscript of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum*, and proposed by the Canterbury monk Thomas of Elmham in the early fifteenth century). Rigold's arguments for Walton Castle would hence be vindicated; so, too, would the Suffolk writer Bartholomew Cotton, whom Whitelock cites as identifying *civitas Domnoc* as Felixstowe in 1298.

If the above conclusions are correct, their implications are fourfold. First, writers on the Anglo-Saxons, editions of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and dictionaries of English place-names should henceforth read *Domnoc* and not *Domnoc*, which has no meaning and should be dropped. Second, we can feel sure that Felix for seventeen years conducted his mission and taught at the lost Saxon Shore fort of Walton Castle. Like Burgh Castle, this was easy to reach by water, but had stout walls against intruders (though they were in the end powerless to halt destruction from the sea). It was there, too, that he died (his bones being translated to Soham and then Ramsey): a missionary exiled for the love of God, with a name still commemorated by the booming Europort of Felixstowe. Third, we can believe his monastery was occupied previously by an Irishman called *Domnoc*, perhaps a monk. Even though this paper disputes his etymology, Coates would here be right in seeing rare Irish influence in Bede's *civitas Domnoc*. Fourth, we can accept of Dunwich to the north that it was not a Roman settlement of importance, and that its name is English, not Celtic.

Henry James wrote of Dunwich that it was 'not even the ghost of its dead self; almost all you can say of it is that it consists of the mere letters of its old name'. That 'old name' has long intrigued or vexed linguists and historians; but it seems the questions regarding it can now be taken as solved.¹⁰

NOTES

¹ John Morris, *The Age of Arthur* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), pp. 140, 562-3.

² S. E. Rigold, 'The Supposed See of Dunwich', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 24 (1961), 55-9, and his 'Further Evidence About the Site of "Dommoc"', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 37 (1974), 97-102; Richard Coates and Andrew Breeze, *Celtic Voices, English Places* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), pp. 234-40. *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*, ed. by V. E. Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 200, makes no reference to Coates's discussion.

³ *Map of Britain in the Dark Ages*, 2nd edn (Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1966); Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1970), p. 108; F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 116; Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Pre-Viking Age Church in East Anglia', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 (1972), 1-22 (p. 4, n. 2); J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People': A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 78, 224.

⁴ D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 85, 196-7, 345.

⁵ Charles Plummer, *Miscellanea Hagiographica Hibernica* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1925), p. 217; *Rhigyfarch's Life of St David*, ed. by J. W. James (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), p. 18; Aubrey Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (London: Longman, 1970), pp. 396, 407.

⁶ Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979), pp. 6-7, 181-2.

⁷ Cf. Brian ó Cuív, *Aspects of Irish Personal Names* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1986).

⁸ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 270 n. 2; Charles Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 34.

⁹ Norman Scarfe, *Suffolk in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1986), pp. 7, 41.

¹⁰ I here thank Count Tolstoy for many gifts of books over the years, including some quoted above.

Burning Idols, Burning Bridges: Bede, Conversion and *Beowulf*

Peter Orton

This article will re-examine some of the information in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (hereafter *HE*), completed in AD 731,¹ on the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity in the late sixth and seventh centuries. It will concentrate not on the positive promotion and reception of the Christian message, but on the related but (as I shall argue) distinct question of the Anglo-Saxons' detachment from the pagan religion that they had followed for centuries before the missionaries arrived. Bede himself was, of course, far more interested in the embrace of Christianity by the Anglo-Saxons, particularly their kings, than he was in any problems they faced in putting paganism behind them; and although commentators on *HE* are now less willing than they once were to align themselves with Bede's own moral and religious perspective on the conversion,² which clearly had much in common, ideologically speaking, with that of the missionaries whose work he describes, it is bound to be difficult to discover evidence of the counter-attractions of paganism in an ecclesiastical history written by a committed Christian. Bede's lack of interest in the interface between the two religions is not simply a consequence of his personal religious convictions; conversion is supposed, from an orthodox Christian point of view, to entail the recognition that all pagan beliefs and practices are fundamentally misguided. Christian conversion does not afford paganism even the dignity of a serious adversary; it simply reveals its folly. Nevertheless, the information Bede supplies shows that not all Anglo-Saxons saw the adoption of the new religion as automatically cutting off the line of retreat into paganism, or even as necessarily involving its abandonment. Furthermore, if we try to bypass Bede's perspective and look at the conversion, not as the simple enlightenment of benighted heathens, but as a process of social and intellectual interaction between the

missionaries and their 'victims',³ the suspicion soon arises that neither side understood the other's religious position at all well. Part of the reason for this, as we shall see later, is that paganism and Christianity represent two very different kinds of religion, making it difficult for adherents of either to appreciate the attractions of the other. In the final part of this article I shall use the Old English poem *Beowulf* to illustrate some of the difficulties the Anglo-Saxons faced in revising their conception of their own pagan past in the light of their newly-acquired Christian faith.

Conversion and conversion narratives

The recent development of theoretical models of religious conversion has helped to put the analysis of conversion narratives generally on a firm theoretical footing. Lewis R. Rambo's book on conversion draws together much recent work in missiology that has important consequences for current and future missionary activity around the world;⁴ but its value for the study of the conversion of individuals and societies in the past is also considerable. We may begin, in fact, with Rambo's definition of conversion and his identification of its sub-varieties. What all conversions have in common is that they involve a more or less fundamental change in the spiritual orientation of the converted individual or group; but several types of conversion are distinguishable according to the condition of the convert before and after conversion.⁵ The categories defined by Rambo that are most relevant to the present study are 'tradition transition', which involves the exchange of one religion for another, and 'apostasy' (or 'defection'), whereby a convert abandons a religion previously embraced.⁶ It is now increasingly recognized that conversion is rarely a sudden transformation, but more often a protracted process, unpredictable enough in its development to postpone almost indefinitely any certainty about when it has advanced beyond the possibility of defection.⁷ In the case of conversions of the tradition-transition type, with which Bede is mostly concerned, defection to the rejected religion is a potential danger for as long as it is remembered; so if we are to appreciate how, in any given case, one religion succeeded in supplanting another, or why it failed to do so in spite of vigorous missionary efforts, or what factors lay behind apostasies, we need to know as much as possible, not only about the attractions of the new religion for converts, but also about the abandoned one, and the level of conviction and determination with which it was consigned to the past.

The literary legacy of medieval Europe has left us several accounts of the conversion of individuals and groups. Most describe instances of tradition transition: Christianity is embraced in place of paganism. Although few modern readers are able to take such accounts, particularly those in which miracles play a decisive role, as entirely historical, there is no reason to doubt that they contain a kernel of fact. And yet the authors of conversion narratives often omit much information of a kind that the reader requires for a satisfactory sense of how conversion was achieved. For example, there is the problem of the inherently mysterious nature of conversion, and indeed of religious conviction generally: even modern accounts of conversion that concern themselves with this question often struggle to describe the experience with any precision, and their medieval predecessors rarely make the attempt to do so except in the most conventional terms. There are also generic and pragmatic features of conversion narratives that tend to exclude any detailed analysis of the factors that led to the decision to convert, or of the actual process of exchange.⁸ Such narratives, typically written retrospectively by representatives of the adopted religion, are firmly cast as success-stories;⁹ they are not to be expected to dwell on past misconceptions from which the convert has now been freed. Detailed attention, even of a critical kind, to the spiritual orientation that has been replaced is no longer felt to be necessary or appropriate when the time comes for such accounts to be written.

A few of Bede's accounts of conversion are in this mould; but many of them reveal some interest in the circumstances of particular conversions, or even touch on difficulties encountered by the missionaries. According to *HE*, the mission to the Anglo-Saxons began (in 597) with the arrival in Kent of Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory the Great.¹⁰ Augustine converted the Kentish king Æthelberht, and the following century saw the extension of the Roman missionary programme, supported by an independent initiative from Iona in the North, to the rest of Anglo-Saxon England. The Isle of Wight was probably the last kingdom to go Christian in about 686.¹¹ Bede's *HE* is by far our most detailed source of information about this period of Anglo-Saxon history, and it contains, by my count, twenty-six descriptions of the conversion of individuals or groups.¹² Prior to conversion, the Anglo-Saxons were pagan polytheists, so these twenty-six are all descriptions of tradition transition as defined earlier. But Bede does not shrink from recording the struggles of the Anglo-Saxon church to establish itself: in addition to his accounts of conversions, he describes several instances of reversion to paganism, and even a few examples of resistance to what Christianity had to offer. There is, understandably enough, no sign in *HE* of any intellectual or

historical interest on Bede's part in paganism as a religion;¹³ but we are given, in passing, a fair amount of information that contributes to a general idea of how paganism was envisaged by the missionaries. Bede also refers, though much less frequently, to prospective converts' conceptions of themselves as pagans, or to aspects of pagan practice or mentality which have some bearing on our understanding of the conversion process itself as he describes it. These references will be given due attention here, though what we most miss in interpreting them is independent evidence from other sources about Anglo-Saxon pagan beliefs and practices. The question of whether or not it is appropriate to use the comparative evidence of Germanic paganism on the continent to compensate for this deficiency in English sources has long been controversial, and it will have to be reopened here.

Apostasies in HE

We may begin with a survey of apostasies in *HE*. These illustrate the rejection of Christianity by people who originally adopted it, and may therefore be expected to give us some idea of the counterattractions of paganism, or the circumstances under which it was able to reassert itself. The instances of reversion described in *HE* vary according to the relative sincerity of the original conversion, or (when kingdoms are involved) of its extent. Some accounts of apostasy in Bede do little more than register its occurrence, without suggesting any explanation for it. Thus the East Angles remained 'in error' (in errore) for three years following the death of their convert-king Eorpwold,¹⁴ but returned to the Christian fold under the influence of Sigeberht, their next Christian king. Earlier, Bede has described Eorpwold as accepting Christianity 'together with his kingdom' (cum sua prouincia);¹⁵ but he also refers to the extensive missionary work that Sigeberht found it necessary to initiate among his subjects when he succeeded, which indicates a high level of national apostasy following Eorpwold's death. We cannot tell if apostasy resulted here from the loss of spiritual leadership invested in the king as an individual, or whether the king's death was itself taken as a symptom of the new God's inadequacies; but Eorpwold's death is clearly regarded by Bede as a significant factor. A second example comes from the north: when King Edwin of Northumbria, a convert, died, his successors, Osric and Eanfrith, ruled Deira and Bernicia respectively. Both had converted, but reverted to paganism when they succeeded.¹⁶ Bede offers no excuse, and does not say anything about whether their subjects followed suit, but his horror at this development is very clearly conveyed.

Bede is seldom explicit about the factors that provoked apostasies, but occasionally we are given a hint of an explanation. When the East Saxon converting Swithhelm died he was succeeded by Sigehere and Sebbi as joint kings.¹⁷ Both were Christian; but Sigehere, along with his subjects in the part of the kingdom he ruled, reverted to paganism, 'as if they could protect themselves by such means from the plague'¹⁸ that was ravaging the kingdom at the time. Both king and kingdom were later reconverted at the instigation of King Wulfhere of Mercia.

Another type of apostasy described by Bede involves the occurrence, following an 'official' conversion of a king and his kingdom, of increased or more open pagan activity by the people under the rule of a new, still-pagan king; and here the extent and depth of the original conversion and subsequent apostasy never emerge very clearly. Perhaps the best-known example is Essex under the successors of King Sæberht, a convert: when Sæberht died, the kingdom was taken over by his three sons, all still pagan, who then felt able to practise their religion more openly than they had when their father was still alive.¹⁹ This is clearly not apostasy: the three brothers had only soft-pedalled their paganism for a time; they had not turned against it. When they succeeded, their subjects followed their example and chose paganism; and although we have been given to understand that the whole kingdom had previously converted under Sæberht,²⁰ the people continued to prefer paganism even after the three brother-kings had been killed in a war against the West Saxons, and Bishop Mellitus, who had converted the kingdom under Sæberht, returned to his London see.²¹ Here we can only conclude that the original conversion of the East Saxons must have been a very superficial affair. A rather different case, in which Bede's version of the story explicitly indicates a somewhat watered-down species of apostasy on the part of the people, is Kent under Eadbald, still unconverted when he succeeded his Christian father Æthelberht: those of his subjects whose previous conversion had been more political than genuine took the opportunity to revert to their traditional practices when Eadbald came to the throne.²²

There are several points of interest among these examples that are relevant to my theme. One is Bede's linking of apostasy to a national crisis in the case of Sigehere of Essex, who reverted to paganism in a time of plague: it is not difficult to understand how national afflictions of this sort might have been blamed on the abandonment of paganism and promoted its revival. The plague here represents one of various types of 'crisis' that Rambo identifies as a trigger of any conversion (including apostasy), whether personal or collective.²³ We should also note Bede's recognition of insincere conversion, as in the case of the people of Kent under

Eadbald: false converts would certainly have been particularly liable to apostatize, though of course having never properly converted in the first place they do not count as true apostates either. A third point may be made on the basis of Bede's accounts of Essex under the three pagan brother-kings and Kent under Eadbald: the conversion of a king did not automatically lead to the conversion of his subjects and followers, even including members of his own immediate family. In Kent, the situation under Eadbald must be viewed in the light of Bede's comment, in his earlier account of the mission to his father Æthelberht, that Augustine had originally emphasised that conversion should be voluntary.²⁴ Later, however, Pope Gregory wrote to Æthelberht urging him to suppress paganism in his kingdom. The insincere converts who reverted under Eadbald may thus have been people put under pressure by Æthelberht to abandon their preferred religion following a period during which they had been encouraged to believe they had a free choice in the matter. In both these cases, Bede's customary emphasis on the spiritual orientation of kings creates the impression that the general apostasy resulted from the new pagan kings' encouragement; but the lifting of the restraint on paganism exercised by the previous Christian king might have been an equally important factor.

In addition to these records of apostasy or semi-apostasy, Bede includes the occasional snippet of information about actual opposition to the Christian faith. In Wessex, Cenwealh, pagan son of the Christian King Cynegisl, was offered conversion, probably on his accession, but refused it.²⁵ We are given no further details. I have already mentioned the case of the convert Swithhelm's successor Sigehere, joint ruler (with Sebbi) of the East Saxons, who apostatized, along with his subjects. Unusually, Bede here adds a brief account of the spiritual orientation of the king and most of his subjects: they 'loved this present life, seeking no other and not even believing in any future existence'.²⁶ This indicates very clearly that the original conversion of the East Saxons had been far from thorough.

The Christian confrontation with paganism

These examples of reversion and resistance to Christianity show, in their different ways, that paganism retained enough attraction for some to cause them to reject the Christian message, occasionally at the first point of contact but more commonly at a later stage. We are given no explanatory details except in the case of Essex under Sigehere; but the foundation of this resistance (though it is never

mentioned by Bede) was probably that Christianity did not constitute a satisfactory substitute for paganism. Religions fall into one of two general categories. Anglo-Saxon paganism was an example of a folk religion, Christianity (like Judaism, Buddhism and Islam) of a world religion. Folk religions generally are 'eclectic and open to outsiders';²⁷ they tend to be polytheistic, worldly, agricultural in emphasis (at least in medieval Europe), and practically orientated. Their adherents use sacrifice or other rituals to influence natural or random processes in their favour, for example to control the weather to maximise crop-yields, or to elicit supernatural support in the pursuit of success in warfare, or wealth, or personal health and emotional fulfilment. Bede's comment on the priorities of King Sigehere and his followers in the East Saxon kingdom, quoted above, is a good illustration of the secular emphasis of folk religions generally. World religions, by contrast, are inclined to reject the fleshly and material concerns of this world and concentrate on the life of the spirit and the world to come. It has been suggested that communities following folk religions are especially vulnerable to missionary enterprises on behalf of world religions: folk religions tend to be strictly local concerns, regarded by the tribe as its business and no-one else's; and because they rarely involve any coherent or dogmatic ideology, they lack the kind of institutional and intellectual vigour needed to counter the missionaries' claims.²⁸ On the other hand, adherents of folk-religions, especially agriculturists, will not lightly abandon their cults, partly because they fear the material consequences of doing so (the crops could fail and they could starve, for example), but also because world religions do not necessarily offer anything to replace them.²⁹ As one scholar has put it in connection with the conversion of the Franks, the Christian God 'intervened at specific times in history', but is 'not a God of the annually recurrent seasons which made up the farmer's calendar'.³⁰

These considerations help to explain both the resistance to Christianity and the various reversions to paganism that Bede describes, especially the apostasies of King Sigehere and his East Saxon subjects, and the indifference to the possibility of salvation that Bede attributes to them; but the case of Sigehere raises some difficult questions about the attitude of kings in particular to the prospect of conversion. It has been argued that Anglo-Saxon kings would have been especially receptive to the Christian message because of the enhanced prestige and power which the missionaries assured them would come with conversion: God was presented to them as the mightiest of political allies, willing and able to reward royal converts with assistance in the defeat of their enemies

and the extension of their realms.³¹ There were also social and political implications for kings in accepting baptism and establishing Christianity as the official religion of the kingdom. The succession of kings in the Bretwaldaship (Æthelberht of Kent, Rædwald of the East Angles, Edwin of Northumbria) was probably bound up with the question of when and from whom a king who either was, or was in line to be, Bretwalda would accept conversion. Decisions may have been influenced by the need to assert power over one's predecessor in the position, or over rival kings, or (in Æthelberht's case) by a desire to assert his political independence of the Franks.³² Thus either conversion or the refusal to convert could be used as assertions of political, social and personal independence. The religious divisions identified earlier between members of the same royal families might also be explained partly on this basis. Perhaps the arrival of the missionaries posed special problems for kings and their families.

Another feature which world-religions do not share with paganism is their exclusiveness:³³ to adopt Christianity is to repudiate all other gods who in the Christian view are not gods at all. They may be condemned as mere fantasies, or as demons, or (when, as always in Bede, idolatry is the target) as lifeless, inert blocks of wood or stone. Bede provides us with some evidence that the polytheistic nature of paganism presented the Christian missionaries with a particular difficulty: the Anglo-Saxons were probably predisposed to treat the Christian God as just another god to be added to the range of pagan gods whom they already venerated—a tendency which has been called 'adhesion'.³⁴ Bede describes how Rædwald, king of the East Angles, fell into adhesion: after his conversion in Kent he returned to his kingdom where his wife and others corrupted his faith to the extent that he maintained both Christian and pagan altars in his temple.³⁵ Paganism, naturally pluralistic,³⁶ could accommodate any variety of gods; and as long as the singularity and the omnipotence of the Christian God were not too scrupulously regarded, it could find room for him. But as Bede makes perfectly clear in his account of Rædwald's error, Christianity was not in a position to reach any kind of compromise with paganism; if kings or anyone else were to become true converts, they had to be persuaded to accept Christianity's exclusiveness. The case of Rædwald shows more clearly even than the apostasies considered earlier that it was not enough for missionaries to describe, or even demonstrate, God's power and hope that the worship of other gods would be rejected and forgotten after baptism. A positive attack on the intellectual basis of paganism was necessary.

The Christian conception of paganism

There are some examples in *HE* of reasoned argument against the worship of pagan gods. The target is invariably idolatry.³⁷ An example of such arguments occurs in Bede's account of the Northumbrian King Oswiu's attempts to persuade Sigebert of the East Saxons to convert. Oswiu tells him that

deos esse non posse, qui hominum manibus facti essent; dei creandi materiam lignum uel lapidem esse non posse, quorum recisurae uel igni absumerentur uel in uasa quaelibet humani usus formarentur uel certe dispectui habita foras proicerentur et pedibus conculcata in terram uerterentur.³⁸

[objects made by the hands of men could not be gods. Neither wood nor stone were materials from which gods could be created, the remnants of which were either burned in the fire or made into vessels for men's use or else cast out as refuse, trodden underfoot and reduced to dust.]

God's home, on the other hand, is in heaven rather than in any worldly substance. This argument is an elaboration of Isaiah 44.15-20,³⁹ which dwells on the absurdity of worshipping a god made from a material, wood, that may also be burnt as fuel. Here, then, is an anti-pagan line to which a pagan king was exposed: idols are man-made; and like all man-made artefacts, they are made from perishable materials, so they cannot be gods. The fact that this argument is brought forward by a king rather than a missionary is noteworthy. So is the fact that Oswiu was a nephew of King Edwin of Northumbria, to whom a similar line was put in a letter from Pope Boniface,⁴⁰ written probably between 619 and 625,⁴¹ long before Edwin's conversion. This letter is worth looking at in some detail, for it incorporates most of the standard arguments against idolatry drawn from the Old Testament, as well as some more individual ones.

Boniface is scathing about idols and their worship, alluding to, and sometimes quoting verbatim, most of the biblical passages that formed the foundation of the standard Christian case against idolatry. Edwin's gods, like the 'gods of the nations' of the Psalms, are 'devils';⁴² but at the same time they are the inanimate, insensible idols of the Psalms, whose eyes, ears, noses, hands and feet imply none of the senses and capacities associated with these features in human beings.⁴³ Powerless to assist their worshippers, made as they are from corruptible

materials by Edwin's subjects,⁴⁴ they achieve only the appearance of men; and 'those who put their trust in them therefore become like them'.⁴⁵ Idols possess no independent power, and Boniface cannot understand how the Northumbrians can be so foolish as to worship them.

There are two separate ideas of Edwin's gods here which actually conflict, though both have biblical authority. One animates them as demons capable of deceit; the other sees idols as lifeless replicas of men, in contrast with man himself who has received the breath of life from God. From the evangelical point of view, both these conceptualizations combine constructive with damaging implications. The identification of pagan gods as demons might have seemed a useful way of drawing pagans towards the Christian moral vision of the world as subject to the antagonistic forces of good and evil—a step forward, perhaps, along the road to conversion; but on the other hand it involves an acceptance of the reality of pagan gods as intelligent beings, and so opens the way for debate over the relative power of Christian and pagan gods—a debate which the missionaries would no doubt have been keen to avoid. The second, idol-based conception of pagan gods as inert, powerless material objects steers around this pitfall, but it projects an image of the gods which the pagans themselves might have found unfamiliar. There are, as we shall see later, probable discrepancies between the Christian conception of pagan gods as mere idols and the pagans' own notion of them.

Certainly the idea of demons as the devil's agents is unlikely to have meant very much to a pagan like Edwin; but it is on the charges against idols in particular that Boniface bases his case. Edwin is directing religious feeling in an illogical direction along a chain of creation: downwards to his own, lifeless creations rather than upwards to the God to whom he owes life itself. Appeal is made to a hierarchy of God-like forms constituted of God himself, man his creation and replica, made out of clay, and idols the creation of men. This is an argument that might have been calculated to appeal to royal self-esteem: Edwin, as a man, is superior to his idols in the hierarchy, just as he is superior, as a king, to his subjects, and just as God is superior to all men, whether they be kings or slaves.

Boniface's argument against idols obviously depends heavily on the assumption that Edwin identifies (or can be persuaded to identify) his gods with their representations; but before considering the safety of this assumption, we are faced here with the even more fundamental question of whether the pagan Anglo-Saxons actually worshipped idols. Although it is difficult to know quite what to look for in the absence of contemporary descriptions, nothing definitely

identifiable as an image of a pagan deity has so far been revealed by excavation.⁴⁶ There might be several possible reasons for this gap in the archaeological record. The church would naturally be eager to destroy idols; and if they were made of organic materials, such as wood, they would probably soon decay beyond recognition in the soil, even if they escaped deliberate destruction by fire. Nevertheless, the original existence of idols among the pagan Anglo-Saxons cannot be taken for granted. Bede's references to them in *HE* are not necessarily to be accepted at face value, because by the time of the Anglo-Saxon conversion there already existed within the church a traditional polemic against idolatry based entirely on the Old Testament.⁴⁷ Boniface's letter to Edwin, summarised above, is a good example of this set of standard arguments. Another is Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*, one chapter of which consists of a very similar string of Biblical passages on the futility and absurdity of idol manufacture and worship, provoked by Gregory's reminiscences of paganism among the Franks prior to the conversion of Clovis near the beginning of the sixth century.⁴⁸ We know that Gregory's *Historia* was one of Bede's models for *HE*.⁴⁹ The availability of this tradition to Bede means that some of his references to idol-worship may reflect nothing more than a convenient general assumption on the part of missionaries and others involved in the conversion (popes, for instance, such as Gregory the Great, who had no first-hand knowledge of England) that all pagans worshipped idols. Perhaps the missionaries, no doubt as likely as anyone else to see what they fear to find, noticed objects among the paraphernalia of pagan religion which corresponded well enough to the traditional, Biblical conception of idols; but we possess no independent evidence of these things.⁵⁰ Thus although Bede's references to idols and idolatry in *HE* may reflect personal knowledge or information from trusted informants, we cannot be certain that he was not simply making use of this tradition of anti-pagan propaganda, one of the advantages of which was that it avoided any real confrontation with paganism as a religion. If, of course, the Anglo-Saxon pagans did not have idols of their gods, the missionary tactic that reduced all paganism to idolatry will have left the pagans with the impression that the missionaries did not appreciate the true nature of the religion that they were trying to persuade them to abandon.⁵¹

The earliest references in *HE* to idols and their worship are connected with the Roman mission of Augustine to King Æthelberht of Kent, referred to briefly above. Bede's account of Augustine's mission shows Pope Gregory, its instigator, urging first a progressively tougher line on paganism in response to English resistance to the faith, and then adopting what might seem to be a more

conciliatory position. Bede's information was that in the early stages of Augustine's campaign Æthelberht would not force Christianity on his subjects.⁵² Bede attributes the king's scruple on this point to the advice of Augustine and his followers, who had impressed upon him that 'the service of Christ was voluntary and ought not to be compulsory'.⁵³ Augustine came to Kent in 597. Four years later, in June 601, Gregory received news of his progress from messengers who came asking for more missionaries to be sent to England. A party of reinforcements left Rome for England in the same month, carrying letters from Gregory to Augustine, King Æthelberht and others.⁵⁴ The two letters to Augustine suggest that he is thought to be making good progress: they contain a plan for the ecclesiastical organization of the whole of England, and a warning to Augustine to preserve humility in the midst of his spectacular achievements in conversion through miracles.⁵⁵ But the letter to Æthelberht strikes a sterner note,⁵⁶ stressing the need for royal opposition to heathen practices and urging the suppression of idol-worship and the destruction of their shrines.⁵⁷ This contrasts sharply with the spirit of tolerance prevailing in the early days of the Kentish mission, and shows an awareness on Gregory's part of the need to oppose heathenism much more actively than before. But it also contrasts with the advice contained in a letter sent only a month later (in July 601) from Gregory to Mellitus, one of the party already en route for England, the contents of which are to be communicated to Augustine.⁵⁸ This letter paints a vivid picture of English refractoriness, of the 'stubborn minds' ('duris mentibus') in which error was too deeply implanted to be removed at a stroke; and it effectively contradicts Gregory's earlier instruction to Æthelberht to destroy pagan shrines, urging Augustine to consecrate them with holy water and put altars and relics in them. In this way, it is hoped, the temples will be converted to the service of God. The letter draws a new distinction between the shrines and the idols they contain: the shrines are to be preserved; only the idols must be destroyed. The sacrifice of animals may continue, though these sacrifices will not be the same sacrifices as before because now they will be offered to God on the anniversary of the new church's dedication, or on other feast days. Temporary wooden huts are to be constructed to house these feasts outside the buildings that have been converted into churches.

The letter to Mellitus represents a striking *volte-face* when compared with the June letter to King Æthelberht. The consideration that the two letters were sent to different people blunts the sense of inconsistency but does not remove it. The Kentish king, as a convert, would be unlikely to appreciate the nature of Augustine's practical problems as a missionary; and as someone who had himself

only recently put aside paganism, his reaction to the rather devious strategy Gregory proposes in the letter to Mellitus might have been difficult to predict. Perhaps Gregory thought that the most that could be expected of Æthelberht at this stage was that he should bring all his political weight to bear in opposing paganism and promoting Christianity in its place. The letter to Mellitus, on the other hand, seems to imply a recognition that royal opposition to paganism was not enough to defeat it permanently. The theory that the inconsistency between these letters represents a deliberate, two-pronged attack on paganism is naturally attractive,⁵⁹ but the danger of a disintegration of the missionary enterprise is clear: Gregory sets Æthelberht to destroy pagan shrines, and very soon afterwards tells Augustine (via Mellitus) to preserve them—a recipe for confusion, if not conflict.

A possible explanation for Gregory's change of mind is that he belatedly realized the danger of unintentionally encouraging adhesion - a danger that would always be present as long as places perceived as at once holy and non-Christian were tolerated. Perhaps Gregory finally saw the importance of the occupation of the sites of pagan worship in securing the permanent conversion of the English. The destruction of the shrines alone was not enough, because they could be restored and the idols replaced. By minimising the disruption of existing patterns of pagan observance, it was hoped that damaging, open conflict between Christianity and paganism could be avoided, and that the former would absorb and eventually replace the latter. Gregory must have been confident that Christianity would emerge as the dominant strain in this hybridization; but his new policy seems calculated to lead to a syncretistic religion combining Christian and pagan elements,⁶⁰ and we must assume that he did not foresee the particular brand of adhesion that Rædwald fell prey to, whereby facilities for honouring both Christian and pagan gods were made available in the same place. Any other policy, however, would leave pagan cults as an optional alternative or extra to Christianity on separate sites, and it is understandable if this was felt to be the worse evil.⁶¹ In fact, the dangerous consequences of encouraging the mere abandonment of pagan holy places rather than their adaptation is illustrated by Bede's account of what happened among the East Saxons when Sigehere apostatized: he and his subjects 'began to restore the derelict temples and to worship images, as if they could protect themselves by such means from the plague'.⁶² Evidently Gregory's advice was not heeded in Essex.

The letter to Mellitus draws attention to idols as the hard core of paganism, the one cultic element that cannot, in Gregory's view, be assimilated to Christian worship. We have already looked at a sample of the arguments marshalled against

idolatry by the missionaries; but there was also the more practical question of what should be done with idols. One obvious way of dealing with them was simple physical destruction, though there is, as we shall see below, reason to doubt whether this procedure was sufficiently comprehensive to put a stop to paganism. Although Gregory urges Æthelberht in his letter of June 601 to suppress idolatry, Bede's narrative implies that he did not do so as energetically as Eorcenberht, who ruled Kent from 640 to 664 and is identified as the first English king to insist on the destruction of idols throughout his kingdom.⁶³ No doubt the destruction of idols was seen as an important step on the road to permanent conversion. The demonstration of an idol's vulnerability might well have been instructive for those who venerated it;⁶⁴ but it is difficult to gauge the impact of such exercises without understanding what conceptions the pagans had of their idols. Would the destruction of an idol necessarily have put an end to the cult of the god it represented? It might have done if the pagan identified the idol with the god, in which case its destruction would lead to the conclusion either that the god had been killed, or that a god so easily destroyed could never have existed in the first place. If idol and god were not regarded as one and the same, of course, the idol's destruction would have been inconclusive; one image of a god might have been as good as another, as the case of Essex under Sigehehere suggests.⁶⁵

The pagans' conception of their gods

The question therefore arises of what general conceptions the pagan Anglo-Saxons had of their gods. It is unfortunate that direct information on this point is so limited. Comparative evidence from continental Germanic sources has some value as a starting-point, though it does not present a consistent picture. Tacitus, writing in the first century AD, claimed that the Germanic peoples did not confine their gods within buildings nor made images of them, but envisaged them as spiritual presences in the groves and forests held sacred to them.⁶⁶ Later Scandinavian sources, however, contain a number of references to pagan idols and temples, including accounts of gods abandoning or being ejected from the object or idol in which they had taken up residence.⁶⁷ These accounts cannot be accepted without question as reliable evidence of pagan thinking about idols; but they show some consistency in conceiving of the idol as a fetish, a material representation or icon into which the deity may enter, sometimes even animating it as its body, but from which it may withdraw and go elsewhere. An example is a

story told in *Gunnars þáttr helmings*, preserved in the fourteenth-century Icelandic manuscript known as *Flateyjarbók*: Gunnarr, a Norwegian adventurer travelling in Sweden, was attacked by an animated wooden effigy of the god Freyr. He wrestled with it and the god, admitting defeat, departed, leaving his wooden form behind for Gunnarr to destroy.⁶⁸

Turning to English evidence, we find one of our fullest sources of information about Anglo-Saxon conceptions of pagan gods in Bede's account of the conversion of King Edwin of Northumbria by the missionary Paulinus in 627.⁶⁹ When Edwin, after lengthy deliberation, finally decided to convert, he asked for his counsellors' opinion of the new religion. Coifi, his chief priest,⁷⁰ was scornful of the gods whose worship he had presided over: no-one had served these gods as devotedly as he, yet others had received more from Edwin in benefits and honours. Coifi felt that he would have been more fortunate 'if the gods had any power'.⁷¹ Here, then, is a notion of pagan gods as weak and ineffectual in an ordinary, human way; Coifi does not cast doubt on their very existence as gods. His down-to-earth materialism contrasts with the metaphysical reflections of a second, unnamed counsellor who invented the famous allegory of a sparrow flying in an instant through Edwin's hall during a storm in winter: unlike paganism, Christianity makes sense of man's life in time. Coifi asked Paulinus for more information about God. Convinced by what he heard of the worthlessness of their paganism, he then advised Edwin that their pagan altars and temples should be immediately abandoned and burnt.⁷² Edwin formally and publicly declared his faith in Christ and renounced idolatry.

Next, Edwin asked Coifi 'which of them should be the first to profane the altars and the shrines of the idols, together with their precincts'.⁷³ Coifi accepted the job himself, reasoning that his destruction of what he once worshipped would set a good example to everyone. In the event, however, this destruction is by no means as summary as Coifi's earlier advice to Edwin has led us to expect. First, a ritual violation of the shrines was performed. In the knowledge that 'a high priest of their religion was not allowed to carry arms or to ride except on a mare',⁷⁴ Coifi borrowed a sword, a spear and a stallion from Edwin, mounted up and rode off towards the shrines. The common people who witnessed this behaviour thought Coifi had gone mad.⁷⁵ When Coifi arrived at Goodmanham, where the shrine was, 'without any hesitation he profaned it by casting the spear he held into it'.⁷⁶ Then 'he ordered his companions to destroy and set fire to the shrine and all the enclosures'.⁷⁷

Among several interesting aspects of this description is Edwin's continuing deference, after deciding for Christianity, to Coifi.⁷⁸ Neither Edwin nor Coifi

were yet baptised; but by this stage Coifi was, according to one view of the situation, redundant as a pagan priest. One might expect Edwin to have consulted Paulinus, or even that Paulinus would step in and urge the destruction of the idols and their precincts, as indeed he does in Alcuin's later adaptation of Bede's account in Latin verse.⁷⁹ In Bede's version, however, Edwin turned to Coifi; and the fact that the priest still retained some of his authority in the king's eyes tells us something about Edwin's conception of the pagan gods he was turning his back on. There is no sign that he had lost faith in their existence. They still required dealing with, not from a Christian standpoint (which maintains that pagan gods are an illusion), but in their own terms. Coifi was best qualified for this; and in spite of his own explanation of his behaviour, Coifi's seems too elaborate a gesture to be interpreted simply as an expression of a new convert's wish to symbolize in violent action a clean break with past errors. Much suggests that the newly converted Northumbrians did not find it easy to think of these gods as nothing more than inert material objects which could simply be destroyed and forgotten. No doubt the idols were understood to have reverted to that basic condition by the time they were burnt;⁸⁰ but the fact that their ritual defeat had to come first is significant.

In terms of conversion theory, Coifi's actions (including the actual burning of the shrine) are a relatively elaborate example of what has been called 'bridge-burning'—a decisive gesture, made at the 'commitment' stage in the conversion process, of disengagement from the religion which a convert has hitherto followed.⁸¹ The detailed interpretation of his actions, however, involves several uncertainties. For example, what meaning did Coifi attach to his own behaviour? Did he see himself as destroying his old gods, or only as driving them away forever? His attack on them is ostensibly an act of war against an enemy who may, presumably, be killed—perhaps easily killed, if the gods are as weak as Coifi has earlier judged them to be. On the other hand, in the light of his status as a priest whose normal duties would have involved officiating at sacrifices, Coifi's actions might be interpreted less as an actual attack than as a symbolic act of defiance, designed to make it clear to the gods that they should expect nothing further from him in the way of sacrifices or appeals for support, and that there was therefore no point in their remaining. We should also note that the sword Coifi carried, unlike the spear, was not put to any practical use, suggesting that the taking up of weapons was itself just as significant as what he actually did with them. Edwin's stallion does, of course, have the practical function of transporting Coifi to the shrines, but Bede makes it clear that Coifi's mode of transport was just as significant symbolically as the weaponry he carried.

Coifi's activities here fall into two stages and also (though not so neatly) into two categories of behaviour. The first stage, the armed ritual assault on horseback, is distinguished from the second mainly by its explicitly pagan symbolism and perspective. It was probably calculated to affront the gods and so bring about their voluntary departure. As an armed attack, the first stage might alternatively be interpreted as the killing of the gods; but this seems less likely in the light of the second stage, in which the shrines are burnt. This act of destruction makes sense in terms of the first stage as a scorched-earth policy: it ensures that the gods' banishment will be permanent and final by preventing their possible return to their former habitations and embodiments. The second stage, however, is also open to a different interpretation. From a Christian viewpoint, this second stage alone would have sufficed to put an end to the gods and at the same time cut off the line of retreat into paganism—by destroying the idols that the Northumbrians had deluded themselves into treating as deities.⁸²

To sum up: Coifi's bridge-burning may be taken as a comprehensive gesture of rejection which probably incorporates both pagan and Christian perspectives on paganism. The two stages into which it falls certainly suggest two distinct processes. The first stage symbolizes disengagement from paganism by the pointed inversion of acknowledged pagan taboos, while the second stage sets the seal on this disengagement by physical destruction of the gods' material manifestations and possessions. The second stage, however, may also be interpreted as a reflection of the simpler, Christian conception of paganism, according to which destruction of an idol amounts to destruction of the god it represents. The second stage is, perhaps, open to interpretation as an added insurance against the gods' return, a kind of topping-up of the ritual designed to satisfy Paulinus, to whom the first stage will probably have seemed superfluous to requirements. It is worth remarking that this distinctive and complex combination of action and symbolism is most unlikely to have been invented as a whole by Bede, though the second stage, along with some of Coifi's somewhat suspiciously orthodox and polished expressions of his new-found Christian convictions, probably owe something to Bede's shaping of his sources for the Northumbrian conversion.

The character of Edwin's gods and comparative evidence

It has been noted that the two priestly taboos violated by Coifi when he rides Edwin's stallion and carries his weapons have parallels in Tacitus's *Germania* and

in later medieval Icelandic literature.⁸³ These parallels are close enough to encourage us to draw on them to help us identify the character of the gods that the Northumbrians are rejecting. As we shall see below, this latter question has some bearing on our understanding of the significance of Coifi's hurling of Edwin's spear into the Goodmanham shrines. In Norse pagan mythology, Óðinn is head of the Æsir, the principal family of gods and goddesses.⁸⁴ Previously, in a remote period of the world's history, a war was believed to have been fought between the Æsir and a second divine family called the Vanir. A truce was called, peace was made, the Æsir absorbed the Vanir, and in most of the surviving mythological stories we find the two families living together harmoniously in a single society. The chief members of the Vanir are Freyr, his sister Freyja and their father Njörðr. The more numerous Æsir have a complex range of interests and functions; the Vanir are more narrowly associated with peace, material prosperity and fertility.⁸⁵

The taboos mentioned by Bede suggest the cult of a god or gods of Vanir-type at Edwin's court. Chapter 40 of Tacitus's *Germania* describes the veneration of a goddess called Nerthus by a confederacy of German tribes which includes the Anglii, the continental ancestors of the English Angles among whom Edwin and the Northumbrians are numbered.⁸⁶ Nerthus's membership of the Vanir family is suggested partly by the identity of her Latinized name with that of the Scandinavian god Njörðr, Freyr's father, and partly by the character of her cult. According to Tacitus, Nerthus's priest would at certain times perceive the goddess's presence in an island grove regarded as sacred to her. He would then escort her in a special wagon drawn by oxen on a tour of the neighbouring communities where she was welcomed enthusiastically. On her arrival, the people would put aside the weapons and warfare which normally preoccupied them. Although Tacitus does not state that Nerthus's priest was forbidden to carry weapons, one would expect his own code of behaviour to match the respect shown to the goddess by the ordinary people who honoured her during her tour. The prohibition placed on Coifi against the bearing of weapons recalls this account of Nerthus in the *Germania*, and suggests the cult of some similar deity in pagan Northumbria.

The prohibition against riding a stallion also points to the veneration of Vanir-type deities at Goodmanham, for it is strongly reminiscent of what we are told in later Scandinavian sources about the cult of Freyr. Evidence that the horse was an animal sacred to Freyr in the Scandinavian pagan world is plentiful,⁸⁷ two of the most important sources being *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, written in Iceland in the thirteenth century but set in the tenth, and a story, probably of similar date,

in the *Flateyjarbók* version of *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, describing the desecration by Ólafr of an idol of Freyr in Norway.⁸⁸ In the first of these texts, Hrafnkell, who bears the title *Freysgoði* ('priest of Freyr'), regards the god as half-owner of all his most valuable possessions, including a stallion called *Freyfaxi* ('Freyr's maned one'). Twelve mares make up Freyfaxi's stud. Hrafnkell swears an oath to kill anyone who rides Freyfaxi without his permission (the restriction, just like the restriction on Coifi's horse-riding mentioned by Bede, explicitly excludes the mares), and so is honour-bound to kill Einarr, a shepherd he has hired, when he mounts Freyfaxi to search for some of the sheep in his care that have strayed. The dynamic of the prohibition is that anyone who breaks it offends against Hrafnkell rather than Freyr, the stallion's other part-owner; but it is noticeable that Hrafnkell does not himself ride Freyfaxi at any point in the saga, and it seems probable that the motif was inspired by the same taboo as the one consciously violated by Coifi in Bede. In the story from *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, the king discovers a pocket of heathenism in Trondheim: some of the inhabitants still maintain an idol of Freyr. On his way to the temple which contains the idol, Ólafr comes upon a stud of horses which are held sacred to Freyr. He mounts the stallion, his followers mount the mares, and all ride to the temple where Ólafr topples various idols including Freyr's, which he carries away with him.⁸⁹ We do not hear of any actual prohibition on riding the horses in this story, but it seems clear from the context that the use to which Ólafr and his men put Freyr's beasts is an affront to the god. Furthermore, the structural feature of the story which has the King mount the stallion and his followers the mares creates an impression that the riding of the stallion is the more significant insult. It must also be admitted that Ólafr's role as an iconoclastic crusader against paganism strongly invites comparison with the story of Coifi in Bede. That the Icelandic author was actually influenced by Bede's story is not impossible, though whether the correspondences are specific enough to support a case for direct influence is a matter of opinion.

Iceland was converted in or about the year 1000 AD. The lateness of both *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða* and *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar* limits their reliability as sources of information about Scandinavian paganism; but it can scarcely be denied that they provide a satisfactory explanatory background to the taboo on stallion-riding that Coifi violates, and that they also support the evidence drawn from Tacitus's account of Nerthus that points to Coifi presiding over the cult of fertility deities resembling the Scandinavian Vanir. But that is perhaps as far as we should go; it would be rash to suggest identifications of the particular continental pagan Germanic gods whose Anglo-Saxon counterparts Coifi has

previously venerated. The Scandinavian parallels and the link with Nerthus in the *Germania* are detailed and specific; but our knowledge of individual Anglo-Saxon pagan deities is far too limited to enable us to discern specific Anglo-Saxon equivalents of Freyr or Nerthus in Bede's narrative.

Similar constraints should probably apply to the interpretation of Coifi's throwing of a spear as a declaration of war against his old gods. This also has a parallel in Old Norse, though in pagan mythology rather than in accounts suggestive of pagan cults. Coifi's gesture has been interpreted (though with greater confidence than the evidence really warrants in my view) as pointing to the veneration in Northumbria of a particular English pagan god, Woden.⁹⁰ We know very little about the mythology of Woden in Anglo-Saxon England,⁹¹ and we have no reliable information about how he was worshipped, or whether he was thought of as belonging to any particular family of gods. The case for Woden as the model for Coifi's spear-throwing depends heavily on the etymological identity of Woden's name with that of the Scandinavian Óðinn. In Norse pagan mythology Óðinn, head of the Æsir, owns a spear called Gungnir, made by dwarfs, which he will carry into battle at Ragnarok.⁹² Old Norse skaldic poets sometimes refer to Óðinn as *geirs drótinn* [lord of the spear], or *Gungnis váfaðr* [Gungnir's shaker].⁹³ These expressions show that the spear was Óðinn's special weapon; but what has convinced many scholars of a link between Coifi and Óðinn (and through Óðinn with the Anglo-Saxon god Woden) is the tenth-century Eddic poem *Völuspá*, strophe 24 of which describes the archetypal war between the Æsir and the Vanir, referred to earlier: Óðinn declares this war by throwing an (unnamed) spear into the Vanir army.⁹⁴ On the basis of this parallel, coupled with the accepted etymological link between Woden and Óðinn, scholars have been attracted to the idea that in throwing Edwin's spear Coifi is acting as Woden's ritual representative; that Woden was therefore included among the gods worshipped in Edwin's Northumbria; and that Coifi was a priest dedicated to his cult.⁹⁵ The potential significance of the parallel with *Völuspá* 24 seems even greater when we note that the mythological context of Óðinn's original gesture was a war against the Vanir, for we have already found other evidence for the cult of Vanir-type deities in Edwin's Northumbria.

There is, however, an awkward problem of consistency here. Óðinn belongs to the Æsir family in Scandinavian myth and behaves like a warrior in the *Völuspá* incident; but there are, as we have seen, rather more convincing reasons for thinking that Coifi presided over the cult of Vanir-type deities, associated with peace and fertility. Are we therefore to conclude that Coifi has changed sides and

become (briefly) the servant of a warrior-god in order to turn on his old fertility gods? This is an attractive solution in some ways, but it creates another difficulty arising from a point I made earlier: Coifi's ritual attack is clearly presented in *HE* as a 'bridge-burning' act in support of the Northumbrian conversion. Coifi has accepted the Christian message by the time he mounts Edwin's stallion and attacks the shrines with the king's weapons, and the whole pattern of his actions is obviously designed to put a formal end to the paganism he has previously adhered to. The problem is that the reactivation of a pagan myth in which a warrior-god—perhaps Woden—played a leading role would have done more to assert the existence and power of pagan gods than to contribute towards a general abandonment of paganism.⁹⁶

One way out of this difficulty would be to assume that Coifi was acting out an adapted version of the spear-throwing myth in which Óðinn (or Woden) as attacker is replaced by the Christian God as a destroyer of false gods.⁹⁷ Such an interpretation would have the advantage of forging a structural link between the disengagement from paganism and the adoption of Christianity in its place; but from other points of view it seems an unsatisfactory solution to the problem. At this stage, Coifi is not convincing as God's ritual representative, in spite of his zeal when it comes to burning the shrines and enclosures. We must also remember that Paulinus stands aloof from the whole business; that Edwin relies on Coifi's judgement in devising a suitable bridge-burning ritual; and that Coifi's profanation of the Goodmanham shrines is achieved by breaking specific pagan religious taboos. All these considerations suggest that Coifi thought of himself as dealing directly with his old gods, and on their terms.

The easiest solution to the problem is to abandon the assumption that in throwing Edwin's spear Coifi is reenacting, or adapting, any kind of divine myth. A conscious link with a myth of Woden in particular cannot be ruled out entirely, but the connection depends, as we have seen, on the assumption of a close match between Woden's and Óðinn's mythology. The trouble with the Woden hypothesis is that the Anglo-Saxon 'Woden' is an almost empty, unstructured category, defenceless against substantiation with the mythology of the god's Scandinavian counterpart. This defencelessness does not inspire confidence in the validity of the link; but what is the alternative? Coifi assumes the role of a warrior, plainly an unfamiliar one from his own point of view, and an inappropriate one from the perspective of the common people used to seeing him in his traditional role as a pagan priest.⁹⁸ There seems to be no pressing reason to regard Coifi as anything more than a renegade pagan priest waging a symbolic war against his old gods.

All his actions as described make sense in these terms: as a disillusioned priest of heathen fertility deities, he deliberately and publicly inverts his priestly functions as a way of showing his old gods that he will no longer seek their support in his affairs.⁹⁹

The break with the pagan past

One of the main conclusions to emerge from this study of the Anglo-Saxons' disengagement from paganism is that the missionaries, and the popes who backed up their efforts, did not, generally speaking, meet the challenge of paganism head-on. This was partly a consequence of their faith: they saw their task as the revelation of God's power to people still ignorant of it—a positive demonstration of what seemed to them unarguably true—rather than as any kind of debate with a rival system of beliefs. The evidence for this attitude is clear in the early stages of the mission to Kent, when Augustine imposed a policy of non-coercion in matters of religion: he saw no special need to defeat paganism, no doubt because he did not think of conversion in terms of a conflict of religions. A disregard for any difficulties potential converts might have had in abandoning paganism could be justified logically by appeal to the rejection of pagan polytheistic worship automatically entailed by conversion. This aspect of Christian ideology spared the missionaries from having to grapple with unfamiliar and alien ideas held by the pagan Anglo-Saxons, or to test their own metaphysics against any rival picture paganism might offer. Presumably this way of thinking lay behind Paulinus's willingness to leave the destruction of the Goodmanham sanctuary in the hands of his Northumbrian converts; and it would also help to explain why Gregory, in his letters to Kent, seems to regard the suppression of idolatry as the king's responsibility rather than Augustine's. But we have seen that this attitude had its drawbacks. It may well have contributed to the later difficulties in Kent, where the resilience of paganism seems to have been misjudged; and the several apostasies recorded by Bede might also be put down to a failure on the part of the church to attack the roots of heathenism with vigour. This failure is attributable, not to any lack of evangelical zeal on the missionaries' part, but rather to their very limited idea of the pagans' conception of their gods, and of the power and practical usefulness with which their adherents had traditionally invested them. It is clear that the missionaries underestimated the opposition; they failed to see paganism as a serious challenge to full conversion. One of the things that the

story of Edwin's conversion reveals, however, is that potential converts recognized this challenge clearly enough. There are signs here that the adoption of Christianity and the rejection of paganism were understood by converts as distinct processes.

Insofar as they perceived Anglo-Saxon paganism at all distinctly, the missionaries inevitably saw it from a Christian perspective rather than from that of its own devotees. When a confrontation was unavoidable, it was found strategically useful to define it in terms of Christian concepts and traditions. Pagan gods were identical with the idols of the Old Testament—lifeless, powerless, undeserving of worship. Alternatively, pagan gods might be condemned as devils. By thus casting the objects of pagan worship in a recognizable mould, the church converted them to forms that it could defeat. Perhaps it mattered little to the missionaries whether Anglo-Saxon pagans really did make idols, or whether they understood what a devil was, or even if, as candidates for baptism, they were confused by such conflicting conceptions of the gods they were being encouraged to reject. The new religion offered them these alternative identifications. By fully accepting either, converts would have been regarded as safe from future apostasy.

The break with the past at the conceptual level was, naturally, the real key to a secure conversion. The missionary encourages his converts to look to the future. The past holds nothing but error: idolatry, the worship of false gods, which must be abandoned for ever. For the convert, however, things could not be so clear-cut. A newly converted society faces and must somehow surmount intellectual difficulties in relation to ideas of its own past. Its sense of identity depends on inherited notions of its own origins and history. Such traditions are irreplaceable and so not lightly abandoned. The missionaries expected their converts to make a clean break with the past in the matter of religion; but history (as always, no doubt, with changes of religion) complicated matters. Christianity brought its own tradition of world history into which the Anglo-Saxons would have had to fit themselves. Under paganism, different ideas will undoubtedly have been held about how the world and its contents came into existence. It is unfortunate that our sources offer no information about these ideas; but we do know that the Anglo-Saxons generally had an intense awareness of their ancestry and preserved stories deriving from the continental heroic age which they no doubt regarded as relevant to the history of their own race. One of the most interesting questions about the period is how the converted Anglo-Saxons reconciled the various strands of these native traditions deriving from pagan times

with Christian world history. The medieval church did not, one imagines, concern itself much with this process. The missionaries, foreigners who were generally uninterested in the indigenous traditions of the peoples they converted, would have lacked the knowledge necessary to assist converts in their attempts to harmonize the two traditions. The converts will have been left to do it themselves, just as they were left (at least in Northumbria, and probably in Kent and elsewhere) to devise their own machinery for putting paganism behind them.

Little direct information is available on how they went about it, but we can form some idea of the kind of adjustments that were involved. Royal genealogies and king-lists show how the Anglo-Saxons revised, or rather extended, their own history in such a way as to link it with Christian history: the lists are continued backwards by spurious additions via Woden to Adam.¹⁰⁰ Here two procedures are illustrated: the simple dovetailing of native traditions with the Christian historical continuum, and a closely-connected euhemerization of divinities from whom the Anglo-Saxon kings came to regard themselves as descended. But the continued transmission, under Christianity, of stories deriving from the continental heroic age presented special difficulties which may be illustrated from the Old English poem *Beowulf*.

Christianity and Beowulf

The inconsistencies of religious reference in *Beowulf* are under more or less constant discussion in critical literature on the poem.¹⁰¹ They have been explained in various ways, with no one explanation winning general assent. The poem's story is set in the countries on or near the rim of the Baltic sea and all the main human characters—Danes, Geats and Swedes—are members of societies the historical bases of which were certainly pagan. The fact that supernatural creatures—the giant Grendel, his mother and a dragon—play important roles in the story means that the action stands to some extent outside time, though historical events in the late fifth and early sixth centuries have contributed to the poem's final form, for it contains references to the death, during Beowulf's lifetime, of the Geatish king Hygelac in a battle against the Franks. Hygelac is a historical figure whose fall is datable from other sources to the early years of the sixth century.¹⁰² *Beowulf* cannot have existed in its present form any earlier than the late seventh century, for it contains evidence of being the product of a converted community. The date of the manuscript sets the latest possible date in

the early eleventh century. Scholars disagree widely within these limits over the date of composition.¹⁰³

The poem's religious inconsistencies lie in the poet's presentation of the religion—pagan or Christian—followed by certain individuals and tribes mentioned in the poem, notably Beowulf the Geat, the hero of the poem, and Hroðgar, king of the Danes, whose royal hall Heorot is released by Beowulf's heroism from the persecution of Grendel and his mother. Although *Beowulf* is often called a Christian poem, it contains no references to God the Son, nor to doctrines connected with him in particular. On the other hand, the poet-narrator does often refer to God as having effective control over the fates of the pagan tribes of the poem and some of their individual members, and as actively intervening on occasion in the pattern of their fortunes.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, we are sometimes told in indirect speech that a character or group thanked God for his mercy.¹⁰⁵ Grendel, whose family are descendants of the Biblical Cain,¹⁰⁶ is also spoken of as subject to God's rule,¹⁰⁷ as God's hereditary enemy,¹⁰⁸ and as feuding with him.¹⁰⁹ All the chief characters in the poem are thus presented by the poet as living in a world presided over by the one God and aware (though there is, perhaps, room for doubt in the case of Grendel and his mother) that they are doing so. The same characters (except the monsters, who do not speak) also demonstrate this awareness directly in their own speeches, especially Hroðgar and Beowulf, both of whom refer frequently to God as managing their affairs, or as having the power to do so. Hroðgar is particularly assiduous in acknowledging God's responsibility for any good fortune, in offering prayers of thanks to him for his mercy, and in praying for his blessings on behalf of others.¹¹⁰ Beowulf often recognizes God's power to control events and sometimes his actual intervention,¹¹¹ though in general his relationship with God seems more distant than Hroðgar's.

But this stratum of monotheistic awareness on the part of the characters is inconsistent with an excursus in which the poet describes the Danes as resorting to pagan sacrifice in their search for protection against Grendel's attacks because they did not know God:

Hwilum hie geheton æt hærgtrafum
wigweorpunga, wordum bædon,
þæt him gastbona geoce gefremede
wið þeodþream. Swylc wæs þeaw hyra,
hæpenra hyht; helle gemundon

in modsefan, Metod hie ne cuþon,
dæda Demend, ne wiston hie Drihten God,
ne hie huru heofena Helm herian ne cuþon,
wuldres Waldend. Wa bið þæm ðe sceal
þurh sliðne nið sawle bescufan
in fyres fæþm, frofre ne wenan,
wihte gewendan! Wel bið þæm þe mot
æfter deaðdæge Drihten secean
ond to Fæder fæþmum freoðo wilnian! (*Beowulf*, ll. 175-88)

[Sometimes they promised honour to idols at heathen temples, asked that the slayer of souls might help them against these calamities. Such was their custom, the hope of heathens. They thought of Hell in their hearts, they did not know the Ordainer, the Judge of deeds, they knew not of the Lord God, nor indeed did they know how to worship the Protector of the Heavens, the Ruler of Glory. Woe to him who must, in dire distress, thrust his soul into the fire's embrace, not expect comfort or any amelioration! Fortunate is he who after his death-day may seek the Lord and ask for protection in the Father's embrace!]

The poet's compassion here for the benighted Danes, unwittingly worshipping the Devil and condemning their souls to perdition, is remarkable; but the passage is very explicit, and I cannot see any way of reconciling these statements about the Danes' paganism and ignorance of God with the apparent Christian monotheism of the main characters elsewhere in the poem. The poet seems to contradict himself. The problem is widely recognized. Critics attempt to resolve it in two different ways. Some try to undermine the passage just quoted, either by condemning it as unoriginal to the poem or by interpreting it in such a way as to minimize the sense of inconsistency. Thus it has been suggested that all or part of lines 175-88 is interpolated, though no irregularities of versification or unusual features of grammar or style of the kind that might substantiate these suspicions have ever been adduced as far as I know.¹¹² The poet describes the Danes' pagan practices as occasional (175 *Hwilum* [Sometimes]) but not unusual (178 *Swylce wæs þeaw hyra* [Such was their custom]); and the context makes it clear that they were provoked in this instance by the national crisis which Grendel's attacks on Heorot represented. The situation here is in some ways reminiscent of Essex under Sigehehere where, as Bede tells us, the ravages of plague provoked an

apostasy. But the conclusion reached by some critics that the passage indicates occasional lapses from a monotheistic religion is in my view unsustainable in the light of what is said about the Danes' ignorance of God in lines 180-3. The idea, sometimes advanced, that Hroðgar, as a monotheist, will have held aloof from these pagan practices is certainly baseless. It is true that he is not mentioned as personally involved in them; but we have been told slightly earlier (170) of his distress at Grendel's attacks, then of meetings of his counsellors to seek a remedy. Pagan sacrifice is a remedy they decide to try. There is no reason to think that this decision was reached and put into practice without the king's knowledge and agreement.¹¹³ The second attempt to resolve the inconsistency belongs to Fred C. Robinson, who argues that terms for the deity in *Beowulf* are always ambiguous when used by the characters: a word like *metod*, when used by, or attributed to, a pagan character like Beowulf would be meant by him to refer to a pagan god such as Woden, but would be understood by the audience as an unwitting reference to the true God on Beowulf's part.¹¹⁴ Robinson presents a closely-argued case for this ingenious solution which, if accepted, removes the offending inconsistency very neatly.¹¹⁵

I prefer to accept the contradiction, however, partly because I find neither of these attempts to remove it wholly convincing, but mainly because the contradiction itself does not seem to me at all surprising against a background of Anglo-Saxon conversion and the reorganization of thinking about the past which conversion required. I find it easier to accept that *Beowulf*, quite possibly a product of this early post-conversion period, contains two mutually incompatible conceptions of a pre-Christian Germanic past. The one represented by lines 175-88 presumably derives from contemporary knowledge of the paganism, past and present, of the Danes, no doubt reinforced by the Anglo-Saxon poet's awareness of his own people's pagan background.¹¹⁶ This picture of the Danes as pagan and ignorant of God is, of course, the one which a modern historian would accept as true. The other conception results from a projection of Christian monotheism back into pre-Christian Danish and Geatish society. This is more difficult to explain. Perhaps the most coherent of existing theories is C. Donahue's, who sees Beowulf, Hroðgar and their followers as 'monotheists who have discovered God, as St. Paul said men could, through His creation'.¹¹⁷ The notion that 'without any assistance from Judaeo-Christian revelation men can and do reach a knowledge of the true God by reasoning from creation to the Creator' is found in the Bible, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans.¹¹⁸ Donahue finds references to natural law in early Irish law-texts and traces the importation of the idea into Ireland to the fifth century. From Ireland, he argues, it spread to Britain and reached the *Beowulf* poet.

A theory depending more directly on the text of *Beowulf* itself may, however, be offered as an alternative to Donahue's relatively involved explanation. A key to a better understanding of the professed monotheism of the main characters in *Beowulf* may lie in a statement which the poem's narrator makes three times: 'Soð is gecyþed, þæt mihtig God manna cynnes weold wideferhð' [it is well known that God has always ruled over the race of men];¹¹⁹ 'Metod eallum weold gumena cynnes, swa he nu git deð' [the Ordainer ruled over all of mankind, just as he still does now];¹²⁰ and 'wolde dom Godes dædum rædan gumena gehwylcum, swa he nu gen deð' [God's decree would control every man's deeds, just as it still does].¹²¹ These three utterances are not identical; but all make the same point that God has always controlled men's actions, and two of them add that he still does. The poet's repetitions might be explained by reference to the fact that, for a recently converted people, these are not obvious truths. The omnipotence of God is still, for the poet and his audience, a source of amazement. So is the fact that this power has always existed and been exercised even on the lives of individuals and communities who had yet to learn of his existence, like the Danes. The notion of a deity who was at once omnipotent and unworshipped would have been an unfamiliar one for the Anglo-Saxons, whose experience of paganism will presumably have led them to conceive of divine power as something released by ritual. It cannot have been easy for adherents of a polytheistic folk religion to take in the idea that every aspect of their lives and the lives of their ancestors had been governed, contrary to all contemporary assumptions, not by the gods to whom they had customarily offered sacrifices but by an invisible God who simply exists, whether he is recognized and worshipped or not. And so it seems to me that the anachronistic monotheism of the characters of *Beowulf* might be explained by supposing that the poet was unequal to the task of depicting a world presided over by a God who, though omnipotent and eternal, was also unworshipped and unknown. In lines 175-88, the poet asserts rather strenuously that the Danes did not know God. The positive implication of this is what is stated explicitly in the three passages I have just cited: God was nonetheless there all the time. In order to understand the difficulty faced by the poet, we have only to imagine the compassion and pathos of lines 175-88 extended over the whole action of the poem. If the pagan characters of *Beowulf* were shown as ever subject to God's will but entirely ignorant of Him, they would lose any claim to dignity and nobility, appearing instead as puppets struggling in the dark against enemies and forces dimly perceived and improperly understood, and foolishly misinterpreting any manifestation of God's benevolent influence.

Some scholars, notably Tolkien, have interpreted the poem rather in this way; but this view of *Beowulf* seems to me to result from putting too much emphasis on lines 175-88 and not enough on all the other references to God as an ally and a stay to Geats and Danes alike. I suggest that what the poet found impossible to depict was a hidden but supportive power the manifestations of which could only be misinterpreted by those it sustained. The poet might, as Donahue thought, have known the Biblical argument of St. Paul that an awareness of God's existence and power has always been within the grasp of all men purely through reason; but whether or not he knew of this idea, the religious inconsistencies of *Beowulf* need not be interpreted as any kind of compromise. They are, I suggest, simply what they appear to be at first sight: a reflection of the distinction between two historical channels which merged at the moment of conversion but had not yet done so in the world of the poem. Conversion could not be made retroactive; but the qualities and achievements for which heroes were remembered had to be aligned somehow with the Christian moral framework if the positive values they represented were not to end up on the wrong side of the dividing line between good and evil. The narrower historical realities of Germanic ignorance and heathenism are faced up to in lines 175-88; but for the poet, the Christian mainstream had an irresistible claim to recognition. Once it was realized that God is all-powerful and has always existed everywhere, it was no longer possible to present Beowulf's fortunes as governed by forces beyond his sphere of influence.¹²²

NOTES

¹ See *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. xvii. Here I make reference (by book and chapter) to *HE* in this edition, and quote its modern English translation throughout.

² See, for example, J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Bede and Plummer', in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. by Gerald Bonner (London: SPCK, 1976), pp. 366-85; Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf" and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England: Papers in honour of the 1300th anniversary of the birth of Bede, given at Cornell University in 1973 and 1974*, ed. by Robert T. Farrell (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), pp. 32-95; J. Davidse, 'Bede as Christian Historian', in *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk & Northumbrian*, ed. by L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1996), pp. 1-15.

³ See S. C. Neill, 'The History of Missions: An Academic Discipline', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. by G. J. Cuming (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 149-70 (p. 160): 'Our Christian history has been written far too much from the side of the operators and far too little from that of the victims.'

⁴ Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (London: Yale University Press, 1993). On some of the problems involved in the interpretation of earlier accounts of missions in various parts of the world, see Neill, 'The History of Missions'.

⁵ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, pp. 12-14.

⁶ The other categories are 'affiliation', which is the conversion of a person or group lacking any prior spiritual orientation; 'intensification', involving an increased commitment to a religion already followed; and 'institutional transition', whereby a member of some major religious tradition switches from one sub-group to another, as for example when a Christian exchanges Anglicanism for Roman Catholicism. Rambo's initial definition of apostasy (*Understanding Religious Conversion*, p. 13) stresses its repudiative aspect, though later, when considering apostasy as one of various factors that lead to religious conversion, he states that 'all conversions implicitly require a leaving-behind or a reinterpretation of some past way of life and set of beliefs' (p. 53), which ties apostasy in with tradition transition. To avoid confusion, I shall reserve the terms 'apostasy' and 'apostatize' here for reversions to paganism following a conversion to Christianity.

⁷ See Alan R. Tippett, 'Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission', *Missiology*, 2 (1977), 203-21 (pp. 217-20).

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⁸ See, for example, Richard E. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 705-40 (p. 715): 'A lack of valid sources complicates any attempt to discuss the content of missionary preaching designed to win converts'.

⁹ See note 4 above.

¹⁰ *HE* 1.25.

¹¹ *HE* 4.16.

¹² Joel T. Rosenthal, 'Bede's Use of Miracles in "The Ecclesiastical History"', *Traditio*, 31 (1975), 328-35 (p. 333), reaches a similar figure (twenty-four) but provides no list. In my list below, which excludes the Frisian conversions mentioned in *HE* 5.10 and 19, the convert or converts are named first, the converter second: King Æthelberht of Kent, preceded by some of his subjects and followed by many more, by Augustine (*HE* 1.26); King Sæberht of the East Saxons and his people, by Mellitus (*HE* 2.3); King Eadbald of Kent, still pagan after the death of his father Æthelberht, but who banned idolatry in his kingdom following his own conversion by Archbishop Laurence (*HE* 2.6); eleven followers of King Edwin of Northumbria, baptized by Bishop Paulinus at the same time as Edwin's infant daughter Eanflæd (*HE* 2.9); King Edwin himself, his nobles and many of his subjects, by Paulinus at York (*HE* 2.14); Edwin's sons Osfrith and Eadfrith, with many more Northumbrians, by Paulinus during the following six years (*HE* 2.14); King Eorpwold of the East Angles and his subjects, through King Edwin's persuasion (*HE* 2.15; the earlier, incomplete conversion of Eorpwold's father, King Rædwald, is also described here); the East Angles under King Sigebert, Eorpwold's brother, who had been converted in Gaul, with the help of Bishop Felix (*HE* 2.15); the kingdom of Lindsey by Paulinus (*HE* 2.16); many Northumbrians by James the Deacon at York (*HE* 2.20); King Oswald of Northumbria and his followers, by Irish clerics (*HE* 3.3); numerous Northumbrians under Oswald, by Bishop Aidan and other Irish monks (*HE* 3.3); the West Saxon King Cynegisl and his subjects by Birinus (*HE* 3.7); Peada, son of Penda and chief of the Middle Angles, with many of his followers, by Bishop Finan (*HE* 3.21); many of Peada's people by the four priests Cedd, Adda, Betti and Diuma (*HE* 3.21); many Mercians and Middle Angles by Bishop Diuma (*HE* 3.21); King Sigebert of the East Saxons and his followers, by Finan at the instigation of King Oswiu of Northumbria (*HE* 3.22); more East Saxons, by Cedd and an unnamed priest, again through Oswiu's agency (*HE* 3.22); yet more East Saxons, by Cedd, now Bishop of the East Saxons, at Bradwell-on-Sea and Tilbury (*HE* 3.22); King Swithelm of the East Angles, Sigebert's successor, by Cedd at Rendlesham (*HE* 3.22); Mercia and neighbouring kingdoms following the death of Penda, by King Oswiu (*HE* 3.24); King Sigehere of the East Saxons and his people, reconverted by Bishop Jaruman (*HE* 3.30); the South Saxons, whose king Æthelwealh was already Christian, by Wilfrid (*HE* 4.13); the people of the Isle of Wight, converted on Wilfrid's initiative by Beornwine and Hiddila (*HE* 4.16); and numerous Northumbrians, reconverted by Cuthbert (*HE* 4.27).

¹³ See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. xxi: 'Speaking generally, the ecclesiastical historian conceived of the content of paganism [. . .] unseriously. There was no need to define its objectives, still less to distinguish its facets'.

¹⁴ *HE* 2.15.

¹⁵ *HE* 2.15.

¹⁶ *HE* 3.1.

¹⁷ *HE* 3.30.

¹⁸ *HE* 3.30: 'quasi per haec possent a mortalitate defendi'. Bede also mentions later on (*HE* 4.27) that Cuthbert reconverted many in the Northumbrian countryside who had reverted to paganism (see note 12 above).

¹⁹ *HE* 2.5.

²⁰ *HE* 2.3: 'Vbi uero et haec prouincia uerbum ueritatis praedicante Mellito accepit' (After this race had accepted the word of truth through the preaching of Mellitus).

²¹ *HE* 2.6.

²² *HE* 2.5.

²³ See Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, pp. 49-50.

²⁴ *HE* 1.26. On the conversion of Kent, see further below, pp. 15-18.

²⁵ *HE* 3.7.

²⁶ *HE* 3.30: 'Nam et ipse rex et plurimi de plebe siue optimatibus, diligentes hanc uitam et futuram non quaerentes, siue etiam non esse credentes'.

²⁷ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, p. 34.

²⁸ See Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, p. 47: 'The most "fertile" field of conversion in the missionary setting has tended to be among the so-called animists, such as the various tribal groups in Africa, South America, and India. Folk religion is less resilient in the face of the world religions—especially Christianity and Islam. Animists rarely have extensive organizations and ideologies that are linked with anyone beyond their village. Lacking these internal structures and external resources, they are more easily disconnected from indigenous modes of thought and action'.

²⁹ See C. E. Stancliffe, 'From Town to Country: The Christianisation of the Touraine 370-600', in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. by Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), pp. 43-59 (pp. 52-3); and Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 712.

³⁰ Stancliffe, 'From Town to Country', p. 53. See also David K. Jordan, 'The Glyphomancy Factor: Observations on Chinese Conversion', in *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, ed. by Robert W. Hefner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 285-303 (p. 294): 'there is almost certainly a continuum

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in the extent to which converts do or do not abandon old beliefs, particularly if they are not seen as significantly competing with "equivalent" new ones'.

³¹ James Campbell, 'Observations on the Conversion of England', *Ampleforth Journal*, 78 (1973), 12-26; repr. in James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: Hambledon, 1986), pp. 69-84.

³² Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Batsford, 1972), pp. 63-7.

³³ Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, pp. 34-5.

³⁴ On adhesion, see E. Nock, *Conversion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 15-16, and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 28, n. 33. Indirect evidence of Anglo-Saxon polytheism before Christianity is found in the letter written between 722 and 732 by Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, to the continental missionary Boniface (Wynfrith); see *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. by M. Tangl, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Epist. select., 1 (Berlin, 1916), pp. 38-41 (no. 23), and *English Historical Documents I: c. 500-1042*, ed. and trans. by Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd edn (London: Eyre Methuen, 1979), pp. 795-7 (no. 167). The letter reads like the product of Daniel's personal experience in opposing heathenism among the Anglo-Saxons of his day, and contains frequent references to a plurality of pagan deities.

³⁵ *HE* 2.15.

³⁶ See Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. by Naomi Goldblum (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 8: 'Monotheism, in its war against polytheism, is an attempt to impose unity of opinions and beliefs by force, as a result of an uncompromising attitude towards the unity of God. Polytheism, by contrast, by its very nature includes an abundance of gods and modes of ritual worship, and so it has room for different viewpoints and beliefs and therefore is pluralistic. This pluralism is not just the product of compromise but is in fact an ontological pluralism that constitutes a deeper basis for tolerance'.

³⁷ Campbell, 'Observations on the Conversion of England', p. 74, identifies 'the inanities of idol-worship' as a missionary line in Bede. References to idols and idolatry in *HE* are listed in *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, 2 vols, ed. by C. Plummer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1896), II 59: in Kent, *HE* 1.30, 1.32, 2.6, 3.8; in Essex, 2.5, 3.22, 3.30; in Northumbria, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 3.1; in East Anglia, 2.15; in Mercia, 2.20; in Sussex, 4.13, 5.19; and among the Anglo-Saxons generally, 2.1.

³⁸ *HE* 3.22.

³⁹ The Bible is cited here by book, chapter and verse from *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. by R. Weber et al., 2 vols., 4th edn (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1994). The Psalms are cited in the Gallican version.

⁴⁰ *HE* 2.10.

⁴¹ See Wallace-Hadrill, *Commentary*, p. 68.

⁴² *HE* 2.10: 'Omnes dii gentium daemonia, Dominus autem caelos fecit' (All the gods of the nations are devils; but the Lord made the heavens). Cf. Ps. 95.5: 'Quoniam omnes dii gentium daemonia, at vero Dominus caelos fecit' (since all the gods of the nations are devils, but indeed the Lord made the heavens).

⁴³ *HE* 2.10: 'Oculos habent et non uident, aures habent et non audient, nares habent et non odorabunt, manus habent et non palpabunt, pedes habent et non ambulabunt' (eyes have they but they see not; they have ears but they hear not; noses have they but they smell not; they have hands but they handle not; feet have they but they walk not). Cf. Ps. 113.13-15: 'oculos habent et non videbunt, aures habent et non audient, nares habent et non odorabuntur, manus habent et non palpabunt, pedes habent et non ambulabunt' (they have eyes but they will not see, they have ears but they will not hear, they have noses but they will not smell, they have hands but they will not touch, they have feet but they will not walk).

⁴⁴ Cf. Ps. 113.12: 'simulacra gentium argentum et aurum, opera manuum hominum' (the idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of men's hands).

⁴⁵ *HE* 2.10: 'similes ergo efficiuntur his, qui spem suae confidentiae ponunt in eis' (and those who put their trust in them therefore become like them). Cf. Ps. 113.16: 'similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea et omnes qui confidunt in eis' (may those who make them and all who put their trust in them become like them).

⁴⁶ It has been suggested that some of the non-structural post-holes in building D2 at Yeavering in Northumbria may have held totemic idols. There is no definite evidence of this, though the presence of a pit within the building containing the bones and skulls of oxen suggests sacrificial activity, and there are signs of the posts' removal at about the time when the missionary Paulinus visited Yeavering after securing the conversion of King Edwin in 627: the removal of the posts may mark the conversion of the building for the purpose of Christian worship. See Brian Hope-Taylor, *Yeavering: An Anglo-British Centre of Early Northumbria* (London: HMSO, 1977), pp. 244-66, 277-80; and David Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 45-8.

⁴⁷ *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, II 59, takes the references in *HE* to Anglo-Saxon idols as straightforward evidence for the existence of these things, though Plummer notes the contrast with Tacitus's remark in the *Germania*, chapter 9, that the continental Germanic tribes did not make images of their gods.

⁴⁸ Book 2, chapter 10: see *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Historia Francorum*, ed. by W. Arndt, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, SS rer. Merov., 1 (Hanover, 1885), pp. 77-9. A modern English translation is Lewis Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), pp. 125-7. The Biblical passages in question are Exodus 20.3-5, Deuteronomy 6.13, Exodus 32.4, Psalms 105.30, 95.5, 134.15, 134.18, 96.7, Habakkuk 2.18-20, Jeremiah 10.11, Isaiah 45.18, 42.8, Jeremiah 14.22, and Isaiah 44.6-20.

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⁴⁹ See *HE*, p. xxx.

⁵⁰ Literary evidence from later sources does not, generally speaking, contribute to a clearer idea of what an Anglo-Saxon pagan god was like or what an Anglo-Saxon idol might have looked like. In Anglo-Saxon sermons and laws of the late tenth century or later we find repeated condemnations of worship of (or at) certain natural features, namely stones, trees and wells, sometimes accompanied by, or combined with, prohibitions against idol-veneration. A few earlier examples of the same sort presumably indicate continuity of pagan observance from pre-Christian times. For references, see *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, II 59-60; K. P. Wentersdorf, 'The Situation of the Narrator in the Old English *Wife's Lament*', *Speculum*, 56 (1981), 492-516 (p. 505). Such prohibitions in later texts are open to interpretation as responses to a late Anglo-Saxon revival of paganism resulting either from the direct influence of pagan Viking settlers in England or from a willingness to try anything, even an appeal to pagan deities long discarded, to ward off Viking attacks.

⁵¹ On the Biblical presentation of pagan idolatry, see Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*, p. 39: 'In their polemics the prophets taunt the idol worshipers with the idiocy of worshiping wood and stone; the image is not a sign or symbol of god, the prophets flatly state, it is god. This view of the function of the image as a fetish was clearly influenced by the biblical polemics that attempted to portray the idolaters as identifying their god with wood and stone.' For the alternative view that this identification of idol and god resulted from a genuine misunderstanding of paganism, see Halbertal and Margalit, p. 259, n. 6, referring to Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel: From its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. by Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 7-20, 133-47.

⁵² *HE* 1.26: 'rex perhibetur, ut nullum tamen cogeret ad Christianismum' (it is related that the king [. . .] compelled no one to accept Christianity). Wallace-Hadrill doubted the accuracy of Bede's information on this point: 'Certainly it was unusual that Germanic kings should exercise no compulsion to conversion [. . .] the passage sounds more in conformity with Bede's own thinking [. . .] than with what may actually have occurred' (*Commentary*, p. 37); but the fact that Bede reports Æthelberht's attitude as something he has heard about rather than as established fact may suggest scholarly caution just as well as a surreptitious introduction of the author's own ideas into the narrative.

⁵³ *HE* 1.26: 'Didicerat [. . .] seruitium Christi uoluntarium, non coacticium esse debere'.

⁵⁴ The chronology of the letters to Augustine and Æthelberht seems confused in Bede. I rely here on the reconstruction by R. A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. by Cuming, pp. 29-38.

⁵⁵ *HE* 1.29, 31.

⁵⁶ *HE* 1.32.

⁵⁷ *HE* 1.32: 'idolorum cultus insequere; fanorum aedificia euerte' (suppress the worship of idols; overthrow their buildings and shrines).

⁵⁸ HE 1.30.

⁵⁹ See *Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. by Plummer, II 58: 'Gregory might well urge on Ethelbert the desirability of destruction, and on Augustine the need for caution and compromise'; and C. Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 14 (1980), 59-94 (p. 61, n. 12): 'Gregory loved emphasizing the necessity of combining two apparently contradictory approaches [. . .] I see the Mellitus letter as an example of promoting Christianity by "coaxing", whereas in the letter to Aethelberht the emphasis goes on "correcting"'. The references to coaxing and correcting are from the letter to Æthelberht (HE 1.32).

⁶⁰ On the extent to which Anglo-Saxon Christianity was syncretistic, see James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁶¹ Archaeological excavations at Yeavinger have produced evidence that Gregory's suggestions in the letter to Mellitus were actually followed there under King Edwin. The D2 building also provides evidence consistent with the relapse into paganism after Edwin's death recorded by Bede (HE 3.1); see Hope-Taylor, *Yeavinger*, pp. 277-81.

⁶² HE 3.30: 'coeperunt fana, quae derelicta erant, restaurare, et adorare simulacra, quasi per haec possent a mortalitate defendi'.

⁶³ HE 3.8.

⁶⁴ See Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 721, for the use of similar tactics by Willibrord in Frisia.

⁶⁵ On the pagan conception of the relationship between god and idol or other representation, see Halbertal and Margalit, *Idolatry*, p. 40: 'Not mere transparent signs, icons have independent power; they heal and perform miracles and therefore are addressed and worshiped. Their unique power is due not to the identity between God and the material makeup of the icon, but to the special relationship between the two. The relationship is only partly based on the similarity between the symbol and the thing symbolized. The icon also shares some of the features of the thing it represents. This special relationship is described in a variety of forms. The idol is one of the manifestations of the god—sometimes his place of residence (like the soul in the body) and sometimes a direct concentration of his powers. Moreover, in certain ritual contexts there are special causal connections between the god and its icons. By means of these causal connections an act performed on the icon becomes an act upon the god itself.'

⁶⁶ See *Die Germania des Tacitus*, ed. by Rudolf Much, rev. by Herbert Jankuhn and Wolfgang Lange (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1967), p. 171 (chapter 9). In chapter 40 of the *Germania* (p. 441), the goddess Nerthus is said to be returned to a temple ('templum') by her priest after her periodic tours of the tribes who venerated her (see E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 236); but in the context the word 'templum' need not be taken to imply an actual building.

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⁶⁷ See Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North*, pp. 247-50.

⁶⁸ *Flateyjarbók*, ed. by C. R. Unger, 3 vols. (Oslo: Mallings, 1860-8), I 338/19-26: 'Freyr ræis þa ór uagnninum ok takazst þeir fangbrögðum ok uerdr Gunnarr miog afluani. hann serr þa at honum mun æigi sua buit duga. hugsar hann þa med ser ef hann getr yfirkomit þenna fianda ok verdr honum audit at koma aftr til Noregs at hann skal huerfa aftr til rettra(r truar) ok sættazst við Olaf konung ef hann uill uit honum taka. ok þegar eftir þessa hugsan tekr Freyr at hrata firir honum ok þui næst fellr hann. hleypr þa ór likneskinu sa feande sem þar hafde leynzst ok uar þa skrokkrinn æinn tomr eftir'. [Freyr then rose from the wagon and they wrestled and Gunnarr was very nearly overpowered. He then realized that there was nothing he could do in these circumstances. Then he thought to himself that if he managed to overcome this devil and it was granted to him to get back to Norway, he would return to the true faith and become reconciled with King Óláfr if he was prepared to receive him. And immediately after he had this thought, Freyr started to stagger under pressure from him, and next he fell. Then the demon leapt out from the image where it had been hidden, and nothing but the shell remained].

⁶⁹ *HE* 2.13.

⁷⁰ Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 333, regards Coifi's status as a high priest as an invention of Bede's because there are no pagan priests mentioned elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon sources, apart from the Sussex magician who tries to work his power on Wilfrid in the Latin *Vita*. However, East Saxon pagan priests are also mentioned in *HE* 2.6: when Mellitus is recalled from Gaul to London by Eadbald of Kent, the people of London reject him, 'preferring to serve idolatrous high priests' (*idolatriis magis pontificibus seruire gaudentes*).

⁷¹ *HE* 2.13: 'Si autem dii aliquid ualerent'.

⁷² *HE* 2.13: 'Vnde suggero, rex, ut templa et altaria, quae sine fructu utilitatis sacrauiimus, ocuis anathemati et igni contradamus' [therefore I advise your Majesty that we should promptly abandon and commit to the flames the temples and the altars which we have held sacred without reaping any benefit].

⁷³ *HE* 2.13: 'quis aras et fana idolorum cum septis quibus erant circumdata primus profanare deberet'.

⁷⁴ *HE* 2.13: 'Non enim licuerat pontificem sacrorum uel arma ferre uel praeter in equa equitare'.

⁷⁵ *HE* 2.13: 'Quod aspiciens uulgus aestimabat eum insanire' [the common people who saw him thought he was mad].

⁷⁶ *HE* 2.13: 'Nec distulit ille [. . .] profanare illud, iniecta in eo lancea quam tenebat'.

⁷⁷ *HE* 2.13: 'iussit sociis destruere ac succedere fanum cum omnibus septis suis'.

⁷⁸ See William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), p. 63: 'The

dominance of King Edwin at the seventh-century council which determined his kingdom's religious future and the advisory role of Coifi, on the contrary, suggest a priesthood subordinate to the monarch.' Coifi's role is more instrumental than Chaney's 'advisory' might suggest.

⁷⁹ Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, pp. 158-62; see *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*, ed. by P. Godman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 17. Godman places the poem's composition between 781/2 and 792/3 (p. xlvii). Another important difference of content is that whereas in Bede's version Coifi devises his own ritual for defiling the shrines, in Alcuin's version Edwin tells Coifi what he must do (see Godman, note to lines 168ff, p. 19). These modifications serve to draw attention to the relative importance of Coifi's role in Bede's version.

⁸⁰ The fact that no reference is made to the burning of the idols in particular is probably not significant.

⁸¹ See Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, pp. 116-17, and 128. The concept of bridge-burning derives from Virginia H. Hine, 'Bridge Burners; Commitment and Participation in a Religious Movement', *Sociological Analysis*, 31 (1970), 61-6, among whose examples is the ritual burning of Voodoo objects when Haitians convert to Pentecostalism (p. 65).

⁸² *HE* 3.1. See also Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, p. 17: 'missionaries in early medieval Europe often denigrated the indigenous gods, myths, and cultic practices of the Germanic peoples, sometimes characterizing them as satanic. Such an approach may result in the secret continued adherence by an indigenous population to their pre-Christian religiosity'.

⁸³ On these connections between Bede's account of Edwin's conversion, Tacitus's *Germania* and Old Icelandic saga literature, see North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, pp. 330-1.

⁸⁴ The chief source of the Old Norse myths alluded to here and below is the *Prose Edda* of the Icelandic Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241); see Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Prologue and 'Gylfaginning'*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 21 and 23-4, and for a modern English translation, *Snorri Sturluson: Edda*, trans. by Anthony Faulkes (London: Dent, 1987), pp. 21 and 23-4.

⁸⁵ See C. Scott Littleton, 'Introduction, Part I', in Georges Dumézil, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*, ed. by Einar Haugen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. ix-xviii.

⁸⁶ *Die Germania des Tacitus*, ed. by Much, p. 441.

⁸⁷ See Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North*, pp. 167-8.

⁸⁸ For *Hrafnkels saga*, see *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða*, ed. by Jón Jóhannesson (Reykjavík, 1950), 100-5; and for *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar*, see *Flateyjarbok*, ed. by Unger, I 400-1.

⁸⁹ See *Flateyjarbok*, ed. by Unger, I 401/25-30: 'En er hann kom a land þa sa hans menn stóðhross nokkur við ueginn er þeir sögdu at Freyr ætti. konungr stæig a bak hestinum ok let

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taka rossin ok ridu þeir nu fram til hofsins. konungr stæig af hestinum ok gek inn j hofit ok hio nidr godin af stöllum. sidan tok hann Frey undir hond ser ok bar hann vt til hestz en byrgde sidan hofit' (And when he came to land his men saw some stud-horses by the wayside which they said Freyr owned. The king mounted the stallion and had the mares caught and they then rode on to the temple. The king alighted from the stallion, entered the temple, and struck down the gods from the pedestals. Then he took Freyr under his arm, carried him out to the stallion, and then closed up the temple).

⁹⁰ Evidence for Woden as the god of Coifi's cult is assembled in Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, pp. 50-4. Davidson regards the identification as 'likely'. Henry Mayr-Harting (*The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 26) accepts it without qualification ('The action of the pagan priest Coifi in flinging his spear into the temple [. . .] is a small but highly significant pointer to the cult of Woden and the knowledge of his mythology at that time'). J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (*Commentary*, p. 72) questions whether Bede would have seen the connection between Coifi's gesture and Woden. Davidson regards Coifi's burning of the shrines and idols as part of the total pattern of ritualistic behaviour, Óðinn having a particular association with cremation in Norse sources.

⁹¹ A brief allusion to a myth of Woden occurs in the Old English *Nine Herbs Charm* (*Metrical Charm* 2) 31-3: Woden destroys a serpent by striking it with inscribed twigs: 'ða genam Woden VIII wuldortanas, sloh ða þa næddran, þæt heo on VIII tofleah' [then Woden took nine glory-twigs and struck the snake, so that it flew into nine pieces]; see *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by E. V. K. Dobbie, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, 6 (New York, 1946), p. 120. The 'glory-twigs' are understood by most scholars to refer to runically inscribed twigs used for magical purposes. The association of Óðinn with runic expertise and magic is well established in Old Norse sources; see Rudolf Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, trans. by Angela Hall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), pp. 268-9, s.v. *Runes*.

⁹² See *Edda: Prologue and 'Gylfaginning'*, ed. by Faulkes, p. 50 (trans. in Faulkes, *Snorri Sturluson, Edda*, p. 54); and *Snorri Sturluson, Edda: Skáldskaparmál*, 2 vols., ed. by Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998), I 42 (trans. in Faulkes, *Snorri Sturluson, Edda*, pp. 96-7).

⁹³ See Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, p. 124, s.v. *Gungnir*.

⁹⁴ *Völuspá*, str. 24, 1-4: 'Flegði Óðinn / oc í fólc um scaut, / þat var enn fólcvg / fyrst í heimi' (Óðinn cast his spear, hurled it into the host; this was still the war first in the world). *Völuspá* is cited from *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. by G. Neckel, rev. by Hans Kuhn (Heidelberg: Winter, 1962), p. 6. The translation is Turville-Petre's (*Myth and Religion of the North*, p. 158). This myth presumably underlies the ritual, to which reference is sometimes made in the sagas, whereby the warriors of an opposing army

were dedicated to Óðinn by throwing a spear over them; see Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, p. 53.

⁹⁵ See Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, p. 50: 'It seems likely that Coifi the priest was the servant of the God of Battle, since his method of destroying and repudiating the temple of the gods was to hurl a spear at it and then to commit it to the flames.'

⁹⁶ We should also remember that in the Norse myth the outcome of the war between the Æsir and the Vanir was a truce resulting in the cohabitation of the two divine tribes—a development which would imply, in the context of conversion, a syncretistic combination of pagan and Christian religious elements. Paulinus would certainly have disapproved of these implications if he had known of them.

⁹⁷ Cf. Richard Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: from Paganism to Christianity* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), p. 123, who describes Coifi as 'the classic case of the poacher turned gamekeeper'.

⁹⁸ *HE* 2.13.

⁹⁹ Cf. North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, pp. 330-40, who sees a very different set of historical realities underlying Bede's account of Edwin's conversion. Coifi is a shadow, Bede's invention (though see note 70 above). The name *Coifi* is derived (via *i*-umlaut) from Latin *cofia*, 'hood', and is a nickname conferred by the Northumbrians on Paulinus after they had seen him wearing a hood. It was thus Paulinus who attacked the Goodmanham shrines and burnt them; but both Edwin and his subjects have, by this point, already been confused by this same hood into identifying Paulinus with the god Woden. In support of this hypothesis, North cites the epithet 'Long-hood' (*Síðhötr*), used of Óðinn in str. 48 of the Norse Eddic poem *Grimnismál*. See also the reviews of North's book by T. A. Shippey, *Modern Language Review*, 95 (2000), 170-1, and J. Gerritsen, *English Studies*, 81 (2000), 143-4.

¹⁰⁰ See Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 39 (1953), 287-348. One of Bishop Daniel's suggestions to the English missionary Boniface is that he should show pagans (by arguments based on their beliefs about procreation among their gods and goddesses) that their supposed deities must really have been men and women.

¹⁰¹ For a recent review of the evidence, see Paul Cavill, 'Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. by Paul Cavill (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), pp. 15-39. *Beowulf* is cited here from *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by Fr. Klaeber, 3rd edn (Boston: Heath, 1950).

¹⁰² *Beowulf*, ll. 1202-14, 2354-66, 2501-8, 2912-19; and see pp. xxxix, 268.

¹⁰³ The question of the date of a poem which draws, as *Beowulf* almost certainly does, on oral traditions deriving from the settlement period, and may have gone through many redactions in either oral or written form (or both), is a difficult one to formulate in any very

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useful or precise way. With only a single manuscript at our disposal, there seems to be no way of judging at what stage the poem assumed the general form it now has. Attempts to date *Beowulf* have too often ignored this theoretical difficulty; see *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Colin Chase (London: University of Toronto Press, 1981; repr. 1997). The arguments of H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), pp. 41-56 (chap. IV, 'The origins and history of the heroic poems') for a relatively early date (late seventh or eighth century) remain compelling.

¹⁰⁴ The terms for God employed in the poem are, in descending order of preference, 'God' [God], 'Dryhten' [Lord], 'Metod' [Ordainer], 'W(e)aldend' [Ruler], 'Alw(e)alda' [All-powerful one], and 'Fæder' [Father], in addition to about a dozen other words each used once or twice. There is no significant difference between the terms preferred by the narrator and those favoured by his characters. For a list of terms and line-references, see F. C. Robinson, *'Beowulf' and the Appositive Style* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), p. 94, n. 48. Robinson's list is complete and correct except in the following respects: ll. 227 and 625 'Gode', actually attributed respectively to the Geats and Wealhþeow by the poet (not by Beowulf or Hroðgar) via indirect speech, are both listed twice, each of them both correctly and incorrectly; l. 1397 'Gode' and l. 1398 'Drihtne' (attributed by the poet to Hroðgar via indirect speech), and l. 2741 'Waldend' (used by Beowulf) are omitted from the list; and l. 2330 'Dryhtne' is misidentified as in an indirect speech attributed by the poet to Hroðgar (it is in fact attributed to Beowulf).

¹⁰⁵ *Beowulf*, ll. 227, 625, 1397, 1626.

¹⁰⁶ *Beowulf*, ll. 107, 1261.

¹⁰⁷ *Beowulf*, ll. 168-9, 705-7, 1056-7.

¹⁰⁸ *Beowulf*, ll. 786, 1682: 'Godes andsaca(n)' [God's enemy].

¹⁰⁹ *Beowulf*, l. 811: 'he [wæs] fag wið God' [he was in a feud with God].

¹¹⁰ For example *Beowulf*, ll. 381-4, 928-31, 944-6, 955-6, 1778.

¹¹¹ For example *Beowulf*, ll. 440-1, 685-7, 967-8, 1658-64.

¹¹² See J. R. R. Tolkien, 'Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 22 (1936), 245-95, repr. in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 51-103, Appendix (c), 'Lines 175-88'. Tolkien thought that lines 181-88 'have a ring and measure unlike their context, and indeed unlike that of the poem as a whole'; but cf. K. Sisam, *The Structure of Beowulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 73, n. 1: 'I see nothing in this passage (175 ff.) to establish the view that any part of it has been added to a text essentially the same as that which has come down to us'.

¹¹³ Cf. Tolkien, 'Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics'; C. Donahue, 'Beowulf, Ireland and the Natural Good', *Traditio*, 7 (1949-51), 263-77, at p. 275, n. 70; and 'Beowulf and Christian Tradition: a Reconsideration from a Celtic Stance', *Traditio*, 21 (1965), 55-116, at p. 76.

¹¹⁴ Robinson, 'Beowulf' and the Appositive Style, pp. 29-59.

¹¹⁵ See Edward B. Irving Jr., 'Christian and Pagan Elements', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1996), pp. 175-92 (pp. 187-88), for a critical response to Robinson's theory.

¹¹⁶ See Sisam, *The Structure of Beowulf*, p. 72.

¹¹⁷ Donahue, 'Beowulf and Christian Tradition', pp. 60-71.

¹¹⁸ Rom. 1.19-23.

¹¹⁹ *Beowulf*, ll. 700-2.

¹²⁰ *Beowulf*, ll. 1057-8.

¹²¹ *Beowulf*, ll. 2858-9.

¹²² This article has benefited from criticisms of an earlier version by Dr R. W. McTurk, Dr Felicity Rash and Mr R. M. Orton, and from comments on a later version by the *LSE* editors and two anonymous readers, though of course the author is alone responsible for the views it contains, and for any remaining errors.

The Armour-Bearer in Abbo's *Passio sancti Eadmundi* and Anglo-Saxon England

Paul Cavill

There has been a good deal of interest expressed over recent decades in the historicity or otherwise of the martyrdom of Edmund of East Anglia. The early literary sources of the legend are from the end of the tenth century, Abbo of Fleury's *Passio sancti Eadmundi* of c. 987,¹ and Ælfric's abbreviated version of this in his Old English *Lives of Saints* sometime later but before the end of the century.² The story of the martyrdom tells how a Viking army led by Ingvar demand Edmund's submission and tribute; Edmund refuses, is captured by the Vikings, beaten, tied to a tree and shot at, then finally beheaded. In the dedicatory epistle which precedes the *Passio* proper, Abbo claims he had been told the story by Archbishop Dunstan who had heard it as a young man at the court of King Æthelstan from the lips of a very old armour-bearer of Edmund who had actually been present and seen it all happen.

Dorothy Whitelock reviewed the sources and concluded that the account of the martyrdom of St Edmund was not entirely implausible.³ She argued on the one hand that neither the Anglo-Saxon chronicler nor Asser, both closer in time to the death of Edmund, were 'interested or well-informed about East Anglia';⁴ and on the other that '[i]t is possible for two memories [that is, of the armour-bearer and Dunstan] to cover some 116 years',⁵ Abbo's sources were impeccable, and this kind of behaviour by Vikings was paralleled in other sources, such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle account of the martyrdom of St Ælfheah. Whitelock's overall conclusion was followed and somewhat developed by Susan Ridyard,⁶ who saw the armour-bearer of Abbo's account as a more reliable source than any others available. Ian McDougall examined the Scandinavian parallels for the atrocities committed by Ingvar's men and agreed with Whitelock;⁷ and Thomas Head similarly saw both Ælfheah and Edmund as historical and distinctively English martyrs.⁸ On the other side of the debate, Antonia Gransden has argued that

Abbo '[a]lmost certainly [. . .] knew virtually nothing about St Edmund's death and early cult', and probably borrowed the distinctive motifs from hagiographical sources known to him.⁹ And I have argued that on closer examination, Scandinavian parallels for the shooting of arrows or similar missiles at a living victim are lacking, and that the story follows the conventional style of well-known Roman martyrdoms, especially that of St Sebastian.¹⁰

I would now like to return to one particular aspect of Whitelock's view of the reliability of Abbo's sources. She writes: 'Abbo could not drastically have altered what he claimed to have heard from Dunstan, to whom he sent this work. He could not have invented the armour-bearer. Nor is it likely that Dunstan should indulge in motiveless and flamboyant lying.'¹¹ This is an over-literal response to hagiography, a genre which the cynic might characterise as perhaps not motiveless, but certainly flamboyant, lying.¹² But the question I would like to ask here is, 'If he could not be invented, what in Anglo-Saxon England was an "armour-bearer", or "sword-bearer"?' The whole story of Edmund's martyrdom, despite the emphasis put on Dunstan's role as informant, depends on the eyewitness account of this man.

Abbo's account of the transmission of the story in the dedicatory epistle to the *Passio* runs as follows:

Audierant enim quod eam pluribus ignotam, a nemine scriptam, tua sanctitas ex antiquitatis memoria collectam historialiter me praesente retulisset domno Rofensis aecclesiae episcopo et abbati monasterii quod dicitur Mealmesbyri ac aliis circum assistentibus, sicut tuus mos est, fratribus quos pabulo diuini uerbi Latina et patria lingua pascere non desinis. Quibus fatebaris, oculos suffusus lacrimis, quod eam iunior didicisses a quodam sene decrepito, qui eam simpliciter et plena fide referebat gloriosissimo regi Anglorum Aethelstano, iureiurando asserens quod eadem die fuisset armiger beati uiri qua pro Christo martyr occubuit.

Cuius assertioni quia in tantum fidem accommodasti ut promptuario memoriae uerba ex integro reconderes quae postmodum iunioribus mellito ore eructares, coeperunt fratres instantius meae pusillitati incumbere ut eorum feruenti desiderio satisfacerem ac pro uirium facultate

tantorum operum seriem perire non sinerem. (*Pref.*, 12–28)
[They [*sc.* the monks of Ramsey] had heard, indeed, that the story of this Passion, which is unknown to most people, and has been committed to writing by none, had been related by your Holiness, as collected from ancient tradition, in my presence, to the Lord Bishop of Rochester, and to the Abbot of the monastery which is called Malmesbury, and to other brethren then assembled in accordance with your practice, whom you cease not to nourish with the food of God's word, alike in the Latin and in the mother tongue. To them you averred, while the tears ran from your eyes, that you had in your youth learned the history from a broken-down veteran, who in relating it, simply and in good faith, to the most glorious English king, Athelstan, declared on his oath that, on the very day on which the martyr laid down his life for Christ's sake, he had been armour-bearer to the saintly hero. In view of the great reliance which you placed on the old man's assertions, and which led you to store up his words in their entirety in the receptacle of your memory, to be uttered at a later date with honeyed accents to a younger generation, the brethren insisted strongly, notwithstanding my diffidence, that I would satisfy their earnest desire, and to the best of my ability preserve from utter oblivion so important a series of events.] (*Corolla*, pp. 7–9)

Ælfric abbreviates this account as follows:

þa wurdon hi æt spræce oþþæt Dunstan rehte be sancte Eadmunde, swa swa Eadmundes swurdbora hit rehte Æpelstane cynincege þa þa Dunstan iung man wæs, and se swurdbora wæs forealdod man. (4–7)

[Then they [*sc.* Abbo and the archbishop] spoke together until Dunstan recounted the story of St Edmund just as Edmund's sword-bearer had related it to King Æthelstan when Dunstan was a young man and the sword-bearer was a very old man.]

The two terms used for the informant in these accounts are Latin *armiger* and Old English *swurdbora*, and these terms are now to be investigated. It is worth noting, however, that those quoted above are the only uses of the terms in the *Passio* and Ælfric's *Life*; they do not occur again in these sources.

Swurdbora

In order to find an Anglo-Saxon context for the 'armour-bearer', it may be simplest to start with Ælfric. Ælfric translates Abbo's *armiger* as *swurdbora* 'sword-bearer'. The word *swurdbora* and its variants are used fairly often in Old English, some eleven times excluding Ælfric's version of Abbo.¹³ It appears in glosses to translate *spatarius* (twice),¹⁴ *gladiator*,¹⁵ and *pugil*,¹⁶ words meaning 'sword-fighter', 'fighter'. In the 'Alfredian' translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* and in Ælfric's version of the story from Gregory, it is used five times of a man, Riggo, in the bodyguard of King Totila, the Gothic king who ruled Italy 541–52, and translates *spatharius*.¹⁷ The story of how Totila schemed to test the powers of St Benedict is recorded in both principal manuscripts of the *Dialogues*, and again by Ælfric:

Ða wolde se wælhreowa fandian hwæðer benedictus
witegunge gast hæfde. and asende his swurdboran RIGGO
gehaten. gescrydne mid his cynelicum gyrelum. mid his
ðegnum to ðam mynstre. swilce he hit sylf wære;¹⁸

[Then the bloodthirsty king wanted to test whether Benedict
had a discerning spirit, and sent his sword-bearer, called
Riggo, dressed in his royal garments, with his attendants, to
the monastery as if he were the king himself.]

Of course, Benedict sees through the deception. Later in the Alfredian text it is used of an unnamed man in Totila's retinue, another *spatharius*, who is exorcised by the red-faced Bishop Cassius.¹⁹ And finally the word is also used of a Bulgarian *spatharius* of Narses, king of Italy in succession to Totila.²⁰ Clearly this range of usage is specific: *swurdbora* in Old English was used to refer to a sword-fighter and bodyguard or attendant for kings, and the extant texts indicate that the term denotes a special office. But the usage is also rather sharply restricted: *swurdbora* is found only as a

translation of a Latin word. Apart from in Ælfric's version of the St Edmund story, there is no native Anglo-Saxon *swurdbora* in extant Old English texts. There is, moreover, no other example than Ælfric's of the translation *armiger* = *swurdbora* in Old English.

Armiger

It is difficult to pin down precisely how familiar the *armiger* would have been as a role in Anglo-Saxon England. Ælfric uses *armiger* among the illustrations in his *Grammar* and translates it as *wæpnbora* 'bearer of weapons', a pattern which is also found in three separate glosses,²¹ alongside two other Anglo-Saxon notes in Latin, *Armiger armi portator* and *Colonom armiger*.²² The Old English word *wæpnbora* also glosses *pugil* (twice)²³ and *belliger*.²⁴ The focus in these glosses, either in the lemma or the gloss itself, is on the idea, explicit in the surface meaning of the words, of carrying arms. In Ælfric's *Grammar* the idea of 'bearing' something is a thread to the list, expressed in the second element of the Old English compound in each case: '*lucifer* leohtberend; *signifer* tacnberend; *frugifer* wæstmbære; *belliger* wigbora; *clauiger* cægborā; <*corniger*> hornbære; *armiger* wæpnbora; <*graniger*> cornbære'.²⁵ Similarly, one of the Corpus notes, *armi portator* 'bearer of weapons', suggests that the role involves the carrying of weapons. Once again, though, the Old English usage of *wæpnbora* is sharply restricted: it is found only as a translation of Latin words.

Perhaps the most important source for both Abbo and Ælfric, however, for the *armiger* would have been the Bible. Latin *armiger* is the word used of the armour-bearer in the Old Testament some twenty-three times.²⁶ The biblical context for the armour-bearer is that in most of the Old Testament stories, he is a young man chosen for his martial promise, who accompanies an important leader and serves him. It is twice noted that Jonathan, son of King Saul, has an *armiger* who is a young man: '*dixit autem Ionathan ad adulescentem armigerum suum*' [And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armour] (I Samuel 14. 6, and see also 14. 1). And David, fresh from the fields, is made Saul's *armiger*: '*et venit David ad Saul et stetit coram eo at ille dilexit eum nimis et factus est eius armiger*' [And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him exceedingly, and made him his armourbearer] (I Samuel 16. 21). The biblical *armiger* differs, in

being young, from the experienced swordsmen, the *spatarius*, *gladiator* and *pugil* found in Latin texts translated into Old English. Bede in his commentary on I Samuel 14. 1 interprets the *armiger* as representing those 'discipulos oboedienter arma non carnalia sed Deo potentia gestantes quorum renouatur sicut aquilae iuuentus' [disciples willingly bearing weapons not of the flesh but by the power of God, whose youth is renewed as the eagle's], thus clearly reflecting the characteristic of youth and the military role of the armour-bearer.²⁷

A clustering of references to an *armiger* is to be found in the story of Saul's death in I Samuel 31, and told a second time, almost verbatim, in I Chronicles 10. Saul is fighting the Philistines, and losing the battle. He asks his *armiger* to run him through with his sword so that the Philistines do not abuse and torture him. The armour-bearer is too frightened, so Saul falls on his own sword. In due course, the Philistines cut off his head and hang up the body as a trophy until it is rescued by survivors of Saul's army. The similarities between this and Abbo's *Passio* are obvious, if not necessarily very significant. As biblical scholars, though, both Abbo and Ælfric might well have been pleased with the patterning of these ideas of an *armiger*, a beheading, faithful people caring for dead leaders and much more. The heinousness of the crime of decapitating 'the Lord's anointed' is made much of in the *Passio*, and the contemporary theology of royal anointing also derives largely from the biblical stories of Saul and his successor David.²⁸ Old Testament stories were widely understood to foreshadow events of the era of God's grace, the days of the saints.

Abbo, Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon England

Taken together, the evidence above strongly suggests that the role of *armiger* or *swurdbora* was not native to Anglo-Saxon England. While we cannot be sure we know all, or even most, of the roles that Anglo-Saxon society envisaged for people, there are many places where we would expect to find reference to 'sword-bearers' or 'armour-bearers' if they existed in English society or formed any part of Anglo-Saxon military institutions: in the laws, or the Chronicle, or charters, or the *Institutes of Polity*, or heroic verse, or the *Maxims* or other catalogue poems. Particularly telling is the fact that in his *Historia ecclesiastica* Bede uses none of the Latin words mentioned in this connection above, namely

armiger, *spat(h)arius*, *gladiator* or *pugil*,²⁹ when as we have seen he is evidently familiar with the role of *armiger* in his biblical commentaries.

The Anglo-Saxons were much concerned with status and roles. Anglo-Saxon kings generally carried their own arms and fought their own battles: Ælfric had to explain why Æthelred was too important to turn out on the battlefield, using the Old Testament example of David.³⁰ The status attaching to owning and using swords is too common a theme in Old English texts to need illustration. The only example of *sweordberend*, in the Old English *Genesis*, indicates that bearing a sword was what was typical of noblemen. When Cain built a city,

þæt wæs under wolcnum weallfæstenna
ærest ealra þara þe æðelingas,
sweordberende, settan hetton. (1058–60)³¹
[That was the first of all walled fortifications under the
clouds that princes, bearers of swords, ordered to be
established.]

King Alfred's laws make clear that anyone loaning a sword to another for the purpose of murder will have to bear legal responsibility and pay part of the compensation. But in the same section of the laws, we have mention of the man responsible for the appearance and quality of swords, the *sweordhwita* [sword-polisher]:

Gif sweordhwita oðres monnes wæpn to feormunge onfo, oððe
smið monnes andweorc, hie hit gesund begen agifan, swa hit
hwæðer hiora ær onfenge, buton hiora hwæðer ær þingode, þæt
he hit angylde healdan ne ðorfte. (Ælfred 19, 3)³²

Whitelock translates this as:

If a sword-polisher receives another man's weapon to polish it,
or a smith a man's tool, they both are to give it back unstained
[without it having been used to commit a crime], just as either
of them had received it; unless either of them had stipulated
that he need not be liable to compensation for it.³³

Both Liebermann and Whitelock apparently rely on the earlier stipulation about the owner of the sword sharing responsibility for any crime committed with it, as well as the Quadripartitus version of the law, for their interpretation of *gesund* = *quietus* = 'unstained [without it having been used to commit a crime]'. But *gesund* normally means 'complete, sound', and the law might be trying to ensure that craftsmen were not made liable for failing to repair irretrievably damaged weapons which might be destroyed in the attempt at repair. This is broadly the view adopted by Attenborough, who translates, '[. . .] the article shall be returned in as good condition as that in which it has been received, unless it has been stipulated that there shall be no liability on the part of the said furbisher for damage done to it'.³⁴ This accords rather better with the emphasis on the trade of the *sweordhwita*, and the ostensible purpose of the transfer of the weapon, *to feormunge* [for polishing]; but it takes away some of the heroic gloss that Whitelock and Liebermann attribute to the *sweordhwita*. The value of such a man's personal service to his lord, and incidentally the value of swords, is recognised in a will.³⁵ Possessing, being arrayed with, and disposing of rich arms was an aspect of power; but having a special officer to carry them into battle on behalf of their owners is not something that appears in Old English texts.

When translating Abbo's *armiger*, Ælfric could have chosen from dozens of Old English words for warrior, or young man, or servant, and almost as many for retainers with high rank or important roles.³⁶ Instead he used the word *swurdbora*, which only occurs elsewhere as a translation for other Latin words. *Swurdbora* itself would have been understood by his audience; but in his *Grammar*, as has been seen, he chose the gloss *wæpnbora* for *armiger*, in line with glosses found elsewhere. Neither *swurdbora* nor *wæpnbora*, from their distribution, would appear to have related to contemporary and familiar Anglo-Saxon roles; but *swurdbora* might have had the more resonance, as it had been used before to denote the particular functions of sword-fighter and personal bodyguard to historical continental Germanic kings.

Abbo was not much concerned about the *armiger*: Dunstan had heard the story of Edmund 'a quodam sene decrepito', in Hervey's translation 'from a broken-down veteran'. But this phrase could be slightly more idiomatically translated 'from some decrepit old man'. Ælfric might well have wondered what such a man might be doing in the presence of King Æthelstan and his bishops. By contrast with Abbo, Ælfric tells us 'se swurdbora wæs forealdod

man' (the sword-bearer was a very old man), raising his status from an undistinguished and superannuated man who was a royal servant once, to an ancient sword-bearer, and simply contrasting his age with that of Dunstan who was 'iung man' [a young man] at the time. This suggests that Ælfric was concerned about the status of the eyewitness, and using the word *swurdbora* was a way of placing an old man more securely in the royal circle since the sword-bearers of literature and history were important royal retainers. But they were not otherwise familiar, and by resolving the difficulty in this way, Ælfric detached the story of Edmund from the ordinary everyday world of his generation, and located it in a different world where things were done differently, where kings had sword-fighter bodyguards rather than retainers.³⁷

In a context other than his *Passio sancti Eadmundi*, Abbo uses *armiger* as a synonym for *spatharius*.³⁸ It is impossible to say whether the roles had merged in the Carolingian period or whether this was simply a linguistic convenience for Abbo, but in his theorising about ideal kingship and the military responsibilities it entailed, Abbo seems to be drawing on contemporary conditions in which the king might employ an *armiger*.³⁹ The *armiger* was a role that Abbo might conceivably have been familiar with as a Frank, either as an historical reality or a contemporary one. In the *Passio*, however, the biblical model of the *armiger* as a specifically young man would be particularly useful to him. It would help Abbo to solve the mathematical problem of a survivor from Edmund's reign lasting into Æthelstan's and then telling stories. As Whitelock outlines it,

Æthelstan came to the throne in 924, and was crowned on 4 September 925; Dunstan was born about 909, and was commended to Æthelstan soon after his coronation. This was some 55 years after Edmund's death, but, if the armour-bearer were young at the time (and men took up arm[s] early), he need not have been more than in his seventies. Dunstan would be about 76 when Abbo heard him recount the story.⁴⁰

The youth of the biblical type of armour-bearer might also go some way towards explaining why Edmund's armour-bearer did not do the honourable thing and defend or avenge his lord, and did not apparently suffer any serious repercussions for his dereliction of duty. Edmund's armour-bearer was not a

man like Riggo, who could pretend to be a powerful and bloodthirsty king; indeed, he was not even named by Abbo and had no role beyond observing and telling the story. But of course Abbo did not need to explain or confront this sort of practical, social or historical issue because he was writing hagiography: he could and did avoid the man having any responsibility by the simple expedient of keeping him concealed 'diuina prouidentia' [by God's providence] (11, 23; *Corolla*, p. 39).

From the analysis above, I suggest that Ælfric presents the source of the legend of Edmund as a literary character rather than as someone an Anglo-Saxon audience might have known from their own society or even from their national history. Abbo could have been drawing on his own knowledge of Frankish military organisation for the armour-bearer, but it is more likely that the biblical and hagiographical sources for the idea were of greater significance, since the man does nothing but observe. It is not going too far to suggest that, for both writers, the armour-bearer was a literary expedient, a topos, a way of giving the story some credibility.⁴¹

Conclusion

There is, then, no clear evidence beyond that of Abbo that a role which would be termed *armiger* in Latin or *swurdbora* in Old English was known in Anglo-Saxon military society. The Old English words used to translate *armiger*, namely *swurdbora* and *wæpnbora*, are only used to translate Latin words in the extant record. The Old English words would be transparent in their general meaning to an Anglo-Saxon audience, but it would not be quite so clear to them, perhaps, what such roles might have meant in practice.

It does not necessarily follow that because the office of *swurdbora* is otherwise unattested in Anglo-Saxon society, there was no such person to witness Edmund's martyrdom. Abbo might simply have been using his own familiar terminology for less familiar Anglo-Saxon roles. But if, as has been suggested, the substance of the *Passio* is a tissue of borrowings from hagiography and the bible, then the *armiger* would be in familiar literary company. The particular type of *armiger* that Abbo may have had in mind when he was writing the *Passio* was the literary biblical type, a young man. Abbo does not make the association that Ælfric makes, by means of his translation *swurdbora*, with an experienced leader and historical character

like Riggo; but he too is a literary type in Anglo-Saxon England. The suspicion that Abbo was writing literary fiction is somewhat strengthened by the parallels between the biblical story of Saul and Abbo's own story of Edmund. Abbo makes no direct reference to these parallels, but they plausibly show the kind of associations the idea of the armour-bearer had for him.

In short, there are a good many reasons to doubt the existence of the eyewitness to Edmund's martyrdom. The mathematics of age is not the problem. Rather it is the literariness of the main features of the story, and the difficulty we find in locating basic persons, practices and even words in historical Anglo-Saxon society, whether these derive from the Latin story of Abbo or the Old English version of Ælfric. At any rate, it cannot be asserted with confidence that Abbo 'could not have invented the armour-bearer': it is in fact perfectly possible that he did invent him, by analogy with continental military practice, historical or contemporary, or more likely by analogy with the Bible. Abbo was writing hagiography, not history, and the convenience of having a reliable witness for the story, with some reason to be present, could have outweighed (and in my view, did outweigh) any necessity for social or historical precision.

NOTES

¹ The various texts relating to St Edmund are gathered by Lord Francis Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi: The Garland of Saint Edmund King and Martyr* (London: Murray, 1907). The *Passio sancti Eadmundi regis et martyris* by Abbo of Fleury is edited by Michael Winterbottom, *Three Lives of English Saints* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, 1972). Further references are to the Latin from Winterbottom by chapter and line, and the translation from Hervey by page number.

² *Ælfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 2 vols, EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94 and 114 (London: Oxford University Press, 1881–1900; repr. 1966), II 314–35. References are to line-numbers of this edition; translations of Old English and Latin are my own unless otherwise attributed.

³ Dorothy Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St. Edmund', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 31 (1967–9), 217–33, repr. in Whitelock, *From Bede to Alfred: Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Literature and History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1980).

⁴ 'Fact and Fiction', p. 218.

⁵ 'Fact and Fiction', p. 219.

⁶ Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁷ Ian McDougall, 'Serious Entertainments: An Examination of a Peculiar Type of Scandinavian Atrocity', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 22 (1993), 201–26.

⁸ Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 243.

⁹ Several important studies have recently come from the pen of Antonia Gransden: 'The Legends and Traditions Concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *English Historical Review*, 394 (1985), 1–24 and 'Abbo of Fleury's "Passio Sancti Eadmundi"', *Revue Bénédictine*, 105 (1995), 20–78, are the ones most pertinent to the matter of this article. The quotation is from 'Legends and Traditions', pp. 7–8.

¹⁰ Paul Cavill, 'Analogy and Genre in the Legend of St Edmund', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 47 (2003), 21–45.

¹¹ 'Fact and Fiction', p. 221.

¹² See my article (n. 10 above), where I discuss the rationale for pious fiction of this type.

¹³ *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form*, ed. by Angus

Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Sharon Butler, Antonette diPaolo Healey (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English, 1981). For the items not discussed in detail, I use the abbreviated reference of the Corpus.

¹⁴ Gl B1.9.2: *spatarius*, *swurdbora*; AntGl 4 (Kindschi) D1.4: *Spatarius*, *swyrdbora*.

¹⁵ ProgGl 1 (Först) C16.1: 'Gladiatorem se factum uiderit, dampnum fedum significat' (*swurdboran hine gewordene gesihð hearm fullic getacnaþ*).

¹⁶ ClGl 3 (Quinn) D8.3: *Pugiles*, *sweordboran*.

¹⁷ 2 (C) B9.5.4: *swurdboran*, *sweordbora*; GD 2 (H) B9.5.10.2: *swurdbora*, *swurdboran*; for the Ælfric reference, see next note. The Latin text of Gregory's *Dialogorum libri quatuor* is edited by J.-P. Migne, *PL* 66 and 77 (Paris: Garnier, 1896).

¹⁸ Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies: The Second Series Text*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS s.s. 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), at p. 99, ll. 237–40.

¹⁹ GDPref and 3 (C) B9.5.5: *swurdboran*.

²⁰ GDPref and 4 (C) B9.5.6: *swurdbora*.

²¹ ÆGl B1.9.2: *armiger*, *wæpnbora*; PrudGl 4 (Meritt) C94.4: *armigeris*, *wæpnbærum*; AntGl 4 (Kindschi) D1.4: *Armiger*, *wæpenbora*.

²² CorpGl 2 (Hessels) D4.2.

²³ AldV 1 (Goossens) C31.1: 'pugiles s. nos gladium portantes gladiatores' (we *wæpenboren & cempan*); AldV 13.1 (Nap) C31.13.1: *pugiles*, † *gladiators*, *wæpenboren*, *cempan*.

²⁴ HIGl (Oliphant) D16.1: *Belliger .i. miles bellator*, *wæpenbora*.

²⁵ Ælfrics *Grammatik und Glossar*, ed. by Julius Zupitza (Berlin: Weidmann, 1880), p. 27.

²⁶ All biblical quotations are from *Biblia sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. by Robertus Weber, 4th edn, rev. by B. Fischer et al. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), and the translation is from *The Holy Bible: Douay Version* (London, n.d.).

²⁷ *In primam partem Samvhelis libri IIII*, ed. by D. Hurst, *Corpus Christianorum series latina* 119 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962), p. 113.

²⁸ For example, 'caput sanctum, quod non impingauerat peccatoris oleum sed certi misterii sacramentum' [the sacred head, which had been anointed not with the oil of sinners, but with the sacramental chrism of mystery] (cap. 11, 14–15, *Corolla*, p. 37). See further Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury: A Study of the Ideas about Society and Law of the Tenth-Century Monastic Reform Movement* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987), pp. 150–4.

²⁹ See Putnam Fennell Jones, *A Concordance to the 'Historia Ecclesiastica' of Bede* (Cambridge, Mass: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1929).

³⁰ See *Wyrdwriteras us secgað* in *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*,

ed. by John C. Pope, 2 vols, EETS o.s. 259 and 260 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–8), at II 725–33.

³¹ Text from *Genesis* in *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931).

³² *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by F. Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle, 1898–1903), I 60.

³³ *English Historical Documents I: c.500–1042*, ed. and trans. by Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd edn (London: Eyre Methuen, 1979), pp. 376–7.

³⁴ *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. by F. L. Attenborough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 75.

³⁵ The will of Ætheling Æthelstan: 'ic geann Ælfnōðe minon sweordhwitan þæs sceardan malswurdes' [I grant to Ælfnōth my sword-polisher the notched(?) inlaid sword], in *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. and trans. by Dorothy Whitelock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 60. Ætheling Æthelstan disposes of several swords in his will, including one formerly belonging to King Offa, and one made by Wulfric which he gives to St Peter's. This indicates that it is the value of the swords that is important here rather than the use to which they might be put, though of course if the sword granted to Ælfnōth was 'notched' or damaged, he would be in a fair position to repair it. In other words, the sword-polisher was a useful servant who merited appropriate reward.

³⁶ See *A Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. by Jane Roberts, Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, 2 vols (London: Kings College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1995), under items 12.01.01.06.08: 'A person of rank, elder, great man'; 12.01.01.07: 'A follower', 12.01.01.08.01: 'A servant, attendant'; 12.04.01: 'A fellow, companion, associate, comrade'; 13.02.10.01: 'A man, warrior'; 13.02.10.01.01: 'A commander, officer'; 13.02.10.01.02: 'An armed man' (among others). The range of vocabulary is extensive.

³⁷ In my article 'Analogy and Genre', pp. 27–34, I have shown that this archaising or use of what can only be called a vocabulary of 'translationese' in Ælfric's *Life* of St Edmund is deliberate and extends to the methods and instruments used for the whole 'package' of torture.

³⁸ M. Mostert, *King Edmund of East Anglia († 869): Chapters in Historical Criticism* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 1983), p. 98, notes the use of *armiger* in Abbo's *Epitome de XCI romanorum pontificum vitis*, ed. by J.-P. Migne, *PL* 139 (Paris: Garnier, 1880), cap. 76, col. 558B. The context makes it clear that the *armiger* is a *spatharius*: 'mandaverat suo spathario [. . .] Nam prædictus armiger'. In his *Political Theology*, p. 183, n. 29, Mostert cites another example of *spatharius* in the same source, cap. 90, col. 570A, but I cannot find this: col. 570 is cap. 91, so there is perhaps some mistake.

³⁹ Mostert, *King Edmund*, p. 98: 'The king has to defend his country with weapons against foreign foes; if necessary he is to die for his country, under no circumstances should he fly or desert his own army. His army, which seems to include a personal bodyguard and knows several specialist functions, has to be paid. Desertion is a case of *lèse majesté*.'

⁴⁰ 'Fact and Fiction', p. 221.

⁴¹ The hagiographical convention of 'the authority of the reliable eyewitness' is concisely outlined by McDougall, p. 204.

The Old English *Apollonius* and Wulfstan of York

Carla Morini

The *Historia Apollonii regis Tyrii* (henceforth *HA*), a romance of travel, exile and love, has been handed down to us in various Latin and vernacular redactions.¹ There are basically two hypotheses as to its origin. According to the first of these the work was initially composed in Greek during the third century AD and then translated into Latin at the end of the fifth century;² according to the second hypothesis the text was compiled in Latin at that same time, before being reworked from a Christian perspective at some point between the fifth or the sixth centuries.³ The rich Latin textual tradition of this romance, which has been collected and studied by A. Riese and A. A. G. Kortekaas,⁴ dates from the ninth century and can be classified in three recensions known as *RA*, *RB* and *RC*.⁵ This romance was not only considered worthy of preservation in Latin but also of being translated into different vernaculars from the tenth to the seventeenth centuries.⁶

The Old English translation of the *HA*, the first vernacular version of the text, has recently been the subject of renewed interest.⁷ It is my intention in this article to investigate two related questions: why was a fragmentary copy of the Old English translation (henceforth *OEHA*) preserved in a codex containing Wulfstan's laws and homilies (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201B)? Who made the translation, and for what purpose? In addressing these questions I will analyse the translation with respect to its source, and investigate the evidence for its authorship, in relation to Wulfstan himself or to his entourage. Both the substance and style of the translation seem closely related to Wulfstan's writings and ideology.

The OEHA and its manuscript

Nothing is known about the arrival of the first Latin copy of the *HA* in Anglo-Saxon England. No Anglo-Latin manuscript of the *HA* has survived and the Latin tradition of the romance that did survive in England, part of the so-called redaction *C*, is more recent in origin than the Old English translation.⁸ It has been suggested that probably the earliest copy of the Latin text of the *HA* was brought to Anglo-Saxon England, together with many other Latin texts, by Benedict Biscop, founder of the monasteries of Wearmouth (674) and Jarrow (681).⁹ But it should also be borne in mind that Bishop Cynewald of Worcester (929-57) used to import books from various continental monasteries (Jumièges, Hornbach, St Gall, Constance), as did his successor Oswald.¹⁰ Moreover Wulfstan of York (†1023) brought from York to Worcester many Latin texts by several authors and encouraged the copying of many other continental writings.¹¹

It is known that a text entitled *Apollonium Anglice* was preserved in the library of the abbey at Burton on Trent; this copy is now lost.¹² Thus the only Old English text of the *HA* to reach us is that preserved in the second part of Corpus Christi College MS 201B, written by three scribes around the middle of the eleventh century.¹³ The two parts of Corpus Christi College MS 201—Ker 49 (A, pp. 1-7, 161-7 + B, pp. 8-160, 167-76) and Ker 50—both written in insular minuscule, were put together at Canterbury in the second half of the eleventh century.¹⁴ Corpus Christi College 201B is a miscellany that contains Wulfstan's homilies, laws, and ecclesiastical institutes, as well as a few texts of other genres.¹⁵ While the second part of this manuscript (Ker 50) was undoubtedly written at Exeter, the place of origin of its first part (A + B) has not been definitively established;¹⁶ in fact, it has been variously argued that it was written in York,¹⁷ Winchester,¹⁸ or Worcester.¹⁹

Corpus Christi College MS 201B does not contain the entire translation of the *HA* into Old English, but just two fragments of it, respectively corresponding to chapters 1-22 (MS, pp. 131-40) and 48-51 (MS, pp. 141-5) of the Latin romance. It may be regarded as a copy from another exemplar, firstly because of copying mistakes, such as *Apallinus* or *Apollianus* for *Apollonius*; and, secondly, because both the end of p. 145, where the *OEHA* finishes, and the following page which concludes the quaternion, contain no text. The empty space suggests that the text which follows was copied before the *OEHA*, and that its lost archetypal form was either

similarly fragmentary, or that a decision was taken to copy only some of the available *excerpta*. The *OEHA* text, copied by the same early eleventh-century hand responsible for copying most of the texts in Corpus Christi College MS 201B,²⁰ is not exempt from corruption, as can be observed by the modern editorial emendations made to the Latin.²¹ Nothing in the language or orthography of the text has helped us to establish a more precise dating for the translation than the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century.²²

Was there a particular reason why the *OEHA* was preserved in this codex, located between Wulfstan's homilies and various legal texts? It has been suggested that the manuscript contains annotations or excerpts of juridical material that were personally utilised by Archbishop Wulfstan.²³ Corpus Christi College MS 201B is not a collection of a purely juridical nature, and Mary Richards has argued that there was a reason for placing instructional texts and items addressing matters of faith between law texts dealing with similar topics: all the pieces served to provide Anglo-Saxon people with useful instructional material.²⁴ She concludes that this careful arrangement of the entire codex 'was made under Wulfstan's supervision',²⁵ and that the *OEHA* has nothing to do with this plan, having been added later by others, because the romance, 'a marvellous narrative', belonged to a genre that Wulfstan avoided.²⁶

As I have recently noted,²⁷ the fragments of *Aethelred's Laws* contained in Corpus Christi College MS 201 mention the juridical situation of the widow:

Si ælc wuduwe, þe hi silfe mid rihte healde, on Godes griðe 7
ðæs cynges. sitte ælc xii monað werleas; ceose siððan þæt heo
sylf wille (V *Atr* 21-21.1, MS pp. 48-52; VI *Atr*, MS pp. 126-
30)²⁸

[Every widow who lives properly shall be protected by the
Church and the king she shall live for one year without her
husband and then can choose who she wants.]

Moreover, *The Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical* (Corpus Christi College MS 201, pp. 40-3 and pp. 87-93) define the norms for regulating the social behaviour of laymen and religious people in marriage, as well as in bachelorhood and in widowhood:

Læwedum men is ælc wif forboden, buton hi rihtæwe (Book I, 75)

[Laymen are not permitted to have women except as their legitimate wives]

Be læwedum mannum. Riht is, þæt gehadode men þam læwedum wissian, hu hi heora æwe rihtlicost sculon healdan (Book II, 87)

[On laymen. It is proper that consecrated men lead the laymen as to the most correct way they should behave in marriage]

Ðæt bið rihtlic lif, ðæt cniht þurhwunige on cnihtade, oððæt he on rihtre mædenæwe gewifige, and hæbbe þa siððan and nænige oðre, ða hwile þe seo libbe. (Book II, 188)

[It is the proper life that a young man should maintain himself in chastity until he takes a young woman in lawful matrimony, and let him afterwards have this woman and no other while she lives.]

Gif hire þonne forðsið getimige, þonne is rihtast þæt he þanonforð wuduwa þurhwunige (Book II, 189)

[If then it happens that she dies, then it is most appropriate that he should remain thereafter a widower]

Ac ða canonbec forbeodað þa bletsunge þarto, þe to frumwifunge gesette syn (Book II, 191)

[But the books of the canons forbid the blessing on it that was granted for the first marriage]

And eac is gescrifen dædbot swilcum mannum to donne (Book II, 192)

[And also to such men is penance imposed]

Be þam man mæg witan, þæt hit eallunga riht nis, þæt wer wifige oððe wif ceorlige oftor þonne æne. (Book II, 194)

[Therefore it can be understood that it is not entirely proper that a man or a woman should marry more than once]

And þæt bið eac micel syn, þæt gehwa his rihtæwe lifigende
alæte and him on unriht oðre geceose. (Book II, 195a)

[And it is also a serious sin for a man to leave his lawfully
wedded wife while she lives and to choose another one
unlawfully]²⁹

In the first fourteen chapters of the fourth book of *The Handbook for the Confession* (Corpus Christi College MS 201, pp. 115-21), the penance imposed on the transgressor of the marriage canon, and on anyone guilty of violence towards women, is described in detail:

Gyf hwa mid his ofercræfte wif oððe mæden neadinga nymð
to unrihtthæmede hire unwilles, beo he amansumod (200-1)

[If someone commits adultery by fraud on a woman or on a
girl against her will he is to be excommunicated]

Gyf hwa wille wið wifman unrihtlice hæman, fæste XL daga
on hlafe and on wætere (246-7)

[If someone wishes to have illegitimate intercourse with a
woman, he must fast for forty days on bread and water]³⁰

The Handbook for the Confession and the canonical and political laws contained in the manuscript thus provided Anglo-Saxon England with regulations as to proper conduct in marriage and prohibitions against marital transgression, including violence, adultery and incest: all these elements are central to the plot of the Apollonius text. On the basis of this evidence, it is reasonable to argue that there could also be a relationship between some of the juridical and religious statements to be found in Corpus Christi College MS 201B and the content of the fragments of the romance, which touches on issues of rape, incest, marriage, free consent, and widowhood.

The Old English Apollonius and its Latin model

It has been suggested that the Latin model used by the Anglo-Saxon translator of the *HA* can be found either in chapter 153 of the *Gesta Romanorum*,³¹ or in a Latin exemplar preserved in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 226,³² or in another copy of the *HA* from Tegernsee, now Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 19148.³³ But the attention of scholars has mostly been drawn to Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 318 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud MS 247, both of which belong to the *C* redaction, a mixed text originating from the other two redactions. Benjamin Thorpe provided his own edition of the *OEHA* with chapter 153 of the *Gesta Romanorum*, adding that a better text was the one given by Welser and reproduced from a manuscript belonging to St Ulrich and Afra Abbey, Würzburg.³⁴ It was Julius Zupitza who first argued that the *OEHA* could have been translated from a Latin text very close to that extant in Corpus Christi College MS 318 (twelfth century),³⁵ a hypothesis affirmed by J. Raith.³⁶ Finally, the most recent edition of the *OEHA*, edited by P. Goolden (1958), contains a peculiar Latin text,³⁷ which, while also based on the Latin text preserved in Corpus Christi College MS 318, includes all the Latin variant readings convergent with the Anglo-Saxon translation, which are preserved in other manuscripts belonging to all three redactions. Goolden also includes the variant readings of a no longer extant Augsburg manuscript, of which we have one fourteenth-century transcription, and also other variants belonging to chapter 153 of the *Gesta Romanorum*. Therefore this Latin text has been described by Gneuss as 'artificial' and 'conflated'.³⁸

The Old English translation

With respect to the Latin text preserved in Corpus Christi College MS 318 and the redaction *C*, *OEHA* has some distinctive variant readings, which could be attributed to the translator himself or to the use of a different Latin exemplar. While the text translated in the *OEHA* appears to have been very close to that preserved in Corpus Christi College MS 318, it was not exactly the same. Misunderstandings in the Old English text that could be attributed to the corruption of the probable Latin model are rare,³⁹ as (according to Raith) are translation mistakes: 10,3 *ic eow cuðe* for Lat. *relevabo* that was read as *revelabo*; 12,9 *hwæs mæg ic biddan* for Lat. *quam partem petam*; 13,24 *and mid*

gelæredre handa he swang þone top for Lat. *ceroma effricuit eum tanta subtilitate*; 13,26 *on his cynesetle* for Lat. *in solio*; 14,16 *buton scrude* for Lat. *abiecto habitu*; 50,28 *heo ræhte þa soðlice hire handa him to, and het hine gesund faran* for Lat. *quem manumissum incolumem abire precepit*.⁴⁰ Moreover, the different linguistic structure of Old English made it necessary for the translator to introduce some modifications to his Latin original: 22,4 *in to ðam bure þar his dohtor inne wæs* for Lat. *ad filiam suam*; 12,7 *waelreownesse* for Lat. *haec*; 13,15 *mid his geferan* for Lat. *cum suis*; 1,11 *of slaepe awoc* for Lat. *vigilans*; 21,23 *þonne saende ic eow word* for Lat. *mittam ad vos*.

Without any further explanation, Goolden restricts himself to noting that only a few additions can be attributed to misinterpretation and, thus, to a poor translation of the Latin text; among these he mentions the *explicit* (though not the existence of an *incipit*) without giving any interpretation.⁴¹ But I would argue that the *OEHA* can hardly be defined as a pure translation. It is basically an impressive prose work which, operating at varying degrees of proximity to its model, creates a quite different atmosphere and a better text than are to be found in the source. The real novelty in this translation, which is not always a literal one, lies in the introduction or omission of particular words or clauses, and in the adaptation and highlighting of various scenes, a process which, I believe, points to the conscious creation of an exemplary text. Amplifications and omissions of words and clauses in the original Latin text are not only the result of an attempt to make a good translation, but also suggest that it was the adaptor's intention to make the Latin text more familiar to and relevant for Anglo-Saxon readers.

Rape and incest

The Old English translation begins, as does the Latin text, with the narration of the incest episode⁴² concerning King Antiochus of Antioch who seduces and rapes his daughter. But the translation introduces some modifications, amplifying some details and omitting others:⁴³

Sed dum pater deliberaret, cui potissimum filiam suam in matrimonium daret, cogente iniqua concupiscentia crudelitatemque flamme, incidit in amorem filie sue, et cepit eam aliter diligere quam quod paterem oportebat. Qui

<cum> diu luctatur cum furore pugne, cum dolore vincitur amore. Excidit illi pietas, oblitus est esse se patrem, induit coniugem. Sed dum sevi pectoris sui vulnus ferre non posset, quadam die prima luce vigilans irrupit cubiculum <filie>, famulos secedere longius iussit, quasi cum filia sua secretum colloquium habiturus, *diuque repugnanti nodum virginitatis erupit*; perfectoque scelere cupit celare secreta. (HA, ch. 1)

Da gelamp hit sarlicum gelimpe, þa ða se fæder þohte hwam he hi mihte healicost forgifan, þa gefeol his agen mod on hyre lufe mid unrihtre gewilnunge, to ðam swiðe þæt he forgeat þa fæderlican arfæstnesse and gewilnode his agenre dohtor him to gemæccan; and þa gewilnunge naht lange ne ylde, ac sume dæge on ærne mergen, þa he of slæpe awoc, he abræc into ðam bure, þar heo inne læg, and het his hyredmen ealle him aweġ gan, swilce he wið his dohtor sume digle spæce sprecan wolde. Hwæt! he ða on ðare mánfullan scilde abisgode and þa ongeanwinnendan fæmnan mid micelre strengðe earfoðlice ofercom, and þæt gefremede mán gewilnode to bedigianne. (OEHA, ch.1)

[Then it happened, through a painful mishap, that while the father was thinking to whom he might, in preference to others, give her, then his own mind fell on her with wrongful desire so greatly that he forgot paternal piety, and desired his own daughter to himself for a mate: and that desire was not long delayed; but one day, in the morning, when he awoke from sleep, he broke into the chamber wherein she lay, and bade his servants all go away from him, as if he would speak in secret with his daughter. He then engaged in that sinful crime, and by great strength and with difficulty overcame the struggling damsel and sought to hide the committed crime.]

Sed dum gutte sanguinis in pavimento cecidissent, subito nutrix introivit; et vidit puellam roseo rubore perfusam, asperso sanguine pavimento [. . .] (HA, ch. 2)

The Old English Apollonius and Wulfstan of York

Ða gewearð hit þæt þæs mædenes fostormodor in to ðam bure eode, and geseah hi ðar sittan on micelre gedrefednesse (OEHA, ch.2)

[Then it happened that the maiden's foster-mother went into the chamber, and saw her sitting there in great affliction]

Et ut semper impiis thoris filie frueretur, ad expellendos nuptiarum petitores questiones proponebat (HA, ch. 3)

and to ðam þæt he þe lengc brucan mihte his dohtor árleasan bridbeddes, and him fram adryfan þa ðe hyre girndon to rihtum gesynscipum, he asette ða rædels (OEHA, ch. 3)

[and in order that he might the longer enjoy his daughter's impious bride-bed, and drive from him those who desired her in lawful marriage, he then posed a riddle]

The additions were made in order to underline the serious impiety of the king, and above all the illegality of his crime, but there are also omissions relating to rape and violence. The reader is gradually informed about what is going to happen: initially we learn that 'gelamp hit sarlicum gelimpe' [a painful misfortune occurred], caused 'mid unrihtre gewilnunge' [by an illegal desire]; the introduction of *unriht* [illegal, improper] seems designed to offer a juridical judgment of the action. Another sentence introduced by the translator, 'Hwæt, he ða on ðare manfullan scilde abisgode', expresses the transition from intention to action, to the violence perpetrated against a non-acquiescent individual, well expressed by the Latin *repugnanti*. The phrase is introduced by the untranslatable *hwæt*, a term with native poetic associations. The adjective *manful* [sinful] is added in order to define the nature of the father's action. Finally, the use of *riht* (ch. 3) [legal, juridical], introduced as positive modifier to the Latin noun *nuptia*, underlines here the legality of the future marriage of the princess which can be contracted with one of her suitors, as opposed to the illegitimate relationship with her father, defined by the translator, as we have noted, as *unriht* (ch. 2). It is worth remarking that this adjective, in its positive and negative forms, is characteristic of Wulfstan's lexis.⁴⁴ We may note in particular how the anonymous translator emphasises that the rape had been perpetrated against the will of the victim, introducing both the adverb *earfodlice*

[with difficulty] and the complement *mid micelre strengðe* [literally 'with great strength'].

The presence of such interpolations highlights the juridical and religious purpose of this translation. It should be noted that during the Middle Ages rape and incest⁴⁵—condemned by the Christian Church and by civil law⁴⁶—were related to a breach of the injunction not to marry one's closest relatives. Germanic law, as well as that of the Christian Church, considered marriage between descendants, ascendants and siblings to be illegal.⁴⁷ But with the conversion to Christianity intermarriage was forbidden within Germanic society and therefore, in due course, to the Anglo-Saxons.⁴⁸ Bede reported an *Interrogatio Augustini* to Gregory the Great about this topic:⁴⁹

V. Interrogatio Augustini: Usque ad quotam generationem fideles debeant cum propinquis sibi coniugio copulari; et novercis et cognatis si liceat copulari coniugio.

Respondit Gregorius: Quaedam terrena lex in Romana republica permittit, ut sive frater et soror seu duorum fratrum germanorum vel duarum sororum filius et filia misceantur. Sed experimento didicimus ex tali coniugio sobolem non posse succrescere, et sacra lex prohibet cognationis turpitudinem revelare. Unde necesse est, ut iam tertia vel quarta generatio fidelium licenter sibi iungi debeat; nam secunda, quam praediximus, a se omnimodo debet abstinere.

[. . .] *Quia vero sunt multi in Anglorum gente qui, dum adhuc in infedilitate essent, huic nefando coniugio dicuntur admixti, ad fidem venientes admonendi sunt, ut se abstineant, et grave hoc esse peccatum cognoscant. Tremendum Dei iudicium timeant, ne pro carnali dilectione tormenta aeterni cruciatus incurrant* (Book I, ch. 27, V).

[Augustine's fifth question. Within what degree may the faithful marry their kindred; and is it lawful to marry a stepmother or a sister-in-law?

Gregory answered: A certain secular law in the Roman State allows that the son and the daughter of a brother and sister, or of two brothers or two sisters may be married. But we have learned from experience that the offspring of such marriages cannot thrive. Sacred law forbids a man to uncover the

nakedness of his kindred; hence it is necessary that the faithful should only marry relations three or four times removed, while those twice removed must not marry in any case, as we have said. [. . .] Now because there are many of the English race who, while they were unbelievers, are said to have contracted these unlawful marriages, when they accept the faith, they should be warned that they must abstain, because such marriages are a grave sin. Let them fear the heavy judgement of God, lest, for the gratification of their carnal desires, they incur the pains of eternal punishment.]⁵⁰

From the eighth to the eleventh or twelfth centuries the Church forbade any marriage up to the seventh generation.⁵¹ Through the introduction and the fixing of Canons of councils, which served to promote its stability and indissolubility, marriage was regulated and legitimized.⁵² It is interesting to note that in 958 Archbishop Oda separated King Eadwig and his wife Ælfgifu on the grounds of consanguinity, because they shared the same great-great grandfather King Æthelwulf:

Chronicles D, year 958

Her on þissum geare Oda arcebiscop totwæmde Eadwi cyning and Ælgyfe, for þæm þe hi wæron to gesybbe.⁵³

[In that year Archbishop Oda divorced Eadwig and Ælgyfu because they were too closely related]

The Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical laws on marriage were first introduced by Wulfstan for Æthelred and Cnut, whom he assisted in drawing up legal statements. In particular *Law VI Atr*, 11.3-12.4 and *Law I Cnut*, 7.2, 7.3 fixed (by the same text also preserved in Corpus Christi College MS 201B, p. 127) the permissible limits of consanguinity to be observed before a marriage could proceed:⁵⁴

[6.3] And æghwile Cristen man eac for his Drihtenes ege unrihtthæmed georne forbuge and godcunde lage rihtlice healde.
[7] And we lærað and we biddað and on Godes namam beodað, þæt ænig Cristen man binnon six manna sibfæce on his aenum cynne æfre ne wifige, ne on his mæges leafæ, þe swa neahsib

wære, ne on ðæs wifes nydmagan, þe he silf ær hæfde, [7.1] ne on his gefæderan, ne on gehalgodre nunnan, ne on ælætan ænig Cristen man ne wifige æfre; [7.2] ne ænig forligeru ahwar ne begange; [7.3] ne na má wifa hæbbe þonne án; ac beo be þære anre, þa hwile þe heo libbe, se þe wille Godes laga giman mid rihte and wið hellebryne beorgan his sawle.⁵⁵

[Each Christian for the fear of God also despises greatly an illegitimate embrace and adheres properly to the divine laws. 7. And we warn, ask and decree in the name of God that no Christian should marry within the sixth degree of relationship in his own family, neither with the woman left by his relative, who was of the same degree of relationship, nor with a relative of [his] former wife. 7.1. Nor should any Christian man marry his godmother, nor a holy nun, nor a separated woman, 7.2. Neither should he perform any type of immoral deed. 7.3. Nor should a man who wishes properly to preserve the law of God and to preserve his soul from the flames of hell have more than one woman, but should remain with the one as long as she lives,]

This statement on permissible degrees of consanguinity was also reproduced by Wulfstan in his homilies, in which he offered instruction to the laity of all classes. The various Anglo-Saxon penitentials testify that, since the eighth century,⁵⁶ the promulgation of moral and social laws concerning marriage and violence was driven by necessity.⁵⁷ The penitentials contain a list of severe sanctions relating to a variety of matrimonial and sexual topics, as well as to possible infringements of the permissible degrees of consanguinity in marriage. They were also directed against other sins such as adultery, divorce, and sexual violence.⁵⁸ Incest was another issue addressed:

De incestuosis. Si quis cum matre fornicaverit, xv annos poeniteat [. . .] Si cum filia vel sorore fornicaverit, similiter poeniteat. (*Penitential of St. Theodor*, Book V 13-14)⁵⁹

[On the incestuous. He who fornicated with his mother shall do penance for fifteen years [. . .] If he fornicated with his daughter or sister, let him do the same penance.]

Qui cum matre fornicaverit xv. annos peniteat. Si cum filia vel sorore xii. annos poeniteat (*Penitential of St. Egberth*, Book IV).⁶⁰

[He who fornicated with his own mother, shall do penance for fifteen years. If he fornicated with his daughter or with his sister he shall do penance for twelve years.]

In the *Sermo Lupi* (Napier 59,⁶¹ Hom U 48), considered by Whitelock and Jost to be authentic,⁶² Wulfstan also deals with the permissible degrees of kinship, reproducing exactly the same clauses from the above-cited law:

[. . .] and we lærað and biddað and on godes naman beodað, þæt ænig cristen man bynnan syx manna sibbfæce æfre ne gewifige on his agenum cynne ne on his mæges lafe, *þe swa neahsibb wære*, ne on his wifes nydmagan, þe he sylf ær ahte ne on his gefæderan ne on gehalgodre nunnan: ne on ælætan ænig cristen man ne gewifige æfre ne na ma wifa, þonne an, hæbbe, ac beo be ðære anre þa hwile, þe heo lybbe, se ðe wylle godes lage gyman mid rihte and wið hellebryne beorgan his sawle. (Napier 59, p. 308)⁶³

[and we teach, ask and decree in the name of God that no Christian man should marry his own kin within six degrees of kinship, nor the woman left by his relative, *who were so closely related*, nor a close relative of (his) former wife; nor his godmother, nor a holy (professed) nun, nor should any Christian man ever marry a separated (deserted) woman, nor have more than one wife, but who will observe the laws of God with right and preserve his soul from the flames of hell, shall remain with this one, as long as she lives.]

The same statement is extant in another homily attributed mostly to Wulfstan's authorship.⁶⁴ In this work the duties of the various classes in society are discussed. Such is the skill with which the material in this homily has been assembled that it has been argued that only Wulfstan, or someone in his entourage, could have been the author.⁶⁵ It is worth remarking that a copy of this homily is also preserved in Corpus Christi College MS 201B, at pp. 78-80.

Finally, with regard to incest, even if earlier laws of King Alfred and King Guthrum (*AGu*, a. 880-90, p. 130) made brief reference to the topic (*and*

*æt siblegelum þa witan geræddan, þæt [. . .]*⁶⁶ [and concerning incest the councillors decreed that [. . .]], only Wulfstan, in the law-codes drafted for King Cnut, set the penalty for this sin:

Gif hwa *sibleger* gewyrce, gebete þæt be sibbe mæðe, swa be were swa be wite swa be ealra æhte (*II Cnut*, 48, 5)⁶⁷

[If somebody commits incest, let him amend it according to the level of relation (with the woman), by means of wergeld or fine (in money or food) or by means of his entire possessions]

He also included it among a list of other infractions in the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*:

ac wearð þes þeodscipe, swa hit þyncan mæg, swyðe forsingod þurh mænigfealda synna and þurh fela misdæda: ðurh morðdæda [. . .] ðurh lahbrycas and ðurh æswicas, ðurh mægræsas and þurh manslihtas, ðurh hadbrycas and þurh æwbrycas, þurh *sibgelegeru* and ðurh mistlice forlegeru. (Bethurum XX, C)⁶⁸

[but this nation, so it seems, has become totally sinful through manifold sins and through many misdeeds: through deadly sins [. . .] through breaches of the law and through seditions, through attacks on kinsmen and through manslaughters, through injury done to those in holy orders and through adulteries, through *incest* and through various fornications.]

On the basis of this evidence, from both legal and homiletic writings, it seems clear that the juridical content of the fragments of *OEHA* could explain each omission and amplification with respect to the Latin source, since they are concerned with sinful love, incest and rape.

Free consent in marriage

The Latin text of the *HA* contains another theme relating to marriage: that of the free choice of the maiden. The Old English text stresses that it is the princess, rather than her father, who chooses the husband:

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'Immo gratulor, quod abundantia litterarum studiorum meorum percepta me volente cui animus tuus *desiderat* nube.' Puella ait: 'Magister, si amares, dolores. Hec dicens istante amoris audacia scripsit et signatos codicellos iuveni tradidit. Pertulit Apollonius in foro et tradidit regi. Scripti erant sic: 'Bone rex et pater optime, quoniam clementie tue *indulgentia* permittit mihi dicere: Illum volo coniugem naufragum, a fortuna deceptum. '(HA, ch. 20)

Apollonius cwæð: 'Na, ac ic blissige swiðor, ðæt þu miht ðurh ða lare, þe þu æt me underfenge, þe sylf on gewrite gecyðan hwilcne heora þu wille. Min willa is, þæt þu ðe wer geceose þar ðu silf wille.' ðæt mæðen cwæð: 'Eala lareow, gif ðu me lufodest, þu hit besorgodest.' Æfter þisum wordum heo mid modes anrædnesse awrat oðer gewrit and þæt geïnseglode and sealde Apollonio: Apollonius hit þa ut bær on ða stræte and sealde þam cyng. ðæt gewrit wæs þus gewriten: Ðu goda cyngc and min se leofesta fæder, nu þin mildheortnesse me leafa sealde þæt ic silf moste ceosan hwilcne wer ic wolde, ic secge ðe to soðan þone forlidenan man ic wille. (OEHA, ch. 20)

[Apollonius said: 'No, but I shall much more rejoice that you, through the instruction which you received from me, can yourself show in writing which of them *you will*. *My will* is *that you choose a husband* whom you desire.' The maiden said: 'Alas, master! if you did love me, you would be sorry about this.' After these words, she, with firmness of mind, wrote another letter, sealed and gave it to Apollonius. Apollonius then carried it out into the street, and gave it to the king. The letter was written thus. 'Good king and my most beloved father, now that your tenderness has given me leave *that I might choose what husband I would*, I will say truly to you that *I desire* the shipwrecked man.']

Although the whole passage follows the HA closely, the translator adds some touches of colour here. We may note the repetition of the same word, puns, assonance, and the use of words with the same root but a different meaning, in a manner that strikingly amplifies the content of the Latin text. The translated

passage reflects the statement about free consent in marriage as established in Anglo-Saxon England during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The consent of the woman was not considered of great importance in Germanic law. Her power and patrimony passed from her father to her husband.⁶⁹ However, for the Christian Church from the ninth century onwards, *consensus* was the basis of marriage as *maritalis affectio*.⁷⁰ Thus, free agreement between the couple replaced the requirement for parental consent in Anglo-Saxon England.⁷¹ The *Be wifmannes beweddunge* (970-1030), a private Anglo-Saxon matrimonial contract, testifies that free choice is confirmed for both the woman and her husband to have the *morgengifu* [the morning gift after the consummation of the marriage]. The bride as principal beneficiary could be the owner of her own patrimony (the dowry and the *morgengifu*):

Donne syððan cyþe se brydguma, hwæs he hire geunge, wið þam ðet heo his willan geceose and hwæs he hire geunge, gif heo læng sy ðonne he.⁷²

[Then her husband says what he has to give, from the moment that she has chosen him of her free will, and what he would leave her if she were to survive him.]

Wulfstan, providing the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of King Aethelred and of King Cnut with a special law concerning widows, decrees that they may choose for themselves whom they wish to marry:

and sy ælc wydewe, þe hy sylfe mid rihte gehealde, on Godes griðe and on þæs cynges and sitte ælc xii monað werleas; ceose syððan þæt heo sylfe wille. (*II Cnut*, 74, p. 360)⁷³

[and each widow, who behaves justly, shall be under the protection of God and the king and remain twelve months without a husband, then choose what she herself wishes.]

and sytte ealc wuduwe werleas .xii. monad, ceose syððan, þæt heo sylfe wylle. (*I, V Atr.* 21, 21.1, p. 242; *VI Atr* 26, 26.1, p. 254)⁷⁴

[and the widow remain twelve months without a husband, then choose what she herself wishes.]

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The following passage also occurs in a homily published by Napier as 50 with the title *Larspell* (Hom U 40), a text, in Bethurum's opinion, made up of combinations of Wulfstan's phrases:⁷⁵

*and sy ælc wydewe, þe hig sylfe mid rihte gehealde, on godes gride and on þæs cynges; and sytte ealc werleas . xii. monad; ceose syððan, þæt heo sylfe wille. (Hom U 40, 18-20)*⁷⁶
[and each widow, who behaves justly, be under God's and king's protection and remain twelve months without a husband, then choose what she herself wishes]

A statement in *King Cnut's Laws* (c. 1023) also attests to the importance of free agreement between the couple:

Na nyde man naðer ne wif ne mæden to þam þe hyre sylfre mislicie ne wið sceatte ne sylle, butan he hwæt agenes ðances gyfan wille. (*II Cnut* 73, p. 360)⁷⁷
[No woman or maiden can be forced to marry a man who displeases her, nor sold for money, unless he wants to give something of his own will.]

Thus it seems clear on the evidence of these juridical writings that by the end of the tenth century in Anglo-Saxon England the consent of both parties lay (at least in theory) at the heart of Christian marriage, and that this is in line with the emphasis given to the topic in the fragment of the *OEHA*.

The reason for translating

The motivating force behind the translation of the Old English *Apollonius* has been variously identified as an interest in the riddles included in the Latin romance;⁷⁸ the new interest in the East, as revealed by *The Wonders of the East*;⁷⁹ the presence of the theme of exile;⁸⁰ or the exemplary Christian figure of Apollonius,⁸¹ who has been seen as a model of virtue and patience, like Job or the saints.⁸²

It must be pointed out, however, that the *OEHA* does not express the complex narrative structure and content of the *HA*. Therefore it is

inappropriate to evaluate the *OEHA* using the same criteria as its model. The *OEHA* lacks riddles, tales, obstacles, vicissitudes, not to mention characters and episodes linked by the structure of a travel narrative. Thus, for example, the riddles, although fundamental to the development of the *HA*, do not constitute the essence of the *OEHA*, which contains only one such element. It also lacks any description of customs, clothes, ceremonies, buildings, or the legislation of eastern countries, thereby casting doubt on the translator's possible interest in oriental matters. Finally, it is worth considering that the motivation for translating the *HA* into Old English may relate to work's genre, which remains a subject of debate. The work has been regarded as: a) an historical romance; b) a romance of love and adventure (it has been seen as the first love story, written for entertainment four centuries before the emergence of romance as a genre);⁸³ c) an exemplary romance.

In the light of what I have argued so far, it would seem reasonable to suppose that behind the translation there lay an exemplary intent, moral and (in particular) juridical, which related to Wulfstan's 'propaganda' on the subject of incest and marriage. The driving force behind Wulfstan's career was the moral regeneration of orthodox Christian witness in Anglo-Saxon England at a time when, as is well known, the northern part of the country faced invasion and subsequent colonization by the pagan Scandinavians. Wulfstan probably intended to resist any possible revival of pagan Germanic customs by supplying Anglo-Saxon England with a set of canons, laws and homilies whose purpose was to confirm and consolidate orthodox practice. I believe that the *OEHA* fragments could have served as *excerpta* from the complete Latin work in order to offer an *exemplum* of the 'right way to view marriage', as promoted by Wulfstan's laws and homilies. The behaviour of Antiochus and his daughter constitutes, in fact, a negative example, in contrast to that of King Arcestrates and his daughter which represents proper or legal behaviour, as the lexical amplifications of the translator underline. The behaviour of King Arcestrates is exemplary, both as a father and as king.⁸⁴ Princess Arcestrate speaks of and demonstrates her own will, unlike the other princess, the unlucky daughter of Antiochus, who suffers passively, a victim who submits to her father's will. Moreover, it must be observed that the changes relating to the matter of love which were introduced by the translator (the omission of many expressions of love and emotion relating to the princess, for example *amore incensa*, *amores suos*, *amoris audacia*, *mittens in amplexu eius*), serve to underline the text's conformity to behavioural orthodoxy.⁸⁵ Moreover,

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Antiochus is referred to by name only four times in the Latin text, which prefers to use *rex* or the personal pronoun. But in the *OEHA* the name of the king occurs fourteen times, followed or preceded by the noun *cyningc* [king] (ch. 1,1; 6,1; 7,7; 7,14; 7,23; 8,23; 9,5; 10,5; 12,4; 54,21). The Anglo-Saxon translator always defines Antiochus as a bad man, using adjectives such as *arleasest* ('se arleasesta cyngc Antiochus' [the perfidious King Antiochus], ch. 3.1) and *wæltreow* ('Antiochus se wæltreowa cuninge' [Antiochus, the merciless king], ch. 4.1). Such evidence appears to confirm that the translator wished to emphasise the contrast between the evil King Antiochus, a familiar figure to learned Anglo-Saxons, and the worthy Apollonius, by adopting the same vocabulary used for Roman persecutors by Ælfric in the *Old English Lives of Saints*.

According to the juridical statements on marriage, the desire of King Arcestrates to respect the will of his daughter in the choice of her bridegroom appears to be perfectly in harmony with the ideology of marriage sanctioned by the Church and the king at the end of the tenth century. Therefore the romance could be said to promote exemplary behaviour of the kind maintained by Wulfstan in his promulgation of ecclesiastical and lay duties.

Incipit-explicit, vocabulary and style

In determining the authorship of *OEHA* one important element should be considered. The Old English text begins with an *incipit*, newly introduced by the translator:

Her onginneð seo gerecednes be Antioche þam ungesælgan
cingce and be Apollonige⁸⁶
[Here begins the story of Antiochus, the miserable king, and
of Apollonius]

Why is only King Antiochus, one of the secondary characters of the romance together with King Arcestrates and Atenagora, named in the *incipit*? I believe that one answer to this question lies in the fact that Antiochus was a familiar historical character well-known in the Anglo-Saxon world. The reference is presumably to Antiochus I, the Seleucid ruler (280-261 BC), whose name occurs in the Old English *Orosius*:

þa þa Lucius Ualerius and Flaccus Marcus wæron consulas,
þa ongon *Antiochus*, *Sira cyning*, winnan wið Romanum
(Book IV, xi, p. 108)

[When Lucius Valerius and Flaccus Marcus were consuls,
then Antiochus, King of Syria, began to fight against the
Romans]

þa *Antiochus* þæt gehierde, þa bæd he Scipian friþes (IV, ix,
p. 109)⁸⁷

[When Antiochus heard that, then he asked Scipion to make
peace]

Moreover, King Antiochus was often mentioned in Old English writings,
notably *The Old English Martyrology*, *The Psalms*, and *Ælfric's Lives of
Saints*:

Antiochus, se oferhydiga cyning, nydde hi þæt hi æten swynen
flæsc. þæt wæs Godes folce forboden on þære ealdan æ (*Das
altenglische Martyrologium*)⁸⁸

[Antiochus, the proud king, forced them to eat pig flesh. That
was forbidden to God's folk in the old law]

Machabeas hatað, þæt hy sceoldon þæt ylce seofian, on hiora
earfoðum, *under Antiochus, þam kynge*. (*Ps* 87)⁸⁹

[Maccabes were named who had to suffer the same, in their
tortures, under King Antiochus.]

An ðæra cyninga wæs heora eallra forcuðost, *arleas and
uppahafen*, *Antiochus* gehaten, se feaht on ægypta lande.
(*ÆLS* xxv, 6-8)

[One of these kings was the wickedest of them all, irreverent
and proud, named Antiochus, who fought in Egypt]

Hwæt ða *Antiochus se arleasa cynincg* behet þam anum
cnapan þe þær cucu wæs þa git mycele woruldæhta gif he
wolde him abugan (*ÆLS* xxv, 168-170).

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[Thereupon Antiochus, the impious king, promised the one boy who was still alive much worldly wealth, if he would submit to him]

Efne þa eode on heora eallra gesihðe án Iudeisc mann to þam deofolgilde, and geoffrode his lac swa swa *Antiochus* hét (*ÆLS* xxv, 221-3).

[Therewith there came in sight of them all a Jewish man to the devil-image, and offered his offering, as Antiochus commanded.))]

Þa cwæð Iudas to his geferum þæt he ða fylðe wolde adón of þam Godes temple, þe *se gramlica Antiochus* þær aræran hét on hæðene wisan (*ÆLS*, xxv, 378-380).

[Then Judas said to his comrades, that he would do away with the filth of the temple of God, which the wrathful Antiochus had ordered to be raised there, in the heathen manner.]

Betwux þysum ferde se foresæda *Antiochus* to Persiscere peode mid micclum þrymme (*ÆLS* xxv, 530-1)⁹⁰

[Meanwhile the aforesaid Antiochus went to the Persian people with a great force]

Finally, the *OEHA* also contains an *explicit*:

Her endað *ge wea ge wela* Apollonius þæs tiriscan: ræde se þe wille. And gif hi hwa ræde, ic bidde þæt he þas awændednesse ne tæle, ac þæt he hele swa hwæt swa þar on sy to tale.

[Here finishes the misfortune and the happiness of Apollonius of Tyre: *read who so wishes*, and if anyone does read it, I ask that he should not blame this translation, but correct whatever there is in it to blame.]

The content of this passage is comparable with King Alfred's *Praefatio to De consolatione Philosophiae*:

and nu bit and for Godes naman he halsað ælcne þara þe þas boc rædan lyste, þæt he for hine gebidde, and him ne wite gif he hit rihtlicor ongite þonne he mihte⁹¹.

[and now he prays and implores in the name of God everyone who wishes to read this book, to pray for him and not to blame him if he can interpret it in a more accurate way than he has been able to do.]

From the linguistic and stylistic point of view it is also comparable with *ræde, se þe will* (*Rid* 59, 15, p. 210)⁹² or *ræde þær se þe wille* (*Gen* 49,1).⁹³

The author of the translation also displays an excellent knowledge of Latin and Old English. He makes extensive use of stylistic and rhetorical devices, employing several kinds of repetition, sometimes in the same clause, and often making use of chiastic structures:

1. Repetition of a word (*epanálepsis*), used in the same case and inflection; this often occurs in assonance and in alliteration with other words:

na þæt an þæt we **willað** þinne fleam bediglian, ac eac swilce, gif þe neod gebirað, we **willað** campian for ðinre hælo, ch.9, 19-21 [*non solum fugam tuam celabunt, sed si necesse fuerit pro salute tua dimicabunt*]; and Apollonius ana becom mid sunde to Pentapoli þam ciriniscan lande and þar up eode **on ðam strande**. Þa stod he nacod **on þam strande**, ch. 12, 2-4 [*Apollonius solus tabule beneficio in Pentapolitanorum est littore pulsus, hoc est Cyrinorum. Stans in litore Apollonius nudus*].⁹⁴

2. Repetition of the same word, used in a different case and inflection; this often occurs in assonance and in alliteration with other words:

þæt gehyrde þæt he his willes **gehyran** nolde [*ut audivit quod audire nolebat*, ch. 4,9 *Rex ut audivit quod audire nolebat*]; heora þu **wille** [. . .] þone du silf **wille** [*cui animus tuus desiderat nube* [. . .]], hwilcne wer ic **wolde**, þone forlidenan man ic **wille** [*quoniam clementiae et indulgentia tue permittit mihi dicere: illum volo coniugem naufragum*], ch. 20, 17-19.

3. Repetition of the same root through the patterned repetition of words as simples or compounds (*paregmenon*; *polyptoton*), but with a different semantic and morphologic value (noun-adjective; noun-verb), as, for example:

gelamp [. . .] **gelimp** (there is no correspondence in the Latin text); **gewilnunge** [. . .] **gewilnode** [. . .] **gewilnunge** [. . .] **gewilnode**, ch.1 [*cepit eam aliter diligere quam quod paterem oportebat. Qui <cum> diu luctatur cum furore pugne, cum dolore vincitur amore. Excidit illi pietas, oblitus est esse se patrem, induit coniugem. Sed dum sevi pectoris sui vulnus ferre non posse* [. . .] *perfectoque scelere cupit celare secreta*]; on micelre **gedrefednesse** [. . .] swa **gedrefedes** modes?, ch. 2, 2-3 [*et vidit puellam roseo rubore perfusam* [. . .] *Quid tibi (sic) vultus turbatus et animus?*]⁹⁵

Although the translator could have used OE *stirung*, which has the same semantic value, he repeats *gewilnunge*; the parallelism *gewilnunge* / *gewilnungan* also occurs in Ælfric, in the *Psalms*, and the *Gospels*.⁹⁶ In ch. 16, *sweg* and *swegecræfte* occur alternatively with a double parallelism and word play on *swig* and *swigode*. We may also note that while the repetitions *willað* / *willað* / *wolde* are very common in Old English writings (*WHom* 20, *CPHead*, *CP*, *GDPref*), *lande* / *strande* is only used in Old English *Charters* (1095, 1109, 1119, 1125, 1126, 1127 etc). It is also interesting to note the frequent deployment of rhetorical devices in chapters 19-21: *awritað*, *gewrite*, *gewrita* (five times in succession), *awrat oder gewrit*, *gewrit*, *gewriten*, *awrat*, *gewrit*, *gewrit*. Although the *gewrite* / *awrat* word play is very common in Old English writings (see Ælfric's *CH* and *LS*, *GD*, Hom U 35, 54, 6, and so on), *gewerite* / *gewrita* only occurs here.

Other passages are marked by alliteration (usually used in combination with parallelism and word play, as previously noted):

þa gyrnde hyre **mænig mære man** micelre **mærða** beodende; sume digle **spæce spreca**n (ch. 1, 13); and geseah hi ðar sittan; **brucan** [. . .] his dohtor arleasan **bridbeddes** (ch. 3, 5-6); þu beþence ðone **rædels ariht** (ch. 5, 6); ac he ne mæg for scame in gan buton scrude. Ða het se cyngc hine sona gescridan (ch. 14, 16-17); Du goda cyngc and earmra gemiltsigend, and þu cwen lare lufigend (ch. 17, 18).

The translator also makes use of echoic repetition, puns, and assonance, involving similar simples or one element of compounds. In this text word play depends more on similarities in the sound (pun-like assonance) or semantic aspects of the words than on the introduction of obscure forms and meanings. If we consider ch. 12, 1-4. 'Apollonius ana becom mid *sunde* to Pentapoli þam ciriniscan lande and þar up eode on dam strande', it is worth remarking that *mid sunde* [by swimming] is a free translation of the Latin *tabule beneficio* in order to create a play on words. Thus, forms are deployed for rhetorical colour by the translator by virtue of their terminal assonance and alliteration, half-rhymes, or punning element.

The translator's lexis is carefully chosen and, with some exceptions, very appropriate. Although for the most part he uses words which occur frequently in liturgical writings (notably from *Psalms*, *Old English Ecclesiastical History*, *Benedictine Rule*, Ælfric's and Wulfstan's *Homilies* and Wulfstan's law-codes), he also adopts words rarely used in Anglo-Saxon texts:

ancæanned (Hy and Ps); *acuman* 'sustain' (Gen and Num); 1 *aerod(d)ian* (Ps and GD); 2 *bæðstede*, *begirdan*, *sirwan* (PS); *bereafigend*, *bridgifta* AldGl; *bocist* (bocyst) *armarium* Aug Ench; *dunlandum* (LCh and Deut and Æl); *moddren* 1 ArPrGl1; *forlidennes*, *hyredmenn* (Æ); *flima*, *giftelic* (ClGL1); *horu* (El and Hy); *rose*, *plega* (Æ and GL); *elcung* (Æ and BR); *dirstig* (Ch); *tacenbora* 'guide', *hearpenægel*, *bæðstede* (GL and Hy); *top*, *rudu* (GL and WN); *plega* (GL and ÆGr); *longeawinnan* (LSc); *fostermodor* GD); *fremdfulnen*, *sidfeaxe* (BR); *fæderlich* (Hy; *ungecnawe* (Lk); *waforlic* (GlNap and Ps); *halierne* (AldGl and Ex); *herapian* (Beow and HomS); *suðwesterne* (Ch).

In the Latin model, where two subordinate words express a single idea, in the OEHA simple coordination is favoured:

2,6 ait / *andwirde and cwæð*; 4,3 locuples valde./ *Swiðe welig and snotor*; 4,7 quasi pius pater: *swa swa to godum fæder and arfæstum*; 6,17 vestemque copiosam/ *an mid mænifealdum and genihtsumum reafum*; 6,21 queritur: *wæs gesoht and geacsod*; 6,22 meror ingens/ *micel morcning and ormæte wop*; 6,25 tonsores cessarent/ *eodon ealle unscorene and sid-feaxe*; 7,6 in luctu/ *on swa micclum heafe and wope*;

11,13 ut illi lateret/ þæt he mihte þar bediglad beon and þar wunian;
16,27 silencio facto/ Ða wearð stilnes and swige geworden; 49,21
apollonius non credens. Ða niste na apollonius ne ne gelifde; 53,5
quieta vita vixit/ he leofode on stilnesse and on blisse.⁹⁷

The translator omits words and short phrases as well as introducing forms new to the Latin original.⁹⁸ It is worth remarking that he introduces only a few *hapax legomena*:⁹⁹

- brid-beddes* [bridal bed] for Lat. *thoris* (ch. 3,6)
- asmeagung* [examination, consideration] for Lat. *questiones solutiones* (ch. 3,13)
- irlic* [angry] for Lat. *iratus* (ch. 4,10; 5,3)
- eastnorðerne* (*windas*) [north-east (winds)] for Lat. *ventis* [. . .],
hinc boreas (ch.11,11)
- snelneasse* [agility] for Lat. *velocitas* (ch. 13,19)
- æfestful* [full of envy] for Lat. *invidet* (ch. 14,28)
- **misþyncan* [to have mistaken ideas] for Lat. *male suspicere*
(ch. 14,29)
- swegcræfte* [musician's art] for Lat. *ars musicae* (ch. 16,14;
16,16; 16,20)
- gecneordnesse* [study, diligence] for Lat. *hesterna studia*
(ch.18,6)
- **hearpestreng* [harp-string] for Lat. *cordis lyrae* (ch. 16,28)
- **lærlingmæden* [female pupil] for Lat. *discipula* (ch.19,19)
- **ofstænan* [to stone] for Lat. *lapidare* (ch. 50,24).

Some of them occur in echoic pairs: *asmeagunge* [. . .] *behealdunge*; *irlicum* [. . .] *cynelicum*; *æfestful* [. . .] *æfestigað*, *sweg* [. . .] *swegcræfte* *swigode* *swegcræfte* *swigende* *swegcræft*; *hearpestreng* [. . .] *hearpenægl* [. . .] *hearpan*; *ofstænan* [. . .] *ofslean*. The translator also introduces *hwæt* twenty-one times and *eala* six times, both of which terms represent a distinctive homiletic usage.

Although there is no definite evidence for the origin of the manuscript, there are some stylistic features of the text of the Old English *Apollonius* which, in my opinion, can be compared with Wulfstan's style or Wulfianisms.¹⁰⁰ It is well known that the 'most impressive of the devices of

Wulfstan's style are alliteration, rhyme, the large number of intensifying adjectives and adverbs, a distinctive lexis, parallelism of words and clauses, exclamation and rhetorical quotations'.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the effectiveness of his homilies derives particularly from the word play and pun-like assonances featured. Similar elements are discernible in the *OEHA*:

1. The introduction of terms such as *riht*, *ariht*, *unriht*, *mid rihte* in a way that confirm's the translator's familiarity with the law-codes and language of Wulfstan; the introduction of the adjectives *riht* and *unriht* (once), the nouns *ariht* / *areht* (four times), and *mid rihte* (twice). The absence from the *OEHA* of other distinctive marks of the lexis, such as other intensifying adjectives and adverbs, may perhaps be accounted for in terms of the generic difference between this work and the laws and homilies.¹⁰²
2. The use of intensifying adjectives and adverbs like *swiðe* (nine times) and *soðlice* (24 times). However, there is no occurrence of *eorne* or *geornlice*, so often used by Wulfstan.
3. The use of sophisticated rhetorical devices:
 - a) duplication of clauses, which are often arranged in pairs, sometimes linked by alliteration or rhyme.
 - b) patterned repetition of words and similar rhyming sounds,¹⁰³ a figurative technique used by Wulfstan probably under the influence of similar constructions in Latin rather than in Old English.¹⁰⁴ This device in Wulfstan's writings also involves *hapax legomena*.¹⁰⁵
 - c) conscious and effective use of word play, sometimes involving forms with the same root but with different meanings. Thus:

Ful earhlice laga and scandlice nydgild þurh Godes irre us
sind gemæne, understande se þe cunne and *fela ungelumpa*
gelumpð þisse þeode oft and gelome. (*Sermo Lupi ad*
Anglos)¹⁰⁶

Ða *gelamp* hit sarlicum *gelimpe*, þa ða se fæder þohte hwam
he hi mihte healicost forgifan (*OEHA*, ch.1)

4. The construction of very short clauses, linked by *and*.

It should also be noted that some sentences in the *OEHA* appear to be very similar to passages in Wulfstan's writings (*Polity*, Law codes and homilies).

Lexical elements and rhetorical devices used by Wulfstan and effectively deployed by the translator of the *OEHA*, do occur in earlier Old English writings. But although parallelism, repetition and alliteration are to be found in homilies (see, for example, *the Vercelli Homily X*)¹⁰⁷ and other Old English writings a quarter of a century before Wulfstan and the *OEHA*, they are not comparable with the artful and sophisticated instances to be found in the romance's fragments. Moreover, although word play occurs in some *Riddles*, in legal writings (laws, wills and charters) and in the homilies, it is very rare and involves no more than two or three terms. The repetitive use of *hwæt* (21 times) and *eala* (six times), so typical of the language of homilies, shows that whoever translated the text was familiar with them.

As is well known, Wulfstan himself had many imitators. Thus, the same phrase is extant in anonymous homilies published by Napier and not considered genuine by Bethurum:¹⁰⁸

<i>and þæt gewrit</i>	<i>þæt he awrat</i>	<i>þis gewrit næs æt</i>	Æfter þisum wordum
<i>ne awrat nan</i>	<i>gewrit and þis</i>	<i>fruman awriten.</i>	heo mid modes
<i>eorðlic man</i>	<i>gewrit he</i>	<i>(Hom U 5) titled</i>	anrædnesse awrat oðer
(Napier 57,	<i>awrat; and þa</i>	<i>Be þam</i>	gewrit and þæt
<i>Hom U 57,</i>	<i>wæs þæt</i>	<i>drihtenlican</i>	geinseglode and sealde
<i>Sermo ad</i>	<i>gewrit þus</i>	<i>sunnandæg</i>	Apollonio: Apollonius
<i>populum</i>	<i>gewriten</i>	<i>folces lar</i>) ¹¹¹	hit þa ut bær on ða
<i>Dominicis</i>	(Napier XLIV,		stræte and sealde þam
<i>diebus</i>) ¹⁰⁹	<i>Hom U 44,</i>		cyng. Ðæt gewrit
	<i>sspell</i>) ¹¹⁰		wæs þus gewriten
			(ch. 20).

Conclusions

On the basis of the evidence set out above, the following conclusions may be drawn from the present analysis. By retelling the story of Apollonius in Old English the translator, or (better) the adaptor, created a different atmosphere, which would make sense to an Anglo-Saxon audience. He created a juridical emphasis, through the use of omission and amplification of words and phrases in his Latin source. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon fragments of the *HA* give expression to a clear juridical position in line with that of the Church, emphasizing the ideology of marriage and the canon of free consent. The text could thus have provided the translator, or whoever authorized the translation (perhaps Wulfstan), with a positive model of morally appropriate behaviour for husbands, wives and fathers-in-law, and a negative model of the unlawful behaviour of an incestuous father.

Accordingly, the transcription into Corpus Christi College MS 201B of the Anglo-Saxon translation of the *HA*, or rather of its fragments, covering such issues as incest, marriage and widowhood, could have been motivated by the wish to offer an illustration of a life lived in accordance with the laws preserved in the same manuscript. The presence in the manuscript of only two fragments corresponding to Cnut's law codes (completed about 1023-6) suggests that it was compiled before those dates but after 1018. In my view the presence of a copy of the *OEHA* in Corpus Christi College MS 201B seems to be neither random nor arbitrary, but reflects a plan that can be associated with Wulfstan himself. Wulfstan, the acknowledged planner of the manuscript, made use of two forms of communication for disseminating his beliefs: firstly, homilies delivered from the pulpit, that allowed all Christians to access directly the truths of the faith and, secondly, the written record of the law. On the evidence of the similarities of content and expression between the *OEHA* and Wulfstan's laws and homilies, the presence of a text of the *OEHA* in a codex whose structure was so carefully planned by Wulfstan himself is certainly consistent with his programme.

Finally, it seems reasonable to argue that whoever undertook the work was a well-read monk, one of *þa ðe þæt leden cuðon* [those who know Latin],¹¹² and who were familiar not only with Wulfstan's works, but also with other Old English texts. Moreover, he was capable of reproducing Wulfstan's distinctive style and adapting the content of his translation to the archbishop's statements. Although his elaborate and polished style recalls an earlier native

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stylistic tradition, he was able to develop it to a new level of sophistication. We may therefore consider two possibilities: the first, that the author was a monk belonging to Wulfstan's circle, to whom Wulfstan assigned the task of translation, and who imitated the archbishop's style; the second, that the translator was Wulfstan himself.

NOTES

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¹ The Latin redactions were collected for the first time by A. Riese, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, Bibliotheca Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893, repr. 1973); see more recently A. A. G. Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1984).

² This hypothesis is based on the presence in the *HA* of references to certain places and events contained in the *Ephesiaca* of Senofonte or in Euripides' Alcmaeon. See E. Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), p. 32; A. A. G. Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, pp. 109-113, and A.H. Krappe, 'Euripides' Alcmaeon and the Apollonius Romance', *Classical Quarterly*, 18 (1924), 57-8.

³ See E. Klebs, *Die Erzählung von 'Apollonius aus Tyrus'. Eine geschichtliche Untersuchung über ihre lateinische Urform und ihre späteren Bearbeitungen* (Berlin: Reimer, 1899), p. 216.

⁴ See note 2 above.

⁵ On this dating see M. Manitius, 'Handschriften antiker Autoren in mittelalterlichen Bibliothekskatalogen', *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 67 (1935), 324-5 and Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, pp. 419-31. For a detailed and recent study on the textual relationships existing among the three extant redactions see Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, pp. 59-96.

⁶ On its entire tradition of vernacular translation read the very useful work by Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. 182-216; 'Apollonius of Tyre in Vernacular Literature: Romance oder Exemplum?', *GCN*, 3 (1990), 123-37; 'Fathers and Kings in Apollonius of Tyre', in *Images of Authority: Papers Presented to Joyce Reynolds on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by M. M. Mackenzie and C. Rouche, *Cambridge Philological Society, Supplementary volume* 16, (1989), pp. 24-40; 'Apollonius of Tyre in the Middle Ages and Renaissance', in *Latin Fiction: the Latin Novel in Context*, ed. by H. Hofmann (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 229-37.

⁷ J. McGowan, 'Royal Titles in the Old English "Apollonius": Two Emendations', *Studia Neophilologica*, 61 (1989), 3-6; 'The Old English *Apollonius of Tyre* and the Latin Recensions', *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Conference*, 1989 (for 1987-88), 179-95; 'Apolloniana', *Archiv (ASNSL)*, 227 (1990), 130-8; *Id.*, 'The Old English

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Apollonius of Tyre 19', *Explicator*, 49 (1991), 74-5; R. A. Riedinger, 'The Englishing of Arcestrate: Women in *Apollonius of Tyre*', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by H. D'Amico and A. Hennessy Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 292-306; H. Ogawa, 'Stylistic Feature of Old English *Apollonius of Tyre*', *Poetica*, 34 (1991), 57-74; R. I. Page, 'The Title of the Old English "*Apollonius of Tyre*"', *ANQ*, 4 (1991), 171-2; C. Morini, 'La versione anglosassone del romanzo di Apollonio nel contesto del suo manoscritto', *AION*, sez. germ., n.s. 10 (2000), 13-26; 'Aspetti giuridici nella versione anglosassone della *Historia Apollonii*', in *Vettori e percorsi tematici nel mediterraneo romanzo*, ed. by F. Beggiano and S. Marinetti (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2002), pp. 199-216; D. Townsend, 'The naked Truth of the King's Affection in the Old English *Apollonius of Tyre*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 34 (2004), 173-95.

⁸ The Latin tradition of the romance in England is represented by Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 318, pp. 477-509, *Vita Apollonii Tyrii*, twelfth century; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 451, fol. 88a-105b, *Historia Apollonii*, thirteenth century; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Laud 247, fol. 204a-23a, *Liber Apollonii*, thirteenth century; Bodleian Library, MSS Rawlinson D 893 (105), chs 15-16, fol. 195 (106), ch. 31, fourteenth century; Bodleian Library, MSS Rawlinson C 5010, fol. 260b (31b), fol. 270b (41b), fourteenth century. The first scholar to discover the existence of this version was Riese, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, pp. 125-73; see also Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, pp. 20-22; J. Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke* (Munich: Huber, 1956), pp. 85-91. There are other exemplars belonging to the RC tradition: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS Lat. 8503, fols. 1r-7v: *Ystoria Apollonii regis Tyrii et synodis et regis Anthiochi* (thirteenth-century); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. Lat. 718, fols. 206r-222r: *Narratio vitae sive actuum Apollonii syri* (twelfth-century); Vatican City, BAV, MS Reg. Lat. 1984, fols. 167r-84r: *Historia Tyrii Apollonii* (early twelfth-century); Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 60, fols. 211r-222r: *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*, a. 1471; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Lat. 266, fols. 107r-26v: *Historia Apollonii* (twelfth-century); Vienne, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Lat. 3129, fols. 41r-60v: *Historia Apollonii* (fifteenth-century).

⁹ For more details on this hypothesis see Kortekaas, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, p. 29. 'Benedict Biscop was making journeys to Rome regularly and as soon as the monastery was founded he brought back books from Rome and probably from Gaul in large quantities': *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. xxv.

¹⁰ On Cynewald and Oswald and their importation of manuscripts from the Continent see *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by D. Bethurum, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957, repr. 1971), p. 60.

¹¹ Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 62, quoted the following authors: Gregory, Augustine, Alcuin, Adso, Jesse of Amiens, Theodulf of Orleans, Amalarius of Metz, Rabanus Maurus, Abbo of St. Germain, Isidore, Caesarius of Arles, Atto of Vercelli, Eligius of Noyon, Pirmin of Reichenau, Ælfric of Eynsham and Bede. On Wulfstan, his life and his works, see H. Sauer, 'Wulfstan von Worcester und York', *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 9 (1998), 347-8; Whitelock, 'Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 24 (1942), 25-45; Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, pp. 69-81. Unfortunately no catalogue remains of the library of Worcester before the Conquest. On the previous manuscripts belonging to this library see K. Keller, *Die literarischen Bestrebungen von Worcester in angelsächsischer Zeit* (Strassburg: Trübner, 1900); C. H. Turner, *Early Worcester Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916); N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1962; repr. 1964), pp. 205-15.

¹² This title is recorded in a catalogue of the Abbey's library, see British Library, Additional MS 23944, fol. 157, at no. 75.

¹³ See for more details N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957, repr. 1990), p. 90.

¹⁴ Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, no. 50, p. 91; L. Whitbread, 'MS. C.C.C.C. 201: A Note on its Character and Provenance', *Philological Quarterly*, 38 (1959), 106-12 (p. 100). For a detailed description of Corpus Christi College MS 201 see also M. R. James, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), I 485-486; Turner, *Early Worcester Manuscripts*, p. lvi; B. Fehr, *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in altenglischer und lateinischer Fassung* (Hamburg: Grand, 1914; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), pp. xiv-xvi; supplement to the introduction by P. Clemoes, pp. cxxvii-cxxix; Ker, *Catalogue*, pp. 82-90; Whitbread, 'MS. C.C.C.C. 201', pp. 107-108; R. Fowler, *Wulfstan's Canons of Edgar*, EETS o.s. 266 (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. xi-xiii; Raith, *Die alt- und mittelenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, pp. 4-8; Morini, 'La versione anglosassone del romanzo di Apollonio', pp. 15-17. The dating is that upheld by Ker, but other scholars such as Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 2, attribute it to the end of the eleventh century.

¹⁵ Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, nos. 49 and 50, and for other details see Whitbread, 'MS. C.C.C.C. 201'.

¹⁶ According to Fowler, *Wulfstan's Canons of Edgard*, p. xxv: 'We cannot locate the manuscript precisely on the evidence provided by present linguistic knowledge. *æ* points vaguely to a southern as opposed to northern origin, despite the presence of *NPL* (i.e. *Norðhymbre preosta logu*) in the manuscript'.

¹⁷ Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1976, rev. ed.), p. 25 in relation to the extant *Northumbrian Priests Laws*, a work originating in and concerning the province of York. Bethurum first claimed Wulfstan's authorship for these laws, see 'Six Anonymous Old English Codes', *JEGP*, 49 (1950), 449-63. Recently P. Wormald, 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society', *Anglo-Saxon History: Basic Readings*, ed. by D. A. E. Pelteret (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 191-224 (pp. 211-13), argues that this text was probably a work later than Wulfstan, written by another archbishop, one of his two immediate successors or someone in his entourage.

¹⁸ H. Gneuss, 'A preliminary list of manuscripts written or owned in England up to 1100', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 9 (1981), 1-60 (p. 5).

¹⁹ It seems probable that the MS did not originate at Worcester, but was only assembled there, see Whitbread, 'MS. C.C.C.C. 201', pp. 109-10. In the opinion of P. Clemoes, this manuscript does not contain the standard form of writing which characterized this scriptorium, i.e. the peculiar spelling of its main hand was unknown in Worcester manuscripts (*æ* instead of West-Saxon *a* for the nasal, while the custom in Worcester was *e*). He suggested that it has been introduced, as well as other spellings, to Worcester by Wulfstan himself or by his secretaries: see Fehr, *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in altenglischer und lateinischer Fasing*, p. cxxix.

²⁰ Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, no. 49B, p. 90. On different hands pp. 151-160 (*Genesis*) and pp. 170-6 (Latin rites for the confession), see Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, no. 49B, art. 56 and 58. It has been argued that the scribe was a Saxon (from Essex) who introduced dialect forms into a West-Saxon copy: see P. Goolden, *The Old English 'Apollonius of Tyre'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. xxxi; Raith argues that it is not possible to define the dialect of the scribe: *Die alt- und mittelhochdeutschen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, p. 15.

²¹ Of these the most evident is the one contained in chapter 20, where the coming of Apollonius into the princess's rooms is described by a meaningless sentence (*Hlæfdige, næs git yfel wif*). No help is afforded by the Latin versions: see A. F. Pottle, '*næs git yfel wif* in the Old English Apollonius', *JEGP*, 30 (1931), 21-5 (p. 25); McGowan, 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre and the Latin Recension', 184-7. The occurrence of *hlaford geong* (ch. 13) was probably a mistake for *cynig*, see McGowan, 'Royal Titles in the Old English "Apollonius"', p. 4.

²² Raith, *Die alt- und mittelenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, p. 8; Goolden, *The Old English 'Apollonius of Tyre'*, p. xxxvii.

²³ D. Whitelock, 'Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut', *HER*, 63 (1948), 433-52 (p. 449).

²⁴ M. P. Richards, 'The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. by P. E. Szarmach (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 171-92 (p. 178).

²⁵ Richards, 'The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws', pp. 180-1.

²⁶ Richards, 'The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws', p. 182. But Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 2, argued that this manuscript was arranged by Wulfstan himself.

²⁷ Morini, 'La versione anglosassone del romanzo di Apollonio', p. 16.

²⁸ These passages are quoted by F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903-16, repr. Aalen, 1960), pp. 243 and 254. Anglo-Saxon queens or princesses, widows or single women used to live in the monastery as abbesses, or in their usual residence close to the monastery, but the law protected them. Again, the behaviour and therefore the choice made by princess Arcestrate could be considered totally exemplary. In fact, she does not get married, but retires to a temple, living in chastity and enjoying the same dignity as the Anglo-Saxon abbesses: 'Heo wæs soðlice þearle wlitig and for þære micclan lufe þære clænnesse, hi sædon ealle þæt þar nære nan Dianan swa gecweme, swa heo' (*OEHA*, ch. 48) [She really was very beautiful, and because of her great love of chastity, everybody said that there was nobody as pleasing to Diana as she was].

²⁹ All the passages are quoted by K. Jost, *Die 'Institute of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical': Ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstan of York* (Bern: Francke, 1959), pp. 113, 130, 131, 133.

³⁰ The Old English text is quoted by Fowler, *Wulfstan's Canons of Edgar*, pp. 23-4. The work comes from Pseudo Eberth's Penitential, datable to the ninth/tenth centuries: see Raith, *Die altenglische Version des Halitgar'schen Bußbuches* (Hamburg: Grand, 1933; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964).

³¹ B. Thorpe, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Story of Apollonius of Tyre* (London: Arch, 1834), pp. 51-52; A. H. Smyth, *Shakespeare's Pericles and Apollonius of Tyre: A Study of Comparative Literature* (Philadelphia: MacCallia, 1898), pp. 93-112. The collection of the tales known as the *Gesta Romanorum* was compiled in the fourteenth century and its first edition dates back to 1480; the hypothesis that the Anglo-Saxon translation derives from this text appears, therefore, erroneous. The convergences can be explained only if a lost common Latin source for both texts is hypothesized. See the edition of the work published by H. Oesterly, Berlin 1872, repr. 1963, and a discussion on ch. 153 in Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. 190-1.

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³² J. Meyer, 'Über den lateinischen Text der Geschichte des Apollonius von Tyros', *Sitzungsberichte der philos-philol.-und historischen Kl. der K. Bayerischen Akademie*, 2 (1872), 1-28.

³³ T. Mommsen, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre. A novel by George Wilkins printed in 1608 and found upon Shakespeare's Play* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1857), p. xviii-xx.

³⁴ Thorpe, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Story of Apollonius of Tyre*.

³⁵ J. Zupitza, 'Die altenglische Bearbeitung der Erzählung von Apollonius von Tyrus', *Archiv (ASNSL)*, 97 (1896), 17-34; Riese, *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, p. vi; Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, p. 39.

³⁶ Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*.

³⁷ Goolden, 'The Old English "Apollonius of Tyre"'.

³⁸ 'Über den Wert eines solchen *conflated Text* kann man verschiedener Meinung sein; hier jedenfalls bietet er alles, was zum Verständnis des ae. Textes wesentlich ist, während ein lat. Text, der ausschließlich einer Hs. folgt, für die meisten Benutzer, des Buches kaum von Vorteil wäre [. . .] Der jeweils gegenüber abgedruckte lat. Text ist "conflated"; er (Goolden) stellt den Versuch dar, die verlorene lat. Vorlage der ae. Übersetzung zu rekonstruieren. Dabei ist die lat. Textform aus Hs. CCC 318 zugrunde gelegt, die von den zahlreichen erhaltenen Hss. Dieser Vorlage am nächsten stehen dürfen. Änderungen, Zusätze und Auslassungen sind durch den ae. Text und andere lat. Hss. gesichert und hier selbstverständlich gekennzeichnet', Gneuss, review of P. Goolden, *The Old English 'Apollonius of Tyre'*, in *Anglia*, 78 (1960), 364-6 (p. 366).

³⁹ For example Lat. *granago* could be an *errata lectio* for *grandi sago* (see *Gesta Romanorum*); for other mistakes see McGowan, 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre and the Latin Recension', pp. 182-190.

⁴⁰ Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, p. 46.

⁴¹ 'Deviations between the Old English text and its source are, apart from this small point, entirely the casual results of a not too meticulous process of translation', Goolden, *The Old English 'Apollonius of Tyre'*, p. xx.

⁴² On this topic see Archibald, *Incest and Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

⁴³ The Latin text from Corpus Christi College MS 318 and the Anglo-Saxon text are both quoted from Raith's edition.

⁴⁴ On this topic see further the conclusion to this article.

⁴⁵ The juridical and moral problem concerning incest finds its source directly in the *Bible* (see for example *Lev.* 18. 6-18. 18).

⁴⁶ D. A. Brundage, 'Rape and Marriage in the Medieval Canon law', in *Sex, Law and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), pp. 63-4. Before the

establishment of a well-organized ecclesiastical juridical system (*The Decretum* of Gratian, a. 1140), the Church in any case penalized such crimes during the early Middle Ages; see Brundage, p. 64.

⁴⁷ F. Merzbacher, *Ehe*, in *Handbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. by A. Erler et al. (Berlin: Schmidt, 1971), I 824. According to Brundage, 'Rape and Marriage in the Medieval Canon law', pp. 63-4, rape in Roman law, which was considered the most serious sexual offence, merited harsher punishment than other sexual crimes.

⁴⁸ W. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), pp. 26-7.

⁴⁹ On the authenticity of the texts contained in this famous letter (*Libellus responsionum*, in *Gregorii I papae Registrum epistolarum*, ed. by P. Ewald and L. Hartmann, MGH Epp 2, xi. 56a (Berlin: Weidmann, 1891-1899; repr. 1957), pp. 342-3), see P. Meyvaert, 'Bede's text of the Libellum Responsionum of Gregory the Great', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to D. Whitelock*, ed. by P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 15-33; G. Picasso, 'I fondamenti del matrimonio nelle collezioni canoniche', *Settimane di studio del Centro di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, 24 (1977), 190-231 (p. 217); J. Dauvillier, *Le mariage dans le droit classique de l'église depuis le décret de Gratien jusqu'à la mort de Clément V* (1314) (Paris: Recueil Sirey, 1933), pp. 146-52; S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 15-16.

⁵⁰ Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, I.27.5, pp. 84-5.

⁵¹ The Councils of Tours (a. 1060, G. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Florentiae: Expensis Antonii Zatta, 1759-98; repr. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960-2), t. xix, ch. 928) and Rouen (a. 1072, Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum collectio*, t. xx, ch. 14 and 38-9) established the prohibition of marriage within the seventh degree, in order to prevent the major noble families from maintaining joint ownership; see P. Fournier and G. Le Bras, *Histoire des Collections canoniques en Occident depuis les Fausses Décrétales jusqu'au Décret de Gratien*, vol. 1 (Paris: Sirey, 1931-2). On the topic of consanguinity and its development on the Continent see C. B. Buchar, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Speculum* 56 (1981), 268-87.

⁵² Thus, for example, Canon viii, Council of Trosly (a. 909) affirmed the principle of the indissolubility of marriage: Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum collectio*, t. xviii, ch. 286-288. Canon Law was compiled from large collections of material derived from patristic works, papal letters, conciliar canons, biblical passages: the so-called *Vetus Gallica* (seventh to eighth centuries) which contains rare canons on marriage entitled 'De incestis et adulteris et qui uxores suas demittunt'; the *Vetus Hibernensis*, where the canon is entitled

'De ratione matrimonio'; the *Ps. Isidorian* (ninth century); the *Collectio Canonum Anselmo dedicata* (ninth century.), where it is decided that only an ecclesiastical judge might intervene in marriage questions; the *Liber de synodalibus causis* of Reginon von Prum (tenth century); the *Decretum Burcardii*, whose VII, 1-30 is concerned with incest (eleventh century), see Picasso, 'Il fondamento', pp. 200-31. On Canon Law, see A. G. Fransen, *Les Collections canoniques* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1973). Canon Law becomes, anyway, a well-organized legal system only after the promulgation of the *Concordia discordantium Canonum* or *Decretum of Gratian* (c. 1140), which established the recognition of only previous authentic canons in order to obtain a universal juridical ecclesiastical law. See for a brief introduction on this work S. Kuttner, *Harmony from Dissonance: An Intrepretation of Medieval Canon Law* (Latrobe: Archabbey, 1960) and *Il matrimonio nella società altomedievale*, *Settimane di Studio del Centro di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, 24 (1977); G. Duby, *Medieval Marriage. Two models from twelfth-century France*, trans. by Elborg Forster (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁵³ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A Collaborative Edition*, 6. MS D: a semi-diplomatic Edition with Introduction and Indices, ed. by G. P. Cubbin (Oxford: Brewer, 1996), p. 45.

⁵⁴ According to Whitelock, the juridical fragments preserved in MS 201B, Ker art. 51, and corresponding to *II Cnut*, are to be considered excerpts or extracts from the previous law codes of king Edgar and VI Ethelred, prepared and used by Wulfstan in order to provide a complete new statement, planned for his meeting with king Cnut and the Danes at Oxford in 1008: Whitelock, 'Wulfstan's Authorship of Cnut' Laws', *HER* 69 (1955), 72-85. On the same subject see also P. Stafford, 'The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo-Saxon royal Promises', *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1981), 175-190 and A. G. Kennedy, 'Cnut's law Code of 1018', *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1982), 57-81.

⁵⁵ The text is quoted from MS 201, fol. 127, as it is published by F. Liebermann, *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, pp. 290-1; recently it was published also by A. G. Kennedy, 'Cnut's law Code of 1018', pp. 57-81 (p. 75).

⁵⁶ On the *Discipulus Umbrensium* or *Poenitentie Theodori* (seventh-eighth centuries), the *Poenitentie Ps. Theodori* (aa. 830-47), the *Confessionale Ps. Ecberti* (eighth century), the *Poenitentie Ecberti* (aa. 732-66), and the *Poenitentie Ps. Ecberti* (aa. 950-1000) see F. W. H. Wasserschleben, *Die Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche* (Halle: Graeger, 1851, repr. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1958); C. Vogel, *Les 'Libri Poenitentiales'* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978); A. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983); L. Körntgen, *Studien zu den Quellen der frühmittelalterlicher Bußbücher* (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1993).

⁵⁷ C. Vogel, *Le pécheur et la pénitence dans l'Eglise ancienne* (Paris 1966); Vogel, *Le pécher et la pénitence au Moyen Age* (Paris: editions du Cerf, 1969); P. J. Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials* (Toronto: Toronto University Press 1984), p. 8 argues that the penitential was not compiled for confessional use but as a list to be memorised of sanctions relating to a variety of sins. For a detailed study see also R. Manselli, 'Il matrimonio nei Penitenziali', in *Il matrimonio nella società Altomedievale*, pp. 287-315 (pp. 289-302); D. A. Brundage, 'Better to Marry than to burn? The Case of the Vanishing Dichotomy', in *Sex, Law and Marriage*, III 198-9; L. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials; Their Religious and Social Background*, in *Studia Patristica*, 7 (1966), 329-39; see the edition by L. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963).

⁵⁸ It is worth noting that the sanctions referring to sexual and matrimonial topics were the most numerous. For a detailed study on this topic see A. Davies, 'Sexual Behaviour in Later Anglo-Saxon England', in *This Noble Craft*, ed. by E. Cooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), pp. 83-105 (at 83-4); D. A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1987), pp. 57-123. In *Ecbert's Penitential*, for example, the list concerning sexual sins constitutes 45%, see Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials*, p. 52.

⁵⁹ *The Poenitentiale Ps. Theodori*, V 13-14; text quoted by Wasserschleben, *Die Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche*, p. 584.

⁶⁰ *The Poenitentiale Egberti*, IV, Wasserschleben, *Die Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche*, p. 234.

⁶¹ The text is quoted by *Wulfstan Homilies*, *Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien*, ed. by A. Napier (Berlin: Weidmann, 1834), Homily 59, pp. 307-9 (p. 308). This homily was not included by Bethurum in her edition, because she did not consider it to be a homily.

⁶² *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 25, 38. See also Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, p. 20; K. Jost, *Wulfstanstudien* (Bern: Francke, 1950), pp. 219-20.

⁶³ Text quoted by Napier, *Wulfstan Homilies*, Homily 59, pp. 307-9 (p. 308).

⁶⁴ *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, p. 25.

⁶⁵ *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 39-40. According to Jost, *Wulfstanstudien*, pp. 249-61, it is a work compiled later than Wulfstan.

⁶⁶ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I, *Ælfred und Guthrum*, pp. 128-31 (p. 130).

⁶⁷ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I, *II Cnut*, 48, 51, pp. 346-7.

⁶⁸ *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, pp. 261-266 (pp. 264-5, 4-13).

⁶⁹ On this subject see Merzbacher, *Ehe*, pp. 813-14.

⁷⁰ Merzbacher, *Ehe*, pp. 811-14; see also D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 63-4.

⁷¹ See the very important letter written by Pope Nicolas I to the Bulgars: *Nicolai I papae Epistolae*, ed. by E. Perels, MGH, *Epistolae Aevi Karolini* 4 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1978), pp. 568-600.

⁷² Text quoted by Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*.

⁷³ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I, II Cnut, 74, p. 360. It is to be remarked that this law is also preserved in Corpus Christi College MS 201, pp. 126-30.

⁷⁴ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I, V Atr., 21, 21.1, p. 242; VI Atr 26, 26.1, p. 254.

⁷⁵ *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, p. 39.

⁷⁶ Napier, *Wulfstan Homilies*, pp. 266-74 (pp. 271, 18-20).

⁷⁷ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, I, II Cnut, 73, p. 360.

⁷⁸ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. 25-6 and 184.

⁷⁹ C. L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1967), p. 253.

⁸⁰ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 184.

⁸¹ T. E. Pickford, 'Apollonius of Tyre as Greek Myth and Christian Mystery', *Neophilologus* 59 (1975), 599-609; Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, pp. 49-50.

⁸² Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, pp. 49-50; Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 184.

⁸³ 'Es war der erste Versuch, einen unterhaltenden Prosaroman zu schreiben, eine Liebesgeschichte zu erzählen [. . .] Der Mönch, der Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts den Apollonius in engl. Prosa brachte, war damit allerdings seiner Zeit um vierhundert aus voraus [. . .] der engl. Prosaroman beginnt im 15. Jahrhundert [. . .]': Raith, *Die alt- und mittenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, p. 48.

⁸⁴ On this topic see Archibald, 'Fathers and Kings'.

⁸⁵ My article on this subject has been published in *SELIM* XVI (2005).

⁸⁶ The emendation *tiriscan ealdormen* [prince of Tyre], first proposed by Thorpe and then by Raith, derives from the same reading in ch. 10; Zupitza and Goolden add just *tiriscan*. Page has recently argued that the erasure space in the manuscript after *þam* could only have accommodated one word, *tiriscan* or *ealdormen*. He favours the latter option: see 'The Title', p. 172.

⁸⁷ *The Old English Orosius*, ed. by J. Batley, EETS s.s 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), see also *Indices*, V 4; V 4, 17 and 20.

⁸⁸ *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, ed. by G. Kotzor (Munich: Beck, 1986), II 5, 165.

⁸⁹ *Old English Psalms: 1-50, Libri psalmorum versio antiqua Latina cum paraphrasi Anglo-Saxonica*, ed. by B. Thorpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1835), Ps. 43, p. 105.

⁹⁰ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by W. W. Skeat, EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94, 114 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881-1900): *Book of Maccabees*.

⁹¹ The text is quoted from *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius 'De Consolatione philosophiae'*, ed. by W. J. Sedgefield (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899, repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), p. 3.

⁹² *The Exeter Book*, ed. by G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, ASPR VI (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 210.

⁹³ *Genesis*, 49 (BL, MS Cotton Claudius B. IV): *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis*, ed. by S. J. Crawford, EETS o.s. 160 (London: Oxford University Press, 1922, repr. with additional material by Ker, London, 1969), p. 20.

⁹⁴ Other occurrences of this device are: *Ða agan se cyncg plegan* [. . .] and *Apollonius hine gemægnde, swa swa godes wolde, on ðæs cyninges plegan* and [. . .] *to ðam plegendan cyngc*, ch. 13, 14-17 / *Subito Arcestrates rex totius illius regionis cum turba famulorum ingressu, dum cum suis ad pile lusum exerceretur, volente deo miscuit se Apollonius regi; et dum currenti sustulit pilam, substuli velocitate percussam ludenti regi remisit*. Se forliden a man is cume [. . .] ac he ne mæg for scame in gan buton *scrude*. Ða het se cyngc hine sona gescriðan mid wurðfullan *scrude*, ch. 14, 16-17 [*'Naufragus adest, sed abiecto abitu introire confunditur'*: *Statim rex iussit eum dignis vestibis indui et ingredi ad cenam*]; *ræde se þe wille* [. . .] hwa *ræde* (at explicit).

⁹⁵ Other occurrences of this device are: *Swa man swa hwylc minne rædels riht aræde* [. . .] and *se ðe hine misræd*, ch. 3, 7-9 [*Si quis vestrum questionis mee solutionem inveniit* [. . .] *qui autem non inveniit*]; þone *rædels* understodon to *arædenne*; and þone *rædels* understodon to *arædenne* [. . .] þone *rædels* ariht *rædde*, ch. 3, 14-15 [[. . .] *sed quis prudentia litterarum questionis solutionem invenisset, quasi qui nichil dixisset decollabatur*]; Antiochus se *wæltreowa* cyningc on þysse *wæltreownesse* þurhwunode, ch. 4, 1-2 [*et cum hanc crudelitatem rex Antiochus exerceret*]; *snotor* [. . .] on his *snotornesse*, ch. 4, 3-4 [*fidens in habundantia litterarum* [. . .]]; þæt Apollonius þone *rædels* swa rihte *arædde*, ch. 5, 1-2 / *rex ut audivit iuvenem questionis sue solutionem invenisse*; Apollonius ariht *arædde* mynne *rædels*. Astih nu *rædlíce*, ch. 6, 4 [*Apollonius Tyrius invenit questionis mee solutionem. Ascende enim confestim navem* [. . .]]; þu eart *wæltreowra* þonne Antiochus [. . .] þas *wæltreownesse* þæt ic þurh ðe gewurde *wædla* [. . .] and þæt se *wæltreowesta*, ch. 12, 5-8 [*O Neptune, fraudator hominum, deceptor innocentium, Antiocho rege crudelior, propter me hec reservasti ut egenum et inopem me dimitteres. Facilius rex Antiochus crudelissimus persequeretur*]; [. . .] and sona swa heo hearþian ongan, heo mid winsumum sange gemægnde þare hearpan *sweg*. Ða ongunnon ealle þa men hi herian on hyre *swegcræfte*, and Apollonius ana *swigode*. Ða cwæð se cyningc [. . .] ealle men heriad mine

dohtor on hyre *swegcræfte*, and þu ana hi *swigende* tælst. Apollonius cwæð [. . .] ic secge þæt ic on gite þæt soðlice þin dohtor gefeol on *swegcræft*, ch. 16, 13-18 [*Omnes laudare ceperunt et dicere: Non potest melius, non potest dulcius dici. Inter quos Apollonius solus tacebat. Ad quem rex ait: [. . .] Omnes filiam meam in arte musica laudant; [. . .] Filiam tuam in artem musicam incidit, nam non didicit. Denique iube mihi tradi liram, et scies quod nescis. [. . .] Et iussit eum trahi liram. [. . .] Et accipiens liram [. . .] atque silentio facto arripuit plectrum animumque accomodat arti. Miscetur vox cantu modulata cum cordis*]; [. . .] heora þu *wille*. Min *willa*; Æfter þisum wordum heo mid modes anrædnesse awrat oðer gewrit and þæt geinseglode and sealde Apollonio: Ðæt gewrit wæs þus gewriten, ch. 20, 31-34 [*Haec dicens istante amoris audacia scripsit et signatos codicillos iuveni tradidit [. . .] Scripti erant sic: illum volo coniugem naufragum [. . .] quod pudica virgo tam impudenter scripserim*]; þæt he þas awændednesse ne tæle, ac þæt he hele swa hwæt swa þar on sy to tale (*explicit*).

⁹⁶ *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Saint Apollinaris, XXII 112-115: Min God Drihten Hælend, þe minum lareowe Petre forgeafe his gewilnunga swa hwæt swa he gewylnode æt ðe, arær nu ðis mæden of ðysum reðum deaðe, forðan þe heo is þin gesceaft, and nis nan God buton ðu'; (*PsGIC*) 'and gewilnodon gewilnunga on westynne & costodon god on druwunge' [*Et concupierunt concupiscentias in deserto et temptauerunt deum in siccitate*]; Lk (*WSCp*) 'and þa tima wæs he sæt and his twelfe apostolas mid him, & he sæde him, of gewilnunge ic gewilnude etan mid eow þas Eastron ær ic forðfare'.

⁹⁷ Raith, *Die alt- und mittellenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, p. 43.

⁹⁸ Raith, *Die alt- und mittellenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, pp. 42-43.

⁹⁹ * signals the hapax legomena listed by Raith, *Die alt- und mittellenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ On Wulfstan's stylistic features see A. Orchard, 'Crying wolf: oral style and the *Sermones Lupi*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 21 (1992), 239-64.

¹⁰¹ *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, p. 28.

¹⁰² Moreover, Wulfstan in his homilies and laws used particular lexical items, like *beorgan* instead of *anan*, *lac* instead of *onsægdnes*, and *gesælig* not *eadig*. In the Old English *Apollonius* we find *beorgan*, and both *gesælig* and *eadig*.

¹⁰³ About 200 echoic pairs occur in Wulfstan's homilies, see D. W. Chapman, 'Motivations for producing and analyzing compounds in Wulfstan's Sermons', in *Advances in English Historical Linguistics*, ed. by J. Fisiak and M. Krygier (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998), pp. 15-21.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapman, 'Germanic Tradition and Latin Learning in Wulfstan's Echoic Compounds', *JEGP*, 101 (2002), 1-20 (p. 18).

¹⁰⁵ In Wulfstan's homilies there are 27 *hapax legomena* occurring in echoic pairs, see Chapman, 'Germanic Tradition and Latin Learning in Wulfstan's Echoic Compounds', pp. 19-20.

¹⁰⁶ See *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, p. 264.

¹⁰⁷ I am indebted to Donald Scragg for drawing my attention to the *Vercelli Homily X*, where the repetition involves only one word mostly twice; very rarely does it involve compounds. See also, for examples of repetition, D. Scragg, 'An Old English homilist of Archbishop Dunstan's day', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by M. Kohnhammer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 181-92 (p. 185).

¹⁰⁸ *Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Bethurum, p. 38.

¹⁰⁹ Napier, *Wulfstan Homilies*, pp. 215-26 (p. 217, 15 and 20; p. 221, 4).

¹¹⁰ Napier, *Wulfstan Homilies*, pp. 291-299 (p. 292, 19-20).

¹¹¹ Napier, 'English Literature 1: An Old English Homily on the Observance of Sunday', in *An English Miscellany Presented to Dr Furnivall*, ed. by W. P. Ker and A. S. Napier (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), pp. 355-62 (pp. 357-62).

¹¹² *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The First Series. Text*, ed. by P. Clemoes, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 175.

Levels of Learning in Anglo-Saxon Worcester: the Evidence Re-assessed¹

Christine Thijs

A large number of surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are associated with Worcester Cathedral,² which is generally considered one of the most important monastic foundations of the period. King Alfred recruited seven scholars, of which no fewer than four were active in Worcester and surrounding areas in south-west Mercia, to assist him in his programme of translating books that he considered 'ða [. . .] nidbeðyrfesta [. . .] eallum monnum to witanne' [most necessary for all men to know].³ In spite of Simon Keynes's and Michael Lapidge's claim that there was only a 'meagre [. . .] record of intellectual achievement during an otherwise barren century',⁴ it is reasonable to surmise, *inter alia* from Alfred's recruitment of the Worcester scholars, that the centre had already reached respectable levels of scholarship in the latter half of the ninth century. Since Wolfgang Keller's and Ivor Atkins's sizable studies,⁵ a number of publications have appeared on issues pertaining to the literary activity at Worcester at various times. This article presents an overview of the evidence as well as some justifiable deductions and extrapolations in order to arrive at a more fully informed picture of Worcester's intellectual development in general, and particularly of the calibre of scholarly expertise at the time of Alfred's educational reform.

The evidence for learning levels in the Worcester area is quite limited for the period prior to the end of the ninth century. Alfred's complaint about the virtually general ignorance of Latin may have been, as some have suggested, dressed in rhetorical exaggeration.⁶

Swa clæne hio wæs oðfeallenu on Angelkynne ðætte swiðe feawe
wæron behionan Humbre þe hiora ðenunga cuðen understandan
on Englisc, oððe furðum an ærendgewrit of Lædene on Englisc

areccan; & ic wene ðætte nauht monige begeondan Humber næren. Swa feawe hiora wæron ðætte ic furðum anne anlepne ne mæg geðencean besuðan Temese ða ða ic to rice feng.⁷

[It (i.e. learning) had declined so utterly among the English that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their divine service in English, or who could even translate a letter from Latin into English; and I know that there were not many on the other side of the Humber. There were so few of them that I could not even think of a single one south of the Thames at the time when I acceded to the kingship.]

It does, however, clearly indicate that scholastic centres in general had suffered at least a significant recession. Ralph Davis seems to imply that Alfred was simply contradicting himself:

Provided that we interpret the word 'few' loosely, it need not contain any specific untruth, but it hardly prepares us for the fact that of the seven of Alfred's literary advisers whose names are known, four came from Mercia. There is every reason to believe that in that part of England a vigorous literary tradition had survived, but in this statement Alfred ignored it, with the result that the magnitude of the educational achievement of his own reign was enhanced.⁸

However, one can deduce that Alfred did not consider Mercia (the territory of the Hwicce, the Angles, the Mercians, and the Magonsætan) part of his own 'entire country'; although it fell within Alfred's sphere of influence,⁹ it was at that stage still a separate kingdom. His turning to south-west Mercia to engage Wærferth as learned assistant, then, like his recruitment of three other scholars from Wales, Saxony and Flanders,¹⁰ indicates that Alfred expected to find in these places the presence of teachers and books, and thus of scribes and the makings of a library whose calibre was not available in his own country.

Worcester's proximity to several Roman roads provided connections with Wessex and the east,¹¹ the Malvern Hills offered protection from the West, and the river Severn allowed access to the sea, while the inhospitable coasts of the Bristol Channel precluded Viking attacks.¹² All these factors contributed to the flourishing of Worcester and its development of an economic base. Numerous

royal grants of land testify that the episcopal see and the monasteries in the immediate vicinity received the patronage of the Mercian kings in the eighth century.¹³ Such donations inevitably resulted in a thoroughly Mercian political and economic orientation and they generated an enhanced material affluence, which was a prerequisite for the development of a library, as is clear from the high prices paid for manuscripts.¹⁴ Of course, if manuscripts were bought, it is plausible to infer that there would have been people able to read them, to use their contents for teaching, and to copy them. This in itself was likely to instigate and inspire the production of more literature.

A considerable number of charters, dating from throughout the ninth century, present bishops of Worcester and monasteries in the immediate vicinity as parties to transactions or donations of land, or in agreements or disputes, indicating a stable economical environment throughout the period of the Viking attacks,¹⁵ during which most of Mercia was ravaged together with the rest of the country. While other monasteries lost their riches and valuable manuscripts, and had to start building up a collection all over again (if they had the means and commitment), Worcester, and perhaps other centres in south-west Mercia, may have suffered no significant interruption to their intellectual development since the seventh century, when Irish teachers were in England.¹⁶ This would explain why Alfred turned to south-west Mercia to find Latinists well versed in theology. It is conceivable that more were engaged than the four mentioned by Asser, and it is certain that others would have continued studying, teaching and writing in Worcester, and possibly in other centres about which no information has survived.

Alfred's military successes against the Danes had firmly established respect for his power and authority in the rest of 'England'. The Worcester area, which was never involved in military operations, was to be approached in a different way. While there is not much clear documentary evidence that previous kings of Wessex invested in Worcester as a manifestation of political power, Alfred was clearly interested both in the standards of learning possessed by the Worcester monasteries and in expanding his network of influence into this very affluent boundary region, thereby opening up the possibility of annexing the rest of Mercia. Such political aims also seem to underlie Alfred's giving his daughter Æthelflæd in marriage to Æthelred Ealdorman of Mercia. The recruitment of four (probably south-west) Mercian scholars may have been a strategic move containing a political statement of power, possibly inspired by Charlemagne's example of inviting advisors and scholars from many areas (such as Alcuin of

York, a prominent figure well-known in England). Asser emphasises the scholars' Mercian origins:

At tunc Deus [. . .] transmisit Werfrithum [. . .] Wigernensis ecclesiae episcopum [. . .] deinde Plegmundum, Mercium genere, Dorobernensis ecclesiae archiepiscopum, venerabilem scilicet virum, sapientia praeditum; Æthelstan quoque et Werwulfum, sacerdotes et capellanos, Mercios genere, eruditos. Quos quatuor [sic] Ælfred rex de Mercia ad se advocaverat [. . .].

[But then God [. . .] sent Wærferth, [. . .] bishop of the church of Worcester [. . .] and subsequently Plegmund, a Mercian by race, archbishop of the church of Canterbury, an obviously venerable man, considerably gifted with wisdom; and also Æthelstan and Werwulf, erudite priests and chaplains and Mercians by race. King Alfred summoned these four from Mercia.]¹⁷

Interestingly, all but one of the scholars (Wærferth) are explicitly said to belong to the Mercian race ('Mercius genere'). Therefore the distinct impression arises that Asser meant to present the cathedral of Worcester as part of Mercia, as well as drawing attention to the four clerics' learning. Given Worcester's undisturbed development, it is a reasonable assumption that they all originated from, or at least were trained in, the Worcester area, but Asser refers to them non-specifically as 'four men from Mercia' ('Quos quatuor [. . .] de Mercia'). Thus he evokes a sense of unity between the old kingdom of Mercia as a whole and Alfred's Wessex, and simultaneously expresses appreciation for their contribution to the success of Alfred's cultural development of his whole territory, which he so strikingly called 'Angelcynn' in spite of his own Saxon descent.¹⁸ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, charters, and ninth-century coinage, as demonstrated by Keynes,¹⁹ equally provide evidence that from the early 880s onwards, Alfred was incorporating Mercia into his 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' (consisting of 'English' Mercia, Wessex, Kent and Sussex). These efforts support the suggestion that at the time he wrote the prefatory letter to the *Pastoral Care* south-west Mercia was not effectively a province of his own realm yet.

Literary Activity in Pre-Alfredian Worcester

Oftfor's Time

The evidence of learning and the presence of books in early Worcester is, again, sparse. As Patrick Sims-Williams remarks, 'biblical study was the ground and apex of all other studies'.²⁰ In the early medieval context, however, as he goes on to say, this presupposes the availability of a text of the Bible, or, as was more usually the case, of individual books or groups of books of the Bible, which would be in Latin and would thus require a grammar and commentaries, and a teacher to instruct in both Latin and theology. Bede's account of Oftfor's studies, travels, and consecration as bishop (691-693/4)²¹ is the first recorded and only pre-Alfredian document illustrating education in Worcester:

[Oftfor] [. . .] cum in utroque *Hildae* abbatissae monasterio lectioni et obseruationi scripturarum operam dedisset, tandem perfectiora desiderans uenit Cantiam ad archiepiscopum beatae recordationis Theodorum. Vbi postquam aliquandiu lectionibus sacris uacauit, etiam *Romam* adire curauit, quod eo tempore magnae uirtutis aestimabatur; et inde cum rediens Britanniam adisset, diuertit ad prouinciam *Huicciorum*, cui tunc rex Osric praefuit, ibique uerbum fidei praedicans [. . .] multo tempore mansit. [. . .] [O]mnium iudicio [. . .] *in episcopatum* [. . .] electus ac [. . .] per Uilfridum [. . .] antistitem [. . .] *ordinatus* est [. . .].

[After he had devoted himself, in Abbess Hild's double monastery, to the reading and observing of the Scriptures, Oftfor eventually came to Canterbury, to Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory, desiring further perfection. Then, after he had dedicated himself for some time to holy readings, he even troubled himself to go to Rome, which at that time was deemed to be of great virtue. When he, on his return journey from there, reached Britain, he made a detour to the province of the Hwicci, which was then ruled by King Osric, and there [. . .] he stayed for a long time, [. . .] preaching the word of faith. [. . .] With a unanimous vote he was elected bishop and [. . .] ordained by priest Wilfrid [. . .].²²

Bede states here that Otffor studied at both of Hild's monasteries, Streoneshealh and Hartlepool, highly valued for their emphasis on the study of Scripture. Subsequently, he is said to have attended Archbishop Theodore's school in Canterbury, renowned for its unique reputation in biblical study in the Antiochene tradition, which categorically rejected the allegorical approach to biblical interpretation promoted by the earlier Alexandrine school, in favour of a very literal method of exegesis, exemplified in Theodore's commentaries.²³ It is perhaps a large step to take, but it is tempting to speculate that this literal approach to exegesis and biblical commentary may have been an influential element contributing to the literal style of translation practised by a Mercian school to which Wærferth and the translator of the Old English *Ecclesiastical History* could have been connected. Otffor would certainly have been well placed to exert this influence, especially, as Bede explicitly states, since he spent a long time in the 'Provincia Hwiccorum' and was ordained bishop there.

Because Otffor, as his name suggests (it may be interpreted as 'often fared'),²⁴ and as Bede's account confirms, spent some time travelling as a pilgrim within England and to Rome, he probably undertook some transportation of relics or manuscripts, for this was customary, as the example of Benedict Biscop testifies and as is reported by Bede and Æthilwald (one of Aldhelm's students).²⁵ Three surviving charters indicate that once he was ordained bishop of the Hwicce, the Church was granted several portions of land by the Mercian King Æthelred,²⁶ conceivably, as happened regularly,²⁷ in exchange for manuscripts. Otffor probably brought several books from his travels to Worcester, but there remains only one speculative indication that he may have provided a connection between the monastery of Streoneshealh and Worcester in the form of the lost source used by the anonymous Streoneshealh author and which is likely to have been available to Wærferth when he was translating the *Dialogi*.²⁸ The anonymous *Life of Gregory*, written at Streoneshealh, possibly by a nun,²⁹ contains two unusual details which reappear exclusively in Worcester texts: Gregory's epithet 'os aureum' ('golden mouth') occurs twice in Wærferth's Old English version of Gregory's *Dialogi*,³⁰ and the anecdote of Gregory breaking the lamp on Siricius' tomb to avenge Jerome can be found only in John of Worcester's early twelfth-century marginalia in the Worcester copy of William of Malmesbury's recension of the *Liber Pontificalis*:³¹

obscurari lampadem. *Nec immerito*; quia in eo lectionis quoque divine lampas hoc lucissime agendum dilucidavit.³³

[His (i.e. Gregory's) celestial soul perceived something similar, that is horrible to tell, regarding that particular Pope (i.e. Siricius). This Pope, as much as was within his power, extinguished God's lamp, lit by Him with a singularly bright light, by forcing the light of Saint Jerome, the lampstand not only of the Romans but also of the whole world, in Rome (which is the head of cities and the mistress of the world), to emigrate from this city on account of his (i.e. Siricius') dreadful infidelity of judgement. He therefore justly deserved that his own lamp be extinguished by Saint Gregory, and not undeservedly, for the lamp of divine judgement in him (i.e. in Gregory) illuminated most clearly that this had to be done.]

John of Worcester passage (CUL Kk.4.6)

Erat Rome mos antiquitus institutus, ut ad apostolicorum virorum sepulcra die noctuque lumen arderet. *Nec immerito*: nam iuxta evangelicam auctoritatem *illi lux sunt mundi* [. . .] Lucerna ardens et lucens, beatissimus videlicet Gregorius, dum paparet, dum ecclesiam Dei apostolico iure gubernaret, aut legit vel audivit a narrantibus, quid [*sic*] olim temporis vir apostolicus Siricius in beatum gesserat Ieronimum. Factum est in una dierum, lustratis Urbis interioribus, sanctus Gregorius ad tumulos virorum apostolicorum luminibus sacris ardentia lumina cernens et ad predicti papae tumbam perveniens, substitit, exclamat, indignans protinus inquit: 'Tumba tegit papam, qui mundi lumen ab Urbe expulerat dudum, quod reple[vit] dogmate mundum. Hinc vere indignum et iniustum est ardere lumen ad sepulcrum illius'. Dixit, vas fregit baculo fuditque liquorem. Et sic in Siricium vindicat Ieronimum.³⁴

[In Rome the ancient custom had been established that at the graves of popes ('apostolic men') a light should burn night and day. Not unrightly so, for according to the authority of the Gospel those men are the light of the world [. . .] A lamp burning and bright, namely the most blessed Gregory, while he was pope, and while he was ruling the Church of God with apostolic right, either

read or heard from informers what, once upon a time, Pope Siricius had done against the blessed Jerome. On one of the days, when the inner parts of the city were lit, it happened that Saint Gregory was observing with his holy eyes the burning lights at the graves of the popes and when he arrived at the grave of the aforementioned pope he stopped and cried out. Indignant he immediately started to speak: 'This grave covers the pope who, a while ago, expelled from the City the world's light, which filled the world with the Learning. Hence it is truly shameful and unjust for a light to burn at his grave.' So he spoke, and broke the lamp with his stick and spilled the liquid. And thus he avenged Jerome upon Siricius.]

The fact that Wærferth refers to Gregory's epithet not only in Old English and in Latin, but also in Greek, possibly suggests, based on the evidence of glosses and biblical commentaries, that there may have been knowledge of Greek (as mentioned earlier) and Hebrew in early ninth-century Mercia, which necessarily would have been supported by a culture of erudition.³⁵

Mainly on the basis that only one, ninth-century continental, manuscript survives, it has generally been held that the Streoneshealh *vita* had only a very limited circulation in Anglo-Saxon England.³⁶ Precisely on the basis of the 'os aureum' and 'gyldenmup' epithets, which the *vita* and Wærferth's *Dialogues* have in common, it is worth considering the possibility that a copy of the Streoneshealh *vita* either was at Worcester shortly before or during Wærferth's time,³⁷ or at least that he had direct or indirect access to it. Sims-Williams mentions that both authors could have drawn on another (lost) source.³⁸ The fact that both Wærferth's and John of Worcester's additions are more elaborate than the Streoneshealh *vita* supports this suggestion, yet it does not preclude the possibility that the Streoneshealh text was also available to them. We know that Oftfor studied at Streoneshealh and suspect that he travelled and transported manuscripts. It is therefore conceivable that he was responsible either for taking to Worcester a copy of the lost Latin source of the Streoneshealh *vita*, or for having learnt the two details and having passed them on in some form in Worcester so that they reached Wærferth and John of Worcester, or indeed that he may have taken a copy of the *vita* itself to Worcester. In any event, this confirms the interest in Gregory at both Streoneshealh and Worcester, and moreover indicates that some

exchange of learning (in the form of manuscripts or teaching, but most likely both) was taking place between Worcester and other monastic centres.

Evidence of Books at Worcester

Worcester doubtlessly acquired the necessary liturgical books immediately after its foundation as a bishopric in 680. In about 780 King Offa is alleged to have donated a bible to the church, as a charter in his name testifies: '[. . .] Insuper dedi ad praedictam ecclesiam (i.e. 'ad episcopalem sedem Wigorcestrengis aeclesiae') bibliothecam optimam cum duabus armillis' [In addition I have granted to the aforementioned church (that is to the Episcopal see of the Church of Worcester) an excellent bible with two golden bands].³⁹ Cuthbert Turner, Ivor Atkins and Neil R. Ker established that the following three fragments could come from this bible, which was identified in the eleventh century with Offa's bible: London, British Library, MSS Additional 37777, Additional 45025 and Loan 81.⁴⁰ Three leaves of Gospel fragments from the second half of the eighth century, three bifolia from biblical commentaries (two seventh- and one eighth-century), and a single leaf from a copy of Isidore's *Sententiae* are preserved in Worcester Cathedral Library,⁴¹ but it cannot be proven that they were already there during the second half of the ninth century.

During 1622-3, when Patrick Young compiled his catalogue, the library of Worcester contained only three manuscripts of the eighth or ninth centuries, which included an eighth-century copy of the *Rule of Benedict* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 48) and an eighth- or ninth- century book on the office of mass 'charactere Saxonico' (MS Hatton 93).⁴² The age and useful nature of these books hint that they may have been copied at Worcester or that they may have been there shortly after their production, but of course they could have arrived at any time between the reigns of Alfred and King James. A third surviving eighth-century book is London, British Library, MS Royal 2 A. XX, written in Mercia in the 950s.⁴³

There is no real evidence for the presence of books in pre-Alfredian Worcester, as no account by contemporary witnesses has survived. In the tenth and eleventh century the copying of manuscripts and the production of new literary works is more fully documented. Richard Gameson has identified fifty-nine manuscripts connected with Worcester, datable between the end of the ninth and the end of the eleventh century, and Rodney Thomson lists some fifty surviving books originating in twelfth-century Worcester.⁴⁴ The presence in Worcester of some of these is confirmed by three surviving Worcester booklists.

The oldest one, contained in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 367 (s. xi^{med}) lists eight titles, three of which refer to two copies:⁴⁵

Deo englissce passionale

7 .ii. engliscce dialogas

7 Oddan boc

7 þe englisca martirlogium

7 .ii. engliscce salteraz

7 .ii. pastorales engliscce

7 þe englisca regel

7 Barontus

[The English passional, and two English *Dialogues*, and Odda's book, and the English *Martyrology*, and two English Psalters, and two English *Pastoral Care* books, and the English *Rule* (i.e. of St Benedict), and the *Visio Baronti*]

The two *Dialogues* have been convincingly identified by Christine Franzen as British Library, MS Cotton Otho C. I part 2 (s. xiⁱⁿ-xii^{med}) and Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 76 (s. xi¹). Franzen argues that the two *Pastoral Care* volumes are probably Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 12 (s. x²) and Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 20 (s. xi^{ex}).⁴⁶ The second booklist on the last leaf of a Latin copy of Gregory's *Dialogi*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 3 (s. xi^{ex}) contains sixty titles mainly consisting of liturgical and teaching material and is not, with any certainty, identifiable as originating in Worcester.⁴⁷ The third list is located on fol. 149 of Cotton Otho C. I part 2 (s. xiii).⁴⁸ Due to fire damage only five titles are discernable, and the entry 'vita et m[. . .]' can probably not be identified:

Liber dialogorum gre[. . .]

Vitas patrum

Beda de gestis anglorum

vita et m[. . .]

synonima ysydori

Boecius De consola[. . .]

[A book of Gre[gory's] *Dialogues*, the *Lives of the Fathers*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the Life and m[iracles? . . .], Isidore's *Synonyms*, Boethius' *Consola[tion of Philosophy]*]

The copy of the *Dialogues* is obviously identifiable with the manuscript containing this list, and Franzen suggested, based on its glosses by the Tremulous Hand, that 'Beda de gestis anglorum' refers to the Old English *Ecclesiastical History*, Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk 3.18 (s. xi²).⁴⁹ None of the other titles have been connected with surviving manuscripts.⁵⁰

It finally needs to be noted in this context that in addition to preserving Old English manuscripts, twelfth-century Worcester also imported a significant quantity of Anglo-Saxon and especially Old English material. Mary Swan has recently adduced evidence about pre-conquest books being taken to Worcester and being re-collated.⁵¹

Possible Literary Achievements of Ninth-Century Worcester?

As to the context of Wærferth's translation of Gregory's *Dialogi*, modern scholars have propounded a wide range of views over the last hundred years. Peter Hunter-Blair does not include the Old English *Dialogues* or the Old English *Ecclesiastical History* in his list of accepted Mercian literary works and Keller simply states that Worcester enters the history of literature with Wærferth's translation.⁵² By contrast, in his first *Critical History of Old English Literature* Stanley Greenfield presents, without evidence, the long reign of the 'anti-ecclesiastical and tyrannical king Æthelbald' (716-57) as an element which would have favoured the development of a vernacular Mercian prose tradition.⁵³ However, his characterisation of this king seems doubtful when we consider that of the twenty-four charters preserved from his reign, twenty regard land, privileges, and tax exemptions that he granted to various abbeys, monasteries, churches and bishops in his kingdom, including Worcester.⁵⁴ In their *New Critical History of Old English Literature*, Greenfield and Donald Calder more successfully involve Alfred's recruitment of Mercian scholars in the argument for the pre-existence of a Mercian school of vernacular prose translation, referring also to the *Martyrology* and the *Life of St Chad* as likely candidates to have originated in the same context.⁵⁵

It has furthermore been suggested that ninth-century Mercian originals may form the basis of the Old England prose *Guthlac*, the *Blickling Homilies*, the *Leechbook*, and the prose texts in the *Beowulf* manuscript.⁵⁶ The language of the Blickling homilies leads Donald Scragg to believe that their origin was Mercian, as does the texts' close affinity with Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 198,

and a Worcester origin cannot be excluded, especially in the light of the links with the Worcester manuscripts Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121 and MSS Hatton 113 and 114.⁵⁷ Around the same time, in his *Study of Old English Literature*, Charles Wrenn describes the Anglo-Saxons' first steps in the craft of translation, emphasising their use of interlinear glossing: at first, in the eighth century, only 'hard words' were glossed, and then, by the ninth century 'we find evidence of interlinear glossing so completely word for word as to amount almost to literal rendering of the Latin', of which the first example happens to be the Vespasian Psalter Gloss, 'copied about the beginning of Alfred's reign from a Mercian text into a [. . .] Latin Psalter and Canticles'.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Wrenn briefly mentions the possibility that the *Life of St Chad* 'seems to look back on an already existing Mercian homiletic tradition', a possibility which he supports mainly by reference to the fact that Mercia was also the place of origin of Alfred's four English assistants.⁵⁹

Almost twenty years later, and cautious about assuming a flourishing vernacular tradition without any hard evidence, Keynes and Lapidge suppose that Mercia had 'at least some (albeit meagre) record of intellectual achievement during an otherwise barren century',⁶⁰ although they offer no particular evidence for this barrenness either. It seems reasonable to assume that the pre-existence of a scholarly tradition is a condition precedent for the production of various ninth-century vernacular writings in Mercia: the poetry of Cynewulf,⁶¹ a *Life of St Chad*, the Old English *Martyrology*, the *Dialogues*, and the Old English *Ecclesiastical History*. However, the dating and provenance of these works is more problematic than this brief assertion suggests.⁶²

With regard to Cynewulf's poems, Kenneth Sisam established a dating between the first half of the ninth century and the middle of the tenth, based on orthographical features as they are recorded in the Exeter and Vercelli Books, where the poems are preserved.⁶³ Because of accurate copying practices in the tenth century, however, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether the compilations were made at that time—or indeed in that place—or whether they are just very faithful copies of an earlier collection. For the *terminus post quem* the main argument is the spelling of the first element of the author's name as *cyne-* or *cyni-*, which renders the question of dating inextricable from that of the poems' original language. This language is regarded as being either Mercian or Northumbrian, but Sisam argues that 'the case for Mercia seems to be overwhelming', not only on the grounds that the dialect and spellings match those of the so-called 'Northumbrian Genealogies' in London, British Library, MS

Cotton Vespasian B. VI, but also, and more convincingly, because of the fact that the only bishops list that was updated was that of Lichfield, the ecclesiastical centre of the old Mercian kingdom, while for the northern sees the lists remain almost as they were first written.⁶⁴

The contents of the poems allow the dating to be refined to the ninth century. Cynewulf's *Ascension* (*Christ II*) was demonstrated by Dietrich in 1853 to draw upon Gregory's Homilies 29 (closely) and 10 (more freely paraphrased).⁶⁵ This seems to support Sisam's opinion that the poem is a product of the time when the demand for direct biblical material in the vernacular had passed its greatest urgency and the most popular themes were devotional and martyrological.⁶⁶ This is in agreement with both the Anglo-Saxon interest in Gregory's *Dialogi* and *Homiliae*, and with the themes covered by the three other vernacular works which are generally considered to be of Mercian origin: the *Martyrology*, the Old English *Ecclesiastical History*, and the *Life of St Chad*. This content-based argument is further supported by the more hypothetical results of linguistic and metrical tests.⁶⁷ It needs to be emphasised, however, that there is no compelling evidence allowing Cynewulf to be dated in more precise or more confident terms than 'probably ninth century', nor to be located with any certainty in Mercia.

The Old English version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is generally accepted to be of Mercian origin and merits association with the same stage in the development of ecclesiastical interests as the Old English *Martyrology*. Although presented as a historical work, the translator's distinct orientation towards saintly deeds and miracles is clear from the fact that, while the work omits substantial parts of Bede's Latin original, all but one of the miracle stories have been faithfully translated. The same argument can be used to demonstrate the translator's interest in Gregory the Great, which the Old English *Ecclesiastical History* has in common with other early Mercian works. Furthermore, Dorothy Whitelock argues on the grounds of language, style and content that it was most probably produced around the end of the ninth century and by a Mercian educated in a school 'similar to that which trained Bishop Wærferth'.⁶⁸ Whitelock indeed also cautiously states that although 'certain words used in the Old English Bede occur only in Mercian texts [. . .] it must be remembered that there are no comparable Northumbrian texts until nearly a century later'.⁶⁹

Another work whose Mercian origin has been generally accepted is the *Life of St Chad*. An important connection between this homily and Mercia is that Chad was most venerated in the Lichfield diocese, as is deducible from the great number of church dedications. Rudolf Vleeskruyer demonstrates in detail the

dialectal and stylistic similarity between this text and Wærferth's *Dialogues*. He theorises that there was already a 'vigorous tradition of Mercian vernacular writing' preceding, and to a large extent facilitating, Alfred's revival of learning.⁷⁰ However, he does not present any external textual or historical evidence, but extrapolates this from the very existence of these two literary texts, the exact dates of composition and provenance of which remain uncertain. To a limited extent such an extrapolation is of course valid: scholarship and literary production are necessarily preceded by the collection and copying of literary works from elsewhere, for the purpose of education, training and inspiration. Yet Vleeskruyer also asserts that Mercian was the first English dialect in which vernacular writings were produced.⁷¹ Although plausible, there is no evidence for this other than the few texts discussed, and the absence of texts in other dialects is only negative evidence.

The translation technique apparent in the Old English *Ecclesiastical History*, and to a greater extent that of the *Dialogues*, can be characterised by the use of doublets and by a striking closeness to the source, often approaching literalness. This caused Vleeskruyer to propound that the translators were probably working from interlinear glosses. This has never been corroborated, but, if correct, suggests that these works may perhaps have originated at a stage when vernacular writing had not yet advanced far enough to have more independence from the structure of the Latin original. Their clearly similar technique could, however, as Whitelock suggested, point to a particular tradition; perhaps the translators had been trained in the same centre, or possibly there was already an existing tradition, or school, producing vernacular translations.⁷² Given the image Alfred sketches of the lack of learning elsewhere, it seems tempting to imagine that this school was actually based in Worcester, or at least somewhere in south-west Mercia, but one cannot exclude the possibility that the translators were originally trained in another region altogether.

Vleeskruyer also confidently includes the Old English *Martyrology* in the group. At about the same time, Celia Sisam's more cautious article offers two plausible, but nevertheless hypothetical, explanations for the Mercian elements in the *Martyrology*: that the text may originate in Mercia and have been mainly transmitted in Wessex, or that its author may have been one of Alfred's Mercian assistants.⁷³ Almost thirty years later Günther Kotzor convincingly dealt with the matter, establishing a *terminus post quem* of around 871, supported by palaeographical evidence which allows 'eine zeitgenössige Datierung' with Alfred's version of the *Cura Pastoralis*.⁷⁴ This seems to preclude the possibility of

the Old English *Martyrology* belonging to an earlier ninth-century Mercian vernacular tradition, if such ever existed.

Several modern scholars have felt the strong inclination to trace Worcester's post-Alfredian cultural importance back into its unknown earlier history. In fact only a very limited amount of conjecture can be justified: if Wærferth translated the *Dialogi*, he must have had a reasonably good Latin education first and this may or may not have taken place in Worcester or elsewhere in south-west Mercia. As is true of many Anglo-Saxon scholars and indeed throughout the Middle Ages, Wærferth might have studied in several places, but it is inevitable that at least his long connection with Worcester as bishop (872-915) led to a significant mutual influence between himself and the learned circle in Worcester and, probably to a lesser extent, the surrounding (south-west Mercian) area. There is insufficient evidence to establish whether an actual 'School of Worcester' existed in Wærferth's time, in the sense of a tradition of translation, but the charters confirm the existence of a Worcester monastery ('monasterium Uuigornense') from 716/717 onwards.⁷⁵ In addition there were numerous other monasteries in the diocese,⁷⁶ with the bishop and the cathedral almost certainly having a *familia*.⁷⁷ It is therefore unlikely that only Wærferth was interested in religious literature. He would probably have contributed to the learning of this community with his knowledge, and possibly even with such written material as he may have gathered or produced himself while studying elsewhere. At the very least he must have had access to a copy of the Latin text of Gregory's *Dialogi*, but it cannot be the copy the Tremulous Hand used four centuries later, Cambridge, Clare College, MS 30, as this is dated to s.xi² or xi^{3/4}.⁷⁸ Irrespective of the physical place where Wærferth wrote his translation—in his bishopric or at King Alfred's court—the work either directly or indirectly originated in Worcester.

Worcester as Intellectual Centre from the Tenth Century Onwards

During the tenth and eleventh centuries Worcester was one of the principal centres of the Benedictine Reform and it is most likely that this well-known prestigious stature was a culmination of a successful tradition developed during the previous period. This level of learning strongly suggests the presence of a library (though, as said before, explicit evidence is not available). There would at least have been a respectable standard of learning prior to the tenth century, upon

which further scholarly activity could be grafted. Admittedly some reform monasteries were newly founded during the Benedictine Reform, but these could only operate with support (in the form of books and teachers) from pre-existing leading intellectual centres such as that in Worcester. Moreover, the monastery survived as the longest lasting substantial bastion of Anglo-Saxon scholarship throughout the twelfth century, a fact often attributed to the longevity of its last Anglo-Saxon bishop, Wulfstan II.⁷⁹ The speed of its library's recovery as well as the high standard to which St Wulfstan (1062-95) managed to restore it after the destruction (brought about as punishment for rebellion by Harthacnut in 1041),⁸⁰ further support the claim that it was an extensive collection, studied and enhanced by a circle of active scribes and scholars. Even in the early thirteenth century, although probably on a relatively small scale, Worcester may be regarded as one of the last strongholds of Anglo-Saxon religious literature.⁸¹ Such is indicated by the work of the anonymous 'Tremulous Hand', who worked at (or near) Worcester and who appears to have had an antiquarian interest in homiletic, devotional, penitential and medical Old English texts. Eighteen manuscripts survive which the Tremulous Hand supplied with Latin (and a few with early Middle English) glosses, probably for his own use and conceivably also for the convenience of other readers, at a time when Old English was no longer easily understood.⁸² This once more confirms the idea of how deep-rooted the interest in Anglo-Saxon scholarship was at Worcester, and of how well-stocked with Old English books its library still was. Some additional evidence that there was an ongoing interest in pre-Conquest vernacular writing in the Worcester area is provided by London, Lambeth Palace, MS 487, the contents of which presuppose that its compiler had access to a number of pre-Conquest texts including material by Wulfstan and Ælfric.⁸³

Conclusion

It is difficult to reach firm conclusions about the levels of learning in south-west Mercia before Alfred's time. From the existence and the cautious dating of the other Mercian texts that are preserved, it is possible to deduce that Alfred's four Mercian scholars, Wærferth, Plegmund, Werwulf and Æthelstan, may have been able to draw on a tradition of scholarship with a predominant interest in Gregory the Great, saints' lives and miracles.⁸⁴ There was at least some vernacular literary activity based on Latin sources before Alfred's cultural renaissance, even if it only

constituted a 'meagre record of intellectual activity'.⁸⁵ The similarities in style and translation technique between the Old English *Ecclesiastical History*, the *Life of St Chad*, and the Old English *Dialogues*, probably suggest that, if they did not originate in the same centre, they were all produced by authors with a similar education, which may or may not have taken place at Worcester. The possibility cannot be excluded that Wærferth's translation of the *Dialogi* originated as a Mercian and pre-Alfredian idea and that it was only associated with Alfred and his programme *post factum*. Alternatively Wærferth may have produced this text at Alfred's request but given the work's consistent methodology and rationale, it seems unlikely that it was written entirely independently of any pre-existing tradition of vernacular translation.

NOTES

¹ I am grateful to Eric Stanley, David Levene, Alfred Hiatt, and Iain Kerr for useful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

² Rodney M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in Worcester Cathedral Library* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001).

³ *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. by Henry Sweet, EETS o.s. 45, 50 (London: N. Trübner, 1871-2), p. 6. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

⁴ *Alfred the Great. Asser's 'Life of King Alfred' and Other Contemporary Sources*, trans. by Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), p. 259, n. 167.

⁵ Wolfgang Keller, *Die litterarischen Bestrebungen von Worcester in angelsächsischer Zeit*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach-und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, 84 (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1900); Ivor Atkins, 'The Church of Worcester from the 8th to the 12th Century', *Antiquaries Journal*, 20 (1940), 1-48 (Part I), 203-29 (Part II).

⁶ Ralph H. C. Davis, 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth', *History: The Journal of the Historical Association*, 56 (1971), 169-82; Jennifer Morrish, 'King Alfred's Letter as a Source on Learning', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose. Sixteen Original Contributions*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 87-107. Stenton, on the other hand, accords Alfred and his cultural achievements much more credit: Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford History of England, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 269-72. The 'mære mynster' also apparently escaped the Vikings; according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Wilfrid had it built at Ripon and it stood until 948, when King Eadred had it burnt down: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Vol. 6, MS. D*, ed. by G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996), *sub anno* 948.

⁷ *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Sweet, p. 2.

⁸ Davis, 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth', p. 175.

⁹ The close relationship between Mercia and Wessex especially during Alfred's reign is thoroughly discussed in Simon Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in *Kings, Currency and Alliances. History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, ed. by Mark A. S. Blackburn and David N. Dumville (Rochester: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 1-45.

¹⁰ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), repr. with an article on 'Recent Work on Asser's Life of Alfred', by Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), chapters 78-9.

¹¹ See Thomas Codrington, *Roman Roads in Britain* (London: SPCK, 1903), maps pp. 273 and 331, and Peter Salway, *Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), map VI.

¹² The Vikings did venture into the Bristol Channel, and camped on a few islands (Lundy, Flatholme and Steepholme), but the coast was too inaccessible, offering few natural harbours, and it was too far from other main areas of refuge for them to carry out systematic large-scale raids. They never managed to sail far enough up the Severn to reach Worcester.

¹³ *Cartularium saxonicum: A Collection of Charters Relating to Anglo-Saxon History*, ed. by Walter de Gray Birch, 3 vols (London: Whiting, 1885-93), I-II, and Peter H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters. An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968).

¹⁴ Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 192-7.

¹⁵ *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I-II and Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*. Keynes discusses how in 877, when the Vikings conquered eastern Mercia, the western part remained under Ceolwulf's control, evidence for which can be found in the Mercian regnal list in London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. XIII, fol. 114v; Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', p. 12.

¹⁶ Peter Hunter-Blair, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 313 and 351. See also Ivor Atkins, 'The Church of Worcester from the 8th to the 12th Century', *Antiquaries Journal*, 20 (1940), 1-48 (Part I), 203-29 (Part II).

¹⁷ *Asser*, ed. by Stevenson, chapter 77, lines 1-18.

¹⁸ *Pastoral Care*, ed. by Sweet, pp. 2-5. The use of the term as a significant indication of Alfred's ideology is discussed by Sarah Foot, 'The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, ser. 6, 6 (1996), p. 29, n. 25, and pp. 41-2. Keynes suggests that Asser's emphasis on 'Saxon' language and literature (chapters 23, 75, 76) can probably be explained as 'a Welshman's idiom for what [Alfred] would have called "English"'; Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', p. 25, n. 112 and p. 43.

¹⁹ Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', pp. 1-45. This article also includes a discussion of the Mercian element in Alfred's court culture.

²⁰ Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 186.

²¹ All that can be said with certainty is that he acceded in 691 and died after August 693. No independently recorded date is available for his successor Ecgbwine (died 30 Dec 717): *Handbook of British Chronology*, ed. by Fryde *et al.*, p. 223.

²² *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and Roger A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 408-10, IV.23 (emphasis added).

²³ The Greek patristic authorities which underlie the Antiochene school, and thus also these commentaries, were not normally accessible to scholars in the medieval west. Medieval exegesis (for example Gregory and Bede) was therefore almost universally allegorical in its orientation: *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian*, ed.

by Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 243-74, esp. pp. 244 and 247; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 102 and 184.

²⁴ See Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 188. Hecht was the first to notice this similarity: Hans Hecht, *Bischof Wærferths von Worcester Übersetzung der 'Dialoge' Gregors des Grossen: Einleitung*, 2 vols (Hamburg: Wigand, 1907), II 37.

²⁵ For Benedict Biscop's acquisition of books ample evidence is provided in Bede's *Lives of Abbots*, in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), I 367 (chapter 4): '[. . .] tertiam [. . .] Romam iter [. . .] solita prosperitate conpleuit librosque omnis diuinae eruditionis non paucos uel placito praetio emptos, uel amicorum dono largitos retulit' [He (Benedict Biscop) completed his third trip to Rome with his usual success and brought back a considerable number of books regarding all sorts of sacred erudition, some of which he had acquired for a favourable price and some of which friends had given him as a gift.]; I 368-9 (chapter 6): '[. . .] Romanis e finibus [. . .] innumerabilem librorum omnis generis copiam adportauit' [from Rome [. . .] he (Benedict Biscop) imported an inestimable abundance of books of all kinds]; I 373 (chapter 9): '[. . .] quinta vice [. . .] Romam adcurrrens, innumeris sicut semper aecclesiasticorum donis commodorum locupletatus rediit; magna quidem copia uoluminum sacrorum' [He (Benedict Biscop) went to Rome for the fifth time, and returned as always laden with uncountable gifts of ecclesiastical commodities; there was indeed a great abundance of sacred volumes]. See also the anonymous *Historia Abbatum*, also included in the collection *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. by Plummer, I 395 (chapter 20) 'et bibliothecam, quam de Roma uel ipse, uel Benedictus adtulerat, nobiliter ampliavit' [He (St Ceolfrith) made generous additions to the library which he and Benedict had accumulated from Rome]. Æthelwald describes in a short poem how many books by divinely inspired prophets and apostles were brought back from Rome to England (*Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. by Rudolph Ehwald, MGH Auctores antiquissimi, 15 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919), p. 531). Bede also indicates that pilgrims travelling to Rome were expected to bring back books or relics; *Beda's Venerabilis Opera, pars 2 Opera exegetica: 3 in Lucae evangelium expositio; in Marci evangelium expositio*, ed. by David Hurst, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 120 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960), p. 93 (I.13). See also Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 187-94.

²⁶ *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I, no. 75: Grant by Æthelred, King of the Mercians, to Otfor, Bishop of Worcester, of land at Heanbury, co. Worcester etc. AD 691-2; no. 76: Grant by Æthelred, King of the Mercians, to Otfor, Bishop of Worcester, of land at Fledanburg, or Fladbury, co. Worcester etc. AD 691-2; no. 77. Grant by Æthelred, King of the Mercians, to Worcester Cathedral, of land at Wichbold, co. Worcester, in reversion AD 691-2 (respectively Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, nos. 77, 76, 75). In the last charter Otfor is not

explicitly named, but as it originates during his episcopate his influence is likely to have played a role.

²⁷ Bede reports in his *Historia abbatum*, ch. 15, that Ceolfrith, Abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, sold a high status manuscript for eight hides to King Aldfrith: '[D]ato quoque Cosmographiorum codice mirandi operis, quem Romae Benedictus emerat, *terram octo familiarum* iuxta fluuium Fresca ab Alfrido rege in scripturis doctissimo in possessionem monasterii beati Pauli apostoli comparauit' [From Alfred, a king very learned in the Scripture, he also received an admirably crafted codex of the Cosmographers, which Benedictus had purchased in Rome. In exchange he acquired for the monastery of St Paul eight hides of land adjacent to the river Fresca.]; *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. by Plummer, I 380 (emphasis added).

²⁸ Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 188.

²⁹ Given that the leadership of double monasteries was almost always in the hands of abbesses rather than abbots, Brooks's suggestion that the author may well have been a nun should be granted more prominence: Nicholas Brooks, 'Bede and the English', Jarrow Lecture 1999 (Jarrow: [s.n.], 2000), p. 19. In the debate on the precise location of Streoneshealh—whether it be Whitby or Strensall near York—Fell, Cramp, and Blair are of the opinion that the linguistic arguments in favour of identifying Streoneshealh with Strensall do not weigh up against the archaeological evidence discovered at Whitby, which amply demonstrates that there was a literate community: Christine Fell, 'Hild, Abbess of Streonæshalch', in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature. A Symposium*, ed. by Hans Bekker-Nelsen *et al.* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 76-99 (pp. 84-5); Rosemary Cramp, 'A Reconsideration of the Monastic Site of Whitby', in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland*, ed. by R. M. Spearman and John Higgitt (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland; Stroud: Sutton, 1993), pp. 64-73 (p. 64); John Blair, 'Whitby', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge *et al.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 472-3 (p. 472). However, Karkov appears less certain, stating that '[i]t is unclear whether the site identified by Bede and his contemporaries as Streanæshalch is the site now called Whitby, although no satisfactory alternatives have been suggested': Catherine E. Karkov, 'Whitby, Jarrow and the Commemoration of Death in Northumbria', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), pp. 126-35 (p. 126). Since no firm conclusion has been reached regarding the precise location of Streoneshealh, I refer to this text as 'the Streoneshealh vita'.

³⁰ *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave, rev. edn (Cambridge: University Press, 1985), pp. 116-18; *Bischofs Wærferth von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des grossen*, ed. by Hans Hecht, 2 vols (Leipzig: Wigand, 1900-7), I 94.

³¹ The John of Worcester marginalia (Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 4. 6, 233r and 244v) are printed and discussed by W. Levison, 'Aus englischen Bibliotheken II: Englische Handschriften des Liber Pontificalis', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 35 (1910), 333-431 (p. 426), and summarized by *The Earliest Life*, ed. by Colgrave, p. 159, n. 120. Sims-Williams suggests that Whitelock (Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Prose of Alfred's Reign', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. by Eric G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 67-103, p. 72) was mistaken in dating the marginalia as late twelfth-century; *Religion and Literature*, p. 188, n. 52. The hand was attributed to William of Malmesbury by Montague R. James, *Two Ancient English Scholars: St. Aldhelm and William of Malmesbury* (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie, 1931), p. 21, but has subsequently been ascribed to John of Worcester. See Neil R. Ker, *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage*, ed. by Andrew G. Watson (London: Hambledon, 1985), pp. 65-6; Rodney M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987), pp. 75, 122 and 172; and Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his Contemporaries', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. by Ralph H. C. Davis and John M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 101-26 (p. 105, n. 2).

³² The emendations are taken from readings offered by London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho C. I part 2, as printed in Hecht's critical apparatus. The superiority of the Cotton Otho text over the Cambridge version has been cogently argued by Pieter N. U. Harting, 'The Text of the Old English Translation of Gregory's *Dialogues*', *Neophilologus*, 22 (1937), 281-302.

³³ In a forthcoming article I will discuss my emendation 'lucerna<m>' and other textual problems of this passage. I am grateful to David Levene for his advice in this matter.

³⁴ The emendation 'reple[vit]' (from 'replete' as printed by Levison in his 'Aus englischen Bibliotheken II', p. 426) is my own and its reasons are discussed in a forthcoming article.

³⁵ Michael Lapidge, 'The Study of Greek at the School of Canterbury in the Seventh Century', in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Michael W. Herren (London: King's College, 1988), pp. 169-94.

³⁶ Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 187.

³⁷ Mechthild Gretsch, 'Ælfric and Gregory the Great', in *Ælfric's Lives of Canonised Popes*, ed. by Donald Scragg (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), pp. 20-1, 40 and 51.

³⁸ Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 188.

³⁹ *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I, no. 235 (Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, no. 118). For a more detailed discussion regarding the authenticity of this charter, see Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 182-3.

⁴⁰ For an extremely useful introduction to the current understanding of Worcester Cathedral library, see Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in*

Worcester (p. xx); Cuthbert H. Turner, *Early Worcester MSS* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), pp. xli-xlii; *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Wigorniensis, made in 1622-1623 by Patrick Young, Librarian to King James I*, ed. by Ivor Atkins and Neil R. Ker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), pp. 77-9.

⁴¹ The fragments are respectively Worcester, Cathedral Library, MSS Additional 1, 2, 4 and 5. See Turner, *Early Worcester MSS*, pp. vii-viii, x-xviii, and xxiv-xxvii; and *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin MSS Prior to the Ninth Century*, ed. by Elias Avery Lowe, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1934-72), Suppl. no. 1777.

⁴² Young incorrectly describes Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 76 as '*Dialogi Gregorii translati ab AElfredo in linguam saxoniam*' (Gregory's *Dialogues* translated by Alfred into the Saxon language): *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Wigorniensis* [...] by Patrick Young, ed. by Atkins and Ker, p. 57 (emphasis added).

⁴³ Alicia Corrêa, 'The Liturgical Manuscripts of Oswald's Houses', in *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. by Nicholas Brooks and Catherine Cubitt (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 285-324 (pp. 288-92).

⁴⁴ Richard Gameson, 'Book Production and Decoration at Worcester in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in *St Oswald of Worcester*, ed. by Brooks and Cubitt, pp. 194-243 and Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts*, p. xxii.

⁴⁵ Michael Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies presented to Peter Clemoes*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985), pp. 33-89 (pp. 62-4).

⁴⁶ Christine Franzen, *The Tremulous Hand of Worcester. A Study of Old English in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 75 and 77.

⁴⁷ Lapidge, 'Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 69-73.

⁴⁸ Franzen, *The Tremulous Hand of Worcester*, p. 78. The list was first printed in Kenneth Sisam, 'An Old English Translation of a Letter from Wynfrith to Eadburga (A.D. 716-17) in Cotton MS. Otho C. i', in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 199-224 (pp. 201-2), p. 204, n. 2. See also Neil R. Ker, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 237.

⁴⁹ Franzen, *The Tremulous Hand of Worcester*, p. 78.

⁵⁰ The 'synonyma ysydori', which refers to Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma de lamentatione animae peccatricis* was referred to by Ker in the citation of glosses in three manuscripts: Ker, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts*, nos. 210, 228 and 400.

⁵¹ Mary Swan, 'Mobile Libraries: Old English manuscript production in Worcester and the West Midlands, 1090-1215', paper due to be published in the proceedings of the conference 'Manuscripts of the West Midlands' (held at Westmere, University of Birmingham, 4th-6th April 2003).

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⁵² Hunter-Blair, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 304. Keller, *Die litterarischen Bestrebungen von Worcester*, p. 4.

⁵³ Stanley B. Greenfield, *A Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 26.

⁵⁴ *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I; and Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*.

⁵⁵ Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, 'The Alfredian Translations and Related Ninth-Century Texts', in *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), pp. 38-67 (p. 62).

⁵⁶ Greenfield and Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*, p. 63.

⁵⁷ From the differences in language and textual tradition between the Blickling Homilies and those of the Vercelli book, Scragg deduces that '[i]t is probably safe to conclude that [the former are] not of south-eastern origin': Donald G. Scragg, 'The Homilies of the Blickling Manuscript', in *Learning and Literature*, ed. by Lapidge and Gneuss, pp. 299-316 (p. 315). For a detailed discussion of the dialect used in the Blickling homilies, see Robert J. Menner, 'The Anglian Vocabulary of the Blickling Homilies', in *Philologica: the Malone Anniversary Studies*, ed. by Thomas A. Kirby and Henry B. Woolf (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), pp. 56-64; *The Life of St Chad: An Old English Homily*, ed. by Rudolf Vleeskruyer (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1953), esp. pp. 39-71; and Otto Funke, 'Studien zur alliterierenden und rhythmisierenden Prosa in der älteren altenglischen Homiletik', *Anglia*, 53 (1962), 9-36. For some reservations about Vleeskruyer's Mercian and early dating enthusiasm, see Celia Sisam, 'Review of: *The Life of St. Chad*, ed. Rudolf Vleeskruyer (Amsterdam, 1953)', *Review of English Studies*, 6 (1955), 302-3.

⁵⁸ Charles L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (London: Harrap, 1967), p. 200. The Vespasian Psalter gloss has been dated to the mid-ninth century.

⁵⁹ Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature*, p. 222.

⁶⁰ *Alfred the Great*, trans. by Keynes and Lapidge, p. 259, n. 167.

⁶¹ Kenneth Sisam, 'Cynewulf and his Poetry', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 18 (1933), repr. in *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 1-28.

⁶² This is discussed in detail by Janet M. Bately, 'Old English Prose Before and During the Reign of Alfred', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 17 (1988), 93-138, esp. pp. 104-14.

⁶³ Sisam, 'Cynewulf and his Poetry', pp. 1-2.

⁶⁴ Sisam, 'Cynewulf and his Poetry', pp. 5-6.

⁶⁵ Exeter book fol. 34 line 18 to fol. 48 corresponds to Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelium*, PL 76, 29.9-11 (col. 1218); Dietrich, 'Cynewulfs Christ', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 9 (1853), 193-214 (pp. 204 and 212).

⁶⁶ Sisam, 'Cynewulf and his Poetry', p. 13.

⁶⁷ Sisam, 'Cynewulf and his Poetry', pp. 6-7.

⁶⁸ Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 48 (1962), p. 76.

⁶⁹ Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', p. 76 and n. 6, p. 249.

⁷⁰ *The Life of St Chad*, ed. by Vleeskruyer, pp. 19 and 41, and more explicitly p. 61: 'The number of texts that can with varying certainty be referred to an independent, and probably in the main pre-Alfredian, tradition of English prose-writing is thus significantly large'.

⁷¹ *The Life of St Chad*, ed. by Vleeskruyer, esp. pp. 48-50.

⁷² Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', p. 76.

⁷³ Celia Sisam, 'An Early Fragment of the Old English *Martyrology*', *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 4 (1953), 209-20. She names Plegmund as the possible translator (p. 217).

⁷⁴ *Martyrologium Anglo-Saxonicum*, ed. by Günter Kotzor, 2 vols (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), I 53-4.

⁷⁵ *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I, no. 137 (716 x 717), no. 204 (770), no. 226 (775 x 778), no. 233 (779), no. 283 (781 x 798) (respectively Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, nos. 102, 60, 145, 126, 1413).

⁷⁶ *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I-II and Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*.

⁷⁷ Royal grants of land and privileges to the Cathedral and the See of Worcester are attested in the charters; *Cartularium saxonicum*, ed. by Birch, I, no. 123 (704 x 709), no. 216 (774), no. 220 (757 x 775), no. 231 (778 x 779), no. 234 (730 for 780), no. 235 (783), no. 239 (781), no. 240 (781) (respectively Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, nos. 64, 104, 1411, 147, 117, 118, 120, 121).

⁷⁸ Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), p. 30.

⁷⁹ Anne Dawtry, 'The Benedictine Revival in the North: the Last Bulwark of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism?', in *Religion and National Identity*, ed. by Stuart Mews (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), pp. 87-98 (pp. 88 and 98). Old English manuscripts also continued to be produced in Rochester throughout the twelfth century but a smaller quantity survives than from Worcester. See Mary P. Richards, 'Texts and Their Traditions in the Medieval Library of Rochester Cathedral Priory', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 78 (1988), i-ix, 1-129 (see pp. 9 and 19 for the continuation of interest in works by Gregory the Great and p. 90 for Rochester's interest in Old English homilies, especially by Ælfric) and Susan Irvine, 'The Compilation and Use of Manuscripts Containing Old English in the Twelfth Century', in *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Mary Swan and Elaine M. Treharne, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 41-61.

Levels of Learning in Anglo-Saxon Worcester

⁸⁰ For the state of the library during Wulfstan's episcopate see Emma Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester c. 1008-1095* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 1-28. The destruction of Worcester monastery at the command of Harthacnut, which could reasonably be assumed to imply extensive damage to the library, is reported in the *ASC* for the year 1041: 'Her let Harðacnut hergian eall Wihracestrescire for his twegra huscarla þingon, ðe þæt strange gyld budon. Þa sloh þæt folc hi binnan port innan ðam mynstre.' [In this year Harthacnut had all of Worcestershire harried because of his two housecarls who had been collecting heavy taxes. The people had slain them then in the town, inside the cathedral]: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Vol. 5, MS. C*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001). This passage also occurs in the related *Chronicle* manuscript D: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Vol. 6, MS. D*, ed. by G. P. Cubbin.

⁸¹ Of course other cultural centres took an interest in the Anglo-Saxon past. Crick discusses how the monks of St Albans forged charters in the name of Offa and how those of Westminster studied other archives in order to remedy the gaps in their records of Anglo-Saxon history: Julia Crick, 'St. Albans, Westminster and Some Twelfth-century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past', in *Anglo-Norman Studies, XXV: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 2002*, ed. by John Gillingham (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 65-83. For an overview of current research on post-Conquest interest in the Anglo-Saxon past and specifically Old English literary material, see *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Swan and Treharne.

⁸² For a detailed study of this scribe's methods and rationale, and for the phases in his work, see Franzen, *The Tremulous Hand of Worcester*.

⁸³ For a description of MS Lambeth 487 see *Wulfstan Texts and Other Homiletic Materials*, ed. by Jonathan Wilcox (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), pp. 72-8 (pp. 72 and 75-6).

⁸⁴ Mason points out that this was still the case in the eleventh century under the bishopric of Wulfstan; Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester*, p. 159.

⁸⁵ *Alfred the Great*, trans. by Keynes and Lapidge, p. 259, n. 167.

Revenge and Moderation: The Church and Vengeance in Medieval Iceland¹

David Clark

Introduction

Although the New Testament clearly prohibits Christians from taking personal revenge, Christian societies—whether in first-century Palestine, medieval Europe, or contemporary North America—have always found this a difficult prohibition to observe, and, indeed, individuals and institutions have often cited other parts of the Bible to legitimise vengeful acts. This article considers the changing attitudes to clerical and secular vengeance in medieval Iceland. It adduces evidence from a range of legal, political, and ecclesiastical documents to contextualise a study of the representation of revenge in family and contemporary sagas in the light of ecclesiastical precepts. The analysis points to a growing perception that secular revenge must be tempered with moderation, and that clerics should not involve themselves in acts of vengeance. Within the sagas, religious figures are employed variously as the voice of the Church, and as those implicated in the turmoil of the *Sturlunga öld*.

Revenge and Reconciliation: A Context

T. M. Andersson concludes his landmark study 'The Displacement of the Heroic Ideal in the Family Sagas' by stating that:

What gives a consistency to the ethical temper of these sagas is precisely a sense of proportion and moderation. They are written against excess [. . .] or they are written in praise of moderation [. . .] Most other sagas [. . .] conform to the same ideal.²

A more nuanced approach is that of Uecker, who also sees in the saga corpus, however, a tendency toward moderation and reconciliation (*Maßvollen, Angemessenen, Versöhnung*).³ In the course of his discussion of his four groups of sagas, Uecker speaks of those, like *Þorsteins saga hvíta*, which deal with magnanimity, forgiveness, and a will to reconciliation. *Vápnfirðinga saga* also, in his view, validates the impulse toward reconciliation, not the ethic of revenge:

Die Versöhnung triumphiert, nicht die Rache, der Wille zum Ausgleich ist stärker als der Drang zur gewaltsamen Auseinandersetzung. (84)

[Reconciliation, not vengeance, triumphs; the will toward equilibrium is stronger than the urge toward violent confrontation.]

Although Uecker traces similar themes of reconciliation through texts such as *Þorsteins þáttir stangarhøggs*, *Droplaugarsonar saga*, *Gunnars þáttir Þiðrandabana*, *Bjarnar saga Hítðlakappa*, *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Reykðæla saga*, and *Valla-Ljóts saga*, he does not attempt to homogenise these disparate texts like Andersson, rather recognising that, though reconciliation and *das rechte Maß* play a significant role in all such sagas, the themes do not always carry the same weight, and there are different motives for reconciliation such as pragmatic political reasons (86-7). His conclusion does not come to a decision about where this theme comes from—he suggests that it could stem from Christian values, or represent a critique of the contemporary chieftains of the thirteenth century, or even 'eine literarisch fixierte Gegenposition zur Heldendichtung' (87) [a position fixed in literature in opposition to the heroic poetry].

Political, Legal, and Religious Attitudes to Revenge

There is, in fact, a tendency in some critical saga studies to speak of texts such as *Brennu-Njáls saga* as depicting the change from the old, pagan ethic of revenge to the new, Christian ethic of forgiveness and grace.⁴ However, this conception cannot always be supported by the texts themselves, as is shown below. First, however, this article addresses some of the evidence for contemporary society's attitudes to revenge, as seen in the arenas of politics, law, and religion. This material both supports and complicates the above interpretation of the revenge

ethic in the sagas, and paves the way for the analysis of individual saga texts which follows.

Christian Revenge?

One might expect the Icelandic Church's attitude to revenge to follow that of the Bible, perhaps based on such passages as in Romans 12:19, where the Apostle Paul (quoting Deuteronomy 32:35) says:

Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath, for it is written: Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.⁵

Indeed, this seems to be the attitude in parts of the *Homilíubók*:

Dominus let eige hefna sín ne veria síc þa es hann vas hondlaþr. oc bunden af gyþingom. heldr grødde hann eyra þræls eins er petrus hafþe af hogvet... hversu megom vér verþa liþer crists. ef vér georom oss apra goto en hann geck fyrer.⁶

[The Lord did not let himself be avenged nor defended when he was seized and bound by the Jews. Rather he healed the ear of a certain slave which Peter had cut off [. . .] How can we become Christ's followers, if we take a different path from the one he took?]

Here, Christ's behaviour serves as an *exemplum* for Christians, and forgiveness and kindness, not revenge, is what is expected of the Christian. However, the picture is inevitably much more complicated than this in medieval Iceland and Scandinavia. That revenge will be exercised to some degree is taken for granted in secular Norse texts.

Revenge in the Konungs skuggsjá

The authoritative 'Father' of the mid-thirteenth-century *Konungs skuggsjá* recognises that revenge is in certain circumstances inevitable, and is most concerned that it should achieve its aims efficiently:

En þo at navzynligar sacar þreyngve þec til uspectar þa gersc þu eigi braðr ihemdom fyrr en þu ser at uel uerði framgengt ok þar come niðr sem maklect er.⁷

[But though necessary causes press you to strife, do not take revenge hastily before you see that it will succeed well and come down where it is deserved.]

However, later on, in the context of advice on wisdom, Father urges circumspection:

æf þær sannaz oc kœmr til þin hæfnder firir at vinna þa hæfn mæðr hofi oc sannsyni en ægi mæðr illgiarnligri akefð.⁸

[if [rumours of slander] prove true and it comes to you to avenge it, then take revenge with moderation and equity, but not with ill-willed vehemence.]

A fuller study of revenge in the whole of the *Konungs skuggsjá* reveals that revenge is considered to be unacceptable if taken by justly exiled subjects against their lord (p. 53), including Lucifer and the fallen angels (p. 80), or by foolish kinsmen who are aggrieved at not getting as much compensation for a greedy or quarrelsome relative as for a kinsman who was both wise and peaceful (p. 54).⁹

Vengeance is, however, approved if it is carried out by God—for instance, against the rebellious angels (p. 85), the greedy and unjust (p. 102), or those who die in a state of sin, as Hezekiah fears he may (p. 91)—or a representative sanctioned by Him, such as a king. Father justifies this by arguing that fear of punishment is an effective deterrent (p. 107). The king, however, cannot act with impunity—King David takes revenge (*hæfnd*) on the slayers of Ishbosheth, saying they have committed *niðings værc*, 'a vile deed', in slaying their lord, and his punishment is implicitly commended (§62, p. 107). However, his predecessor Saul's rejection occurs because he carries out the vengeance he is charged to wreak upon the Amalekites in a way not sanctioned by God (§63, p. 109f.). David twice refuses to harm the rejected Saul, saying first that he has no (implicitly justifiable) revenge to take for kinsmen ('faður [. . .] ne bræðra ne ængara annarra [. . .] frænda', §63, p. 113), and that it is God's place to deprive Saul of the kingship, and not David in 'avaricious boldness' (*agirndligri dirfð*, p. 113). The second statement is even more revealing in its implications:

þar sœm ec a hvarki at minnaz til hœmnda við hann storra rana ne frœnda latz nema þeira æinna at hann hæfir reinsat land mæð rettre ræfsing. oc er þat hvarki mitt oc ænskis annars rett værk at hæfna þæss. (p. 114)

[since I do not have to remember to avenge upon him either great plundering or loss of kinsmen, except those [things] alone when he cleansed the land with just punishment—and it is neither my nor any other's just work to avenge that.]

Thus, one may conclude that revenge under certain circumstances for loss of land, possessions, or kinsmen, *is* conceivable. A king's revenge against ambitious rivals is likewise implicitly sanctioned (as Solomon's against Adonijah, p. 119), but if the king takes the law into his own hands and kills out of hatred, it is considered *mandrap* as with anyone else, and he is liable to *svara* [. . .] *firi guði*, 'answer [. . .] before God' (p. 124).

Since much of this seems particularly relevant to Christian kings, we may return finally to the second passage quoted in this section, where circumspection is advised in the taking of revenge. Immediately previous to this statement, the Father says

Ef þu ert æinum hværium reiðr firir noccors konar fiandskap eða sakar þa rannzaka vandliga ihugþocca þinum fyrr en þu leitir hæfnda hværso mykel soc er eða hværso mikillar hæfndar su soc er værð. (p. 66)

[If you are angry with any individual for some kind of enmity or lawsuit, then carefully search your disposition before you seek vengeance [as to] how great a matter it is, or how great a revenge this offence is worth.]

It is therefore clear that though the authoritative speaker of the *Konungs skuggsjá*, at least, sees revenge as inevitable and indeed commendable in certain circumstances of individual injury, he nonetheless urges caution and moderation.¹⁰ However, it remains to be seen whether this attitude can be reconciled with the picture given by the extant law-codes of the period.

Revenge in the Law-codes

Since a complete study of vengeance in the Norse law-codes is impracticable here, I seek briefly to survey the contexts of the terms *hefna* (alt. *hemna*, *hæmna*), and *hefnd* (alt. *hæmd*) as used in the collection *Norges gamle love*.¹¹ These codes come from various periods and places, and any full study would have to examine in detail the evidence for Icelandic legal attitudes to vengeance.¹² However, it is evident that, as with any system of laws, the texts are influenced by, and often copy closely, the precedent and wording of those legal texts already extant, and it thus seems permissible to take the corpus as a whole as representative of prevailing legal attitudes to revenge, in a way not possible with other types of text. It should be remembered that law-codes are frequently not just prescriptive but also idealistic, rather than representing the actual historical situation, or describing accurately what was done in response to crimes.

The use of *hefna* / *hefnd* falls into only a few main groups. One can dismiss first the instances where they are employed merely as a synonym for punishment, as in *kononglige hemd*, 'kingly revenge'.¹³ The second group of instances concern the avenging of certain criminals, which is universally condemned. *Gulathing* §178 states 'þat er oc niðings vig ef maðr hefñir þiova. syni með settar eiði' [It is also a base killing if a man avenges a thief—let him deny it with a sixfold oath].¹⁴ The penalty is exile as an outlaw with no rights, and one may compare to this statute *Gulathingslov* §32, which lists criminals suffering permanent outlawry and forfeiture of all rights to property and peace, including

'þeir er hemnast þessara ubota manna. æða heimta giolld efter ef vitni veit þat'. [Those who avenge these irredeemable criminals, or claim compensation for them, if witnesses know it.]¹⁵

Conversely, those who defend themselves, their property or their kinswomen against these men are *fríðhelger*, 'inviolable, protected by law', and need pay no compensation if they wound or kill the outlaws—*Frostathing* V, §45, repeats these statements.

Bjarkö-Ret §162 (and likewise *Frostathing* X, §35) reveals the great importance and power of words, providing a detailed list of payments to be made to men of various ranks if they are compared *við berendi*, 'to a female animal'. Calling a man *sannsorðinn*, 'buggered' demands full atonement

(*fullrétti*), but comparison to a male animal necessitates only half atonement (*hálfrétti*), and the statute ends:

En ef menn mælast illa við eða geyast. þá skal orð orðs hefna.
(*NGL* I 333)

[But if men speak ill of each other or abuse each other, then shall word avenge word.]

The Gulathing code speaks of two occasions when it is 'good' for someone to be avenged. The first statute (§152) states 'ef maðr er i flokke viginn. þa er vel ef hemt verðr' (*NGL* I 60) [If a man is slain in a crowd, then it is well that he be avenged]. It goes on to specify what should happen if the killer gets away—none must hinder his pursuit and capture, and if anyone does and is killed, then the fallen man is to be considered an outlaw, that is, he himself cannot be avenged because he obstructed vengeance for another. The second statute (§171) states:

Ef maðr vigr annan a skipi. þa er vel ef hans er hemt. æða utanborðz rundit mannbana. (*NGL* I 65)

[If a man kills another on a ship, then it is well if he is avenged, or the man-slayer made to run overboard.]

The crew is permitted to take the killer to the shore, but no further, upon penalty of a fine. If they take him out to sea with them, they are outlawed with him, and anyone who refuses to row while he is on board cannot be punished if they report the situation to the first people they meet. These statutes presumably attempt to combat lawlessness in situations (in crowds, on board ship) which were difficult for authorities to control directly.

The introduction to the Frostathing code clarifies in detail the procedure in situations that were evidently proving complicated, sometimes through the abuse of legal loopholes. Section 6 of the introduction states that if a man wounds without reason, or an injury necessitates full atonement, but revenge is taken by the victim or his kinsmen before the offender can offer atonement, then the offender is still considered to be an outlaw, even if he is killed, because he *fyrri braut friðin*, 'broke the peace first', unless his is judged a special case. However, once he has offered full atonement, then anyone who kills him is punished with outlawry. Provision is made, however, for those who trust to their wealth or kinsmen to allow them to injure an innocent man a second time, and the victim

need only accept atonement if he wishes, and remains in the king's peace 'þó at hann hemni sín. hvárt sem hinn daur eða lifnar' (*NGL* I 122) [Though he avenges himself, whether the other lives or dies].

Similarly, section 8 of the introduction addresses a problem that had arisen, whereby a slain man's kinsmen would kill in revenge not the offender himself, but that member of the offender's family *er beztr er*, 'who is best, foremost', presumably because this would cause the family more harm and weaken its power base. Consequently, the offender was not punished for his crime, an innocent man suffered, and the country lost some of its *beztu þegna*, 'best thanes':

oc fyrir því leggium ver við þetta úbóta sök oc aleigumál hverium þeim sem hefnir á öðrum en þeim er drepa eða ræðr. (*NGL* I 123)
[And therefore we designate this an irredeemable offence and an entire property case for the one who takes revenge on another than the one who kills or plans (the killing).]

This is comparable to the *Nyere By-Lov*, §3, which states 'Þat er oc niðings værk ef maðr hæfnizt a öðrum en þæim er gerer eða ræðr' (*NGL* II 212). [It is also a vile action if a man takes revenge on anyone other than the one who acts or plots.] Finally, section 5 of the introduction provides for the situation where a man outlawed for killing abuses the king's pardon by refusing to pay the remaining price of atonement after being permitted to remain in the land:

þá megu frændr hins dauða hefna á honum. þó at hann sé sátrr við konung. svá at þeir verði eigi útlægir þó at þeir drepri hann. (*NGL* I 122)
[Then the kinsmen of the dead man may take revenge on him although he is reconciled with the king, such that they will not become outlaws though they kill him.]

Similarly, the law already allowed a man to kill another who had unlawful sex with a woman of his immediate family, thus dishonouring him. In section 7 of the introduction, however, the Frostathing law further states that, if the offender refuses to defend himself against any legal action 'þá verðr hvárgi útlagr þó at hinn hefniz þeirrar scammar' (*ibid.*) [Then there will be no outlawry, though that one (the offended man) avenges himself for the disgrace].

This might seem to indicate an attitude more of tolerance than enthusiasm for legal compensation, with the default feeling being that, if compensation or the law is not providing satisfaction, revenge is there to turn to—possibly borne out by *Gulathing* §186, which warns 'Nu a engi maðr rett a sér oftarr en þrýsvar. hvarke karl. ne kona. ef hann hemnise eigi a milli' (*NGL* I 68) [No one has a claim to redress more often than three times, neither man nor woman, if he does not avenge himself in between]. Monetary compensation was becoming increasingly more acceptable as the wergeld system developed, but revenge was evidently still an ever-present thought in some minds.

The growing complexity of this situation, where recourse was sometimes had to revenge, sometimes to compensation, is epitomised by a long passage in King Magnús Hákonsson's *Nyere Landslov*, paralleled almost word for word in *Jónsbók* chapter 21 and the *Nyere By-Lov* §21, and shows clearly an attempt to bring the alternation of offence and revenge under due legal process and the control of the king's officials.¹⁶ Careful provision is made against official neglect, or corruption, and a pragmatic view is taken of the taking of personal revenge if legal justice is not brought about. There is a very clear sense that an offence requires the appropriate retribution, preferably a legally controlled and reasoned fine, but, if that should not be forthcoming, then an equal act of revenge. This sense is the same as that in *Hertug Haakon Magnussöns store Retterbod for Hedemarken og Thoten* §6, which states that, if revenge is taken by innocent victims, 'ok værðær hæmden æi mæiri en hin hafde til gort aðr. þa skal sa vera saklaus er hæmdizst sin' (*NGL* III 21) [And no more revenge occurs than that one had done before, then that one shall be guiltless who avenges himself].

Finally, in this survey of these secular law-codes, a statement in King Magnús Hákonsson's *Hirðskrá* (*Hirdskraa*) provides a close parallel to one of those quoted from the *Konungs skuggsiá*, stating:

Þo at þer misliki [nokor lutr þa ver [æighi braðr hælld(r) forseall
huat hæfnd [er þu at að væita eða huerium oc at æigi værðe
ofhæfnt [eða a uverðugum. (*NGL* II 418, §28)

[Though some thing displeases you then be not hasty, rather
prudent (as to) what revenge you have to inflict, or on whom, and
(such) that it is not excessively avenged or undeservedly.]

Again, the greatest importance is placed on moderation and a sense of justice based on equality of crime and punishment. We see in these examples of

sanctioned and unjustified revenge in both political and secular legal texts the various distinctions that medieval Christianised Scandinavians were able to draw with regard to this subject. These texts, however, refer primarily to individual, secular revenge—it is a different matter when it comes to the involvement of clerics in vengeance and litigation.

Revenge in the Church

Orri Vésteinsson's recent detailed study *The Christianization of Iceland* makes very clear how the early period in the Icelandic Church saw the gradual disentanglement of ecclesiastical and secular power.¹⁷ At the beginning of the period, clerics were heavily involved in legal prosecutions and the overseeing of fighting, or even participated in fighting themselves. Orri details the legal dealings of Bishop Klængr Þorsteinsson (1152-76), who, in 1160, was asked to arbitrate between Sturla Þórðarson in Hvammur and Einarr Þorgilsson in Staðarhóll. Bishop Klængr took the part of Einarr, his second cousin, with whose sister he had had an affair. However, when in 1170 the enmity was still unabated, Bishop Brandr stepped in to arbitrate, this time taking the part of Sturla, his first cousin once removed. Brandr was heavily involved in politics and arbitration. In 1190, he had seized control of a church-farm because the owner died and he deemed the sons incapable of taking over. By 1200, the sons felt they were old enough to take charge, but Brandr refused to relinquish control, and they asked Chieftain Ögmundur *sneis* to help them occupy the farmstead and prepare for battle. Bishop Brandr assembled a force, which marched on the church-farm under the command of his grandson Kolbeinn Arnórsson and Hafr Brandsson (possibly his illegitimate son). The fighting was averted, but this does indicate the way that bishops were functioning much like chieftains at this period. Reform began under Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson (1161-88), although it was only at the very end of the twelfth century that the offices of chieftain and priest began fully to separate.¹⁸

Eysteinn's archiepiscopal letter of *circa* 1173 clearly and specifically attempts to remove clerics from the field of legal prosecution, and even retributive violence. He states:

Nu kenne menn aller. þeir sem menn hafa drepit. þa fyríbyð ek þeim Guds þionostv giord. fra hinne fystu uigslu til ennar efstu. og framleidis fyríbyð ek ollum ken[n]e monnum soknar mal. aa

hendur sier at taka nema orvqssum frændvm sinvm. eda bqrnvm. fqdvr lausvm. eda konum verndarlausum. og þo felausvm. og fyri gudz saker.¹⁹

[Now (with regard to) all clerics, those who have killed men, I forbid them God's services, from the first consecration to the last, and further I forbid all clerics to prosecute lawsuits (lit. take into their own hands) except on behalf of their aged kinsmen, or children, orphans, or defenceless women, and even then (they must do it) without money, and for God's sake.]

However, immediately following this, the archbishop makes it clear that violence against clerics by laymen will not be tolerated, such acts not being susceptible to absolution except by intervention of the Pope or archbishop.

hverr er sa j gudz banne og papans er misþyrmer kenne manni med heiptugri hendi. og ma hvergi lavsn taka vm drap. eda afhqg[g] ken[n]e manz eda mungs. nema þar sem papinn er. (*DI* i 222)

[each one is under the interdict of God and of the Pope who maltreats clerics with a vengeful hand, and none may take absolution for the killing or striking of a cleric or monk, except where the Pope is concerned.]

Nevertheless, it is apparent that these reforms took time to have an impact, if indeed they were ever wholly successful. Both Orri Vésteinsson and Jón Jóhannesson are sceptical about the effectiveness of the reforms, and this is borne out by the later archiepiscopal letters. Around 1179, Archbishop Eysteinn had to write again, this time to support Bishop Þorlákr's institutions, which apparently were being disregarded because of the fact that they were new laws (*helldur til nymælis*, p. 259). Then, around 1180, Eysteinn writes not only to the bishops, but also to the chieftains Jón Loptsson and Gizurr Hallsson, making it clear that clerics should not bear arms, but that the chieftains should be supporting the discipline of the bishops (*DI* i, pp. 262-4).

Change had still not occurred by 1189, when Archbishop Eiríkr Ívarsson (1189-1205) felt he had to repeat his predecessor's instructions. He writes to Bishops Þorlákr and Brandr that 'Kenne menn bere eigi vopn. og skulv vera fridsamer vit olærda menn' (*DI* i 288f.) [Clerics should not bear weapons, and should be peaceful toward laymen]. He also re-emphasises that clerics should not

litigate on behalf of anyone other than defenceless relatives. His following letter also repeats directions about clerical immunity, and forbids ecclesiastical involvement in violence and litigation (*DI* i, pp. 290-1).

Orri Vésteinsson suggests that these archiepiscopal letters of the late twelfth century only began to have their effect in the thirteenth century, when it gradually came to be perceived that clerics were 'benevolent and trustworthy', and increasingly involved in reconciliation.²⁰ However, in this context one must also take account of the work of Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Sverrir Jakobsson. The former shows that canon law and the Niðarós diocese were bringing to bear strong influence on the Icelandic church in this period, and that canon law instigated certain changes in judicial matters such as the legal protection of individuals being taken over by official institutions.²¹ The latter places the archiepiscopal directives in the context of the European *Pax Dei* movement of the tenth and eleventh century, encouraging physical immunity for those who did not carry arms.²²

The implication of the evidence just surveyed, therefore, is that clerics up until this period were heavily involved in all kinds of violence and litigation. When we turn to the sagas, whether *Íslendinga sögur* or *samtíðar sögur*, a fuller picture emerges of what kind of situation the archbishops may have been addressing. One must of course always remember that the balance between historicity and fictionality within both kinds of saga texts is very variable, and it is not in fact my intention to claim a direct relation to actuality for the discussion which follows. Rather it will serve as a window onto the world-view of certain Icelandic saga authors, focussing particularly on their perceptions of the interaction of ecclesiastical and secular authorities in the matter of revenge.

Clerics and Revenge in the Family Sagas

In chapter 49 of *Laxdæla saga*, Kjartan throws down his weapons so that Bolli can slay him, in a gesture sometimes compared to those of medieval Christian martyrs: 'Síðan kastaði Kjartan vápnum ok vildi þá eigi verja sik, en þó var hann lítt sárr, en ákafliga vígmóðr' [Then Kjartan cast down his weapons and would not defend himself, and yet he was little wounded, but terribly weary from fighting].²³ Richard North points out, however, that the action can be seen in a very different light: 'Kjartan taunts Bolli to attack him, so he can watch Bolli incur the *níð* [. . .] It is to cause the ultimate injury, not to forgive, that Kjartan throws down his sword'.²⁴

The author of *Njáls saga*, too, is sometimes seen as validating the new Christian way of peace in contradistinction to the old heathen way of vengeance (famously exemplified by the conduct of Hallr of Síða, who, in the interests of peace, waives both revenge and compensation for his son's killing). Lars Lönnroth, for instance, argues that the author of *Njáls saga* had grown up with the older law-code *Grágás*, but was influenced by the later *Járnsíða*. According to Lönnroth, the narrator quotes the old law, but makes the ones who respect it either Christians or noble heathens 'acting in the spirit of the new law by taking revenge only when they were prompted by justice, atoning for their sins like any good Catholic, sometimes even abstaining from seeking legal compensation when higher interests were at stake'.²⁵

However, one must place this against *Njáls saga* chapter 129, where Njáll refuses to leave his burning farmstead at least in part because he can neither avenge his sons nor live in shame, however martyrlike other aspects of his death may seem. He says:

'Eigi vil ek út ganga, því at ek em maðr gamall ok lítt til búinn at hefna sona minna, en ek vil eigi lifa við skömm'.

[I do not wish to go out, for I am an old man and little equipped to avenge my sons, and I do not wish to live in shame.]²⁶

Further, in the same saga, *Ámundi inn blindi*, 'the blind', is miraculously awarded his sight for just long enough to avenge his father with an axe in the head of his slayer. Lýtingr has refused to pay him compensation, and Ámundi says that if he could see, he would have 'annathvárt fyrir föður minn fébætr eða mannhefndir, enda skipti guð með okkr!' (ch. 106, p. 273) [Either compensation or blood-revenge for my father, and so may God judge between us!] Immediately, his eyes open, and he cries 'Lofaðr sé guð, dróttinn minn! Sér nú, hvat hann vill' [Praised be God, my Lord! It can now be seen what he wishes]. After Ámundi has killed Lýtingr, his eyes close once more, 'ok var hann all ævi blindr síðan' [and he was blind all his life afterwards]. It could be argued that, in choosing to take revenge rather than the other option he mentions, compensation, Ámundi has misinterpreted God's will and his subsequent blindness is a punishment of his vengeance. However, it is equally possible that the quick succession of events—prayer, miracle, revenge, then blindness once more—implies that divine intervention was necessary to restore the 'correct' state of affairs, and that blindness is merely Ámundi's normal state, not a judgement upon him—he

certainly is not represented as complaining about his lot, only as celebrating his chance to restore equity.

Hildigunnr's inciting of Flosi in *Njáls saga* chapter 116, mentioned above, further complicates the matter. She tells him:

Skýt ek því til guðs ok góðra manna, at ek særi þik fyrir alla krapta Krists þíns ok fyrir manndóm ok karlmennsku þína, at þú hefnir allra sára þeira, er hann hafði á sér dauðum, eða heit hvers manns níðingr ella. (p. 291)

[I call God and all good men to witness that I adjure you with all the powers of your Christ and your manhood and manliness, that you avenge all those wounds which (Hǫskuldr) had upon him when dead, or else be called every man's *níðingr*.]

Flosi's oft-quoted retort *eru kǫld kvenna ráð*, 'cold are the counsels of women' (p. 292), and the insistent personal deixis in Hildigunnr's speech (*Krists þíns; karlmennsku þína*) foreground gender in this episode, and it is clear that Hildigunnr is enlisting the authority of the male, Christian God in her quest for vengeance.²⁷

Although it might seem that she represents the 'old way of vengeance', kept alive by women, she equally evidently does not associate the Christian God with an ethic of forgiveness. This is a point in the saga, nonetheless, where the relationship between Christianity, vengeance and gender is less than clear, abetted by the traditional external focalisation of the saga narrative—the author avoiding explicit intrusion which might guide the reader's judgement.

A full analysis of Christianity and revenge in *Njáls saga* would demand a book in itself. In *Njála*, however, it does seem that God may not always be averse to individuals taking vengeance. Certainly there is no clear denunciation of 'just' revenge, and, in fact, the family sagas often present a similarly mixed attitude to revenge in a Christian context.

In *Þorvalds þáttur víðförla*, Þorvaldr kills two men who have composed an obscene poem about him and the bishop, implying that they have had sexual relations and the bishop has borne Þorvaldr's children. However, when Þorvaldr tells the bishop about the killing, the latter rebukes him. Þorvaldr gives as his excuse that he 'þolda eigi, at þeir kölluðu okkr raga' [Could not endure that they called us queer].²⁸ However, the bishop replies that he should

have taken the words as meaning merely that the bishop had carried Þorvaldr's children around, saying:

Eigi skyldi kristinn maðr leita at hefna sín sjálf, þó at hann væri smáðr hatrliga, heldr at þola fyrir guðs sakir brizgli ok meingörðir vándra manna.

[A Christian man should not seek to avenge himself, though he might be reviled hatefully—rather suffer for God's sake the reproach and offences of wicked men.]

Later, Heðinn—a man who spoke out effectively against the bishop's preaching, leading to the utterance of the slanderous poem already mentioned—puts into the same harbour as Þorvaldr, and the latter takes a slave into the forest where they know Heðinn to be, ordering the slave to kill Heðinn. When the bishop is told, he informs Þorvaldr that they must part: 'því at þú vilt seint láta af manndrápum' (ibid., p. 300) [Because you will be slow to leave off man-slaying]. Bishop Friðrekr goes to Saxony, and we are told that he dies there with *heilagleik* ('holiness')—an implicit commendation of his rigid line on vengeance and killing.²⁹

On the other hand, in *Knýtlunga saga* chapter 96, Archbishop Qzurr addresses Eiríkr's troops before the impending battle: 'Nú er sú skript mín, at ek býð yðr í guðs nafni, at þér gangið fram karlmannliga ok berizk djarfliga' [Now this is my penance, that I command you in God's name that you go forth in manly fashion and bear yourselves boldly].³⁰ Eiríkr immediately follows the archbishop's speech with an exhortation of his men, ending: 'Má oss hugkvæmt vera, hvers at hefna er' [We must be mindful of what there is to avenge].³¹ The implication is, thus, that the archbishop is underwriting this revenge—and, indeed, (*í guðs nafni*) bestowing God's blessing upon it, although admittedly soldiers taking revenge is different from a cleric doing so himself.

Still another attitude is shown in *Ljósvetninga saga* chapter 20, where Þorvaldr Hqskuldsson wants to avenge his brother upon hearing of his death on his way back from Rome. Þorvaldr has presumably been on a pilgrimage, and declares: 'Ok verði nú sem Pétur postoli vill. Ætla ek þó, at betra væri, at ek kæma eigi út apr' [And let it now happen as the Apostle Peter wishes. I think, though, that it would be better that I did not come back to Iceland].³² He suddenly develops severe eye pain, dies, and is thus prevented from taking a revenge which is implicitly both desired, but also perceived as sinful.

These passages—just a few of those which might be cited in this connexion—serve to highlight the far from consistent attitudes to the involvement of Christians and clerics in revenge evinced in the family sagas and associated *þættir*.

Clerics and Revenge in the Contemporary Sagas

The *Sturlunga saga* compilation as a whole, by the use of theme and the process of compilation itself, foregrounds the necessity of moderation and mediation, lest the violence of the Age of the Sturlungs bring Iceland to ruin.³³ Within this broader context, however, it is possible to draw out separate strands of narrative that create a picture of the complex of attitudes which must have prevailed according to individuals' different understandings of the place of vengeance in Christian society, reflected by their differing educational, theological and spiritual experience.³⁴ And if in the *Íslendinga sögur* revenge is often condoned or exercised by Christians, in the *samtíðar sögur* contained in the *Sturlunga saga* compilation one finds numerous examples of priests and clergy taking part in revenge attacks, or killing opponents. The beginning of *Þorgils saga ok Haflíði* features a notable heir to the violently irascible Þangbrandr in the vengeful priest Már Guðmundsson, who steals from and finally kills Óláfr Hildisson, although his conduct is frowned upon.³⁵ One of the more notable unions of at least nominal Christianity and revenge, however, is found in chapter 44 of *Íslendinga saga*, in a verse attributed to Guðmundr *skáld*:

Stórlátr hefir Sturla,
— stendr hrafn á ná jafnan,
Kistr ræðr tír ok trausti —,
Tuma hefndir vel efndar.

[Proud-minded Sturla has—the raven always stands on the corpse: Christ rules over glory and protection—fulfilled vengeance well for Tumi.]³⁶

As Peter Hallberg comments: 'The Prince of Peace has been assigned a place in the ideology of the blood-feud, and has been made to take over the old war-god Óðinn's bird, the black guardian spirit of the battlefield.'³⁷ We may note that immediately before this Bishop Guðmundr *bað guð hefna sín*, 'asked God to

avenge him' (*Íslendinga saga*, p. 293)—that is, both parties are invoking God on their side, expecting divine aid in battle.

A more nuanced approach to revenge can be seen in *Þorgils saga skarða*. In chapter 17, when Þorgils asks Sturla for quarter, Hrafn interjects, saying that Sturla cannot give it, and will rather give him the same degree of quarter he intended to give his kinsman Sturla.³⁸ The narrator tells that Óláfr Þórðarson then told Hrafn, Sturla and the rest that he intended to avenge the shame done to him and the church, continuing: 'Skal ek þess biðja almáttkan guð ok inn helga Nicholaum biskup, er staðinn á, at hann hefni yör sinni misgerða...' (p. 130f.) [I shall pray to Almighty God and the holy Bishop Nikulaus, who holds the place, that he avenge upon you your misdeeds]. Here, God is being invoked in a feud between kinsmen, and not just on one side.

Later in the same chapter, Þorgils muses:

'Ek hugsa þat [. . .] hvé illt mér þykkir, ef engi skal saga ganga frá mér, áðr en þrýtr líf mitt, svá at ek geta ekki á hefnileið róit um svívirðing þá, er mér er nú ger'. (p. 132)

[I was thinking [. . .] how ill it will seem to me, if no saga shall be current about me before my life runs out, such that I cannot set out upon the way of vengeance for that dishonour which is now done to me.]

That is, he wishes to take vengeance lest, in not doing so, his life be unworthy of posthumous fame. However, Þórðr replies:

'Ger eigi þat í hug þér. Ger þá sem þér sýnist, ef þú þiggir líf, en ef þú skalt nú deyja, þá er þér því betra, sem þú átt færur ábyrgðum at svara.'

[Do not have that in your mind. Do what you think fit if you receive your life, but if you must die now, then it will be the better for you, the less responsibility you have to answer for.]

There is a consciousness that present actions of revenge, however satisfying, may have eternal consequences—even thinking about revenge or wishing one could take it is a dangerous indulgence when one is about to die. Nevertheless, the implication of Þórðr's advice is that, if Þorgils in fact does not die, he can then resume thoughts of revenge, and even carry them out, presumably with the intention of repenting later, a pragmatic approach to religion.

That Icelandic religious leaders were not supposed to take revenge seems to be implied in chapter 44 of *Þorgils saga*, where Þorgils is planning to help Þorvarðr attack Hrafn and Eyjólftr, and asking Abbot Brandr's advice as to how he should proceed. He at once makes it clear that: 'mér er þat bannat at eiga nökkurn hlut í mannráðum eða nökkurs kyns ófriði' (p. 174) [It is forbidden for me to have any part in plots against men's lives or any kind of hostilities].³⁹

Nonetheless, it is very evident how hard he finds it to obey the church's constraints on clergy, both in his careful omitting to command Þorgils *not* to act, and in his demeanour as he leaves the scene:

Spratt ábóti þá upp ok bað, at verða skyldi guðs vili. Mæltu þá sumir menn, at honum hlypi kapp í kinn,—því at hann dreyrrauðr á at sjá ok mælti þetta, er hann gekk í brottu: 'Hart er þat, at vér skulim bera frændr vára göfga bótalausa fyrir bóndasonum, ok svá myndi þykkja Ormi, bróður mínum, ef hann lifði.' (*Þorgils saga skarða*, p. 175)

[The abbot then sprang up and bade that God's will should be done. Some men said then that zeal overcame him (lit. leapt into his cheek, i.e. flooded his face)—for he was blood-red to look at and said this, when he walked away: 'It is hard that we must bear our noble kinsmen (being) without compensation before the sons of farmers, and so it would seem to Ormr, my brother, if he lived'.]

This seems to indicate at least in some areas a policy whereby clerics themselves were not supposed to countenance or become involved in violent feuds and revenge, but had a certain amount of leeway to turn a blind eye to the actions of laymen.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, zealous churchmen (such as Bishop Friðrekr in *Þorvalds þáttr víðförla*) might still take a hard line even on revenge by laymen—perhaps citing Christ's non-violent stance of forgiveness in support of their exhortations, as in *Homiliubók*.

Finally, the office of priest has a double implication in chapter 18 of *Guðmundar saga dýra*, where Snorri Snorrason and Þorsteinn, his brother and a priest, are about to be executed. They are both ready to die, but Snorri asks to be killed before Þorsteinn: '[. . .] því at ek treystumst honum betr, at hann muni fyrirgefa yðr, þótt hann sjái mik af lífi tekinn' [For I trust to him better that he will forgive you, even if he sees me put to death].⁴¹ The implication is evidently that,

because Þorsteinn is a priest, he will forgive even the person he sees slay his own brother. Snorri, on the other hand, might not be able to endure this sight, and, presumably, wishes to die with a clean conscience and not with a thwarted desire for vengeance. The saga audience is then told that Hámundr Öundurson kills Snorri, but that his brother Vigfúss Öundurson did not want to kill Þorsteinn *er hann var prestur*, 'because he was a priest': in the end Starkaðr *inn seki*, 'the outlaw', kills him. Thus, the office of priest at this time is such that only an already marginal and ostracised criminal is willing to shoulder the responsibility for killing one. Significantly, in the same chapter, Þorgrímr prevents the killing of a woman and her male child (*sveinbarn*), saying: 'Hvárki skal hér vinna á börnum né konum, þótt sjá sveinn verði oss öllum at bana' (p. 199) [Neither women nor children shall be harmed here, even if this boy should become the slayer of us all].

Revenge is portrayed here as somewhat unpalatable, the avengers owing to scruples, and the threat of future vengeance or a feud is not a sufficient incentive to kill children. Although space forbids it here, the progressive entrenchment of religious attitudes, and the shift from a shame to a guilt culture, would repay close scrutiny in the historically transitional narratives of *Sturlunga saga*.

Conclusion

It is, of course, impossible to say exactly what *did* happen with regard to the taking of revenge by the historical clergy of Iceland. None of the written sources we have provides unadulterated historical evidence: the family sagas are primarily literary works based on historical events, and the contemporary sagas also betray literary shaping and ideological bias. Sources such as the laws, homilies, and archiepiscopal letters deal with the subject only sporadically, and they are predominantly normative, rather than descriptive. Moreover, the texts come from different geographical and temporal spheres, and the historical practices are likely to have varied according to place and time. The main consideration, however, is that practice (as opposed to intention, or duty) most certainly will have varied from individual to individual, according to the degree of religious zeal, socio-political ambition, and personal circumstance. Thus, from the material adduced above, it is clear that, in historical matters as well as literary ones, it is imperative that one proceed only with caution from individual analyses of texts to general statements about society or a body of literature, since both are made up of individuals with differing ideological and literary concerns, and diverse

understandings of their society, its history and the ways in which they wish they were different.

It seems fair, nevertheless, to see a general perception in the sagas that, even in secular revenge, moderation is necessary, and that it is inappropriate for clerics to engage in violence and litigation. This corresponds with the evidence of the historical sources, which suggests a progression towards greater consistency in the Church's attitude to revenge: urging moderation in laymen and forgiveness and a degree of religious separation from secular affairs in clerics. Saga characters complying with this Christianising trend are depicted favourably, whereas those who do not, in general terms, are seen as a threat to society.

The sagas are not a homogenous body of texts, and generalisations about attitudes to revenge, such as those of Andersson quoted at the beginning of this article, seem less than satisfactory. Nevertheless, the analysis above suggests a general validation of a moderate approach to revenge in several different contexts, where the figure of the cleric in both family and contemporary sagas can feature not only as perpetrating or encouraging of revenge in clear contravention of ecclesiastical policy, but also as a voice exhorting Christian forgiveness.

NOTES

¹ I would like to express my thanks to the following people who read this article in earlier forms: Heather O'Donoghue, Carl Phelpstead, Ármann Jakobsson, Siân Grönlie, Carolyne Larrington, Judy Quinn.

² T. M. Andersson, 'The Displacement of the Heroic Ideal in the Family Sagas', *Speculum* 45 (1970), 575-93 (p. 588).

³ H. Uecker, 'Isländersaga contra Heldensage', *skandinavistik* 10 (1980), 81-8 (p. 83).

⁴ Studies which fit this formulation either explicitly or implicitly include Lars Lönnroth, 'The Noble Heathen: A Theme in the Sagas', *Scandinavian Studies* 41 (1969), 1-29, and Andersson, 'Displacement of the Heroic Ideal'.

⁵ Romans 12:19, quoted from *The Holy Bible: Douay Version, translated from the Latin Vulgate* (Douay, A.D. 1609: Rheims, A.D. 1582) (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1956); cf. Hebrews 10:30.

⁶ *Homiliu-bók*, ed. by T. Wisén (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1872), p. 67 (italics omitted).

⁷ *Konungs skuggsiá*, ed. by Ludwig Holm-Olsen, 2nd ed. Norrøne tekster, 1 (Oslo: Norsk Historisk Kjeldeskrift-Institut, 1983), p. 6. I have on occasions silently normalised the text.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 66; see Lars Lönnroth, 'The Noble Heathen', p. 26.

⁹ See further, Sverre Bagge, *The Political Thought of The King's Mirror*. Mediaeval Scandinavia Supplements, 3 (Odense: Odense University Press, 1987), pp. 71-84.

¹⁰ See Bagge, *Political Thought*, pp. 83-4.

¹¹ *Norges gamle Love indtil 1387*, ed. by R. Keyser, P. A. Munch, et al. 5 vols (Christiania: Gröndahl, 1846-1895) (hereafter *NGL*). The (un-normalised) Norse texts of the laws are cited from *NGL* by page and section number unless otherwise stated; translations are my own.

¹² Particularly important would be the evidence of *Landnámabók* and *Íslendingabók*, and the ways in which legal provisions here differ from those in *Grágás*. See *Íslendingabók*; *Landnámabók*, ed. by Jakob Benediktsson, 2 vols, Íslenzk fornrit I (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968); and (for *Konungsbók*) *Grágás* [. . .] *efter det kongelige Bibliotheks Haandskrift*, ed. by Vilhjálmur Finsen. Nordiske Oldskrifter, 11, 17, 21, 22, 32 (Kjøbenhavn: Brødrene Berlings Bogtrykkeri, 1852), §§ 86, 89, 90, 111; also (for the additions in *Staðarhólsbók*) *Grágás: efter det Arnamagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol. i Staðarhólsbók*, ed. Kommissionen for det Arnamagnæanske Legat [i.e. Finsen] (Kjøbenhavn: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1879), §§ 265, 271, 293, 366-67.

¹³ Compare *NGL* III 143, §60; also, p. 189, §100; IV 382, §13.

¹⁴ *NGL* I 66; cf. §133, p. 56; also II 50, §3; II 212, §3.

¹⁵ NGL I 19; cf. II 288, §X; II 52, §4.

¹⁶ NGL II 66f., §20; *Jónsbók: Kong Magnus Hakonssons Lovbog for Island vedtaget paa Altinget 1281 og Réttarbætr de for Island givne Retterbøder af 1294, 1305 og 1314*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1970), pp. 60-1; NGL II 222f.; cf. also the excerpt in NGL IV 153.

¹⁷ Orri Vésteinsson, *The Christianization of Iceland: Priests, Power, and Social Change 1000-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁸ See Jón Jóhannesson, *Íslendinga saga* (orig. pub. Reykjavík: Almenna bókafélagið, 1956); trans. Haraldur Bessason: *A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth*, University of Manitoba Icelandic Studies, 2 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1974), pp. 186-90. Although archiepiscopal orders seem not to have been made law in Iceland, nevertheless 'there is no evidence of the assuming of priestly orders by a temporal chieftain after 1190', p. 190.

¹⁹ *Diplomatarium Islandicum* (hereafter *DI*), i, ed. by Jón Sigurðsson (Kaupmannahöfn: S. L. Möller, 1857), p. 222. I have on occasion minimally normalised some of the texts.

²⁰ Orri Vésteinsson, *Christianization of Iceland*, p. 234.

²¹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, 'Um afskipti erkibiskupa af íslenzkum málefnum á 12. og 13. öld', *Saga* 20 (1982), 28-62.

²² Sverrir Jakobsson, 'Friðarviðleitni kirkjunnar á 13. öld', *Saga* 36 (1998), 7-46, *passim*. Violent clerics were clearly a concern in late Anglo-Saxon England—see *Wulfstan's Canon Law Collection*, ed. by J. E. Cross and Andrew Hamer, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 1 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), §§ 75, 79, 83, 102, 159, 164-7.

²³ *Laxdæla saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson. Íslenzk fornrit V (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1934), p. 154. The comparison is made despite the fact that a more conventional martyr, such as Edmund in Ælfric's *Life of St Edmund*, refuses to fight from the beginning. See *Ælfric: Lives of Three English Saints*, ed. by G. I. Needham (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1976), p. 48f.

²⁴ Richard North, *Pagan Words and Christian Meanings* (Rodopi: Amsterdam, 1991), p. 163f. North construes the *nið* as 'the attacking and then killing of a foster-brother and cousin' (p. 163), but the cowardice of attacking a defenceless man surely also enters into the disgrace Kjartan intends for Bolli.

²⁵ Lars Lönnroth, *Njáls saga: A Critical Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 147.

²⁶ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit XII (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1954), p. 330.

²⁷ On the proverb, see Sarah M. Anderson's introduction to *Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology*, ed. by Sarah M. Anderson, with Karen Swenson (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. xi-xvi; see also Carol J. Clover, 'Hildigunnr's lament,' in *Structure and*

Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism, ed. by John Lindow et al (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), pp. 141-83 (p. 145, n. 8).

²⁸ *Þorvalds þáttur víðfjörla*, in *Flateyjarbók*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal. 4 vols ([Reykjavík], Flateyjarútgáfan, 1944-1945), I 299.

²⁹ This is in stark contrast to the attitude of the notorious Bishop Þangbrandr, not considered in detail here for reasons of space. The episode has been compared to a similar one in Gregory of Tours (IV. 39) by Joaquín Martínez Pizarro: 'On *Níð* against Bishops', *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 11 (1978-9), 149-53. The interesting thing here is that Gregory represents God as taking the revenge ('Gregory talks of *divina ultio* and not *poena*', p. 152, n. 13), as opposed to the *þáttur* which implicitly sets God against vengeance.

³⁰ *Knýtlinga saga* in *Danakonunga sögur*, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason. Íslenzk fornrit XXXV (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982), p. 260.

³¹ Indeed, this is a male whetting, since 'Hann eggjaði mjök liðit'. I have written elsewhere on female whetting, but the concept of male incitement to revenge would repay further study; see 'Undermining and en-gendering vengeance: distancing and anti-feminism in the *Poetic Edda*', *Scandinavian Studies* 77 (2005), 1-28.

³² *Ljósvetninga saga*, ed. by Björn Sigfússon. Íslenzk fornrit X (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1940, p. 103).

³³ See Stephen N. Tranter, *Sturlunga Saga: The rôle of the Creative Compiler* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), p. 221; Úlfar Bragason, 'In the Scriptorium of *Sturlunga's* Compiler', in *International Scandinavian and Medieval Studies in Memory of Gerd Wolfgang Weber*, ed. by M. Dallapiazza et al., *Hesperides*, 12 (Trieste: Edizioni Parnaso, 2000), pp. 471-482 (pp. 472 and 481).

³⁴ It is of course possible that the saga authors are misrepresenting to some extent the behaviour of their subjects according to their own biases.

³⁵ Chapters 4-6: Már is introduced as 'unpopular and ill-natured' (ch. 1), and his actions depicted unsympathetically, and criticised by Hafliði (ch. 6).

³⁶ *Íslendinga saga*, in *Sturlunga saga*, ed. by Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbógason and Kristján Eldjárn, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Sturlunguútgáfan, 1946), I 293.

³⁷ Peter Hallberg, *The Icelandic Saga*, trans. Paul Schach (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 113.

³⁸ *Þorgils saga skarða*, in *Sturlunga saga*, II 130.

³⁹ Compare Ælfric's *Life of St Edmund*, where it is said that canon law (*þa halgan canones*) forbids clerics' involvement in judgements which lead to executions, but the source of the rule is again not cited (l. 182, p. 55).

⁴⁰ See, however, Marlene Ciklamini's article 'The Christian Champion in *Íslendinga saga*: Eyjólfur Kársson and Aron Hjörleifsson', *Euphorion* 82 (1988), 226-37. Here she argues: 'In

describing the life of Eyjólfur Kársson and the youth of Aron Hjörleifsson, *Íslendinga saga* has set the champion into a Christian context. The narrative exemplified the lawlessness, pride, and vengefulness to which champions inclined and which disrupted community life. Nevertheless, by the mercy of God and with the aid of his vicar, the two champions were tamed to serve a purpose higher than that dictated by selfishness or pride [. . .] The end of their roles in *Íslendinga saga* thus coincides with their attainment of spiritual magnanimity or insight', (p. 237).

⁴¹ *Guðmundar saga dýra*, in *Sturlunga saga*, I 198.

The Adaptation of *Laxdæla Saga* in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*

Elizabeth Ashman Rowe

In the Middle Ages, there were some central texts, such as the Bible, that needed to be copied as accurately as possible. Other important works, such as Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, were treated quite differently. These became what Tim William Machan calls living textual traditions, in that writers freely created their own versions by selecting from, modifying and adding to earlier copies, translations and commentaries.¹ The composite texts that resulted were in turn available for the use of later writers. Although the modern reflex is to categorize some of the writers participating in this tradition as authors or translators and the rest as (mere) scribes, the difference between 'authorial' work and 'scribal' work was a quantitative one, not a qualitative one, for scribes often took on the role of editor as well as copyist. In Iceland the sagas of King Óláfr Tryggvason and St Óláfr appear to be just such living textual traditions. Shortly after 1300, one editor-scribe created the so-called 'Longest Saga' of Óláfr Tryggvason (*Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*) by taking Snorri Sturluson's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* from *Heimskringla* and expanding it with loans from Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga*, the *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* written by the monk Oddr Snorrason, material on the kings of Denmark, material on the settlement of Iceland, material on Greenland (from *Eiríks saga rauða*, *Landnámabók* and *Heimskringla*) and excerpts and summaries relating to the events told in *Orkneyinga saga* and *Laxdæla saga*.² The latter is the subject of the present study, which examines how the interpretation of the story of Kjartan Ólafsson's stay at Óláfr's court is substantially modified by the changes made to fit it into its new context.

In addition to the expansions described above, the editor-scribe of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* also interpolated three entire sagas (*Færeyinga saga*, *Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds* and *Jómsvíkinga saga*) and eleven short narratives (*Eindriða þáttur ilbreiðs*, *Gauts þáttur*, *Kristni þáttur*, *Ögmundar þáttur*

dytts ok Gunnars helmings, Rögnvalds þáttir ok Rauðs, Svaða þáttir ok Arnórs kerlinganefts, Sveins þáttir ok Finns, Þiðranda þáttir ok Þórhalls, Þórhalls þáttir knapps, Þorvalds þáttir tasalda and Þorvalds þáttir víðförla). This list of interpolations is taken from the redaction in AM 61 fol because its copy of this version of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* is relatively complete. However, this redaction was not the only one made. For example, between 1370 and 1380, another compiler created the redaction in AM 62 fol by taking some form of the early version and abridging *Færeyinga saga*, *Hallfreðar saga*, *Jómsvíkinga saga* and the material from *Landnámabók*. This compiler also added *Helga þáttir Þórissonar* and *Norna-Gests þáttir* and expanded some of the sections about the adoption of Christianity with material from the monk Gunnlaugr Leifsson's Latin account of Óláfr Tryggvason's missionary activities.³ Yet another redaction was made in 1389, when Jón Þórðarson, the editor-scribe of the first part of *Flateyjarbók* (GKS 1005 fol), created yet another—and yet larger—version of *Óláfs saga* by taking a text related to the AM 62 fol. version and interpolating into it six more *þættir* and also substituting the entire texts of *Orkneyinga saga*, *Færeyinga saga*, *Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds* and *Jómsvíkinga saga* in the place of the abridgements in his exemplar.

All three redactions create a rich mixture of history, hagiography and heroism. First there is the story of Óláfr Tryggvason himself, who as a young viking of royal descent has a vision of a marvelous stone pillar floating in the air. Steps are carved into the pillar, and in the vision he mounts these steps and comes to a place where he can see the inhabitants of paradise. A voice tells him to go to Byzantium to be baptized and then return to Norway to be its king. Óláfr does so, and after a series of battles he succeeds in winning the throne. He begins the work of converting the Norwegians to Christianity, and his missionaries contribute to the decision of the Icelanders to adopt the new faith as the religion of their country, but the Norwegians are stubborn and Óláfr must often use threats and force when preaching and persuasion fail. His political enemies regroup and defeat him at the sea-battle of Svölðr. Óláfr's body is never found, and some believe that he was killed, but others believe that he escaped to the Holy Land and spent the rest of his life as a hermit. Elaborating this main narrative thread are the stories of the Icelanders who came to Óláfr's court and were willing to accept Christianity in order to gain the high honour of royal favour. Further narrative complexity is provided by the miscellaneous texts that the compilers found interesting, such as the report from an unknown Latin source about how the sons of the legendary Danish king Ragnarr loðbrók were with a Scandinavian army

pillaging Germany. When confronted with the emperor's superior force they surrendered and agreed to become Christians, only to renounce their faith and resume plundering as soon as the emperor's army had moved off. This capacious saga thus offered something for everyone: for the pious, a salutary history of the overthrow of paganism; for the bored, entertaining accounts of haughty queens, fearsome monsters and stupendous battles; for the ambitious, stories illustrating how to behave at court; and for the patriotic, narratives of how one Icelander after another is acknowledged by the king for his noble blood, outstanding character, physical prowess or ability to compose poetry.

The following material from *Laxdæla saga* was interpolated into *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*:

- Ch. 123 of *Óláfs saga* tells how Dala-Kollr marries Þorgerðr and has three children: Höskuldr, Gróa and Þorkatla.⁴ Höskuldr's grandson is Bolli, who marries Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir. Höskuldr buys a slave named Melkorka who is the daughter of Myrkjartan, king of the Irish. Their son is Óláfr pá, who marries Þorgerðr, the daughter of Egill Skallagrímsson. Among their sons is Kjartan, who marries Hrefna Ásgeirsdóttir. Their sons are Ásgeirr and Skúmr.

This chapter summarizes the genealogical information pertaining to Bolli and Kjartan conveyed in chs. 5, 9, 13, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30 and 47 of *Laxdæla saga*. However, ch. 9 of *Laxdæla saga* gives Höskuldr's wife's name as Jörunn, not Hallfriðr, and it says nothing about Kjartan and Hrefna having a second son.

- Ch. 157 of *Óláfs saga* reintroduces Óláfr pá, his wife and his son Kjartan and tells how the latter grows up at home with his father.⁵ Kjartan is the most handsome man of his time who was born in Iceland. A description of him is given that brings in his descent from the sons of Skallagrímr. The chapter also describes Kjartan's warm relationship with his fosterbrother and relative Bolli, who was brought up with him. A description of Bolli is included.

The beginning of this chapter summarizes information from *Laxdæla saga* about Bolli and Kjartan in their youth, and the middle section closely parallels ch. 28 of *Laxdæla saga*. Sometimes the details are in a different order; sometimes they are expanded a little. For example, the description of Bolli in ch. 28 of *Laxdæla saga* is not as detailed as that in this chapter of *Óláfs saga*.

- Ch. 158 of *Óláfs saga* (or the equivalent text, as it is not always a new chapter) introduces Osvífr Helgason and his daughter Guðrún.⁶ The chapter describes her and her marriage to Þorvaldr Halldórsson, as well as their divorce and Guðrún's marriage to Þórðr Glúmsson, who drowns. They have a son, Þórðr,

whom Snorri goði fosters. The chapter then tells of the friendship between Osvífr and Óláfr pá; Kjartan meets with Guðrún at the hot-spring baths, but his father warns him that it will come to no good and affect their luck. Kjartan says that he will not go against his father's wishes, although he thinks nothing bad will happen. Kjartan continues his visits to the baths as before, and Bolli always goes with him.

This chapter summarizes chs. 32, 34, 35 and 37 of *Laxdæla saga*. The last part of this chapter is drawn from the end of ch. 39 of *Laxdæla saga*.

- Ch. 159 of *Óláfs saga* describes Ásgeirr æðikollr and his daughter Hrefna the beautiful.⁷

This information is from the beginning of ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga*. It gives Hrefna's genealogy, including some information not in *Laxdæla saga*, such as the descent of Auðun skökull from Ragnarr loðbrók's daughter Ólöf and Auðun's daughter's being the ancestor of St Óláfr's mother.

- Ch. 160 of *Óláfs saga* (or the equivalent text, as it is not always a new chapter) describes Kjartan and Bolli's visit to Kjartan's uncle Þorsteinn Egilsson at Borg.⁸ While there, Kjartan says that his most important reason for visiting is to buy a half-share in a ship at Gáseyri owned by Kálfr Ásgeirsson and to travel abroad. Þorsteinn encourages him, and Kjartan makes the purchase. Kjartan goes home and informs his father and Guðrún of his plan. Both say that this is rather sudden. Guðrún says she wants to go with him, but Kjartan will not hear of it. Kjartan and Bolli leave Iceland as planned and arrive in Norway north of Trondheim, where they learn that jarl Hákon is dead and Óláfr Tryggvason has arrived in Norway, and everyone is accepting him as king. Also, King Óláfr is preaching a change of faith, which is not accepted everywhere. Kjartan and his companions head for Niðarós, where there happen to be three merchant ships owned by Icelanders. They give Kjartan a good welcome, especially Brandr the generous. The Icelanders in Niðarós had discussed the conversion and had decided to decline to change their religion, and now they bring it up again with Kjartan and ask his opinion. He thinks little of it and says he will agree to whatever they think most advisable.

The information in this chapter is also from ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga*. The phrases are rearranged somewhat, but overall the borrowing is very close. In some places *Óláfs saga* has dialogue where *Laxdæla saga* has a summary of the conversation, but in other places it is *Laxdæla saga* that has the dialogue and *Óláfs saga* the summary. There are other changes as well: *Óláfs saga* has Kjartan specify that Guðrún is to wait for three years and not get married, whereas *Laxdæla saga* only

has him ask her to wait for three years. The passage at the end in which the Icelanders ask Kjartan about converting is not in *Laxdæla saga* (nor is it in *Hallfreðar saga*, another interpolation in *Óláfs saga* that deals with an Icelandic and Christianity).

- Ch. 161 of *Óláfs saga* relates the famed swimming match between Kjartan and King Óláfr.⁹ This is a key moment, for the king's holding Kjartan underwater prefigures Kjartan's later baptism.¹⁰ Kjartan accepts the gift of a cloak from the king, which the other Icelanders dislike because it will put him in the king's debt. (The gift of a cloak prefigures the king's later gift of a baptismal robe.) The weather turns bad, and the heathens explain that the gods are angry.

The beginning of this chapter, about King Óláfr's urban development in Niðarós, is not in *Laxdæla saga*; borrowing from that saga begins with the swimming match, which is drawn from ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga*. The material here has been revised to integrate the interpolation of *Hallfreðar saga*, for in *Óláfs saga* Kjartan asks Hallfreðr if he wants to compete against the good swimmer from town; when he declines, he then asks Bolli the same thing. In *Laxdæla saga*, Hallfreðr is of course not present and Kjartan asks only Bolli. *Óláfs saga* also places the detail of Kjartan's red kirtle before the swimming match, whereas *Laxdæla saga* places it afterwards. *Óláfs saga* underscores the outstanding characteristics of the king and Kjartan in a number of ways: it includes a remark giving Kjartan's favourable impression of the townsman (who turns out to be the king); it has the king praise Kjartan for being a fine and lucky-looking man; and it adds that the cloak was the best of gifts. None of this is found in *Laxdæla saga*. The end of the *Óláfs saga* chapter is rather jumbled in its treatment of the material from *Laxdæla saga*, but overall the content is very similar.

- Ch. 162 of *Óláfs saga* presents Kjartan and Bolli's discussion about whether to convert to Christianity.¹¹ The next day the king summons the Icelanders to a meeting with him. He tells them to convert, and Kjartan says he will accept the new faith to the extent of ceasing to believe so much in Þórr when he goes home. The king smiles and says that it is clear that what Kjartan really believes in is his own strength, not Þórr or Óðinn. Later the king's companions urge him to compel the Icelanders to accept Christianity, but the king says he will not do that. The autumn progresses, and the king learns that the heathens of Trondheim plan on holding a great sacrifice at the beginning of winter.

This chapter follows the material from ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga* about Óláfr's first efforts to convert Kjartan. The beginning of the *Óláfs saga* chapter, about the king's assembly at Eyrir, is not particularly close to the parallel material in

Laxdæla saga. The *Óláfs saga* passage about the king's spies watching the Icelanders is more detailed than in *Laxdæla saga*. In general, *Óláfs saga* is more expansive here than *Laxdæla saga*, but apart from the additions, the borrowed content is not greatly changed. The mention of the sacrifice is not in *Laxdæla saga*.

- Ch. 164 of *Óláfs saga* continues the account of Kjartan's conversion.¹² On the first day of Yule, Kjartan suggests that the Icelanders go and see how the Christians are worshipping their god in the new church of St Clement. Impressed by the singing and incense, they stay until after high mass. Then they argue about whether to accept Christianity. Kjartan argues for it, and Bolli tells Kjartan to decide for both of them. All these conversations are reported to the king.

This chapter too is drawn from ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga*, but the latter does not include the details about the king's building and Christmas plans that are at the beginning of the *Óláfs saga* chapter. As before, there is more detail in *Óláfs saga* than in *Laxdæla saga*, such as the *Óláfs saga* references to the singing and incense, and Kjartan's much longer speech. Interestingly, *Óláfs saga* does not borrow the *Laxdæla saga* description of the king's sermon, but the beginning of the chapter does mention the presence of the bishop, which *Laxdæla saga* does not.

- Ch. 165 of *Óláfs saga* recounts how King Óláfr summons Kjartan the next day and commands him to accept baptism.¹³ Kjartan agrees, on the condition that the king's friendship will accompany it. The king agrees, and Kjartan and Bolli and their crew are baptized. The chapter reports that most men say that on the day that Kjartan and Bolli stopped wearing their baptismal robes, Kjartan became the king's retainer.

This chapter continues the adaptation of material from ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga*, although many of the details are different. The most significant difference is that in *Laxdæla saga* the king meets Kjartan on the way to church and Kjartan volunteers his desire to be baptized, whereas in *Óláfs saga* the king commands Kjartan to accept Christianity. *Óláfs saga* also moves the king's comment that holy days bring the best luck to this part of the narrative; in *Laxdæla saga* the king uttered this on the previous night.

- Ch. 167 of *Óláfs saga* describes how, after Christmas, King Óláfr goes into the district of Trondheim with his men.¹⁴ Kjartan, Bolli, Hallfreðr and many Icelanders were with him. At an assembly, Óláfr disputes with a prominent pagan named Járnkeggi.

This material is not in *Laxdæla saga*, and we may assume that it is the invention of the compiler of *Óláfs saga*, made to integrate the interpolated narrative threads more closely into the main narrative.

- Ch. 170 of *Óláfs saga* tells how King Óláfr has a great longship named the Crane built that same winter.¹⁵ Kjartan and Bolli have been with the king ever since they were baptized. Óláfr values Kjartan above all the other Icelanders because of his family and accomplishments. The chapter also reports that it was commonly said that Kjartan was so popular that he had no ill-wishers among the king's retinue and that virtually no-one like Kjartan had come from Iceland. His kinsman Bolli is also considered a very valiant man.

As with ch. 167, this material is not in *Laxdæla saga*, and we may again assume that it is the invention of the compiler of *Óláfs saga*, in this case made to enhance Kjartan's reputation with praise from King Óláfr and the Norwegian populace. This in turn reflects well on Kjartan's native land.

- Ch. 175 of *Óláfs saga* explains that the winter that Gunnar helmingr was in Sweden, Kjartan and Bolli and Hallfreðr were with King Óláfr, as was previously mentioned.¹⁶ But as the winter passes and traders prepare for their spring voyages, Kálfr Ásgeirsson asks Kjartan about his plans for the summer. Kjartan is thinking of a trading voyage to England, but when he discusses this with the king, Óláfr tells him that he should go back to Iceland and bring its inhabitants to Christianity, whether by force or persuasion. But if Kjartan thinks this too difficult, then Óláfr will not let him go to England, because it is better to serve noble men than to be a merchant. Kjartan replies that he would rather stay in Norway with the king than get into a conflict with his family, but probably his family will not go against the king's will when they know that he is treated so well by the king. Óláfr approves and gives him a suit of clothes that he had made for himself. The chapter reports that people say that Kjartan and the king were of the same height. Kálfr goes to England with Kjartan's wares.

This chapter follows the very end of ch. 40 of *Laxdæla saga* and continues with material from ch. 41 of that saga. This material is almost unchanged from its source, except that the final information about Kálfr's voyage is brought forward from ch. 43 of *Laxdæla saga*.

- Ch. 218 of *Óláfs saga* recounts how the missionary Þangbrandr returns from Iceland and reports that the chieftains there are very much against Christianity.¹⁷ The king becomes very angry and wants to have every pagan Icelander in Niðarós killed or maimed. The Christian Icelanders, including Kjartan, protest. Hjalti and Gizurr give a speech, and Gizurr concludes by inviting Þangbrandr to stay with

him and promising to help him convert his countrymen. The king agrees to let the Icelanders go free except the four noblest—Kjartan, Halldórr, Kolbeinn and Sverting—who will stay as hostages. They are well treated during the winter.

This material is derived from *Kristni saga*'s account of the conversion of Iceland, and it is quite different from that in ch. 41 of *Laxdæla saga*, where there is no mention of the king's threats against the Icelanders in Niðarós. *Óláfs saga* also omits the account in this part of *Laxdæla saga* of Bolli's conversation with Kjartan about the latter's friendship with the king's sister.

- Ch. 224 of *Óláfs saga* describes how King Óláfr and Queen Þyri spend the winter after the conversion of Hálogaland in Niðarós.¹⁸ Their infant son dies, which is considered a great shame. Many Icelanders are with the king, as is Óláfr's sister Ingibjörg. She has treated all the Icelanders well, but Kjartan is the one best known to her, as he has been with the king longest. The chapter reports that Kjartan enjoys speaking with her often.

None of this material is in *Laxdæla saga*, and we may assume that it is the compiler's way of acknowledging the relationship between Kjartan and Ingibjörg, which the audience of *Óláfs saga* would have been familiar with and might have expected to be addressed.

- Ch. 233 of *Óláfs saga* describes how King Óláfr has his ship the Long Serpent readied, and all the heroes who serve him prepare for battle.¹⁹ That summer, a ship arrives from Iceland with the news that Christianity has been accepted in Iceland and everyone there has been baptized. The king is very pleased at this and grants all the hostages their freedom. Kjartan is the first to answer; he thanks the king and declares his intent to set out for Iceland. The king reiterates his high esteem and friendship for him and says that he does not want him to be eager to go to Iceland, despite his noble kin there, because he will get great honour and treatment in Norway that Iceland cannot offer. Kjartan asks God to reward the king for all the honour he has shown him, but he says that he expects that he has no less permission to go to Iceland than the others. The king acquiesces but says that it would be difficult to find a man with no rank or title who is Kjartan's equal. Kálfr has returned from England, and he and Kjartan get ready to leave. Kjartan takes his leave of Ingibjörg, who gives him rich gifts, including a splendid headdress for Guðrún. The king gives him a sword and says that he does not expect Kjartan to die from weapon-wounds if he carries this sword. Kjartan arrives in Iceland, and the chapter summarizes the tragic events that follow. The chapter concludes with the king's evaluation that Kjartan and

some of his kinsmen have been allotted a dire fate and that great harm will result if their fate cannot be altered.

Laxdæla saga says nothing about the king's preparations for war, and this chapter of *Óláfs saga* begins its adaptation of material from *Laxdæla saga* with the mention of the arrival of the ship from Iceland, which occurs in the middle of ch. 43 of that saga. That chapter also supplies *Óláfs saga* with the conversations between Kjartan and the king and between Kjartan and Ingibjörg, as well as with the closing evaluation.

The preceding survey shows that the material about Kjartan in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* is not a word-for-word copy of its source in *Laxdæla saga*. There are numerous kinds of changes, including genealogical (e.g. the number of Kjartan and Hrefna's sons), the addition of detail (e.g. the description of Bolli) and the substitution of dialogue for summarized conversation. Possibly the compiler of *Óláfs saga* was using an expanded version of *Laxdæla saga* that is no longer extant, but many of the additions and changes could well be of his own composition, as they reinforce the impression of Kjartan's superiority and introduce didactic material. An example of the former is found after the swimming match. In understated family-saga style, *Laxdæla saga* has: 'Þá tekr konungr af herðum sér skikkju góða ok gaf Kjartani; kvað hann eigi skikkjulausan skyldu ganga til sinna manna' [Then the king takes a good cloak from his own shoulders and gave it to Kjartan; he said that he must not go back to his men cloakless], whereas in *Óláfs saga* the king says:

Eigi skaltu yfir hafnar lauss ganga til þinna felaga. sva sæmiligr maðr ok hamingiv samligr sem þu ert. ok vil ek gefa þer skickiv þessa. Vil ek ok at þu takir þat sem vit höfum við aatz i dag sem ek man gera fyrir gleði ok gaman. þvati ek vænti at fair menn kalli þer at minni mennt i sund förum. þo at ek gangi þar vm til iafns við þik.

[I want to give you this cloak, for such a fine and lucky-looking man as you shall not go back to your companions without an over-mantle. I also want you to take our competition today as I will, as fun and amusement, because I expect that few people would call you less skilled in swimming (than I), though I am your equal in it.]²⁰

An example of the latter occurs when Kjartan finally decides to accept Christianity. In *Laxdæla saga* he says:

Svá leizk mér vel á konung it fyrsta sinn, er ek sá hann, at ek fekk þat þegar skilt, at hann var inn mesti ágætismaðr, ok þat hefir haldizk jafnan síðan, er ek hefi hann á mannfundum sét; en miklu bezt leizk mér þó í dag á hann, ok öll ætla ek oss þar við liggja vár málskipti, at vér trúim þann vera sannan guð, sem konungr býðr, ok fyrir engan mun má konungi nú tíðara til vera, at ek taka við trúnni, en mér er at láta skírask, ok þat eina dvelr, er ek geng nú eigi þegar á konungs fund, er framorðit er dags, því at nú mun konungr yfir borðum vera, en sá dagr mun dveljask, er vér sveitungar látum allir skírask.

[The king seemed so fine to me the first time I saw him that I understood immediately that he was the greatest of excellent men, and this impression has held steady ever since, when I have seen him meeting with people. But yet he seems by far the best to me today, and I expect that all our dealings depend on our believing that the god whom the king preaches is the true one. The king must be no more eager for me to take this faith than I to let myself be baptized, and this alone delays me from now going immediately to meet with the king, when the day is so far gone, because the king will be at the table now, and that day will be a long one when we companions all let ourselves be baptized.]²¹

In *Óláfs saga*, however, he says:

þat berr storum huersu mer þocknaz vel þeira at hæfi. því helldr sem mer kynniz meirr. ok iafnan hefir mer litiz merkiliga aa konunginn. En nv i dag syndiz mer hans yfir bragð fra því aagiætligt sem fyrr. sva at ek ætla þa betr hafa er honum hlyðnaz ok veita goðuiliaða pionosto. Ok er þat sannaz at segia at ek ætla þar við liggja öll vor malskipti ok hamingiv at ver truim aa þann guð sem hann boðar. Nv duelr mik engi lutr er ek geng eigi þegar til konungs at biðia skirnarinnar. vtan sa einn at hann mun nu til borða genginn. ok þat at ek vil eigi vnaða konung eðr kristna kenni menn aa þessvm degi er þeir kalla mikla höfuð hatið guðs síns. þvíat mer er ván at þat se starfi mikill at veita oss skipverium ollum þat embætti. ok ætla ek þann dag dueliaz er ver látvm allir skiraz. En með engu mothi ma Olafi konungi vera annara til at þetta uerði framgengt en mer. Er þat ok eigi staðfastligt at lata sva aa kafliga at ein huerium lut at eigi fylgi hof ok stilling.

[It matters a good deal how well these things seem fitting to me, the more so as more becomes known to me, and the king has always looked to me like a man of note. But now, today, his appearance seems to me more excellent than before, so that I think it better to obey him and give him willing service. And it is most true to say that I think all our dealings and luck depend on us believing in this god that he preaches. Now nothing prevents me from going at once to the king to ask for baptism except this alone, that he will have gone to table now. And also that I do not want to disturb the king or Christian clerics on this day, which they call the great chief holy day of their god, because I expect that it would be a big job to grant all us companions this favour, and I expect that that day will be a long one when we all let ourselves be baptized. But notwithstanding, King Óláfr cannot be more eager for this to take place than me. It is also rash to act so impetuously and not be moderate and temperate in every respect.]²²

The additional material here shows the compiler using this speech as an opportunity to instruct his audience on such points as the moral basis of lordship, the significance of Christmas and proper behaviour.

The details of the textual relationship between *Laxdæla saga* and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* remain to be clarified, but it is safe to say that *Laxdæla saga* probably used *Heimskringla* or Oddr Snorrason's saga about Óláfr Tryggvason for information about King Óláfr, and then the compiler of *Óláfs saga* used *Laxdæla saga* to elaborate Óláfr's story with information about Kjartan. In addition, the compiler expanded the *Laxdæla saga* material with information from *Landnámabók*, such as the genealogical link between Hrefna and Ragnarr loðbrók, and added material that was most likely of his own composition.

The first kinds of expansion could have resulted from the simple desire for a more detailed account, but the last kind of expansion suggests that the compiler of *Óláfs saga* had some further purpose in mind for this part of his narrative. What was that purpose, and how does it compare with its original purpose in *Laxdæla saga*? These questions may be answered based on what the *Óláfs saga* compiler left out as well as what he included. An example of the former is the elimination of *Laxdæla saga*'s focus on its female characters. *Óláfs saga* is silent about Unnr djúpúðga, the powerful matriarch who successfully finds a place for her family in Iceland despite their not being among the first settlers. And for all its concern with the conversion of the Icelanders, *Óláfs saga* is also silent about

Guðrún's becoming the first nun in Iceland. A reduced attention to the romantic—which may be related to the loss of interest in the female characters—results from *Óláfs saga's* omission of *Laxdæla saga's* hint of the possibility of marriage between Kjartan and Ingibjörg.

These shifts away from women and romance move the focus of the narrative to the male characters, their relationships, and their concern with power both secular and religious. The relationship between King Óláfr and the Icelanders who visited him took different forms in the different redactions of *Óláfs saga*, and the treatment of Kjartan (and indeed of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld, whose story is intertwined with those of Óláfr and Kjartan) contrasts with the treatment of equivalent characters in the *þættir* interpolated by the compiler of the Flateyjarbók redaction of *Óláfs saga*. This later redaction presents the Icelanders at Óláfr's court as his spiritual sons, in that they have lost their biological fathers but have gained a spiritual father in the king, who converts them to Christianity and accepts them into his bodyguard, where they serve him faithfully, to the point of giving their lives for him at the Battle of Svölðr.²³ Although Kjartan and Hallfreðr do find salvation through Óláfr, they do not give their lives for him, instead leaving Norway and pursuing their own destinies, whether tragic (as with Kjartan) or religious (as with Hallfreðr). And although Hallfreðr's troubled relationship with his biological father does yield to a filial relationship with King Óláfr, as Marianne Kalinke has argued, Kjartan's case is quite different.²⁴ His father is alive, well and on good terms with his son when he leaves, and Kjartan never develops any inclination to spend the rest of his life with Óláfr. Indeed, both *Laxdæla saga* and *Óláfs saga* take the opposite tack and strongly imply that Kjartan is the king's equal. Their statements that Kjartan is the king's equal in size are what first suggests this, but *Óláfs saga* continues in this vein with Óláfr's remark about their equal competence in swimming. Furthermore, Kjartan's desire to return to his own country at the first opportunity shows the preferability of life in Iceland to life at court.

Rory McTurk argues that *Laxdæla saga* emphasizes Kjartan's royal descent and royal characteristics, with the implication that he—and Guðrún—would have been the ideal couple to rule Iceland, so the compiler of *Óláfs saga* could very well have thought of Kjartan as the Icelandic parallel of Óláfr Tryggvason.²⁵ What is curious about this supposition as regards *Óláfs saga* is that it ignores the obvious point of difference between King Óláfr and Kjartan, namely that Óláfr is fiercely dedicated to promoting Christianity, whereas Kjartan is notably reluctant to undertake a missionary effort in Iceland. Is this just a contradiction, an

unintended result of compilation, like *Óláfs saga's* contradictory depictions of the sons of Ragnarr loðbrók? Is the compiler of *Óláfs saga* ultimately unconcerned with the importance of Christianity per se (unlike the compiler of the Flateyjarbók *Óláfs saga*, who is explicitly worried about the spiritual effect of reading about pagan heroes)?²⁶ Or perhaps the compiler of *Óláfs saga* is unconcerned with the importance of the conversion of Iceland. After all, by the time he was working on this saga early in the fourteenth century, Iceland had been Christian for 300 years, and with none of the backsliding that had occurred in Norway, which necessitated a second missionary effort by St Óláfr. In retrospect, Iceland's conversion might have been seen as inevitable and unproblematic. Perhaps, just as Kjartan was so outstanding a young man, so much a potential king, so too his potential realm of Iceland was superior to Norway in not needing its ruler to be a missionary as well as a king.

These factors result in a significant change in the depiction of Kjartan as a Christian. In *Laxdæla saga*, the religious dynamics are complex. Kjartan's meek, Christ-like death is paralleled by Guðrún's devoutness in her old age, and the Christian elements in turn are balanced by the pagan heroic subtext, in which Kjartan plays the role of the innocent Sigurðr Fáfnisbani and Guðrún is the vengeful Brynhildr. These parallels in turn suggest an *interpretatio christiana* of the Sigurðr legend. In *Óláfs saga*, the legendary subtext has been stripped away, as has Guðrún's spiritual equality with Kjartan, and instead two 'martyrdoms' are juxtaposed—Kjartan accepts death at Bolli's hands, and King Óláfr is killed by his pagan enemies.

These manipulations lead to another question, namely, the nature of the 'original' tradition about King Óláfr's treatment of the pagan Icelanders in Niðarós, for in *Óláfs saga*, the king is considerably harsher than he is in *Laxdæla saga*. Which, if any, is more accurate? Possibly neither account is very reliable, for most likely both were written in service of the various programmes of their authors. That of the *Laxdæla saga* author seems to have been political. This saga was composed before Iceland became subject to Norway, and it accordingly makes certain assumptions about the relationship between conversion and rule. According to readings of St Paul—'Ubi autem spiritus Domini, ibi libertas' [And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty] (2 Cor. 3:17)—the Christian's freedom from the devil's bonds of sin meant that he was also not subject to political conquest. Conversely, those who had to be forced to accept Christianity lost their claims to political sovereignty and could be subjugated by their converters.²⁷ Giles of Rome, whose treatise on kingship, *De regimine*, was

translated into Swedish in the mid-fourteenth century, possibly for the instruction of Hákon Magnússon (later king of Norway) and his brother Erik (later king of Sweden), elaborates on this very point. Giles argues that the right to rule could be obtained only through the working of divine grace, which became operational above all through baptism. This gave rise to the thesis that 'infidels could have neither legitimate property nor legitimate authority: what they had, they had unjustly and through usurpation. Governance or lordship could not be obtained by a mere inheritance (a merely carnal *generatio*) or by conquest, but solely by the efficacy of divine grace through regeneration, through re-birth in baptism. Power over infidels therefore belong to the Christians, and above all to the pope.'²⁸ Icelanders had long been conscious of this reasoning, and in the thirteenth century they developed a historical 'myth of freedom' as a means of resisting Norwegian efforts to annexe their country.²⁹ The topoi constituting this myth are found in several genres of Old Norse literature and employ both political and religious doctrine. The Icelandic historical myth situates itself within the Christian tradition and accepts that the forces of Christianity and Norwegian imperialism were joined in the person of the king of Norway, beginning with Óláfr Tryggvason and continuing through Magnús góði. However, it insists that the country chose to accept Christianity of its own free will at the Alþingi of 1000 A.D., thus countering both the Norwegian claim that Óláfr Tryggvason had converted Iceland forcibly and the concomitant claim to sovereignty over Iceland in the political sphere as well.³⁰ This controls the depiction of Kjartan's conversion, for he refuses to be pressured into changing his religion but later of his own free will accepts baptism at the hands of King Óláfr.³¹ This may be the reason that earlier accounts of Óláfr's harsh treatment of the pagan Icelanders were softened in *Laxdæla saga* to make Iceland's acceptance of Christianity seem more a free choice. This kind of account would better support Iceland's claims to independence.³² In *Óláfs saga*, written after Iceland's loss of independence, there is no longer any point in maintaining *Laxdæla saga*'s version of these events. Indeed, a return to the earlier version is preferable, for Óláfr's willingness to murder and maim pagan foreigners emphasizes the strength of character of the Icelandic who stands up to him.

We should not forget that the adaptation of the story of Kjartan did not begin with the compilation of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*; in fact the author of *Laxdæla saga* itself had already adapted one element for his own purposes. This is the depiction of the ancestress of both Kjartan and Guðrún, named Unnr in *Laxdæla saga* but Auðr in *Landnámabók*. In *Landnámabók*, Auðr

djúpúðga is said to be a Christian. The description of her Christian interment is replaced in *Laxdæla saga* by an account of a pagan burial, in which the wealthy matriarch departs from the world of the living with extensive feasting, abundant grave goods, and a picturesque ship-grave. This change allows the saga writer to reserve the prestige of introducing Christianity for the later character Kjartan. In medieval Iceland, at least as much if not more effort was put into revising extant sagas than into composing new ones, and although this is not the place to go into the medieval Icelandic debates about the best ways to determine historical facts and preserve accurate accounts, the example of the story of Kjartan shows that the changes wrought by editor-scribes were far more likely to be the result of deliberation than accident or incompetence.³³

Not surprisingly, the willingness to go to the great cost and effort required to create a new saga or redaction was motivated by concerns that encompassed far more than an abstract antiquarianism. The depiction of Icelanders at the Norwegian court, for instance, turns out to be a mirror of contemporary Icelanders' hopes and fears about their relationship to their fatherland. While Iceland retained its independence, the story of Kjartan in *Laxdæla saga* shows an Icelander who is implied to be the equal of the king of Norway and a suitable match for the king's sister. In another three-quarters of a century, less than fifty years after the loss of Icelandic independence, the stories of Kjartan and Hallfreðr in the earliest redaction of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta* multiply the examples of Icelanders who are free to choose and pursue their own destinies. Indeed, *Óláfs saga* strengthens the likeness between Kjartan and the king through its additional comparisons and the omissions that emphasize the similarities in the manner of their deaths. Given the current political situation, with Icelanders having accepted Norwegian rule, Norwegian laws, and Norwegian monopolization of their trade and even their ability to cross the ocean, this characterization of Kjartan seems a little pathetic, the result of wishful thinking or a futile desire to rewrite history. With the passage of time, however, Icelanders seem to have accepted the new relationship with Norway. The stories of Þorsteinn Ox-foot and Hallsteinn Hrómundarson in the late-fourteenth-century Flateyjarbók redaction of *Óláfs saga* depict Icelanders who recognize that not only their personal loyalty but the very salvation of their souls are owed to the king of Norway. This picture of profound dependence may have been exaggerated in order to suggest that such devotion deserved some suitable reward, but in any case it—and *Laxdæla saga* and the earlier redactions of *Óláfs saga*—tells us far more about their compilers than about the people they were writing about.

NOTES

¹ Tim William Machan, 'Scribal Role, Authorial Intention, and Chaucer's Boece', *Chaucer Review* 24 (1989), pp. 150-62.

² In ch. 233 the compiler of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* refers to *Laxdæla saga* (written ca. 1245) as one of his sources. See *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson, Editiones Arnarnagæanæ A2 (København: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1961), p. 212. For the date of *Óláfs saga*, see Ólafur Halldórsson, 'Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar', in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano et al. (New York: Garland, 1993), pp. 448b-9b.

³ Ólafur Halldórsson, 'Úr sögu skinnbóka', *Skirnir* 137 (1963), pp. 83-97, *The Great Sagas of Olaf Tryggvason and Olaf the Saint: AM 61 fol.*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson, Early Icelandic Manuscripts in Facsimile 14 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1982), p. 30 and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson, Editiones Arnarnagæanæ A3 (København: C. A. Reitzel, 2000), pp. ciii-cxii and cccx-cccxcviii.

⁴ *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson, Editiones Arnarnagæanæ A1 (København: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1958) pp. 273-5.

⁵ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 351-2.

⁶ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 352-4.

⁷ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 355-6.

⁸ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 356-9.

⁹ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 359-62.

¹⁰ Gerd Wolfgang Weber, 'Irreligiosität und Heldenzeitalter. Zum Mythencharakter der altisländischen Literatur', in *Speculum Norroenvm: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. by Ursula Dronke, Guðrún P. Helgasdóttir, Gerd Wolfgang Weber and Hans Bekker-Nielsen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), p. 502.

¹¹ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 362-7.

¹² Ch. 163 of *Óláfs saga* interrupts this thread of the narrative; it describes Óláfr's speech at the Frosti assembly. Ch. 163 is published in Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 367-9, and ch. 164 is found on pp. 369-71.

¹³ Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 371-2.

¹⁴ Ch. 166 of *Óláfs saga* interrupts this thread of the narrative to describe how King Óláfr meets the Icelandic poet Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld. Ch. 166 is published in Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 372-6, and ch. 167 is found on pp. 376-8.

¹⁵ Chs 168 and 169 of *Óláfs saga* interrupt this thread of the narrative to return to the main plot, which tells how Járnskeggi is killed, the local people agree to be baptized, the king

agrees to marry Járnkeggi's daughter, and she tries to kill him on their wedding night. Chs 166 and 169 are published in Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 378-86, and ch. 170 is found on pp. 386-7.

¹⁶ Chs 171-174 of *Óláfs saga* interrupt this thread of the narrative. The first two of these chapters continue the material from *Hallfreðar saga*, and the second two chapters contain *Ögmundar þáttur dytts ok Gunnars helmings*. Chs 171-4 are published in Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 387-400, and Ólafur Halldórsson (1961), pp. 1-18, and ch. 175 is found in the latter volume on pp. 18-20.

¹⁷ Ólafur Halldórsson (1961), pp. 163-6.

¹⁸ Ólafur Halldórsson (1961), pp. 175-7.

¹⁹ Ólafur Halldórsson (1961), pp. 205-12.

²⁰ *Laxdæla saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit 5 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1934), p. 118, and Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), p. 361.

²¹ Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1934), p. 122.

²² Ólafur Halldórsson (1958), pp. 370-1.

²³ In the case of one of these *þættir*, the Flateyjarbók compiler emphasizes the filial relationship between Óláfr and his Icelandic retainer by juxtaposing *Hrómundar þáttur halta* with the chapter of *Óláfs saga* that describes the death of the king's own son, almost as if to suggest that the loss of the biological child is compensated for by the acquisition of a spiritual son.

²⁴ Marianne Kalinke, 'Stæri ek brag: Protest and Subordination in *Hallfreðar saga*', *Skáldskaparmál* 4 (1997), pp. 50-68.

²⁵ Rory McTurk, *Chaucer and the Norse and Celtic Worlds* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2005), pp. 106-47.

²⁶ *Flateyjarbok: En Samling af norske Konge-Sagaer med indskudte mindre Fortællinger om Begivenheder i og udenfor Norge samt Annaler*, ed. by Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C. R. Unger (Christiania: P. T. Mallings, 1860), I 35-6.

²⁷ Weber (1981), pp. 499-505 and Gerd Wolfgang Weber, 'Intellegere historiam. Typological perspectives of Nordic prehistory (in Snorri, Saxo, Widukind and others)', in *Tradition og historieskrivning: Kilderne til Nordens ældste historie*, ed. by Kirsten Hastrup and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *Acta Jutlandica* 63:2, *Humanistik Serie* 61 (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1987), pp. 125-7.

²⁸ Walter Ullmann, *Medieval Political Thought*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 125; see also Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought 300-1450* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 133-4.

²⁹ Weber (1981), p. 500.

³⁰ Óláfr Tryggvason's threats against Iceland and his keeping Icelandic hostages at court could be interpreted as equivalent to the use of force and punishment by which he converted Norway; see Weber (1981), p. 500.

³¹ Weber (1981), pp. 502-3, and (1987), pp. 125-7.

³² Oddr Snorrason's Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason gives this as Óláfr's response to Þangbrandr's report of the failed mission: 'The king became very angry when he heard this and had the Icelanders seized. Some he plundered, some he killed, and some he maimed' (*The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason* [(by) Oddr Snorrason], trans. by Theodore M. Andersson, *Islandica* 52 [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003], p. 90). In Snorri Sturluson's version, the king is angry but calms down after hearing from the Icelanders at court: 'Óláfr konungr varð svá óðr ok reiðr, at hann lét blása öllum íslenzkum mönnum saman, þeim er þar váru í böenum, ok mælti síðan, at alla skyldi drepa. En Kjartan ok Gizurr ok Hjalti ok aðrir þeir, er þá höfðu við kristni tekit, gengu til konungs ok mæltu, "Eigi muntu, konungr, vilja ganga á bak orðum þínum, því at þú mælir svá, at engi maðr skal svá mikit hafa gört til reiði þinnar, at eigi viltu þat upp gefa þeim, er skírask vilja ok láta af heiðni..." Tók þá konungr at hlýða á slíkar ræður' [King Óláfr became so furious and angry that he had all the Icelandic men summoned together, those who were there in town, and then he said that they should all be killed. But Kjartan and Gizurr and Hjalti and those others who had converted to Christianity went to the king and said, 'Your majesty, you will not want to go back on your word, because you say that no man who wants to be baptized and refrain from heathendom will give you such great cause for anger that you will not pardon him...' Then the king began to listen to such counsels] (*Heimskringla*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Íslenzk fornrit* 26.1 [Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1979], pp. 332-3).

³³ For discussion of some of these debates, see Sverrir Tómasson, *Formálar íslenskra sagnaritara á miðöldum: Rannsókn bókmenntahefðar*, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, Rit 33 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1988), pp. 194-208 and 410, and Sverre Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 29.

Polysemy in Middle English *embosen* and the Hart of *The Book of the Duchess*

David Scott-Macnab

Many scholars have drawn attention to those narrative features in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*—particularly at the start and close of the dream sequence—that seem intended to evoke the fluidity, the strange transitions and the uncertainties of an authentic dream experience.¹ These are now widely accepted as important characteristics of the poem, yet dream-like fluidity is not the same as vagueness, either of purpose or of style, and imprecision of that sort is assuredly not a quality of *The Book of the Duchess*. In one area, in particular, we may be confident that Chaucer could not possibly afford any hint of laxity or imprecision to affect his narrative: namely, in his use of specialised hunting terms to introduce and describe the action of Octovyen's hunt. In a poem intended for a cynegetically knowledgeable court audience, and with a nobleman, John of Gaunt, appearing (thinly disguised) as a major character, it is unthinkable that the young poet would have chosen his words from the hunting lexicon with anything less than a clear sense of their contemporary currency, and an equally clear sense of their relevance to his overall purpose. To do otherwise would surely have been to risk losing credibility, both for himself and his poem, among the very people he most needed to impress.

It therefore makes sense to strive for accuracy in our understanding of Chaucer's hunting terminology, not only for what it reveals about events themselves, but also for its possible structural, thematic or metaphorical implications in the poem as a whole. I have explored such ideas in an earlier article focussing on the main events of Octovyen's hunt;² in this study I wish to examine a hunting expression that was overlooked in my earlier article, but which continues to give rise to confusion.

When the mournful narrator of *The Book of the Duchess* 'wakes' in his dream, he lies for a while in bed marvelling in turn at the melodious sounds of birdsong and the magnificently glazed windows and painted walls of his chamber, which depict, among other things, 'al the story of Troye' and 'the Romaunce of the Rose' (ll. 291-334).³ Finally he becomes aware of the splendour of the day without, before suddenly hearing a group of hunters busily preparing for a day's sport and discussing it in such detail that he gives up trying to recall everything they said:

And as I lay thus, wonder lowde
Me thought I herde an hunte blowe
T'assay hys horn and for to knowe
Whether hyt were clere or hors of soun.
And I herde goynge bothe up and down
Men, hors, houndes, and other thyng;
And al men speken of huntyng,
How they wolde slee the hert with strengthe,
And how the hert had upon lengthe
So moche embosed—y not now what. (ll. 344-53)

The arrival of the hunters quickens the narrator's consciousness, drawing him away from his drowsy contemplations of literary lovers and into a world of purposeful masculine action. With a renewed blitheness, he grabs his horse and joins the hunters, who he learns are servants of the emperor Octovyen (ll. 354-68). The action moves on with extraordinary swiftness, enhanced by a terseness of style that seems intended to evoke the 'fot-hot' nature of the chase itself; and then, all too soon, the hunt is over, or at least suspended for the time being when the hart manages to escape from its pursuers (ll. 370-86).

To return to the beginning, however, what is it that the narrator first learns from the hunters' animated chatter outside his chamber window, and how is it relevant to the unfolding events of the narrative? In fact, only two salient details emerge, both couched in the specialised language of the hunt: first, that the hunters intend to 'slee the hert with strengthe' and, secondly, that 'the hert had upon lengthe / So moche embosed' (ll. 351-3). The first of these is not problematic; described most simply, the hunt with strength—from French *à force*, sometimes *par force de chiens*—was a hunt conducted with horse and hounds.⁴ Not nearly so straightforward is Chaucer's disclosure that the hart (a male red deer aged six years or more) 'had [. . .] embosed'; this apparently simple statement has

been the subject of considerable disagreement and continues to be glossed in a way that, as I shall show, misses Chaucer's point entirely.

Commentators and editors have generally adopted one of two rival interpretations. On the one hand are those, such as Walter Skeat, Norman Davis and J. H. Fisher, who believe that the hunters are saying that the stag has secluded itself deeply in a wood;⁵ on the other are equally influential voices, such as those of O. F. Emerson and F. N. Robinson, who claim that the statement reveals instead that the hart has been exhausted and is foaming at the mouth as a consequence of hard running.⁶ To complicate matters further, there is divergence between the two most authoritative sources on English language, with the first reading being endorsed by *The Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*, s.v. *emboss*, v.² 1), and the second by the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*, s.v. *embosen*, v.).⁷ Regrettably, there is no authoritative verdict to be found in *The Riverside Chaucer*, which merely reiterates both interpretations, though apparently favouring the *MED*.⁸ This is unfortunate, since the first reading—that the stag is sequestered in the depths of the forest—is in all respects the better of the two, as A. C. Baugh has convincingly shown.⁹ The present study attempts to settle the dispute finally in favour of the *OED* by offering corroborating evidence that has not previously been considered. But it also goes further, in reconsidering the overall treatment of *emboss* by both the *MED* and the *OED*, and then suggesting a fresh explanation for the development of the various senses associated with this word.

First, however, it is necessary to dismiss the ingenious, but maverick, interpretation of E. T. Donaldson, who paraphrases the lines 'how the hert had upon lengthe / So moche embosed' as meaning 'how much in length [the stag's] antlers had grown'.¹⁰ Although Donaldson supplies no supportive etymology, it seems most likely that he has read Chaucer's verb as a form of ME *embocen* (var. *embossen* < OF *embocer*), which is glossed by the *MED* as meaning 'to bulge or be bloated', 'to cause to bulge', even 'to be hunchbacked'.¹¹ Donaldson's paraphrase implicitly postulates an unattested transferred sense of the word, which goes beyond the main notions of bulging, swelling or protruding, to signify the considerable growth that takes place in a red deer's antlers. But this is to stretch the meaning of the word beyond anything that the available evidence will support. Although it is just conceivable that ME *embocen* could describe the budding of a new set of antlers, no citation in the *MED* shows that it was ever used that way, let alone for the burgeoning of a head of ten or more tines ('points') such as a 'chaseable' hart was expected to possess.¹²

Equally problematic, for other reasons, is O. F. Emerson's proposal that Octovyen's hunters are discussing a previous day's hunt in which a stag was hunted to exhaustion and therefore foaming at the mouth. According to Emerson's paraphrase, the hunters are saying that '[. . .] the hart had, after a long run [*upon lengthe*], so much exhausted himself [*so moche embosed*] [. . .] that he had at last succumbed to their long continued efforts'.¹³ The suggestion may seem appealing and plausible, were it not for the fact that it casts the hunters' animated conversation as boastful reminiscence, which is totally out of place here. According to Chaucer's account, the narrator hears the hunters talking about 'How they wolde slee the hert with strengthe' (ll. 350-1): that is, anticipating the hunt to come. Emerson's notion that they should then immediately start talking about another hart, which had been successfully slain on a previous occasion, subverts the logic both of Chaucer's syntax and of the situation he describes. For it is important to see that everything in Chaucer's account at this point revolves around the hart-hunt that is about to take place, with the narrative moving inexorably, and with ever-intensifying concentration, towards that event.

*Middle English embosen and Early Modern English emboss:
origins and evolution*

Turning to the *MED*, we find the verb *embosen* defined as follows: 'Of game: to become exhausted from being hunted'. An enigmatic etymological note posits a derivation from OF *bos*, *bois* 'woods, chace' without any indication of how this could have produced the specified sense. No other grammatical information is supplied, nor any subdivisions of senses or uses to which the verb was put. Only two examples are cited for the one definition: *The Book of the Duchess* l. 353 and a passage from the fifteenth-century verse romance *Generydes*, which tells of the magical appearance of a stag before Auferius, the king of India, as he stands in the bed-chamber of a beautiful seductress (the faery Sereyne). The event is narrated thus:

Anone vppon as she these wordis saide,
Ther come an hert in att the chaunber dore
All embosed; the kyng was sore dismayede,
Semyng to hym, as it passid in the flore,
It was the same he chased in the more [. . .] (ll. 78-82)¹⁴

Here it is clear that the main distinguishing feature of the stag is that it is 'embosed' (l. 80), which dismays the king and prompts him to think that this must be the same stag he had hunted earlier that day. The narrative point is that Auferius now realises that the stag has somehow been responsible for leading him to his current predicament; for our purposes, the passage reveals a sequence of ideas that makes the poet's intended meaning easy to construe: the king recognises the stag by certain characteristics, and chiefly by the fact that the animal is 'all embosed', which identifies it as having been involved in a lengthy chase.

If to be 'embosed' is to show the signs of a long chase, the stag would be panting heavily, rolling its eyes, sweating freely and foaming at the mouth, some of which we learn from the verse *Boke of Huntyng* (Rawlinson text), when it describes how, 'whan þe hert negh is dede / Then castes he þe froth al blode rede'.¹⁵ This is confirmed by a somewhat later source—George Gascoigne's treatise, *The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting* (1575)—which states, 'When he [the hart] is foamy at the mouth, we saye he is *embost*'.¹⁶ But is Gascoigne's sense what is intended in *Generydes*? Is Auferius' hart one that is generally harried and exhausted? Or is it, more specifically, one that has reached the extremity of exhaustion and is therefore foaming at the mouth (and perhaps casting flecks of that foam as it runs)? Unfortunately, we cannot be absolutely sure in this context, yet the distinction is important as it concerns our understanding of the several meanings that attach to this word, and the chronology of their development.

In spite of this uncertainty, we can nevertheless accept that the way in which *embosed* is used in *Generydes* fits reasonably well with the gloss supplied by the *MED*, even if the supposed origins of the word in OF *bois* remain obscure.¹⁷ We now need to ask if the same can be said of the relevant passage in *The Book of the Duchess*, which differs from *Generydes* in two important respects. In the first place, the stag in *Generydes* is one that has already been chased for much of the day, whereas in *The Book of the Duchess* the hunt has not yet started. Secondly, the grammatical characteristics of *embosed* diverge in the two texts. In *Generydes*, the word is an adjectival past participle (that is, a past participle in form, an adjective in function) describing the condition of the stag ('an hert [. . .] all embosed'), whereas in *The Book of the Duchess* it is an active, intransitive verb indicating something that the stag has accomplished itself (the hunters discuss 'how the hert had [. . .] so moche embosed'). This distinction is vital because it marks two very different senses of the word, both of which relate to hunting, but whose relation to each other is less than clear.

Before analysing the evidence further, we may reflect that one of the main difficulties with our current understanding of ME *embosen* (var. *enbosen*) is that it has so few recorded occurrences. Only *The Book of the Duchess* and *Generydes* are cited by the *MED*, and in both of these the word's meaning has to be teased from the context. Furthermore, unlike many other ME hunting terms, *embosen* is not recorded in any English hunting treatise of the period, which means that we lack the considerable clarifying potential of such texts, and are forced to rely on the evidence of later witnesses to make sense of the word in earlier ones. Another thorny matter is that the Chaucerian usage—where the verb is active and intransitive—appears to be exceedingly rare, with no other attestation in the *OED* until the late seventeenth century.¹⁸

Unlike the *MED*, the *OED* distinguishes Chaucer's use of *emboss* from the sense discernible in *Generydes*, defining it as the original and principal signification of the verb (s.v. *emboss*, v.²):

†1. *intr[ansitive]*. Of a hunted animal: To take shelter in, plunge into, a wood or thicket. *Obs[olete]*.

Here at last is a definition that can be reconciled with borrowing from OF *bois* (specifically, *em* (= *en*) + *bois*), making sense of the unexplained etymology in the *MED*. The word's other main meanings—literal, figurative and transferred—relating to, and deriving from, the exhausting or exhaustion of a hunted animal are set out by the *OED* as follows:

†2. To drive (a hunted animal) to extremity. *Obs[olete]*.

†3. In *pass[ive]* of a hunted animal: To be exhausted by running; *hence*, to foam at the mouth (as a result of exhaustion in running). Also *transf[erred]* of persons: (a) To be exhausted, at the last extremity of fatigue; (b) to foam at the mouth (from rage, etc.). *Obs[olete]*.

4. *trans[itive]*. To cover with foam (the mouth, the body of an animal). *arch[aic]*.

Summarising the evidence, we find that examples of *emboss* are rare in Middle English, but numerous in the Early Modern period; indeed, from the early sixteenth century onwards, there is no shortage of witnesses for a cluster of related senses to do with exhaustion—being exhausted, or being made exhausted—and only two (from Milton and Samuel Butler) exemplifying the

original, Chaucerian sense of the word.¹⁹ Without duplicating the precise semantic divisions made by the *OED*, we can see from these later witnesses that *emboss* can indicate: (i) the action of hunting an animal hard so as to exhaust it; (ii) the condition of being harried, frenzied or exhausted by being so hunted, or by the act of hunting itself; or (iii) the foaming at the mouth caused by the frenzy or exhaustion brought about by the chase. In transferred or figurative uses, exhaustion of any kind can be intended, and the foaming or frenzy can come from rage, distemper or any other violent emotion. The word was clearly popular and widely used in richly varied contexts, even if all its senses are now considered obsolete or archaic.

For our purposes, what is significant is that the senses relating to exhaustion and its consequences (specifically, foaming at the mouth) appear at an early stage and very quickly predominate—at least as far as surviving evidence shows. And although these several senses all indicate a genesis in the hunt, even early examples may be divorced from hunting contexts. Indeed, as early as 1523, Skelton uses *emboss* without any reference to the hunt. In his poem *Howe the Douty Duke of Albany*, Skelton rails against Henry VIII's detractors in the following terms: 'Than ye be a knappishe sorte / [. . .] With your enbosed jawes / To rayle on hym lyke dawes'.²⁰ From the context, we may deduce that persons with 'enbosed' jaws are frothing at the mouth from some cause other than by being hunted or chased: in this case, a condition of lunacy or idiocy is implied. Such an early use of this transferred sense of the verb, with no reference to the hunting field, is particularly noteworthy.²¹

In another poem, also from 1523, Skelton uses the past participial form of *emboss* more conventionally to denote the frenzy of an animal pursued by hounds. In the *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*, Skelton depicts himself '[. . .] in the frytty forest of Galtres, / [. . .] Where hartis belluyng, embosyd with distres, / Ran on the raunge so longe, that I suppose / Few men can tell where the hynde calfe gose'.²² Skelton's 'embosyd' is here traditionally glossed as meaning 'exhausted with running', in spite of the awkwardness that this imposes on the line; 'frenzied' or 'maddened' (by being pursued) would suit both the context and the syntax far better.²³ And that is precisely how the word is used when Shakespeare's Cleopatra calls out, 'Help me, my women! O, he's more mad / Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly / Was never so emboss'd' (i.e. frenzied).²⁴

Yet it is important to see that both quotations from Skelton exemplify shifts away from the supposed prototypical senses derived from venery, 'to be exhausted through being hunted', and 'to exhaust in pursuit'. Ironically, in order to

find incontrovertible examples of these senses, we need to look later in time (by at least half a century), not earlier. The notion of being exhausted through being hunted is expressed by *emboss* unambiguously for the first time in Gascoigne's *Noble Arte of Venery* (1575), where the author explains how a huntsman needs to judge any deer that runs past him, in case it is being mistakenly pursued by hounds that have gone astray:

and if peradventure it happen that the pricker on horsebacke being at his relaye, should see an Hart of tenne passe by him, and yet heare not the other huntsmen, nor their hornes, then let him looke wel whether the Hart be embost or not, and what houndes they were that came with him. And if he perceiue that they were choyse hounds and such as will not hunt chaunge [the wrong quarry], then ought he to blowe as loude as he can for other hounds, and to call in helpe.²⁵

As in *Generydes*, Gascoigne's *embost* must mean that the hart is showing signs of having been pursued for a long time, which would distinguish it from an animal that has been mistakenly taken up by some of the less reliable hounds. And Gascoigne's use of the adjectival past participle is also noteworthy because this is the form in which the word is cast in the great majority of recorded cases.

Likewise, the active, transitive form of the verb (meaning 'to exhaust in pursuit') is not recorded until 1602-3, when Shakespeare has a conspiratorial Frenchman say of his intended victim, 'But we have almost emboss'd him, you shall see his / fall to-night; for indeed, he is not for your lordship's / respect'.²⁶

Further, peripheral developments will not be discussed here, such as the emergence of the variant forms *imbost* and *imbosted*, and the parallel formation *imbosk* (< Italian *imboscare*), during the late sixteenth century. It remains only to observe that the brief survey sketched out above agrees broadly with the *OED* in most respects, but differs over certain details of interpretation, and especially over shades of meaning that are not acknowledged by that dictionary: most especially, my suggestion that *embossed* can mean 'harried', 'stressed', 'hard-pressed' or 'frenzied', as well as 'exhausted'. And another point that the *OED* fails to make is that *embossed* was not restricted to the quarry of a chase, but could apply to the pursuers as well, as we learn from an unnamed lord in *The Taming of the Shrew*, who commands his huntsman to 'tender well my hounds. /

Breathe [Folio: *Brach*] Merriman, the poor cur is emboss'd, / And couple Clowder with the deep-mouth'd brach'.²⁷

Yet one fundamental issue remains, namely, how *emboss* came to develop its several senses pertaining to exhaustion and foaming at the mouth, when its roots clearly relate to the action of entering a forest (*en + bois*).²⁸ The *OED* admits to considerable uncertainty over this matter, observing in its prefatory comments, 'The development of senses [. . .] is strange, but appears to be in accordance with the existing evidence'. Under sense 2, 'To drive (a hunted animal) to extremity', we find the further admission, 'The sense "drive to a thicket", required by the etymology above suggested, is not clearly evidenced'; and sense 3 (b), 'to foam at the mouth', is accompanied by the comment, 'The sense "to foam at the mouth" is prob. influenced by *EMBOSS* v.¹, as if an "embossed stag" were one "studded" with bubbles of foam'.²⁹ This final suggestion must be admired for its ingenuity but it seems unsatisfactory, desperate even, with not so much as a hint of support from the available evidence. Even so, there may well be a kernel of truth in the idea that *emboss* v.¹ influenced the development of polysemy in *emboss* v.².

The principal meanings of *emboss* v.¹, evident as early as the fifteenth century, are 'to bulge, swell' or 'to cause to bulge', as in Lydgate's advice to a youth concerning table-manners: 'To enboce thy Iowis withe mete is nat diewe'.³⁰ And from the mid-sixteenth century we find that verb is used figuratively, to indicate the inflating of oneself or one's demeanour; hence, pomposity, tumidity of style.³¹ Could it be that such general notions of swelling or inflating could have been carried over to *emboss* v.², when applied to an animal that was seen to be panting, hyperventilating, sweating, lolling out its tongue, rolling its eyes and frothing at the mouth? There is no recorded evidence that makes such an association explicit, but it seems rather more plausible than thinking of a stag as being 'studded' with bubbles of foam.

Leaving the realms of speculation, there is other, more concrete evidence that does indeed show why an exhausted stag might be called 'embossed'. Once again, the sources are not medieval, but what they describe is just as relevant to the medieval hunt as to their own period, namely, the appearance and behaviour of a stag when it is nearing the end of its strength. First, from Michael Drayton's *Legend of Matilda* (1594), comes an extended simile which reveals that a weary deer starts looking for places to hide itself:

When, like a Deere, before the Hounds imbost,
When him his strength beginneth to forsake,
Leaves the smooth Launds to which he trusted most,
And to the Covert doth himselfe betake
Doubling, and creepes from Brake againe to Brake,
Thus still I shift me from the Princes Face,
Who had me then continually in Chace.³²

The verisimilitude of this image is confirmed by Gervase Markham, who observes that, '[. . .] when a Stagge is wearie [. . .] he will tappish oft, that is, hee wil euer and anon be lying downe and lurking in darke holes and corners [. . .]'.³³ And a very similar description occurs in William Warner's allegorical hunt of Cupid:

Sweet Cynthea, rate the eger Curre, and so my foe preuent,
For, loe, a farre, my chased Heart imboste and almost spent.
Thankes, gentle Goddesses, now the Lad pursues a bootles chace:
My Heart recouers Couerte wheare the Hound cannot hold pace.
Now tappas closely, silly Heart, vnrowse not and so liue.³⁴

In other words, an exhausted stag will try to hide from pursuing hounds by re-entering covert, which is precisely the action denoted by the component parts of *emboss*: 'into + woods'. We may plausibly infer that a deer came to be described as 'embossed' ('exhausted') when it had reached such a level of fatigue that it would start looking for a woodland refuge—a brake, thicket or other area of dense undergrowth—in which to hide from its tormentors or, in the last resort, to confront them by turning and standing 'at (a) bay'.³⁵

Chaucer's hart reconsidered

So much for *embossed* in its widely attested denotations of exhaustion or exhausting (through hunting or being hunted), and the attendant physical manifestations of that condition. Returning to the hart that 'had upon lengthe / So moche embosed' in *The Book of the Duchess*, we can see more clearly how different is Chaucer's verb from those examples discussed above, and consequently how inappropriate is the *MED*'s gloss of this passage. In *The Book of the Duchess*, the agent of the action is the hart itself, which must indicate that

the animal cannot be 'embossed' in the same way as one that has been pursued by hounds. Furthermore, as I have already observed, the hunt is an event that has yet to occur in the poem, so it makes little sense that the hunters should be discussing how the animal had been driven to exhaustion. If that had occurred, the hart would almost certainly be dead, not reappearing to be hunted another day.

Given the context in which it occurs, there is every reason to suppose that Chaucer's *embosed* is a technical hunting term that in some way derives from French, though it is not borrowed from any immediate source of *The Book of the Duchess* itself. For Joseph Mersand, it is simply one of '[. . .] several words pertaining to the chase and to hunting that probably were used too frequently in the conversation of the polite society of the time to have necessitated borrowing from a French original'.³⁶ Middle English forms of the word—*embosed*, *enbosed*, *enbosid*—all indicate a derivation from OF *bois*, resulting in a term cognate with OF *embuschier* (var. *embo(s)chier*, *embuissier*, *embuiser*), which had a variety of meanings, among them, 'to ambush', 'to send into a forest' (as with pigs for the purpose of feeding), and '(of game) to withdraw into covert'.³⁷ The last of these is a specifically hunting sense, which usually, though not always, requires the verb to be used reflexively. In the thirteenth-century instructional poem *La chace dou cerf*, for example, the huntsman, accompanied by his tracking hound, or limer, is advised to be extremely cautious when stalking the hart to its lair—literally, the place where it is 'enbochiez' ('embossed'):

Et quant tu ceras aprochiés
De lou li cers ert enbochiez,
Fai tenir ton chien et descent,
Et puis si sui tot belement.

[And when you have drawn near / to the place where the hart is
embossed, / let your hound be held and dismount, / and then
follow very carefully.]³⁸

The prose manual *Les livres du roy Modus et de la royne Ratio* (c. 1354-76) gives much the same advice to hunters setting out on their morning quest for a suitable quarry: 'Et les veneurs doivent aler entour le buisson atout leurs limiers et prendre garde se il s'enboche [var. *s'embusche*, *s'embosque*] gueres de bestes u buisson de la nuit' [And the hunters should go around the thicket with their limers and take note whether any animals are (still) embossed in the thicket from the night (before)].³⁹ Likewise in the *Livre de chasse* (1387-c.1391) by Gaston Phébus,

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Comte de Foix: 'Et, si il voit cerf chassable, si regarde quel part il s'enbuschera ne entrera la ou il ne le puisse plus veoir, si aille fere une brisee' [And if he (the tracker) sees a huntable stag, let him note where he embossed himself, and not enter where he cannot see him any more, but rather let him break a twig (as a marker)].⁴⁰

In Old French and Anglo-Norman there is also the related noun *embuschement* (*emboschement*, *embouschement*), which denotes 'an ambush' or 'a hiding-place' (usually in a forest); in hunting contexts, it also indicates the place where an animal (often a deer, commonly a hart) enters the woods to seclude itself in its lair, to hide or rest after feeding.⁴¹ In *Modus et Ratio*, for example, the huntsman who sets out to track the hart in the morning is advised: 'Trai donques tout l'embouchement entre les champs et le bois, et met ton limier devant toi' [Then investigate the whole 'embushment' between the fields and the wood, and let your limer go ahead of you].⁴² And Gaston Phébus has similar counsel for a tracker looking for a potential quarry in woodlands with tall trees ('hauz boys'): 'Et, quant il en encontrera aux champs de chose qui li plaise, il doit trere l'embuschement pour le mettre au fort entre les champs et le bois' [And when he (the tracker) finds anything encouraging in the fields (indicating a huntable stag), he should investigate the 'embushment' between the fields and the wood in order to follow (the stag) to its thicket].⁴³

The circumstances in which *embuschier* and *embuschement* occur in French hunting texts are highly informative and fit the Chaucerian context well. They reveal that a well-secluded hart was precisely what one would expect to find, and to hear discussed, before the start of a hunt with strength. These texts also show that a hart known to be so sequestered in its lair (its *giste* or *fort*)⁴⁴ would be one that had been properly 'harboured' by a limerer (a tracker) early in the morning, which seems to be precisely what Chaucer's narrator hears being recounted.⁴⁵ Some background information may be useful here.

Harbouring involved the selection of a suitable quarry for a day's sport, and was an operation of vital significance to the hunt with strength. It was the first stage in the elaborate ritual of choosing, separating, and pursuing a specific hart, which is how the hunt with strength was conducted. Edward Plantagenet describes the finer details of harbouring the quarry in ten chapters of his hunting treatise, *The Master of Game* (c. 1406-13), emphasising throughout what care the harbourer must take to ensure that he knows precisely which is the best stag, and where that animal has hidden itself in the woods (caps 23-32).⁴⁶ Having made his observations, the harbourer has to return to the 'assembly', where his master is waiting, report his findings, and offer such evidence as he has been able to gather,

including, for example, some of the stag's 'fumes' (its droppings; *Master of Game*, caps 26, 33). There are many passages that could be usefully quoted, but one is conspicuously relevant. Closely following his source, the *Livre de chasse*, Edward describes the often lengthy process required for discovering the hart's lair, allowing it to settle there, and ensuring that it stays put. The harbourer, says Edward:

shuld also clymbe vp on tree bi cause þat þe hert shuld wynde no þing of hym [. . .] And if he se an hert stondyng stably he must loke wel what contre he shal goo to his leire [Gaston: *quel part il s'enbuschera*]; [. . .] but he must abide a grete while for sumtyme an hert wil stalle and loke about a greet while or he wil go to his leire, [. . .] or ellis sumtyme he comeþ out agayn for to loke about and for to herken, [. . .] and þefore he shal abide longe þat he affray hym not.⁴⁷

Even then the harbourer could not make his report: he still had to make a circuit of the covert to confirm that the hart had not left from the opposite side.⁴⁸

It is clear, then, that a successful harbouring could take a long time, and that it was most confidently reported when the hart was securely sequestered in its lair; two conditions that usefully explain Chaucer's adverbial phrases 'upon lengthe' and 'so moche'. Emerson, who took these phrases as sure indicators of a lengthy pursuit, paraphrased them as saying, 'the hart had, after a long run, so much exhausted itself',⁴⁹ but in fact they make much better sense if understood in the context of a harbourer's report. As *The Master of Game* reveals, a hart might take a considerable time to settle securely in its lair (cf. *upon lengthe*), and the deeper it secluded itself in the wood (cf. *so moche embosed*) the more likely it was to remain there. Such facts are precisely what a harbourer would want to establish and report before the start of a hunt. They would indicate that the hart was safely secluded deep in the woods, from where it was unlikely to move, and that its position was exactly known: details that would certainly merit animated discussion amongst expectant huntsmen.

This interpretation also helps to explain a novel aspect of Octovyen's hunt in *The Book of the Duchess*, which is that it begins with a *mayster-hunte* blowing three notes ('blasts') on his hunting horn, at which the running hounds are released at the stag (*The Book of the Duchess*, ll. 372-7). This is noteworthy because it was more usual in the hunt with strength for the chosen hart to be first

'unharboured'—i.e. driven from its lair—by the limerer who had discovered it there, and only then for the running dogs to be released, or 'uncoupled', after it. It is clear, however, that the formal unharbouring of a stag did not always occur. Edward Plantagenet explains, for example, that hunters were sometimes too impatient (a situation he deplores), the quarry too restless, or the day too far advanced to risk further delays:

this trewly no skylful hunter oweþ to do but if [. . .] þe deer be
steryng in þe quarter and haþ not abyde þe meving of the lymer,
or ellis þat it be so fer forþ daies þat þe sonne haþ dried vp þe
fues, and þat þei haue lytel day inowe to renne to hym and hunt
hym wiþ strength.⁵⁰

We may also infer that the unharbouring was unnecessary in certain situations: for example, if no specific, individual stag was being sought, or if a specific stag's position was so well known and so isolated that the running hounds (specifically the 'finders') could be released directly at it.⁵¹

There is a tradition that Edward III was the first English monarch to forgo the unharbouring, which raises the interesting possibility that Chaucer is deliberately alluding to the contemporary practices of the English court.⁵² But it is also evident that the hunters' discussion about how the hart had 'so moche embosed'—in the sense 'gone deep into the forest'—would provide excellent grounds for waiving the unharbouring. For if the hart was known to be deeply secluded in a location that had been clearly marked by the habourer,⁵³ it could quite feasibly be 'run to' without being first unharboured. In other words, the omission of the unharbouring and the detail that the hart had 'moche embosed' support and inform one another. In so doing, they lend further support to the view that the hunters, whose garbled chatter the newly awakened narrator first hears, are not boasting about a hart already hunted to exhaustion, but are planning, in the meticulous way appropriate to the hunt with strength, the pursuit of a particular hart—indeed, we must assume, the very one that later 'yfounde ys' (*The Book of the Duchess*, l. 378).

In conclusion, there are many good reasons for construing the 'embossed' hart of *The Book of the Duchess* as one that has secluded itself deep in the woods. Not only does this reading of Chaucer's verb make the best possible sense in the context, it also helps to explain an unusual aspect of the hunt that ensues, and it matches Chaucer's usage with analogous French expressions which, in several

respects, readily show the most likely origin and meaning of Chaucer's locution. If Mersand is right, Chaucer may not have actually coined *emboss* as an intransitive English verb, though his is certainly the first recorded use of it. We may speculate that if *emboss* had contemporary currency in Chaucer's England on the model of OF *embuschier*, it too would have been generally reflexive, which would mean that Chaucer is using the verb in an 'absolute' way—i.e. omitting the expected reflexive pronoun.

Finally, to close the case with one further observation, this reading makes sense thematically too, for it draws attention to an important premonitory image. Even before the hunt begins, Chaucer's reference to the hart that has hidden (embossed) itself in a remote recess of the forest can be seen to anticipate the Man in Black whom the narrator presently discovers grieving in his own secluded covert—or, to borrow the appropriate term from Old French, 'embuschement'—into which he has withdrawn, beset by cares, to meditate on his recent bereavement.⁵⁴ We may also then contrast the violent dislodging of the hart by Octovyen's hunters with the narrator's naively gentle inquisition of the Man in Black, leading to his eventual, cathartic disclosure of the matter bearing down on his heart: 'She ys ded [. . .] be my trouthe!' (l. 1309). But such ideas lie beyond the scope of this enquiry.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Georgia R. Crampton, 'Transitions and meaning in *The Book of the Duchess*', *JEGP*, 62 (1963), 486-500 (p. 492); James Winny, *Chaucer's Dream-Poems* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1973), p. 55; Donald R. Howard, *Chaucer: His Life, His Works, His World* (New York: Dutton, 1987), pp. 153-4; Derek Brewer, *A New Introduction to Chaucer*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1998), p. 84.

² 'A re-examination of Octovyen's hunt in *The Book of the Duchess*', *Medium Ævum*, 56 (1987), 183-99.

³ All references to the works of Chaucer are to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

⁴ The hunt with strength is described in detail by John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), pp. 32-46; also Marcelle Thiébaux, 'The medieval chase', *Speculum*, 42 (1967), 265-74.

⁵ *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by W. W. Skeat, 2nd edn, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894-1900), I 472; Norman Davis *et al.*, *A Chaucer Glossary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), s.v. *embosed*; *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by J. H. Fisher (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), p. 549, n. 353.

⁶ Oliver Farrar Emerson, 'Chaucer and medieval hunting', in *Chaucer: Essays and Studies* (Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1929), pp. 320-77 (esp. pp. 323-30); *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F. N. Robinson, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), Glossary, s.v. *embosed*.

⁷ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. by Hans Kurath, S. M. Kuhn *et al.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1954-2001). All citations have been checked against the current online editions of both dictionaries.

⁸ *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 969, n. 353. The editors' citation of the *OED* is erroneous at this point; there is no headword *emboss* in that dictionary.

⁹ A. C. Baugh, 'Two Middle English lexical notes', *Language*, 37 (1961), 539-43 (pp. 539-42).

¹⁰ *Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader*, ed. by E. T. Donaldson, 2nd edn (New York: Ronald Press, 1975), p. 595, n. 352-3.

¹¹ *MED*, s.v. *embocen* v. 1; see also *OED*, s.v. *emboss* v.¹ 1.

¹² For the sake of analogy, see *MED* for the related noun *boce*, sense 3: 'a bulge, swelling' etc. (cf. *OED*, s.v. *boss* sb.¹ 1.a). The term 'chaseable' is used by Edward Plantagenet in his treatise *The Master of Game*: 'þe vi yere [he is] an hert of x. And þan [. . .] is he schaceable for

alway bfore he shal be called but rascayle or foly'. *The Master of Game by Edward of Norwich, Second Duke of York*, ed. by W. A. and F. Baillie-Grohman (London: Ballantyne, Hanson, 1904), p. 18 (punctuation mine).

¹³ Emerson, 'Chaucer and medieval hunting', p. 324 (interpolations in italics mine).

¹⁴ *Generydes: A Romance in Seven-Line Stanzas*, ed. by W. A. Wright, EETS o.s. 55 and 70 (London: Trübner, 1878).

¹⁵ Rachel Hands, *English Hawking and Hunting in 'The Boke of St. Albans'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 184, ll. 539-40.

¹⁶ Facsimile edition published as *Turbervile's Booke of Hunting 1576 [sic]* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 244. See also Gervase Markham, *Countray Contentments* (1615; facsimile edn, Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), I 31 (sig. E4r): 'To know when a Stagge is wearie, you shall see him imboist, that is, foaming and slauering about the mouth with a thicke white froth, his haire will looke blacke, shining and fowle with sweat [. . .]'.
¹⁷ The *MED*'s gloss for *Generydes* would be improved if it read, '[. . .] to be, or to become, exhausted from being hunted' (emphasis mine).

¹⁸ The *OED* cites the satiric poem, 'The Elephant in the Moon', by Samuel Butler (d. 1680): 'An Elephant from one of those / Two mighty Armies is broke loose, / [. . .] Look quickly, lest the Sight of us / Should cause the startled Beast t'imboist': *The Genuine Remains in Prose and Verse of Mr. Samuel Butler [. . .] with Notes by R. Thyer*, 2 vols (London, 1759), I 8 (ll. 125-30).

¹⁹ Unlike Butler (see preceding note), Milton uses the word as an adjectival (past) participle: 'Like that self-begott'n bird / In the Arabian woods embost': *Samson Agonistes* (1671), ll. 1699-1700, in *The Riverside Milton*, ed. by Roy Flannagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Flannagan's note (p. 843, n. 315) is erroneous in claiming that 'the *OED* does not record Milton's usage'; see *OED*, *emboss*, v.² 1. b.

²⁰ John Skelton, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by John Scattergood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 370, ll. 475-8.

²¹ Compare Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named The Governor* (1531), facsimile edn, ed. by R. C. Alston (Menston: Scholar Press, 1970), II. vi: 'For who, beholdynge a man in estimation of nobilitie and wisdom, by furie chaunged in to an horrible figure, his face infarced with rancour, his mouthe foule and imboist [. . .] wyll nat haue suche a passion in extreme detestation?' (punctuation mine).

²² Ed. by Scattergood, p. 312, ll. 22-6.

²³ See *ibid.*, Glossary, p. 537, s.v. *embosyd*; *OED*, s.v. *emboss*, v.² 3; 'exhausted with distress' does not make sense, whereas 'frenzied with distress' does.

²⁴ *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. xiii. 1-3. Except where otherwise indicated, all references to the works of Shakespeare are to *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. by G. Blakemore Evans *et al.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

²⁵ *Noble Arte of Venery*, pp. 103-4; see also p. 118, where Gascoigne explains why a hart hates running into northerly or southerly winds: 'And if he should runne into any of those two windes, it would quickly enter his throte when he *is embost and beginneth to be spent*, and would drie his throte and his tongue sore [. . .]' (emphasis mine).

²⁶ *All's Well that Ends Well*, III. vi. 99-101. The French lord is speaking to Count Bertram about the parasitical Parolles. The *OED* (s.v. *emboss* v.² 2) cites Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, III. i. 22-3 as an earlier example: 'Like dastard Curres, that hauing at a bay / The saluage beast embost in wearie chace [. . .]'; ed. by A. C. Hamilton (London: Longman, 1977). But it is questionable whether the verb *emboss* is transitive in this instance; it makes better sense to read the required transitive verb as *have* ('hauing'), rather than 'hauing [. . .] embost'; i.e. the dogs are described as having (the beast) at bay, with the adjectival phrase 'embost in wearie chace' supplying supplementary, parenthetical information about the 'saluage beast'.

²⁷ Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by Brian Morris, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1981), Ind. i. 14-16.

²⁸ There is no connection with the modern American expressions 'to bush' and 'to be bushed', meaning 'to (be) exhaust(ed)', which are first recorded as slang expressions in 1862 and 1870: *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, ed. by J. E. Lighter (New York: Random House, 1994-).

²⁹ *OED*, s.v. *emboss*, v.², 2-3.

³⁰ *Stans puer ad mensam*, l. 31, in *The Babees Book etc.*, ed. by F. J. Furnivall, EETS o.s. 32 (London: Trübner, 1868, repr. 1997), p. 28. See also *MED*, s.v. *embocen* v.

³¹ See, for example, Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, III. iii. 156-7, when Prince Hal reprimands Falstaff for accusing Mistress Quickly of picking his pocket: 'Why, thou whoreson, impudent, emboss'd rascall [. . .]'. This postdates the *OED*'s earliest citation, which is from 1564: s.v. *emboss* v.¹ 1. b; see also *embossed*, ppl. a.¹ 4.

³² *The Legend of Matilda*, ll. 386-92, in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), II 422.

³³ Markham, *Countrie Contentments* (1615), p. 31 (sig. E4r).

³⁴ William Warner, *Albions England* (London, 1602), STC 25083, p. 175.

³⁵ See the quotation from Spenser already cited: 'Like dastard Curres, that hauing at a bay / The saluage beast embost in wearie chace, / Dare not aduenture on the stubborne pray [. . .]' (*Faerie Queene*, III. i. 22).

³⁶ Joseph Mersand, *Chaucer's Romance Vocabulary* (New York: Comet Press, 1937), p. 63 (see also p. 64).

³⁷ F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue Française de IXe au XVe siècle*, 10 vols (Paris: Vieweg, 1881-1902), III, IX, s.v. *embuschier*, verbe. Tobler-Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche, 1925-), s.v. *embuschier*, *embuissier* vb., esp. col. 80: 'Jagd: vom Wild: sich in den Busch schlagen'. It is clear that ME *embosen* cannot, for phonological reasons, have descended directly from OF *embuschier*; it must be a parallel formation, either independently coined from *bois*, or perhaps modelled on Late Latin **inboscare* (unattested) from which also derives Italian *imboscare*, whence, in turn, EMnE *imbosk* (see *OED*, s.v. *imbosk*, v.).

³⁸ *La chace dou cerf*, ed. by Gunnar Tilander, *Cynegetica* 7 (Stockholm: Offset-Lito, 1960), ll. 205-8; all translations mine. Cf. ll. 130-1, where a slightly different expression is used: 'li sers [. . .] va ramboschier' (lit. 'the hart [. . .] goes to re-emboss'—i.e., it 'returns to covert').

³⁹ *Les livres du roy Modus et de la royne Ratio*, ed. by Gunnar Tilander, 2 vols (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1932), I, cap. 60. 60-2; see also cap. 60. 74-85.

⁴⁰ Gaston Phébus, *Livre de chasse*, ed. by Gunnar Tilander, *Cynegetica* 18 (Karlshamn: Johanssons, 1971), cap. 31. 7.

⁴¹ See Tobler-Lommatzsch, s.v. *embuschement*, *embuisement* s. m., esp. col. 77: 'Jagd: Ort, wo das Wild nach dem Äsen auf den Feldern in den Wald zurückkehrt'. *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, ed. by William Rothwell, Louise W. Stone et al. (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1992), s.v. *embuschement*.

⁴² *Modus et Ratio*, I, cap. 14. 70-71. Cf. *ibid.*, ll. 75-6, 'et se il encontre de l'embouchier, c'est comme il entre ou bois, gete une brisiee [. . .]' [and if he (the tracker) sees (signs of) 'embushing', that is, going into the wood, let him make a marker]; and see also *Livre de chasse*, cap. 1. 91.

⁴³ *Livre de chasse*, cap. 35. 15. Middle English had no cognate noun, as can be seen from Edward Plantagenet's choice of words when translating this passage: 'And whan he shal mete in þe feeldis eny þinge þat hym likeþ he shal drawe hym to his couert [*l'embuschement*], for to make hym drawe the sonner to his strength [*au fort*]: *Master of Game*, p. 90 (here, as elsewhere, I have expanded printed *þ'* to *þat*).

⁴⁴ See *Livre de chasse*, caps 31. 8; 33. 2; 34. 5; 35. 15, 24-5.

⁴⁵ Credit must go to A. C. Baugh for first suggesting that the narrator overhears a general discussion of a harbourer's report: 'Two lexical notes', pp. 540-41.

⁴⁶ Of these ten chapters, nine are largely translations of Gaston de Foix's *Livre de chasse*, while one (cap. 26) is Edward's own work; cf. *Livre de chasse*, caps 28-36.

⁴⁷ *Master of Game*, p. 86; cf. *Livre de chasse*, cap. 31. 7.

⁴⁸ *Master of Game*, pp. 83-4, 86.

⁴⁹ 'Chaucer and medieval hunting', p. 324; but the idea that a hart fleeing from hunters should be said to 'exhaust *itself*' seems incongruous.

⁵⁰ *Master of Game*, p. 95 (punctuation mine); see also p. 18: 'An olde deer [. . .] is vncoupled to, as þe lymer meneþ [r. meueþ] hym or oþere houndes fynden hym wiþout limere [. . .]'.¹

⁵¹ See also *Master of Game*, p. 92, which describes how the unharbouring is not advisable when stags are in rut. Cf. *The Tretyse off Huntyng*, ed. by Anne Rooney (Brussels: Omirel, 1987), which devotes an entire section to hunting the hart with strength without having it first unharboured (ll. 72-117).

⁵² See G. K. Whitehead, *Hunting and Stalking Deer in Britain through the Ages* (London: Batsford, 1980), p. 16.

⁵³ Described in *Master of Game*, p. 86 ff.

⁵⁴ For *embuschement* as a 'hideaway', 'den' or 'refuge', see *Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. by Alexandre Micha (Geneva: Droz, 1990), ll. 3249, 3293, 6105.

Domesticity and Medieval Devotional Literature

Catherine Batt, Denis Renevey, Christiania Whitehead

Introduction

Catherine Batt and Christiania Whitehead

The Christian soul is a castle that must be fortified against the attacks of the devil. It has long been acknowledged that the architectural metaphor of the soul as a besieged castle plays a key role in the literary construction of devotional identity in religious literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, from Tertullian to Edmund Spenser.¹ Until recently, however, this authoritative focus on 'defensive' constructions of the self has been at the expense of the investigation of alternative spatializations, specifically, the construction of religious interiority as a domestic or household space. That neglect is now beginning to be redressed, in parallel with a growing interest in the political, economic and material dimensions of the medieval household.² This tripartite article contributes to this process of redress; it has its origins in a conversation in which the three of us were intrigued at how the thirteenth- to fifteenth-century vernacular texts we were studying independently all in some way called on (sometimes startling) domestic imagery and reference for devotional purposes; and yet, in different contexts, local similarities might also make for rather different general effects, as the texts engage contrastingly as well as complementarily with metaphors of domestic space.

Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, introducing a collection of essays on *Medieval Practices of Space*, remind us that 'space' itself is by no means a given, but is shaped and re-shaped, both historically and experientially, and in the process of our attempt to conceptualize it and to understand how others perceive it: '[t]he practice of space in the Middle Ages

was never homogeneous, but always in flux.³ Hanawalt and Kobińska draw attention to the work of Henri Lefebvre, whose formulation of how we inhabit and perceive space is valuable to our investigations—at least in general terms—for the way in which it acknowledges and incorporates the interrelation of experience and conceptualization. Lefebvre writes of overlapping and fluid categories of 'spatial practice', 'representations of space', and 'representational spaces', which he understands on the level of social practice as, respectively, space 'perceived', 'conceptualized', and 'lived'. Representations of space alert us to the interconnectedness of produced spaces and to the codes one uses to understand them, while representational spaces open up the world of art, in which the realm of the imagination 'makes symbolic use' of physical space.⁴ Most interesting for our purposes is Lefebvre's definition of 'representational spaces' as sites of social and artistic interaction. If one might want to take issue with aspects of the detail of his categorisation (and also interrogate the broad distinction he makes, elsewhere in his work, between medieval 'feudal', and post-medieval 'capitalist' spaces), his method nonetheless illuminates the importance of social relations to constructions of space, an emphasis central to the argument in the first section of our tripartite article. In all our texts, social constructions of space and its perception are integral to the presentation and analysis of tropes of siege and of household, and the ways in which they draw on literary technique and lived experience is intrinsic to their dynamic as devotional writings.

The Christian soul—or heart—is, then, a castle, and it can also be a household space. The following linked considerations examine some of the most extended and detailed developments of this figure to survive in texts of medieval English provenance. Focussing on texts united by their religious dedication, but otherwise very different from one another, these considerations seek to elucidate the ways in which the trope of the household of the soul is moulded by time, genre and didactic purpose, as well as indicating how several of these texts prove amenable to later environments of reception distinctly different from those for which they were first conceived. Opening with a study of the evocation of figurative and physical household spaces in the early thirteenth-century Middle English *Ancrene Wisse* and Latin *De doctrina cordis* (with subsidiary reference to *Sawles Warde*), in a way that especially draws attention to the importance of social relations to spatial practice, Denis Renevey will explore the ways in which these spaces signify within texts premised upon anchoritic and conventual enclosure,

together with the means by which they interact with their envisaged primary audiences of female religious. Catherine Batt's subsequent essay will contrast these clerical and institutional evocations of the moral household with an equivalent figurative episode in the mid-fourteenth-century *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* of Henry, duke of Lancaster, and comment on the different emphases that emerge as a result of Henry's gender, aristocratic and secular social circumstances, and of his relatively more 'personal' motivations in writing. Finally, Christiania Whitehead will focus upon an extended allegory of domestic management in St Bridget of Sweden's mid-fourteenth-century *Liber celestis* (in its fifteenth-century Middle English translation), and will examine the changes that occur when the 'household imaginary'⁵ transfers from its initial application to institutional women readers, to become reanimated by an aristocratic female prophet as an object of divine revelation.

In addition to paying attention to the chronological evolution of this trope, and to its reformulation in response to the variables of textual genre, authorial circumstance and intention, and envisaged primary audience, we shall also locate our analyses with reference to recent debates upon the gendered character of medieval religious writing, enquiring whether the domestic and menial configuration of religious identity in texts initially designed for women religious is intrinsically disempowering,⁶ or whether there is evidence that enables the construction of more nuanced models of reception. We shall also address some further implications of the domestic trope as a tool for shaping religious identity: the interaction between menial activity and contemplative passivity; the assumption of unruly psychological subordinates that require control or policing, and the presence of a degree of tension between material asceticism and spiritual acquisition and hoarding.

Traditional discussions of the social uses of space have tended to take at face value medieval religious writers' insistence that there obtains a stark division between 'close' and 'commune' space (in modern terms, the private and public spheres); between the spaces of religious enclosure and open social commerce (taken to its greatest extreme in anchoritic literature), and between the domestic spaces of the convent and the aristocratic or gentry household. In every instance, our case studies reveal evidence that questions these traditional assumptions. They uncover patterns of permeability and interactivity in and around the anchorhold and the convent, and reveal significant areas of overlap between aristocratic and conventual household practice, and between aristocratic and sacred space. They also demonstrate

that, rather than remaining confined within fixed reading constituencies, many religious texts offering a domestic model of interiority were appropriated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by mixed audiences of male and female enclosed, religious, and lay readers. Moreover, the various deployment of similar domestic imagery across different texts alerts us to the theological and spiritual strategies particular to each work. In addition to offering insight into the rich hybridity of late-medieval devotional reading communities, examination of domestic imagery also supports the important idea that, despite appearances, apparently 'feminized' systems of metaphor and models of selfhood quickly proved adaptable to different reading situations and varied audiences, and became credible for use by men as well as women, by lay Christians as well as enclosed.

*Figuring Household Space in Ancrene Wisse and The Doctrine of the Hert*⁷

Denis Renevey

Introduction

At various moments in *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer situates his pilgrims' narratives both in a specific time scheme and in a detailed representational space, the latter marked by the reference to a pilgrimage journey from Southwark to Canterbury. Following the Knight's and Miller's Tales, Harry Bailey, mastermind of the tale competition that supposedly unfolds on the way to Canterbury, invites the Reeve to press on with his own story, with the mention of Deptford as the location on the Southwark-Canterbury axis, which has been reached by the company at round the liturgical hour of prime. Space plays an integral part in the development of the larger narrative which gives coherence to the deployment of the more specific spatial dimensions inherent in each of the Tales. The movement of the pilgrim-characters in the space configured by the Southwark-Canterbury journey is teleologically configured by the sacred dimension of the pilgrimage, whatever the specific intentions and degree of seriousness the characters may have had about their journey. Such a cosmic apprehension of space, interpreted with a broad exegetical palette by the secular Chaucer,

nevertheless shows how the sacralization of space looms large in medieval culture and its literature.

Although, as stated in the introduction, Lefebvre considers the capitalist period for his investigation of space in *The Production of Space*, his concept of space as revealing of social practice is useful to the analysis of the textual production of physical and mental spaces for the practice of religious activities. My analysis of the representation of secular space as social practice in two devotional works of the thirteenth century, *Ancrene Wisse* and *The Doctrine of the Hert*, shows a reversal in the process of the use of the cosmic dimension as defining space in Chaucer; in those works, the reader is invited to consider her/his own role in the cosmic order through the decoding of a mainly secular space, that of the medieval household, which is delineated by a multiplicity of social practices.

Broader contextual approaches to anchoritism, with a study of the possible influences of, or parallels with, the continental feminine religious tradition, as well as the recent interest in the similarities between *Ancrene Wisse* and Latin continental preaching, invite a horizon of reading which suggests the co-existence of an insular tradition dating back to the Anglo-Saxon period, with the continental literature of confession and sermon literature which developed as a result of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decisions on pastoral reform.⁸ Both traditions need to be taken into account in order to discuss the features of the early Middle English text. According to Bella Millett, it is not impossible that Paris-trained preachers contributed to the revival of vernacular religious literature in the West Midlands, with the introduction of continental preaching practices fused with repackaged insular native preaching resources.⁹

Such new directions make possible a comparative study of the use of space in *Ancrene Wisse*, a South-West Midland text which belonged to the revival of vernacular literature mentioned by Millett, and *De doctrina cordis*, a Latin continental devotional tract attributed to the Dominican cardinal Hugh of St Cher (c. 1200-63) and translated into Middle English in the fifteenth century. *De doctrina cordis* addresses a community of sisters and is, like *Ancrene Wisse*, influenced by sermon preaching practices and the new literature of confession. This relatively understudied text was a medieval devotional best-seller, with more than two hundred manuscripts held in all major medieval European libraries, and translations in French, Italian, Spanish, English, German and Dutch.¹⁰ As its title suggests, the treatise offers guidance about how to prepare one's heart for union with God.¹¹ As an overall study of

the uses of preaching and confessional techniques within those two works goes beyond the limits of this essay, I would like to confine my analysis to one of the recurring tropes of confessional literature, that of the household, considered here as representational space. The activity of cleaning, dusting, and sweeping makes ample use of the household space, as evidenced in *Ancrene Wisse* in a few instances and, more systematically, in *The Doctrine of the Hert*, and Henry's *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, which will all be discussed later.

But as the two texts I am concerned with in this first part belong to specific but parallel traditions, I would like to consider, first, the anchoritic one, by pointing out textual evidence which helps construct an anchoritic paradigm marked by the politics and the discourse of enclosure in *Ancrene Wisse*. The essay then deconstructs this idealised but overly confined image of the recluse by looking at passages dealing with the representation of space and topography of the household, highlighting how social networks marked the life of the anchoresses for whom *Ancrene Wisse* was written.¹² Textual imagery implying the larger Christian community also contributes to representing the anchoress in a central role, where she is compared to saints and virgin martyrs, the Virgin Mary or even Christ. But below this surface discourse which the author is keen to maintain throughout the text, other traces show that routine daily activities in the anchorhold depend on a set of social practices which require close surveillance and regulation if the attainment of a condition as close as possible to being dead-to-the-world is to be reached. However, the solitary life in *Ancrene Wisse* is not depicted in terms of complete physical isolation. Instead, significant social practices and networks permeate the life of the anchoresses, which are described, to use Lefebvre's terminology, in the 'lived' space of the anchorhold, the latter extending in fact beyond the confines of its architectural boundaries. It may be that this form of spiritual solitude contributed to broadening the readership of the text, to both men and women, religious or lay, who were familiar with Latin or one of the vernacular languages spoken in medieval England.

The Politics and Discourse of Enclosure

The large number of manuscripts (17 extant) in which *Ancrene Wisse* circulated testifies to the surprising popularity of such an apparently specialized religious piece. Changes made to the original version suggest the

existence of a reading public whose way of life and gender did not necessarily match those inscribed in the original. For example, it seems that a male, non-anchoritic public might have been attracted to this text, without any sense of incongruity in digesting passages specifically addressed to female virgins. The evidence provided by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne on the Anglo-Norman version of *Ancrene Wisse*, integrated into a large compilation called the *Compileison*, provides a great deal of information about the ways in which *Ancrene Wisse* was adapted for an audience which may well have included monks, canons, friars of whatever kind, nuns, recluses, and men or women of religion. Wogan-Browne also stresses how the Anglo-Norman compiler did not see the need to change the highly gendered passages dealing with enclosure in particular. Wogan-Browne's paper makes a strong case for the un-enclosing of *Ancrene Wisse* by a consideration of its adaptability outside specifically anchoritic channels.¹³ I would like to pursue this argument about the permeability of enclosure by looking first at internal textual evidence that specifically addresses enclosure; then at the description of the anchoritic household as representation of 'lived' space, in order to argue that this concept serves the construction of a representational space marked by circulation, exchanges, social practice and networks. However much the author of *Ancrene Wisse* deploys anchoritic culture as part of his overall textual strategy, more careful attention to space as an historical category allows for evidence showing how anchoritic culture is based on systems of networks in which anchoresses are shown interacting with the world at large.¹⁴

Although I concur with Christopher Cannon on the shaping influence of *Ancrene Wisse* as material book and the ways in which it determines how the anchoritic body is conceptualized in its rapport with spatial categories—according to the Russian dolls principle—I also contend that emphasis on interchange between those spatial containers which are the Christian community at large, the parish, the village, the anchorhold, the cell and the anchoress's body, reveals awareness on the part of the author about the necessity of permeability within anchoritic culture.¹⁵ Also, one should point out that Guido I's *Consuetudines* and the solitary model of the Carthusian which it constructs, which had a strong impact on the construction of the concept of solitariness in *Ancrene Wisse*, is based on the concepts of an order which considered itself semi-eremical, with relative importance given to social networks and practice.¹⁶ Given the Carthusian influence and the evidence of *Ancrene Wisse* itself, it is worthwhile paying additional attention

to the question of permeability. Our desire for a past that is foreign, exotic, other, and therefore appealing, may have had too great an impact on the way we represent anchoritic culture in general, and the space that it produces. It may account for too rigid an interpretation of some of the information found in liturgical manuals and manuscript illustrations, where notions of impermeability, enclosure and containment are treated formally and ideally. For instance, without wanting to deny the psychological importance of the recitation of the Mass of the Dead which marked the ceremony of enclosure, as is attested by liturgical manuals, we may have been blinded by the fact that, despite this psychological death, the anchoress had to interact with the world in several specific ways for her own physical survival.

Recent attention to the subject of female monastic and anchoritic enclosure shows that enclosure as a concept needs to be complemented by those of permeability and networks. The work of Mary Erler on ownership and transmission of manuscripts among female religious communities points to important relationships between nuns and their religious and blood families.¹⁷ The convent gate becomes a site from which exchange becomes possible. Evidence of book ownership among anchoresses is probably even scantier than that for nuns; nonetheless, one may suspect that blood families also played an important role in the purveyance of goods and commodities for solitary recluses or small communities of anchoresses.¹⁸ The defensive, guarded, tone of *Ancrene Wisse* and other anchoritic works towards the outside world occludes in part the necessary contacts which practical aspects of the anchoritic mode of life inevitably forced upon anchoresses. In fact, most passages dealing with enclosure, if read from the other side of the lens, can be used as evidence in support of a space that is permeable and which therefore allows intense networking for those who inhabit it:

Vt þurh þe chirche þurl ne halde 3e tale wið namon, ah beo
reð þer to wurðmunt for þe hali sacrament þat 3e seoð
þerþurh. Ant neomeð oðerhwile to ower wummen þe huses
þurl, to oþre þe parlur. Speoken ne ahe 3e bute ed tes twa
þurles. Silence eauer ed te mete. 3ef oðre religiuse as 3e
witen doð hit, 3e ahen ouer alle. 3ef ei haueð deore geast, do
hire meidnes as in hire stude to gleadien hire feire. ant heo
schal habbe leaue forte unsperren hire þurl eanes oðer twien.
ant makie sines toward hire of a glead chere. Summes

curteisie is iturnt hire to uuel. Vnder semblant of god is ofte ihulet sunne. Ancre ant huses leafdi ah muchel to beon bitweonen. (pp. 37-8, fol. 17a/18-17b/3)

[Do not talk to anyone through the church window, but hold it in honor because of the holy sacrament that you see through it. And use the house window for talking sometimes with your women; for others, the parlor window. You should not speak except at these two windows.

Always keep silence at meals; since other religious do this, as you know, you above all ought to do it. If anyone has a loved guest, let her have her maid entertain her fairly as though in her place—and she will have leave to open her window once or twice and make signs toward her with a cheerful face. The courtesy of some has turned to their harm. Under the appearance of good sin often lies hidden. There should be a great difference between an anchoress and the lady of a house.] (*AW*, p. 74)

There is indeed a difference between an anchoress and the lady of a house, even if the comparison drawn by the author indicates that similarities can be found as well. In fact, the text's content makes clear that the author is addressing a primary audience familiar with noble or gentry household practices. As Chris Woolgar observes, every decent household would demonstrate its wealth by displaying a strong sense of hospitality, entertaining and feeding guests in the best possible fashion, with as much courtesy as demonstrated, for instance, in the fourteenth-century romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.¹⁹ It is quite clear, therefore, that hospitality, an essential Christian value, needs readjusting in the space of the anchorhold and that the textual strategy of *Ancrene Wisse* consists mainly in attuning the noble ladies to a material space for which a new code of conduct is now required.²⁰ Yet the architectural space of the anchorhold, despite obvious differences, creates another household for which practical regulations and networks need to be implemented. The acquisition and assimilation of those new paradigms by the anchoresses are a great concern of the author. They are shaped with reference to secular household practices.²¹

The Anchorhold as Household

Although the anxiety-driven anchoritic background of *Ancrene Wisse* does not allow for profuse and systematic use of household imagery, this imagery, when it occurs, holds several distinct functions. For instance, the last part of *Ancrene Wisse*, 'The Outer Rule', contributes to the shaping of anchorhold activities, to the anchorhold as 'lived' space, by making repeated gestures towards secular household practices:

Ne limeð nawt to ancre of oper monnes ealmesse to makien hire large. Nalde me lahhen a beggere lude to bismere. þe leaðede men to feaste? Marie ant Marthe ba weren sustren. ah hare lif sundrede. ze ancren beoð inumen ow to Marie dale. þe ure lauereð seolf herede. Maria optimam partem elegit. Marthe marthe qð he þu art mucho baret. Marie haueð icore bet. ant ne schal hire na þing reauin hire dale. Husewifschipe is marthe dale. Marie dale is stilnesse ant reste of alle worldes noise. þat na þing ne lette hire to heren godes steuene. Ant lokið hwet godd seið. þat na þing ne schal ow reauin þis dale. Marie haueð hire meoster. leoteð hire iwurðen. ze sitten wið Marie stan stille ed godes fet ant hercnið him ane. Marthe meoster is to feden poure ant schruden as hus leafdi. Marie ne ah nawt to entremeatin þrof. zef ei blameð hire, godd seolf ihwer wereð hire. as hali writ witneð. Contra Symonem, duo debitores et cetera. Contra Martham Maria optimam par. et cetera. Contra apostolos murmurantes. Vt quid perditio hec? Bonum inquit opus et cetera. On oðer half nan ancre ne ah to neomen bute meaðfulliche þat hire to neodeð. hwer of þenne mei ha makien hire large? ha schal libben bi ealmesse ase meaðfulliche as ha eauer mei. ant nawt gederin forte zeouen. ha nis nawt husewif, ah is a chirch ancre. zef ha mei spearien eani poure schruden, sende ham al dearnliche ut of hire wanes. Vnder semblant of god, is ofte ihulet sunne. Ant hu schulen þeose chirch ancres þe tilieð oðer habbeð rentes isette. don to poure nehburs dearnliche hare ealmesse? Ne wilni ha nawt to habbe word of a large ancre. ne forte zeouen muchel, ne beo nan þe gnedure. forte habben mare. For hwon

þe gredinesse beo rote of þe gederunge. of hire bitternesse. al beoð þe bohes bittre þe of hire spruteð. Bidden hit forte zeouen hit, his nawt ancre rihte. Of ancre curteisie. of ancre largesce, is icumen ofte sunne ant scheome on ende. Wummen. ant children. ant nomeliche ancre meidnes þe cumeð iswenchet for ow. þah ze spearien hit on ow, oðer borhin oðer bidden hit, makieð ham to eotene wið chearitable chere. ant leaðieð to herbarhin. (pp. 211-22, fols 111b/28-112b/10)

[It is not appropriate for an anchoress to be generous with someone else's alms. Would one not laugh a beggar loudly to scorn who invited people to a feast? Mary and Martha were both sisters, but their lives were quite different. You anchoresses have committed yourselves to Mary's share, which our Lord himself praised: *Maria optimam partem elegit* (Luke 10. 42)—'Martha, Martha!' he said, 'you are much troubled. Mary has chosen better, and nothing will deprive her of her share.' Being a housewife is Martha's share; Mary's is stillness and rest from all the world's noise, so that nothing may prevent her from hearing God's voice. And see what God said, that 'nothing will deprive' you of this share. Martha has her office; leave it to her. You sit with Mary stone-still at God's feet and listen to him alone. Martha's office is to feed the poor and clothe them, like a lady of the house. Mary ought not to meddle in this. If anyone blames her, God himself always protects her, as Holy Writ witnesses: *Contra Symonem, duo debitores, et cetera; contra Martham, Maria optimam partem, et cetera; contra apostolos murmurantes, ut quid perditio hec? Bonum inquit opus et cetera* [In answer to Symon (the Pharisee): 'If a man has two debtors', etc.; in answer to Martha: 'Mary has chosen the best part' etc.; in answer to the apostles complaining 'What is the purpose of this waste?' he replied 'She has done me a good service'] (Luke 7. 36-50; 10. 38-42; Matthew 26. 8-10)

Likewise, no anchoress ought to take more than moderately what she needs. How then can she be generous? She has to live by alms, as moderately as she can, and not accumulate

things in order to give them away. She is not a housewife but a church- anchoress; if she can spare any poor scraps, let her send them quite secretly out of her house. Under the semblance of good, sin is often hidden. And how can those rich anchoresses who cultivate land or have fixed incomes give their alms to poor neighbours secretly? Let her not wish to have a reputation as a generous anchoress, nor become greedier to have more so as to give much away: for when greediness is at the root of such accumulation, because of bitterness all the boughs which sprout from her are bitter. To ask for something in order to give it away is not right for an anchoress. From an anchoress's graciousness, from an anchoress' generosity, sin and shame have often come in the end.

To women and children, and especially to the anchoress' maidens who come and work for you, give food to eat with cheerful charity, even if you must deprive yourself or borrow or beg for it; and invite them to stay with you.] (*AW*, pp. 200-1)

The passage seems to have as reference a pious noblewoman who, by organising feasts for her guests and distributing generously to the poor, may be spiritually following the model of Martha, but whose behaviour is marked nevertheless by typical secular noble household activities. However praiseworthy the spiritual dimension of this activity may be, the anchoress is asked to follow an altogether different, contemplative model: that of Mary, completely devoted to the contemplation of spiritual matters. Some of the comments above, the author states, do not address the original recipients, the three sisters the author knew as their possible confessor and/or spiritual guide. If, according to the *Ancrene Wisse* author, the behaviour of these sisters is exemplary, one cannot infer that their way of life is typical of other anchoresses' behaviour. For example, following the well-known passage of the cat, the author continues with advice to anchoresses who keep animals other than cats:

ladlich þing is hit wat crist hwen me makeð i tune man of
ancre ahte. Nu þenne zef eani mot nedlunge habben hit, loki
þat hit namon ne eili ne ne hearmi. ne þat hire þoht ne beo

nawiht þron ifestnet. ancre ne ah to habben na þing þat
utward drahe hire heorte. (p. 213, fol.113a/3-8)

[It is a hateful thing, Christ knows, when people in town
complain about an anchoress' animals. Now then, if anyone
has to have one, see that it does not bother or harm anyone, and
that her thought is in no way fastened on it. An anchoress ought
to have nothing which draws her heart outward.] (*AW*, p. 201)

Servants, guests, and here, animals, make preservation of physical enclosure impossible. Anchoresses do have other animals than cats, people complain about them, and the author here seems to provide evidence of knowledge of an anchoritic way of life in England which not only speaks against the feasibility of applying physical enclosure, but shows in addition that anchoresses' contact with the outside world is sometimes subject to criticism. Hence, the use of household imagery in *Ancrene Wisse* is a complex one. It is used, firstly, perhaps not so much to warn anchoresses against improper behaviour, but rather, to help them adapt—at least for some of them—pre-enclosure gentry behaviour which they used to perform themselves in the past, or which they used as a model while they were still living in the world. However, the same 'household imaginary' (in Smith's phrase) serves also in the construction of a representation of a system of communities and networks, social and spiritual, in which the anchoress plays an essential role.²² Unlike the first use of the household, which is not without slight negative connotations, the anchoress is provided with tools that help her situate herself precisely in a nexus shaped by the representational space of an abstract household characterized by exchange and interaction.

Confession, Introspection and the Household

A third use of household space in *Ancrene Wisse* appears in the delineation of the inner feelings in the context of confession:

Schrift schal beon ihal. þat is. iseid al to a mon ut of child
hade. þe poure widewe hwen ha wule hire hus cleansin, ha
gedereð al þe greaste on an heap on alre earst, ant schuueð hit
ut þenne. þrefter kimeð eft aȝein ant heapeð eft to gederes þat

wes ear ileauet ant schuuēð hit ut efter. þrefter o þe smeale dust. 3ef hit dusteð swiðe, ha flaskeð weater ant swopeð ut efter al þet oðer. Alswa schal þe schriuēð him efter þe greater schuuen ut te smealre. 3ef dust of lihte þohtes windeð to swiðe up, flaski teares on ham. ne schulen ha nawt þenne ablende þe heorte ehnen. (pp. 161-2. fol. 85b/8-18)

[Confession must be whole: that is, sins from childhood on must all be spoken to one person. When the poor widow wants to clear her house, she first of all gathers all the dust in a heap, and then sweeps it out. Then she comes back and heaps what has been left together again, and sweeps it out after. After that, if it is very dusty, she sprinkles water on the fine dust and sweeps it out after all the rest. In the same way, one who confesses must push out the small sins after the great ones. If the dust of light thought blows up too much, sprinkle tears on them; then they will not blind the eyes of the heart.]

(*AW*, pp. 163-4)

As shown by the quotation above, *Ancrene Wisse's* adaptability at using concepts and images—elaborated from Alan of Lille's *Distinctiones*—according to the genre which it incorporates for the fashioning of its eight parts, is well demonstrated in the way in which household space serves in the confessional part to describe the recipient's inner self.²³ Linda Georgianna, followed by Millett and Cate Gunn, has given ample evidence of *Ancrene Wisse's* debt to penitential literature, a genre for which the Friars became the strongest advocates and to whose composition and propagation they contributed in important ways.²⁴

The Doctrine of the Hert is a work that similarly shows the influence of the increase in interest in self-introspection that marked the penitential literature which flourished after the 1215 Canon 21 decision of the Fourth Lateran Council imposing annual confession on all Christians. Unlike *Ancrene Wisse*, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, studied here in its fifteenth-century Middle English translation—and in this sense a reflection of one of *Ancrene Wisse's* French versions, the confessional and penitential *Compileison*—explores domestic imagery at far greater length.²⁵ Specifically, it participates in the construction of what I wish to call the devotional household, a concept that becomes fashionable all over Europe in the late medieval period,

involving the development of a sophisticated allegorization of the heart or the conscience as a household in need of minute attention.²⁶

Household space conceived as a mental image in *The Doctrine* serves then exclusively as a means of configuring the believer's consciousness. The degree to which mental images in this treatise are developed bespeak a strong conviction concerning the pedagogical potential of such imagery, to be used as part of an inner preparation for the exercise of confession:

Of oo þing beware, þou mayst neuer zeve trew rekenyng in confession but zif þou remembre þe long afor as a lordis catour þe whiche schal zeve a rekenyng to his lord. First he rekenet by hym self. Riȝt so schuldist þou do er þan þou come to confession and reken þe defautes by þiself, how þou hast dispendid þi lordis gode þe whiche He haþ lent to þe, þat is, þe giftes of nature, þe giftes of fortune, and þe giftes of grace. Also þou wost wele if a catour schuld zeue trew rekenyng he writeth both þe daies and þe causes in his boke how þat he haþ dispendid his lordis gode. So most þou do; rekene wele þe circumstances of þi synnes wher and how and by what cause þou hast synned and þan go to confession and zeue þi rekenyng to þi lordis auditor, þat is, þi confessour sittynȝ þer in þi lordis name. (*The Doctrine*, p. 8)

As a mental spatial representation, the house of your heart ('þe hous of þin hert'; *The Doctrine*, p. 9) becomes a dominant image of the treatise, one that enables a careful delineation of consciousness, and which makes possible the further exposition of basic Christian concepts.

The metaphor of the household for the representation of consciousness elaborates the more general concept of the space of daily experience which 'represents the inner side of a person's life and the inner circle of activities of persons in groups, the estate, the "house", or the "room"'.²⁷ According to Harald Kleinschmidt, that space of daily experience can be represented by a private household.²⁸ In the case of *The Doctrine*, the household is used solely to conceptualize the interiority of a person's life. It is an outstanding example of an extensive development of household space for the configuration of the inner feelings that developed in parallel to, or within, the confessional context. Household space is exploited in minute details, with a stress on the

significance of private, enclosed locations. So the house is easily appropriated as the figuration of the heart, the seat of consciousness, which does not stand as an abstract entity in the medieval period, but is corporeal. The force of the figuration can only be stronger when the household imagery is applied to interiority as physical habitation, the physical organ of the heart.²⁹ The use of the household as a space of exchange and busy negotiation for the interior life marks the latter as a site of bustling mental activity. Hence, the representational space of the household, understood as site of social exchanges, helps shape a mode of contemplation which feeds on an active engagement with household activities. In fact, interactivity is at the heart of the process of defining the self according to Christian paradigms regulated by circulation and exchange. The author of *The Doctrine of the Hert* therefore depicts household space as a site of social negotiations applied to the paradigm of the self, which must be kept under intense surveillance. Ways of cleaning the house are closely associated with confessional practice; that trope appears also in *Ancrene Wisse* and Catherine Batt (below) demonstrates also its subtle use in Henry's treatise. In the *Doctrine*, the household space is furnished with a bed, an eating table, a stool and a candlestick, associated, respectively, with inner peace, penance, judgement and self-knowledge. As Christiania Whitehead notes in *Castles of the Mind*, the confessional context invites expansion of this familiar trope.³⁰ In the *Doctrine*, the devotional household becomes a site in which regulation of circulation is possible. Thus it is an enclosed space, with the primary enclosure of the garden ('close gardyn', *The Doctrine*, p. 12) as a first barrier against unwelcome guests. The dichotomy 'close'/'commune' (*The Doctrine*, p. 13) which here addresses the garden imagery, is an overriding structural paradigm of the treatise. It addresses the notions of private and public spaces and assumes particular, antinomic roles for the characters acceding to those specific spaces. Hence, the self inhabiting the space of the household, unlike the common garden or the common market-place (*The Doctrine*, p. 28), has a way of controlling the circulation of allegorical characters within this particular precinct. If the evidence provided by the treatise, prescriptive by nature, suggests firmly how that space should be filled, it nevertheless leaves the last word to the reader, who has to engage actively with her own self and decide on its own configuration. Unsurprisingly, control of one's own senses is paramount in both *Ancrene Wisse* and *The Doctrine*: the household participates in the presentation of the inner feelings. In the former, the reclusorium as

physical household in which the anchoress is enveloped—which echoes the way in which the textual structure of *Ancrene Wisse* functions according to a similar pattern of envelopes—significantly affects the manner by which household space as imagery is used within the treatise. The *Doctrine*, less focused on the representation of physical space, makes more systematic and rigorous use of the representation of the moral household, so much so that it is possible to explore household performances at great length, especially those taking place in the kitchen.³¹ So, while *Ancrene Wisse* resorts to a multiplicity of images (with the pelican, the *nictycorax* and the sparrow as the principal ones) to create a discussion about the inner feelings and how they should be guarded, the *Doctrine* proceeds differently, making use of household imagery by discussing the need to keep the gates (the five senses) of the household shut to unwelcome visitors (the seven deadly sins):

Thow, þi hous, Sister, be þus yclensed and araied, ȝit ȝif Our Lord schalle dwelle þerin, þe ȝates þerof most be kept. The ȝates þat schuld be kept ben þi fyue wittes, þat is, tastyng, touchyng, seying, hiryng, and smellyng. By þes fyue ȝates þe soule goth out to outward þingis and outward þingis cometh into þe soule. The kepyng of þes ȝatis is noþing ellis but puttyng away of delectacions of þe fyue wittes. The soule goth outward by þe ȝates whan sche putteth hir to outward besynes þat longith to actif lif þe whiche schuld ben vsed with gret sadnes and grete drede. (*The Doctrine*, p. 23)

In the second chapter, keeping a vigilant eye out for the enemy's attacks is expressed in an even more defensive light. Household imagery is extended to encompass a besieged castle, with emphasis on the activities of those engaged in the defence of the castle:

Lo, Sistir, se and beholde what aduersary þou hast. Kepe þerfor þe castelle of þin hert fro suche an enmy þat so haþ besegid þe. Considere also and behold how sobirly alle þo þe whiche ben besegid in a castelle lyuen, how litel þei slepe and how selde, and with what drede and with how moche scleythe þei gon out of þe castelle whan þei haue nede, and how sone þei come aȝen, how oft and how besily þei serche þe wardis

of þe castelle, with what noyse and with what besynes eche of hem exciten oþer to bataile, and zit allebeit þat þei ben þus sorowful and dredful þei syngen oþer whiles on hye vppon þe castelle walles by cause þat her enemys schuld be aferde. Thus schuldist þou do, Sistir, zif þou wilt kepe wel þe castelle of þin hert. (*The Doctrine*, p. 78)

However, unlike *Ancrene Wisse* and Grosseteste's *Château d'amour*, in which the besieged castle as architecture represents the inviolability of the anchoritic body in the former, and describes the invulnerability of the Virgin in the latter, this metaphor of the aristocratic household, which I perceive in the *Doctrine* as a refined variation of the household one, also emphasises space as a social construction, a place of exchange and interaction, rather than as the static and firm conceptualization of a physical object.³² The *Doctrine's* besieged castle is a place of interaction, full of men, women and children:

But oo þing þou schalt wele know, a castelle may not be long kept zif it faile men for to defende it & kepe it. Riȝt so þou maist not long kepe þin hert in trew rest fro þe fende but zif þi þouȝtes ben myȝty ant strong for to withstand hym. Thou wost wele zif wommen or children be in a castelle þat is besegid þei ben sone sent out for þei mow litzly discomfort hem þat ben within and also for cowardise and fayntise of hert bryng in with somme sotilte preuely her ennemys. (*The Doctrine*, p. 83)

The easy transfer from household to castle space initially supports the ideology of (household) containment as typically female and used by male clerical culture to occlude notions of oppression by those of sacrifice.³³ In addition, Karen Fresco's statement that 'the ultimate instance of female space imbedded in the closed world of the court is the woman herself' corroborates containment ideology.³⁴ If, indeed, the moral household participates in the representation of such ideology in both *Ancrene Wisse* and *The Doctrine*, one needs to be aware that later medieval adaptations of *Ancrene Wisse* and vernacular translations of *De doctrina cordis*, of which our version is an example, were also made for a male readership for whom the feminisation of devotional practices enabled a deeper understanding of their inner feelings.³⁵

In addition, *The Doctrine* is a good example of the complexity involved in the use of domestic space and its activities. The transition from household to castle space leads to a reference to the male world of armoury and horsemanship. Further on, being shaved by the barber serves as image to instruct male and female readers in the principle of obedience to a superior, thus showing that containment ideology is not necessarily perceived in as gendered a manner by the medieval imagination as by the modern one:

It schuld fare by a cloisterer þat is vndir obedience as it doth with a man þat is schaue vndir a barbouris rasoure. þou wost wele, he þat sitteth vndir a rasoure, he suffret þe barbour to torne his hede now to þat one side, and now to þat oþer side, and now he suffreth hym to open his mouth and now for to lift vp his chyn and alle þis he suffreth lest he be hurte of þe rasoure ȝif he struglid. Riȝt so schuld a cloisterere do. As long as þou art vndir þe gouernaunce of þi souereyne in religion so longe þou art vndir þe handis of a barbour for to schaue away þi synnes. (*The Doctrine*, p. 134)

In this example, a male character is being checked in his movement by the barber. This image again deploys the containment ideology implicit within the household space of the treatise. It insists on subjection, obedience and sacrifice, without making too forceful a use of gender difference to convey its doctrine.

Conclusion

Space, more particularly household space, is an important element in the configuration of the self in late medieval writings. It is also undeniable that the deployment of spatial imagery as a means of containment in writings initially addressed to female recipients is overwhelming. In *Ancrene Wisse*, the ambitious project of delineating both a physical and spiritual horizon makes heavy demands on the way with which household space has to be dealt. Although we have seen that the politics of enclosure and containment loom large in the authorial project, its practical application rather reveals permeability and exchange. On the other hand, *Ancrene Wisse's* use of

household and domestic imagery for the figuration of the inner state stresses containment ideology. A more systematic development of this politics is to be found in *Sawles Warde*, one of the Katherine Group texts associated to *Ancrene Wisse*. Here, household space is used for the development of ideas of subjection and obedience applied to the soul:

Nv is Wil, þet husewif, al stille þet er wes so willesful, al
ituht efter Wittes wissunge, þet is husebonde; ant al þet hird
halt him stille, þet wes iwunet to beon fulitohen ant don efter
Wil, hare lefdi, ant nawt efter Wit.

[Now Will the housewife, who was formerly so wilful, is
entirely subdued, completely directed by the guidance of
Reason, who is master of the house; and all the household
remain at peace, who were so accustomed to be undisciplined
and follow the lead of Will, their lady, instead of Reason.]
(*Sawles Warde*, pp. 106-7)

Since *Ancrene Wisse* is a multi-function text, serving, among others, as an anchoritic rule of conduct, a liturgical treatise, a confessional manual, a spiritual treatise, a practical guide and an intimate epistolary text, it has to negotiate ways of applying the imagery of the household space to each of its specific parts. That is one of the reasons why it cannot configure as steadily as does *The Doctrine* an interior landscape by means of the household. The devotional household becomes a central paradigm in *The Doctrine*, one whose space is more extensively explored than any other figuration in this Middle English version.

The study of imagined and represented household space that this essay attempts relies upon a perception of space as an active element shaping social practice. It infers therefore that imagined and represented household space hinges on the understanding that space has social significance, that it changes with time and that it is gendered. But what are the relationships between imagined household space and concrete architecture, and the ways in which the real gendered household affects the representation of the devotional one? Although this essay does not offer clear answers, it nevertheless suggests, by its close application of space as an historical category to two religious texts, new lines of enquiry in the study of late medieval religious literature.³⁶

Domestic and Devotional in Henry, Duke of Lancaster's Book of Holy Medicines

Catherine Batt

Denis Renevey's investigations raise important questions about how material and imagined spaces interrelate in early devotional literature, and in the circumstances of its writing. Especially intriguing is the issue of how, in this context, internal and internalised spaces might be marked as 'feminine', and how such spaces, deployed figuratively, might be understood in the reception of texts such as the *Ancrene Wisse* and the *Doctrine*, originally produced for audiences of select female religious, but disseminated to a much broader devotional constituency. Henry, duke of Lancaster (c.1310-61), is a likely consumer of a text such as the Franciscan *Compileison* Renevey mentions, which is one of the channels by which the *Ancrene Wisse*—in the *Compileison*, in synthesis with other devotional material concerning, for example, vices and virtues, penance and purgatory—reaches a wider mixed readership in the later Middle Ages.³⁷ Henry's own colourful contribution to devotional literature, the Anglo-Norman treatise the *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* (*Book of Holy Medicines*), written in 1354, is most well-known (especially among cultural historians) for its extended metaphors of physical wounds as evidence of loss of spiritual integrity and, as the title suggests, of salvation through the medicine Christ offers, in his role as master physician to the abject soul. (The *Ancrene* author also on occasion invokes this ancient trope, for example, in the prayer that the wounds of the Passion might heal the soul wounded by sin [p. 23, fol. 7a.15-19; *AW*, p. 57]; or in discussion of the healing of body and of soul [p. 189, fol. 100a.25-100b.15; *AW*, p. 184]). Henry concentrates on how, while the penitent's wounds figure his spiritual lack, Christ's wounds are themselves salvific, so the imagery exploits this element of Christian paradox.

Other imagery, however, also crowds Henry's fascinating text, in a way that suggests its author is quite at home with the taxonomic methodologies and quasi-encyclopaedic, magpie-like accumulation, and range, of imagery common to popular Latin and vernacular devotional literature on virtues and vices and penitential practice, of which the earlier and later thirteenth-century Guilelmus Peraldus's thirteenth-century *Summa*, and Laurent d'Orléans' *Somme le Roi*, are examples. A third of the way into

the treatise, amid a cluster of intensely detailed figurations of the spiritually troubled penitential self (a self variously represented as a whirlpool, as a fox's hole, and as a market place, which imagery suggests acquaintance with Franciscan homiletic material³⁸), the narrator explains the pragmatic difficulties of confession, by way of an amplified anecdote about the problems of housekeeping.³⁹ The anecdote, which develops into a figuring of the body as a household to be defended, marks the culmination of a brief section within the treatise (pp. 95-103), which is signalled as a digression, and devoted to meditation during the last three days of Holy Week, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, when—in conformity with the Fourth Lateran Council's prescriptions for the laity to make Easter confession and communion⁴⁰—the narrator receives Christ 'en mon vil corps' [into my vile body] (p. 98). The detailed account of domestic cleanliness Henry offers imaginatively elaborates on the manner of the abject sinner's reception of the body of Christ. In respect of linking cleansing with the confessional, and representing the sinful soul as abject, there are similarities with the procedures of both the *De doctrina* and the *Ancrene Wisse* (as Renevey describes them above), as with other homiletic and instructional literature. By 'claiming' these writings as part of a reconstruction of possible cultural and devotional contexts for Henry's work, and through them considering this example of domestic imagery, one can begin to appreciate the *Livre's* literary debts and to assess the extent and nature of its originality.

When, the narrator says, a great lord visits the house of a humble subject, he sends along everything he needs beforehand, and it remains for the poor host only to make sure that at least the place is clean for his lord's coming, and to make the place as clean as possible: 'come d'un bone balaise bien baler et nettement getter hors toute l'ordure de la meson, et puis laver del eawe chaude pur tuer les puses et faire tout net' [by giving it a good sweeping with a stout broom and completely cleaning out all the house's filth, and then washing it down with hot water to kill the fleas and make everything clean] (pp. 99-100). If the would-be host turns out to be hapless, too weak—'fiebles de soi meismes' (p. 100)—to do this work on his own account, then the lord might send someone in advance to help carry out the necessary tasks.

Certes il lui covendra avoir eide des ascuns qe le seignur
envoie devant pur eider l'oste de appariller l'ostel a poynt

contre lui. Alas a poynt! A poynt ne poet estre, car poynt n'ad de qoi il puisse a ceo poynt ordener a poynt. (p. 100)

[Indeed, (the host) will need to get help from those whom the lord sends ahead to help the host prepare the lodging and make it fit for his arrival. Fit? Alas, unfit! Fit it cannot be, for in no fit time is there anything fit for him to make fit.]

The over-worked pun conveys, through its simultaneous awkwardness and inventiveness, the speaker's urgent awareness of his dependence on God's help to remedy his own spiritual lack.⁴¹ Henry compares himself to the wicked and inadequate host, and the ugly and wretched home is his soul, opened up to Christ, although it is not worthy to receive Him. He contrasts his own evil with his guest's goodness and, continuing the household metaphor, expresses the hope that his evils have been ousted, at least for a time, just as, in anticipation of a great lord's visit, one clears a house of unnecessary furniture. A thoughtless return to old routines, however, has unfortunate consequences:

quant le signur s'en va, les ostiementz sont remys ariere en son lieu come ils estoient et sovent de pire aray q'ils devant ne feurent, et plus encombrent l'ostiel; et si revient le chat, et set la ou le seigneur sist, qi s'en estoit fuy hors de pour. Tresdouz Sires, les ostiementz sont les maveis pechés qe sont en moy comme les oustielemens de la pour meson qe sont ore remuez, jeo espoir, par vostre grace, un poy hors de moi [. . .] (p. 101)

[And when the lord leaves, the furniture is put back in its place, as it was, and often in worse order than it was before, and it clutters up the home more; and then the cat—who had fled outside in fright—returns, and sits there where the lord sat. Most sweet Lord, the furniture is the wicked sins that are within me, like the furniture of the poor house, which are cleared away a little now, I hope, by your grace [. . .]]

Henry begs God, whose grace displaces the movable goods that are his sins, to put his mark at all the entrances to the house, so that the furniture should not be returned, and so that the cat, by which we must understand the devil, should not again take his place.⁴²

Henry provides a confirmatory and somewhat repetitive gloss for his text. The sweeping of the house represents the discipline with which he must clean his body, soul and heart for God. That is, one must constrain and chastise the flesh by means of penance, as if with a rod. The scalding water of regretful tears, meanwhile, expels the 'fleas' that are sins and devils. The mark that will protect the doors are the instruments of the Passion, and so the body's orifices (and senses), imagined as the 'doors' of the body, will meditate on the events and nature of Christ's sacrifice, and thus attune themselves to His suffering, and make penitential restitution. The ears will hear and remember the account of the Passion, and the eye too will look upon the image of Christ crucified. The nose will abandon the pleasures afforded by the sweet perfumes of this world, in order to smell instead the filth of the mud that was thrown in Christ's face at the crucifixion. Meanwhile, the tongue will rehearse the events of the Passion, just as the hands will strike the penitent's breast in acknowledgement of his sins, and also join together to ask for mercy. His feet too will go on pilgrimage and ask for mercy on account of the Passion. In sum, says Henry, kneeling in devotion before the cross, he will learn to love God completely and with all his heart. Indeed, the narrator insists, the heart, as the central entrance to the house that harbours the soul, is that which has most need to be signed and marked with the arms of the Lord, as all the traffic for the soul passes through it. Mindfulness of the Passion will keep the heart pure, and the devil will not dare to step into the place again. Henry concludes with an aside on the poor design and troublesome inconvenience of a house with so many entrances, so difficult to protect (p. 103).

As with much of Henry's treatise, it is difficult to trace an exact parallel for the working-through of this image, though of course cleansing is everywhere a recognised image of spiritual renewal, from the Old and New Testaments, to its reworking in modern poetry (of which Jean Binta Breeze's 'Spring Cleaning', which draws on Psalm 22 (23), is just one example⁴³). The figuring of the body as architecture (in this section, elaborated from the housecleaning motif), is a recurrent feature of Henry's text and, previous to this passage, he has already presented the recalcitrant spiritual self as a fortress subject not only to potential attack from outside, but also to the tyranny of a disorderly household. In this earlier episode, Lady Sloth, the most fully realised of the text's personifications of sin, appears initially as a reluctantly received guest, who has managed to appropriate for herself the

role of unruly hostess in the castle of the self. Blocking the path of Sin—'Ja ne vous hastietz tant, car une altre foize vous vendra il meultz a poynt; et alons nous dormir et manger et boire' [Don't be in such a hurry, for another time you will be better prepared, so let's go sleep and eat and drink] (p. 59)—she plies him with drink, and prevents his expulsion through the mouth by way of confession, because in his drunkenness he is incapable of finding the door.

Renevey notes above how the earlier *Sawles Warde's* treatment of the body as household emphasises the need for obedience and subjection. The casting of Reason as husband and Will as recalcitrant wife in this earlier psychomachia deploys conventionally approved male-female social relations as a model of spiritual order and self-regulation. That Henry casts his Will as male, and enamoured of Lady Sloth, arguably complicates this presentation of internal strife. And where the immensely popular *De doctrina cordis* (and its Middle English translation, *The Doctrine of the Hert*) glosses as the sinner's 'weak thoughts' (p. 83) the image of women released from a besieged castle for fear they might somehow draw in the enemy, Henry's own image of his spiritual self as a castle besieged by sin stoutly identifies his masculine military 'self' as source of treachery and self-betrayal (pp. 65-6). While the *Livre* can certainly be fully conventional in respect of 'male/female' imagery—for example, the narrator characterises his flesh as the 'mother' of his sins (p. 88)—Henry perhaps refocuses the traditional associations of male with order (as opposed to female and disorder) in these instances so as to align his examples more closely with the abject, sin-wounded, male body that serves as his principal image.

In the same vein, Henry's deployment of housekeeping imagery casts him as maladroit host turned cleaner. The Dominican Laurent d'Orléans' *La Somme le Roi* also figures the heart as a house, an image its earlier-fourteenth-century Middle English translation, the *Ayenbite of Inwit*, reproduces, in an account of the weeping repentance of King David (as a figure of the penitent Christian sinner) that elaborates on the imagery of the Psalms. If the *Ancrene Wisse* image Renevey discusses, of confession as assiduous house-sweeping, offers precedent for Henry's image, it is perhaps the *Somme*, in one of its versions, that has provided Henry with the image of a domestic animal as index of changes to household order:⁴⁴

Tex larmes chacent le deable fors dou cuers aussi comme
liaue chaude chace le chien de la cuisine. Apres la repentance

doit venir la confession. Cest la bone chamberiere qui netoie
lostel & giete toute lordure hors au balai de la langue si
comme parole Dauid ou sautier.⁴⁵

zueche tyeares driueþ þane dyeuel uram þe herte: ase þet hote
weter cacheþ þane hond out of þe kechene. Efter þe
uorþenchinge ssel come þe ssrifte þet is þe guode chomberier
þet clenzeþ þet hous and kest out al þe uelþe mid þe besme of
þe tonge. huerof spekeþ dauid ine þe sautere. & *meditatus sum*
*cum corde meo & exercebar & scopebam spiritum meum.*⁴⁶

[such tears drive the devil from the heart, as hot water chases
a dog out of the kitchen. After repentance comes confession,
which is the good chamberer that cleans the house and throws
out all the filth with the broom of the tongue, about which
David says in the Psalter: 'and I meditated with my own heart
and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit.']

The sweeping metaphor also features in the *De doctrina* / *Doctrine*, which I
want to concentrate on in preference to the *Summae*, because of the ways in
which Henry's text resembles it, in method if not in structure, although it is
written primarily for a female religious community. A work such as the *De*
doctrina helps explain the allusive, on occasion apparently random, train of
Henry's argument. The *Doctrine*, like Henry's text, makes reference to
internal and external domestic architecture familiar to gentry and aristocratic
households, as also to castle imagery, as has been noted briefly above.⁴⁷ In
each text, pious selfhood is figured and meditated upon by means of
architectural imagery, of communities imagined interacting within those
spaces, and of an intriguing fragmentation and anatomization of the body.

Henry's book, which he presents as having been written in short
episodes, when he could snatch the time—at one point he mentions the slow
progress he is making (p. 98)—falls into two main sections. The first
enumerates the wounds / sins of his body (this part introduces both the figure
of the body as a castle, its entrances breached by sin, and also the image of
the dirty household), and the second phase describes the remedies for his sin,
provided by the Virgin Mary, the nurse par excellence, and Christ her Son,
the doctor whose own wounds supply healing medicine. The image Henry
constructs throughout is that of an abject sinner, his body a corrupt and
failing receptacle for his fallen soul. The seven chapters of the *De doctrina* /

*Doctrine*⁴⁸ describe the preparation of the heart for God, and, in its minute attention to aspects of household maintenance, this latter text startlingly and elaborately figures the devout heart as flesh to be cooked in preparation for Christ the guest—suffering the 'fire' of obedience to one's institutional rules, and being 'larded' with charity, that Christ might receive it. The heart's cooking is an appropriate response to Christ's own sacrifice, his 'rost(ing) vppon þe spite of þe cros' (pp. 36-8). Denis Renevey discusses the culinary detail of this account in terms of an emergent language of interiority for female religious.⁴⁹

While Henry also demonstrates an interest in cooking, in his treatise the culinary emphasis is on Christ, whose incarnation, and melting and burning Passion, constitute the chicken soup of holy love that is the medicine for the convalescent soul that turns to God after the ravages of the devil. Henry glosses the enclosing of the chicken in the earthenware pot in the making of soup as a metaphor of the incarnation, and the releasing of its nutritious juices, to Christ's Agony at Gethsemane, testimony of his overwhelming love of humankind:

lequel douz suour et gouttes, tresdouce Sires, jeo vous requier
[. . .] qe jeo en puisse avoir ore a man grande bosoigne, pur
moy revigourer et faire fort pur recevoir toutes les autres
medicines qe eider me poent. [. . .] (p. 195)

[which sweet drops and perspiration, most sweet Lord, I
entreat you [. . .] I may now have in my great need, to restore
me to health and strengthen me to take all the other medicines
that can help me. [. . .]]

D. Vance Smith claims that it is specifically the medieval *male* body that is 'caught between production and representation', and that: '[m]an not only provides a tablet onto which a significant world can be inscribed but also produces a world that becomes significant'.⁵⁰ The language of such as the *De doctrina* / *Doctrine*, however, suggests that female religious selfhood is no less supple and various in conceptualization, in the way it can construct both body and external world as objects for devotional meditation. Moreover, the rigour with which this earlier text works through its imagery of the penitential self exposes both Henry's debt to this kind of literature,

and the distance between it and his own, arguably more 'curtailed', penitential discourse.

The *Doctrine's* deployment of the image of the cleansed house is slightly different from, and perhaps more focused than, Henry's; the household image takes on incremental power in the treatise, and also has an introductory role for the extended description of the soul's reception of Christ, which culminates in an account, in Chapter Seven, of what it calls the 'ecstatic' love between Christ and the Soul (pp. 143-56).⁵¹ The author also (and unlike Henry) supplies specific narrative and scriptural contexts for the housekeeping image and its development (as Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead show). The honoured guest is defined as Christ the warrior (the Middle English retains the citation in Latin of the image of the bloodied man from Isaiah 63. 1) who must be made welcome after his struggle to save humankind. The nun is urged to 'make clene þin house of þin hert' (p. 6) for this guest. She must sweep the house of her soul and her heart with the broom of 'Fear of the Lord', as both Solomon and Augustine teach. Afterwards, like David, searching her conscience, she sweeps the 'filth of the house' away with the broom of her tongue through confession, washing her soul/house with the water of contrition (*Doctrine*, p. 7). The domestic image is further developed by analogy with the story of the Good Woman who makes ready a room for the prophet Elijah. As Renevey's analysis has already mentioned, the guest-room contains a bed, a dining-table and a stool, and a candlestick (already in use): the bed figures peace; the table, penance; the stool the conscience's self-judgement, and the candle, one's own spiritual awareness. As with Henry's text, the coda to this image is the need to make the house of the soul secure by constant vigilance at the gates of the five senses.

Each text, the *Livre* and the *Doctrine*, uses the room as an illustrative tableau to form part of a rhetoric of instruction. As Christiania Whitehead has noted in her investigation of devotional evocations of the household, these authors are 'revitalizing the taxonomies' of piety for the devout.⁵² (For devotion in effect comes down to meditation on a series of lists; the seven deadly sins; enumeration of the virtues necessary to counter these vices; the redemptive force of Christ's Passion considered through the number of his wounds; the joys of the Virgin Mary, and so on.) At the same time, the *de Doctrina* appears to be more attuned to the specifics (and consequences) of household organization than is Henry's account. The section just outlined, for example, also mentions the nun's confessor as having the role of a spiritual

accountant. As Christiania Whitehead has also pointed out, the idea that the 'stool' in that allegorical room stands for the practice of self-criticism, is illuminated by knowledge of 'chapter-house tribunals where the convent's official visitor passes judgement on the sisters' misdemeanours'.⁵³ In the *Doctrine*, moreover, imagery of the household and of military service (another scriptural trope on which the author expounds), run together in the later declaration of our obligations to Christ (p. 66), to whom we are bound in the same way as household servants and soldiers are bound to their lord.

The investigation of interior space as devotional mnemonic and as rhetorical stratagem, a piece of memory work, reminds us of the dangers of literal-mindedness. It is perhaps too easy to assume that domestic imagery is targeted uniquely at female religious, especially when one considers the ratio of men to women employed in household service in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁵⁴ Past commentators on Henry's work seem eager to account for his knowledge of (for example) wounds and their medical treatment, or his insight into castles under siege, from his long war-service, but do not suggest that mention of floor-sweeping confirms that one of the most powerful men in mid fourteenth-century England had to do his own dusting.⁵⁵ There is, however, a certain temptation to view the differences between the *Doctrine* and the *Livre* accounts in terms of gender (whether of author or apparent intended audience). Henry's declared attitude to housework is that evident inadequacy in face of the task will lead to someone else taking pity and completing the work themselves; the Good Lord himself comes to the aid of the weak and feeble penitent. The *Doctrine*, meanwhile, distinguishes sharply between the servant who cleans properly and the servant who throws new rushes down in a hopeful way, in an attempt to disguise the lack of attention to the task (p. 8). It might be amusing to interpret Henry's version as a timeless anecdote about masculine aversion to housework, but the differences between the two texts' use and development of the image also articulate a difference at the level of devotional engagement.

The *Doctrine* outlines the whole process of confession in preparation for the soul's deep knowledge of Christ. Conventionally in doctrinal texts the remedies for sins are virtues, and the soul is instructed in charity. The plan of the *Livre*, however, locks Henry's narrative persona into an abject relation with Christ and with Mary that, while not ignoring the importance of the penitent sinner's volition, and his responsibility to try to do good in future, nonetheless emphasises dependence on higher powers. While there is room

for Henry to deplore his sins and express his regret for them, in dwelling primarily on the remedies of divine grace, the treatise offers little imaginative space for individual self-willed spiritual improvement, for all its stress on human responsibility. If, as Renevey suggests above, the *Ancrene Wisse* and the *Doctrine*, by means of the 'feminisation of devotional practices' that they represent as religious texts, offer the potential, to a male lay readership, of a 'deeper understanding of . . . inner feelings', there may also be the potential to use such imagery to register a certain spiritual recalcitrance. Henry deploys this imagery in such a way as to 'regulate' his soul and his devotions, but in context the imagery also works to circumscribe and delimit the nature of that devotional experience, to mark the reach of Henry's spiritual understanding or, at least, the reach of the experience he is willing to make public.⁵⁶

Although governed by its primary conceit of the 'wounded sinner', Henry's text contains, as mentioned above, a wide range of imagery. Renevey usefully draws attention to how the *Ancrene Wisse*, as a 'multi-function text', figures its household imagery more variously, and less consistently, than does the *Doctrine*, and he suggests that, in its complex negotiation of spiritual and physical spaces, a certain 'permeability' inheres in its central idea of enclosure. Henry's text, while not so obviously 'multifunctional', partakes in an analogous (although not identical) 'permeability' with respect to its overlaps of—rather than any specific distinctions between—religious and material spaces and practices, and gains its special appeal (especially for cultural historians) in its highly realised engagement with historical detail. Such overlaps speak to other mergers, for example, those between religious and aristocratic, and between male and female, communities. Even within historical religious communities, one's domestic arrangements might be complicated, in that one might in effect belong to more than one household. Isabella, sister to Henry, was first a nun, and then prioress, at Amesbury, yet she appears to lead the life of an aristocrat as much as of a nun. R. B. Pugh extrapolates from a brief record of her personal household accounts, recovered for some months of 1333-4, when she was (notionally at least) at Amesbury, that she leads a life 'hardly distinguishable from that of a lay person'.⁵⁷ The life of Isabella as it emerges here accords with what Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has construed, on both historical and literary evidence, for life at Wilton in the fifteenth century: 'in a prestigious nunnery institutional life was routinely a version of upper-class household and family living—including over-generous hospitality', and it is

not unusual to find 'great ladies modifying institutional culture to their family values and styles'.⁵⁸ In this fourteenth-century documentary example, Isabella employs men to do her accounts and to look after business for her; she buys ginger and spices, pays for New Year and Christmas entertainments, makes generous gifts of clothes to friends, and gives to the poor and to lepers. (Disappointingly, the accounts do not record any book-purchases, although other documentation notes that Edward III bought 'a book of romance' from her, in 1335⁵⁹). She keeps greyhounds, and shares hunting interests with Sir Hugh de Audley of the local gentry. Pugh seems rather shocked at how many days' absence Isabella takes from her convent to visit family and friends.⁶⁰

A particularly intriguing aspect of Isabella's lifestyle, however, is the implicit perception of the boundaries of permissible behaviour. By virtue of birth she runs a separate aristocratic household within her convent as a matter of course, but when she *does* live as a nun, she evidently sees herself as bound by convent rules. Record exists of the papal grant to Henry (in August, 1344) of his petition 'that religious of either sex and seculars may eat flesh meat at the table of his sister Isabella'.⁶¹ That Henry goes to the trouble of seeking permission on this count suggests that there exists a sense of demarcation and of decorum on the part of aristocratic religious and of their families. Institutional life and the life made possible by an independent income and extra-conventual family networks co-exist by means of mutual respect for rule and custom. I stress Isabella's 'dual' lifestyle because I want to suggest both that there are intersecting audiences for religious writings, and that to live with such arrangements might accustom one to view apparently 'realist' textual details as themselves pragmatic fictions.⁶²

To return to this image of the household operative in these devotional texts: Christiania Whitehead makes a valuable point when she notes that male writers tend to invoke scriptural authority for their use of household imagery and domestic parable for literature often written for women, whereas women writers tend to use domestic allegories that are detached from specific biblical reference, because they are authorized by the women's visionary status.⁶³ This observation helps to locate the anomalousness of Henry's own text, between the ordered exposition of the writer for religious communities, and the inspired narratives of mystics. Henry, while his imagery might recall scriptural precedent (as when the broom sweeping one clean of sin puts one in mind of Psalm 76 [77]), rarely 'authorizes' his *Livre*

with biblical or other references (and the extant manuscripts, with only some Latin marginal noting of passages on the deadly sins, and some index-marks, themselves contain no explanatory marginal glosses or references). Instead, Henry seems pragmatically to borrow from homiletic, devotional, and encyclopaedic materials, which may, to greater and lesser degree, be supplemented by further details from personal experience, to which he gives a spiritual commentary, laying claim not to any visionary (or even explicit didactic) status, but offering a rueful exposition of his own sinfulness.

In terms of material evidence for Henry's religious practices that extended beyond visits to immediate relatives, there is record of a 1349 papal permission for him to visit the Minoresses at their Aldgate convent in London, in the 'company of [ten] honest persons'.⁶⁴ In the following century, the convent's Abbess, Christine St Nicholas, will bequeath a copy of the early fifteenth-century *Doctrine of the Hert* to the women of this community.⁶⁵ I have yet to trace any contemporaneous copy of the *De doctrina* to those institutions with which Henry is most readily associated—for example, Amesbury, the Franciscan foundation at Aldgate, or the Newarke Hospital and College (which survives as Trinity Hospital, Leicester), which his father endowed and which he extended in the 1350s.⁶⁶ At the end of his book, Henry identifies what looks like a reading circle for what he has just written; motivated by the desire to make a general confession of his wickedness, 'to God and all the world' (p. 240), Henry says he is also responding to the urging of 'some of my good friends', to write a treatise which in effect becomes a modest part of their own devotions; those who finish the book are asked to say three Our Fathers and Three Hail Marys for him. The textual and material evidence together suggest that certain (if highly privileged) fourteenth-century secular groups may avail themselves of various forms of pious interaction and constitute themselves, whether informally or institutionally, and for different periods of time, as devotional communities. There is increasing interest in documenting and examining the interaction of lay and religious female spirituality, especially for the later-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁶⁷ The example of Henry, duke of Lancaster, suggests that mixed aristocratic circles adapt and rework modes of learning and devotional practice more commonly associated with female religious (even if, as I have argued, Henry does not fully develop the spiritual capital of such literature). Certainly, as Teresa Tavormina's excellent introduction to Henry's work demonstrates in its collation of the

documentary evidence, his own text seems to have been available to men and women, monastic and aristocratic secular, alike.⁶⁸

Henry's work finds currency after his lifetime and in other contexts.⁶⁹ Chaucer's *Summoner's Tale* may well be paying homage to Henry's anecdote of the cat-as-the-devil in an ill-ordered household; in Chaucer's account, the grasping friar, visiting the housebound parishioner Thomas, settles himself down to enjoy hospitality:

'Thomas,' quod he, 'God yelde yow! Ful ofte
Have I upon this bench faren ful weel;
Heere have I eten many a myrie meel.'
And fro the bench he droof away the cat,
And leyde adoun his potente (stick) and his hat,
And eek his scrippe, and sette hym softe adoun.⁷⁰

If Chaucer here assumes specific knowledge of Henry's deployment of the cat, he is adding an enriching dimension to the familiar domestic space of fabliau, in order to figure the Friar as worse than the devil. This intertextual reference reminds us that reading and writing in general do not respect religious or secular situations as 'boundaries', but find inspiration and continuity in their constant recontextualisation.

Accumulating Domestic Stores in the Middle English Translation of St Birgitta's Liber celestis

Christiania Whitehead

The organisational metaphor of the household community appears within a number of thirteenth-century and fourteenth-century Latin, Middle English, and Anglo-Norman devotional treatises, most notably, as discussed above, the Early Middle English *Sawles Warde* and the *Ancrene Wisse*,⁷¹ the *De doctrina cordis*, a sizeable Latin treatise of French provenance, directed to an audience of nuns,⁷² and Henry of Lancaster's Anglo-Norman *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*. The metaphor of the household is the topic under investigation here. However, it is worth noting that at the same time that the *Sawles Warde* focuses upon tensions within the household community—the frictions

between husband and wife, the intractability of the household servants—danger from without is never very far away. The four daughters of God descend to help guard the treasure of the household and exhort vigilance against an external enemy. Similarly, while the *Ancrene Wisse* may be excavated to reveal evidence of an anchoritic household, as Denis Renevey shows above, nonetheless, the majority of the architectural metaphors of the text remain those of fortification and besiegement. The soul is a recalcitrant lady housed in an earthen castle. The anchoress should not raise her head above the battlements of her house, lest she be struck in the eye by the arrows of the devil.⁷³ In its first chapter, the *De doctrina cordis* offers its readers a vivid, extended allegory of the household as a device for structuring the Christian consciousness.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, later chapters continue to reanimate, albeit in far briefer ways, commonplace emblems of the soul as an besieged castle, encircled by cohorts of the devil, and dependent on its spiritual champion, Christ.⁷⁵ As Catherine Batt has shown, Henry of Lancaster's mid-fourteenth-century *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* pairs the figure of the body as a castle whose defences are threatened by sin with the image of the disordered household, within its first section.

In other words, all these texts maintain a simultaneous awareness of the ancient allegorical commonplace of spiritual fortification. At times they make use of this commonplace to supply the more unparalleled architectural metaphor of the household with a recognisable frame of reference. At times, their brief inserts are simply concessions to devotional spatial conventions. Nonetheless, since they do demonstrate this awareness, their decision to focus upon the allegory of the household needs to be viewed as an informed and deliberate one, consciously differentiated from the commonplace motif of psychological fortification. It is also a relatively innovative choice, in that the trope of the household seems not to have been used in any extended way much before the early 1200s.⁷⁶ In what else does this choice consist? In the case of *Sawles Warde*, it would appear to consist in a decision to picture the soul as the site of fraught, contending psychological impulses—of domestic tension—as against the old, unitary image of the soul pitted against external opposition; a possible acknowledgement of the new faculty psychology gathering momentum in Paris. In the case of the *De doctrina cordis* and its Middle English derivative, it would appear to consist in a decision to give increased attention to the self-cleansing and self-preparatory activities of the soul in the purgative phase of its spiritual evolution. The soul scrubs itself

out and amasses the requisite furnitures to receive Christ. It prepares a meal in the 'kitchen' of its conscience for Christ, comprised from its own spiritual motions of penitence and self-mortification. Both images can be explained as vivid and ingenious ways of propagating the self-scrutinizing penitential apparatus enjoined by the fourth Lateran Council, and rehearsed in numerous thirteenth-century penitential manuals.⁷⁷

There are obviously more examples. What it seems that the majority share in common is a revised appreciation of the soul, tending away from vigilance and from passive anticipation of the spiritual champion, Christ, toward a model that is notably more proactive and self-reliant. Vices, like germs, are controllable through various self-operated practices of cleaning. When Christ comes, in the *Doctrina*, it is to benefit from the spiritual furnitures we have prepared, and from the meal of penitential mortification we can set before him. Henry of Lancaster, of course, hopes that God will be good enough to send emissaries of grace to help organize his unworthy household. Perhaps this new intervention anticipates theological developments in the latter part of the fourteenth century, placing greater weight upon the human need for God's grace.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Henry fully acknowledges the extent to which the expulsion of sinful dirt and fleas must depend upon the self-enjoined disciplines of penance and tearful contrition. In other words, the emphasis in these devotional allegories of the household remains firmly premised upon self-cleansing, self-acquisition, self-rehabilitation.⁷⁹ Christ's final residence is troped as the arrival of a prized guest, as an occasion for festivity and feasting, in which we are able to bring to bear luxurious, even aristocratic hospitality. It is *not* envisaged as a release from captivity. The emphasis has changed. Castle warfare has given way to an allegorical culture of conspicuous welcome.

Domestic allegories such as *Sawles Warde*, *Ancrene Wisse* and *De doctrina cordis* take an essentially didactic tack, instructing the anchoresses, nuns, and beguines, who constitute their primary reading audiences.⁸⁰ The domestic trope is enrolled as a homiletic tool, facilitating the formation of a Christian identity. As such, this trope tends to be founded upon a scriptural verse or parable, such as the parabolic sayings of Christ, urging the advisability of sweeping a house against evil spirits, or of guarding household valuables against burglars,⁸¹ or the Old Testament story of the old woman who readied her home to receive Elijah the prophet in the first Book of Kings.⁸² Henry of Lancaster's *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* acts as a

contrasting case. Positioned anomalously, as Catherine Batt notes above, 'between the ordered exposition of the writer for religious communities, and the inspired narratives of the mystics', it makes only occasional attempts to link its moral figurations to scriptural precedents, perhaps as a consequence of the lay and aristocratic circumstances of its composition.

But what happens when the domestic trope is passed over into a different kind of discourse? When it is removed from clerical or devout lay composition and passed into the domain of female prophecy?⁸³ When gender and circumstance reverses, and the figurative household is commandeered, not by a cleric or a male aristocrat, but by a married woman? Not to give homiletic instruction to a select readership of variously enclosed females, but to relay the words of God to a potentially universal Christian public? Obviously, it becomes incontestable. As such, it may no longer require the authority provided by scriptural precedent, since it is directly validated by God. Rather than acting to shape the consciousness of the late medieval female reader, and to proclaim it domestic, menial, hospitable, culinary, it is claimed directly by a woman to assist her in her act of self-construction.⁸⁴ Rather than offering its readers a model of domestic community that presupposes some kind of active engagement—participation in a mixed routine for those living in the world, a more active and charitable monasticism—but which still assumes a basically coterie audience with the individual dedication to pursue such extended visualizations, it redirects itself to carry a potentially universal application, inset within a prophetic discourse addressed to popes, prelates, religious, and the kings and magnates of secular Christian society.

In order to add flesh to these bones, and to go some way towards substantiating these general claims, I would like to direct the remainder of this discussion towards a specific, yet largely overlooked, prophetic allegory of domesticity: the extended allegory of domestic stores spread over four chapters in the second book of the *Liber celestis* of St Bridget of Sweden.⁸⁵ My intention will be to suggest that this allegory acts to revise existing images of the domestic in accordance with its 'author's' female gender and marital status;⁸⁶ also, that it can be excavated to reveal tension and confrontation; tension, in relation to the thread of self-reproval and castigation running through the saint's revelations, and confrontation, vis-à-vis the allegorical stratagems and norms of the Swedish clerical establishment.

To enter into greater detail, as is well-known, Bridget's opus of revelations consists largely of an exhaustive number of brief allegorical visions, shown to her by Christ or by Mary, and no sooner shown than explained. Many of these allegories purport to offer a divine perspective upon contemporary issues—the pope's residency in Avignon, the war between England and France, the matter of the Swedish crusades to Russia in the late 1340s. Many more comment upon the Christian duties and shortcomings of various estates in society, in particular, the knightly class, Bridget's own class. Still more deliver ominous pictures of the moral dereliction of the contemporary church and demand urgent reform. Many of these allegorical visions utilize and revise relatively standard allegorical *exempla* culled from the preaching repertoire.⁸⁷ To return for a moment to the discussion that opens this essay, many visions comment upon contemporary crises and weaknesses within the church by utilizing the familiar tropes of the assailed castle or the figurative temple. In view of this continuity, it seems fair to describe Bridget's literary method in many instances as a method of translation, in which allegorical figures coined by preachers and utilized within manuals of religious instruction are reassessed as *divine* allegories, embellishing an incontestable narrative dictated by God to direct and admonish mankind.

On many occasions Bridget appropriates commonplace preaching tropes and *exempla* to serve her visionary purpose. Yet, on other occasions, she is equally prepared to voice her prophetic message by reference to seemingly artless, or 'non-scholastic' domestic scenes. To reutilize two brief examples that Bridget Morris alludes to in passing in her recent biographical monograph upon the saint—on one occasion Bridget describes how Christ likens her soul to a cheese that requires cleansing within the cheese-vat of her body: 'þi saule [. . .] is to me swete and delitabill as a chese',⁸⁸ while on another, St Agnes appears in a vision and tells how God is a washerwoman:

þat puttes a clothe þat is no3t clene in swilke place of þe water whare, throug mouinge of þe water, it mai be clenner and whitter, and 3ete sho takes heede þat þe watir drowne no3t þe clothe. So God suffirs þaim þat he loues in þis world be in disese of tribulacion and pouert, þat þai be clenner and more abill to blisse. And 3it he kepis þaime, þat nowþir to grete disese ne heuenes fordo þaime.⁸⁹

It is worth noting, as an addendum, that, whereas the clerical author of the *Doctrina* provides his female reader with the menial tasks of sweeping and scrubbing the chamber of her heart to receive a knightly guest, the female author of the *Liber* transposes the chore to a heavenly household and envisages God's purification of the soul as an act of female domestic labour.

It has proved tempting to wish to relate examples such as these to the local circumstances of Bridget's own domestic experience and oversight. To summarise some well-known biographical details—born into the aristocracy near Uppsala, and married at thirteen to a leading member of the council of state, much of Bridget's early life was spent carrying out the traditional functions of a *châtelaine*: mothering children, supervising brewing, baking and dairy labour, and overseeing the management of her husband's rural estate.⁹⁰ However, I would like to hold to the phrase '*seemingly* artless and experiential', in that, in our more extended domestic example, I think we will need to recognise the way in which apparently artless local detail can be unpackaged to reveal more sophisticated stratagems of construction.

The domestic example in question is located in the second book of the *Liber*, and in all probability dates from the period succeeding Bridget's widowhood and consequent transfer to the Cistercian house of Alvastra; the period in which she also received the visionary call bidding her identify herself as a bride of Christ.⁹¹ In this book, in the course of an extended vision, Christ appears and describes three houses that he desires to share with his spouse.⁹² The first must contain food: bread, not of the eucharist, but of a 'gude will'; the water of the forethought of worship; and the salt of godly wisdom, which has nothing in common with academic wisdom:

For þare is som so simpill þat þai can no3t on right maner sai
one Pater noster, and anopir hase grete conninge and mikill
litterature. Is þis Goddes wisdome? Forsothe nai! For devine
wisdome is noht alloneli in litterature, bot it is in a clene hert
and gude life.⁹³

The second house must contain textiles: linen signifying peaceableness towards God and mankind; wool, signifying deeds of mercy, and silk, drawn from worms, that signifies the abstinence that springs from the memory of sin. Interestingly enough, this instruction is preceded by a short digression in

which the Virgin quotes from St Lawrence's meditation upon the passion: 'þe lorde Iesu Crist was naked and scorned. Howe semis it me þan to were precious and delicate clothinge?'⁹⁴ The third house must contain vats, tools and farm animals. The first vat for storing sweet liquids such as oil, water, and wine signifies morally profitable thoughts; while the second, for storing bitter liquids such as mustard and meal, represents the evil thoughts through which one becomes aware of one's own moral frailty. These vats are stored alongside a plough of reason, and an axe of discretion, with which Christians need to examine their daily intentions and to cut away arrogant accretions. The third house must also contain agricultural beasts of confession that bear the soul towards God and invigorate its good works.

Once these houses have been designated and filled with goods, they need to be protected by sturdy doors and locks so that spiritual enemies cannot enter the premises and cause mayhem. Consequently, Christ instructs his spouse to install a door of hope, swinging between hinges of despair and presumption, a lock of charity, strengthened by wards of dread, fervour, and diligence, and a key for this lock, consisting in a heartfelt desire to be with God.

þe kei of swilke a desire closes God in þe saule and þe saule in God. þe husband and þe wife—þat menes God and þe saule—alloneli sall haue þis kei, þat God mai haue fre entre to delite himselve in þe vertuse of þe saule, and þe saule to com to God when it likes.⁹⁵

There are several main points I would like to make in response to this revelatory allegory. First, by contrast with earlier domestic allegories and, I would suggest, as a consequence of her gender and married status, Bridget significantly shifts the parameters of devotional domesticity. Directing themselves towards anchoritic and monastic audiences, *Sawles Warde* and the *Doctrina* depict scenes of marital friction, or of hospitality and culinary process, that are essentially communal and monastic in implication. Marriage is presented as a tense and turbulent process one might do well to avoid, or it remains without presence. In his *Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, Henry laments his vice-ridden, disreputable interior household, but there is no suggestion that lordly marriage acts either as the source or the solution to his difficulties. Instead, as the treatise advances, the dominant figurative language becomes

one of spiritual healing; the tarnished household is reimagined as the moral illness of the soul. Bridget reinscribes a positive picture of marriage—the marriage between Christ and his bride, Bridget—into the centre of figurative domestic life. Obviously, this has to do with her wish to work on her own new identity—to probe deeper into the figurative daily realities of what it might mean to be a bride of Christ. It is also apparent that it contains some refraction of her own background of marriage to Ulf Gudmarsson, and the stocking, ordering and oversight of their country estate in the Närke province. As such, since Bridget writes of the condition of spiritual brideship in terms so akin to those of physical married existence among the landowning aristocracy, physical marriage and the virginity traditionally associated with spiritual brideship implicitly coalesce, a conclusion that accords well with Bridget's general desire to rehabilitate marriage from its traditional position at the base of the triad of sexual conditions.⁹⁶

Bridget's allegory, picturing God and the soul taking delight with one another in the three houses they have stocked with goods, gives a homely slant to the condition of mystic marriage, and rehabilitates the potential for perfection in physical marriage. As such, the text and its meditation upon Christian interiority, using material space and domestic circumstance, is implicitly made available to a more mixed Christian public than earlier domestic allegories presupposing readerly adherence to anchoritic regimes. And, as has been well-charted, vernacular versions of Bridget's revelations were read far beyond the confines of Bridgettine monasteries in fifteenth-century Europe, in particular, in England.⁹⁷

Bridget inscribes marriage into the figurative domestic sphere. But she also recrafts marriage, and the marital household. Whereas earlier, predominantly monastic writers upon spiritual marriage tend to elaborate the sensual and erotic aspects of the mystic marriage between God and the soul, describing, as it were, the honeymoon part of things, and never really moving beyond that,⁹⁸ Bridget, the mother of eight children, and busy châtelaine of a Swedish country estate for the twenty-eight year duration of her marriage, fascinatingly recrafts marriage as a sphere of material acquisition, of conspicuous preservation and consumption, in which the married couple take their pleasure, not by gaining entry into some allegorical depiction of the bedchamber, but by unlocking the door of hope into larders, cellars, linen closets, and stable buildings, and contemplating, perhaps even enumerating, their abundant material stores. The contrast with the equally aristocratic

Henry of Lancaster, who views furniture as sinful clutter and sees a virtue in emptying rather than in hoarding, is pronounced.

'Bourgeois' would be an inappropriate word to use in this context, as would 'mercantile'. Bridget was a member of traditional landed aristocracy. Nonetheless, there seems to be something extraordinarily forward-looking, something anticipatory of social shifts to come, in Bridget's decision to configure aristocratic marriage, not by reference to courtly and chivalric systems of manners, but by reference to reams of wool and linen, and vats of oil, and grain, and wine. In many ways, the episode anticipates the neat domestic interiors, with their chests and dressers and reams of cloth, that frame religious subject matters in urban, fifteenth-century Flemish art.⁹⁹

Bridget constructs marriage as a site of material acquisition, in which satisfaction resides in the contemplation of adequately stocked storehouses. She constructs an image of the spouse, in which it is suggested that it is her zealous preservation of household wealth and conscientious oversight that is best designed to gain her the approval of her divine husband. Aristocratic marriage in the early years of the fourteenth century frequently contained similar emphases. Bridget's own marriage, aged thirteen, was an arranged one, politically expedient to her family—a worldly and a practical arrangement. Morris relates how, in many places in her revelations, Bridget maintained this awareness of the realistic character of marriage—advising a betrothed woman on how to obtain as much as possible for her dowry; elsewhere naming material property and a male heir as the true fruits of a good marriage.¹⁰⁰

Nonetheless, there is a tension; there is a conflict. We should recall the Virgin's passing reference to St Lawrence, who scorned 'precious and delicate clothing', in the midst of an allegorical validation of hoarding silk and wool. Elsewhere in her revelations, Bridget presents herself as having provoked God by her weakness for fine food and clothing.¹⁰¹ During her marriage, we are told how, having had a luxurious bed made up for her, she was reproached for her vanity by Christ, and took to sleeping on straw and bearskins instead.¹⁰² And after her husband's death, we are told how she receives a vision in which she is instructed to distribute his household goods amongst the poor, since the pleasure he had taken in those objects had caused him to sin.¹⁰³

Whereas menial domesticity—sweeping, scrubbing and roasting chickens—provides a set of uncontroversial signifiers in treatises such as *De*

doctrina cordis; the allegory of domestic abundance, of conspicuous hoarding, is laced with more unstable and uncomfortable subtexts, opposing asceticism to abundance, material derision to material satisfaction. In one way, these sub-indicators of asceticism serve as a reminder of the ultimately immaterial, or figurative character of the vision described. Yet, in another way, they destabilize the authority of the allegory, suggesting awkwardly that Bridget's vision of the 'ghostly' husband and wife in amongst their silks and their wine flagons may simply pander to the aristocratic status quo. In other words, rather than acting to reinforce itself, as is the case with many of Bridget's other visions, ascetic subtexts within and beyond this allegory of domestic circumstance succeed unusually in *detracting* from its divine authority.

In addition to destabilizing its divine sources of authority, Bridget's allegory of the three houses also succeeds in questioning some more gendered and institutional loci of authority. In many ways, many of the details of the allegory are scrupulously orthodox. Confession and the confessor duly make their appearance. However, two small deviations from standard significations—Christ insists that the bread to which he refers is not 'þe brede on þe awter', but the bread of good will which is wholly unrelated, and that the salt of divine wisdom is not to be confused with the wisdom of those who enjoy 'grete conninge and mikill litterature'—additionally betray a very palpable dissatisfaction on the part of the saint with a clerical hermeneutics in which bread is always eucharistic, and wisdom, Latinate and book-bound—in which, in effect, everything always refers back to a sacramental practice or to an exegetical interpretation.

This process of interpretative fine tuning, whereby Bridget evokes, but then backs away from, accepted allegorical significations, can be glimpsed on several instances within her visionary corpus. On one occasion, for example, during a visionary conversation with the Virgin, Bridget makes the eminently forgivable mistake of comparing the Virgin to Solomon's temple—a homiletic and exegetical commonplace.¹⁰⁴ However, having then gone on to elaborate upon this comparison in considerable detail—the pavement represents Mary's stability of conduct, the walls, her imperviousness to reproach—she is finally brought up short by the Virgin, who demands testily: 'whi likkens þou me to þe tempill of Salamon?'¹⁰⁵ and goes on to suggest that a parallel with the mother of the temple's sovereign priest would be a far more fitting comparison. The Virgin's interjection is brief, but its implication is far-reaching. Essentially, it suggests, in exactly

the same way as Christ's modification regarding the bread and the salt, that the stock similitudes employed in sermons and in commentary may be flawed and fallible. It suggests, in effect, that standard ecclesiastic hermeneutics fall short of mystical revelation, and need to be subjected to a process of divine fine-tuning that can only be accessed through God's chosen visionaries.¹⁰⁶

The bread in the storehouse is *not* Christ's body on the altar. The salt in the sack has nothing in common with academic wisdom, with 'grete conninge and mikill litterature'. As such, imbued with such scepticism regarding book knowledge and, by extension, clerical intellectualism, ought we not to view Bridget's detailed construction of affluent rural domestic circumstance in the second book of her revelations, as a conscious attempt to formulate a domestic language of spirituality, an innovative finding of Christ in the home, untouched by the 'bookish' and more ecclesiastically-oriented formulae of the Christian allegorical tradition?

The image of domesticity comes in a number of guises in Latin and vernacular devotional literature, emphasizing by turns the relational, hospitable, communal, and acquisitional. When it is voiced by a woman who purports to derive her authority directly from the divine, I would suggest that it is voiced rather differently to its articulation in more homiletic texts. When it is voiced by a *married* woman, I would suggest that it configures marriage, and domestic property within marriage, very differently to its voicing in treatises geared towards coterie readerships in the female religious life. Nonetheless, what all these allegories and devotional episodes share in common is perhaps finally more important than what divides them. In their different ways, they testify to the idea that domestic, everyday space can be sacred space; that, troped with different kinds of virtue and penitential intention, it can be the place where one encounters Christ, as guest, as husband, as lover. As such, they add an important additional strand of evidence to established, but still ongoing, researches into the devotional shift from exclusively cloistered to lay and mixed forms of spirituality, and into the character and textual stratagems of the books of guidance that form and nurture that spirituality.

Conclusion

Christiania Whitehead

In a late series of interviews and talks, Michel Foucault lists four major 'technologies' by which human beings develop knowledge about themselves, and enumerates his increasing preoccupation with the fourth:

[The] technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.¹⁰⁷

Following these three essays, considering the trope of the soul or heart as a household in a variety of pre-modern textual locations, it may prove fruitful, finally, to evaluate this trope in the light of Foucault's crystalline definition. The configuration of the heart as a household, alternately an object for serene satisfaction or rueful despair, arguably constitutes an overlooked 'technology of the self', specific to medieval Christian culture, in which the self, modified in a certain direction by author and reader working in tandem, is constructed as a private yet social place, prone to moral dirt and external contamination, and in need of constant surveillance and cleansing. An appropriate degree of figurative domestic oversight—the policing of the senses and psychological self-disciplining, allied with stringent moral hygiene—creates the right conditions for transformation (significantly located as external rather than internal in Christian ideology—the soul is the recipient, not the agent) in the form of the arrival and residency of Christ, enabling communion with the divine.

After offering initial comments on what a 'technology of the self' might entail, Foucault goes on to trace an evolution in the ways in which we think about our self, from Greco-Roman philosophy to early Christian monasticism. Having sketched the Hellenistic recommendation to 'care' for the self by, for example, retreat, regular self-examination, and autobiographical letter-writing, Foucault suggests that Christian monastic culture innovates a far more disjunctive and inherently contradictory

'technology of the self', in which the self must continually be confessed (that is, verbalized, to God or to a confessor) as a pre-condition of necessary self-renunciation.¹⁰⁸ The self is articulated, on an ongoing basis, in order to be put aside.

Now, obviously, Foucault's overarching theorizations need to be subjected to considerable historical fine-tuning (not least, by tracing the respective trajectories of the history of confessional practice and of self-abnegation); nonetheless, once again, they initially appear very illuminating for the devotional trope in question. The interior domestic space of the self must be swept out, emptied of sinful clutter, by the act of confession. The old detritus of compromised thought and action must be expelled—new green rushes must be strewn—the self must be reconstituted afresh. In these didactic and devotional texts, the act of confession would indeed appear to be an act of self-rejection or ejection, communicated through the trope of spring-cleaning and house-emptying.

But is this the whole story? Foucault proposes the disjunctive, ongoing renunciation of the self as a central monastic paradigm, and identifies as an (initially) eighteenth-century phenomenon—and a clear rupture with earlier practice—the articulation of a 'disclosure of the self' that does not involve self-renunciation.¹⁰⁹ I would suggest that, on closer inspection, the domestic trope of interiority actually unfolds to reveal readings of the devotional self that give due place to stability, permanence and continuity. The *Livre de Seyntz Medicines* and the *Doctrine of the Hert* require the periodic expulsion of dirt through confession, to be sure. But after everything has been swept out and confessed, the household of the self is still there, not gone. It is simply sweeter, fresher and better operated than before (or in Henry's case, there is the rueful realization that the dirt and domestic beasts are likely to re-establish themselves soon!) In the same section that the *Doctrine* writes about expelling dirt through the medium of sweeping, it also speaks of *acquiring* basic domestic furnitures—a bed, a food-table, a candlestick, and a stool. Putting *out* the self, via speech, is conjoined with *determined* self-construction, within the same allegorical linguistic field. Bridget (still engaged obliquely with confession in that she relates her visions to her confessors) only acquires and does not expel. Her model of the self, received unarguably via vision, is one of scrupulous, laudable acquisition—a domestic and contemporary reinterpretation of the parabolic treasure *laid up* in heaven. But, as we have seen, Bridget often proposes to

correct or re-nuance the homiletic commonplaces that she receives. Here, she dispenses with the penitential convention of self-rejection or ejection (sweeping out the soul with the broom of the tongue), and instead stresses the cumulative stocking and securing of the self in terms of household goods and virtues. Bridget 'confesses' an interiority that is *built up* and equipped to a point of repletion for the enjoyment of the divine spouse rather than an interiority that has, perennially, to be renounced.

Moving then from monastic and anchoritic instruction, through lay devotional writing, to female vision, it would seem that the complementary yet distinct allegories of domestic devotional selfhood within these texts can fruitfully be examined as 'technologies': allegories that present their recipients with a prescriptive imagination of the form of their inner, Christian selves. Nonetheless, a close investigation of these tropes arguably reveals a more stable and continuous reading of the 'confessing' self than Foucault is prepared to allow, qualifying the violent rejection of the self (the broom of the tongue) by inseting it within a broader discourse of domesticity in which the inner space of the self is identified as the 'home'—always improvable, yet equally, always the same—in which cleaning gives way to a psychological culture of acquisition, drawing in a profusion of the moral furnitures and utensils necessary for salvation.

NOTES

¹ For two recent studies of the architectural metaphor in religious and other medieval literatures, see David Cowling, *Building the Text: Architecture as Metaphor in Late Medieval and Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

² See C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); *The Medieval Household in Christian Europe c.850 - c.1550: Managing Power, Wealth and the Body*, ed. by Cordelia Beattie, Anna Maslakovic and Simon Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

³ *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. x.

⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 29-40.

⁵ The phrase derives from the title of D. Vance Smith's recent monograph, *The Medieval Household Imaginary* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

⁶ Quoting Max Horkheimer, Felicity Riddy draws the conclusion that such texts: 'encourage the female reader to internalize "the necessity to curtail her freedom in a life of domesticity" [...] and "to call this curtailment sacrifice rather than oppression"'. 'Preface', in *Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 129-35 (p. 133).

⁷ My contribution to this joint article forms another triptych, with two of my own essays: 'Early Middle English Writings for Women: *Ancrene Wisse*', in *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*, ed. by David Johnson and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 198-212, explores that text's notions of communities and social networks; 'Household Chores in *The Doctrine of the Hert*: Affective Spirituality and Subjectivity', in *The Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 167-86, addresses household, and in particular kitchen, imagery, in *The Doctrine of the Hert*. (See also: 'L'imagerie des travaux ménagers dans *The Doctrine of the Hert*: Spiritualité affective et subjectivité'. In *Il Cuore. The Heart. Micrologus* 11, ed. by A. Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), 519-53. References to the primary literature (in brackets following quotations) are to the following editions: *Ancrene Wisse*, edited from MS. Corpus Christi College Cambridge 402, ed. by J. R. R. Tolkien, EETS, o.s. 249 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962); *Anchoritic Spirituality: Ancrene Wisse and Associated Works*, trans. by Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson (New York: Paulist Press, 1991) (referenced in the body of the text as *AW*); Mary Patrick

Candon, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, edited from the Manuscripts with Introduction and Notes' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fordham University, 1963); Sawles Warde, in *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrone Wisse*, ed. by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 86-109.

⁸ E. J. Dobson, *The Origins of Ancrone Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); among her numerous contributions to *Ancrone Wisse* studies, see Bella Millett, 'Women in No Man's Land: English recluses and the development of vernacular literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 86-103; see also Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Analytical Survey 5: "Reading is Good Prayer": Recent Research on Female Reading Communities*, *New Medieval Literatures*, 5 (2002), 229-97; Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

⁹ Bella Millett, 'The Ancrone Wisse Group', in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 1-17. Of the seventeen manuscripts in which versions of, or extracts from, *Ancrone Wisse* are found, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402 (the manuscript Tolkien edits), probably written no earlier than the 1230s, and definitely not before 1224, in the West-Midland area, serves as my primary evidence.

¹⁰ G. Hendrix, *Hugo de Sancto Caro's Traktaat De Doctrina Cordis: Handschriften, Receptie, Tekstgeschiedenis en Authenticiteitskritiek*, 2 vols (Louvain: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Théologie, 1995), I xxviii.

¹¹ Renevey, 'Household Chores', esp. pp. 167-8.

¹² I treat this aspect at greater length in Renevey, 'Early Middle English Writings'.

¹³ I here draw on Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's talk, 'Unenclosing *Ancrone Wisse*', given at the 'Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs' Conference, Gregynog Hall, Newtown, 5-7 July 2002, and thank her for generously making her paper available to me. Some of that material appears in an essay written with Nicholas Watson, 'The French of England: the *Compileison*, *Ancrone Wisse*, and the idea of Anglo-Norman', in a special issue, on 'Cultural Traffic in the Medieval Romance World' edited by Simon Gaunt and Julian Weiss, of the *Journal of Romance Studies*, 4 (2004), 35-59.

¹⁴ See Alexandra Barratt, 'Anchoritic Aspects of *Ancrone Wisse*', *Medium Ævum*, 49 (1980), 32-56. Lefebvre speaks, for instance, of a farm as a space implying social networks. The farm houses a family from a particular country, region. This farm is inserted into a particular landscape. Whether beautiful or poor, it is an undertaking as well as a product, which corresponds of course to a certain type. But the farm is nevertheless

also part of nature. It is, Lefebvre writes, an intermediary object between undertaking and product, nature and work, the symbolic and the meaningful. Does the farm give birth to a space? Yes. Is this space natural or cultural, immediate or mediated (by whom? for what?), given or fictitious? Both. See *The Production of Space*, pp. 82-4. This simple example shows the complexity of discerning all the connections such an object immediately implies. The same questions can be asked of the anchorhold, resulting in a similarly complex set of answers.

¹⁵ Christopher Cannon, 'The form of the self: *Ancrene Wisse* and romance', *Medium Ævum*, 70 (2001), 47-65. See also Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Barratt, 'Anchoritic Aspects', pp. 37-8.

¹⁷ Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 27.

¹⁸ In addition to Erler, see David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995); see also Vincent Gillespie, 'The Book and the Brotherhood: Reflections on the Lost Library of Syon Abbey', in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie and Ralph Hanna (London: The British Library, 2000), pp. 185-208; see also the introduction to *Corpus of British Medieval Catalogues 9. Syon Abbey*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie, with *The Libraries of the Carthusians*, ed. by A. I. Doyle (London: The British Library, 2001), pp. xxix-lxv.

¹⁹ For more information on the medieval household from a historical perspective, see Woolgar, *The Great Household*. On hospitality, see especially pp. 21-29; on food and drink, see pp. 111-35.

²⁰ On the medieval household, see Woolgar, *The Great Household*; see also D. Vance Smith, *Arts of Possession*.

²¹ In addition to hospitality, food and drink, other interesting parallels can be drawn between the anchoritic household and the great medieval household. Dietary concerns, relationships with servants and animals, the specific function of particular rooms, all provide interesting evidence. See Woolgar, *The Great Household*.

²² On the importance of communities in *Ancrene Wisse*, see Renevey, 'Early Middle English Writings'.

²³ Savage and Watson, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, p. 389.

²⁴ Linda Georgianna, *The Solitary Self: Individuality in the Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Bella Millett, 'Ancrene Wisse and the

Conditions of Confession', *English Studies*, 80 (1999), 193-215; Cate Gunn, 'Ancrene Wisse: A Modern Lay Person's Guide to a Medieval Religious Text', *Magistra*, 8 (2002), 3-25.

²⁵ This confessional and penitential version is found in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 883 (R.14.7), and dates from the late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth century. For a description of the manuscript, see *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Robert Hasenfratz, TEAMS (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2000), p. 32.

²⁶ Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 120-56.

²⁷ Harald Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages: The Transformation of Ideas and Attitudes in the Medieval World* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 34.

²⁸ Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages*, p. 34.

²⁹ Riddy, 'Preface', pp. 129-33.

³⁰ Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, pp. 122-8.

³¹ Renevey, 'Household Chores', pp. 176-7.

³² Christiania Whitehead, 'A Fortress and a Shield: The Representation of the Virgin in the *Château d'amour* of Robert Grosseteste', in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 109-32, esp. pp. 113-17.

³³ Felicity Riddy, 'Preface', p. 133.

³⁴ Karen L. Fresco, 'Gendered Household Spaces in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des trois vertus*', in *The Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 187-98, esp. p. 194.

³⁵ On late-medieval adaptations of *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, see Nicholas Watson, 'Ancrene Wisse, Religious Reform and the Late Middle Ages', in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Yoko Wada (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 197-226.

³⁶ See also Cordelia Beattie and Anna Maslakovic, 'Introduction', in *The Medieval Household*, ed. by Beattie et al., pp. 1-8.

³⁷ See Watson and Wogan-Browne, 'The French of England', for a synopsis of the *Compileison*, together with an account of its potential audiences. They note the text survives in full in two fourteenth-century manuscripts (p. 42).

³⁸ See similar imagery in *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. and trans. by Siegfried Wenzel (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989).

³⁹ *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines: The Unpublished Devotional Treatise of Henry of Lancaster*, ed. by E. J. Arnould, Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1940), pp. 99-103. Subsequent references are given in the text, by page-number.

⁴⁰ Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990) I 245.

⁴¹ See also, my "'De celle mordure vient la mort dure": Perspectives on Puns and their Translation in Henry, duke of Lancaster's *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*', forthcoming in *The Medieval Translator* 10, ed. by Jacqueline Jenkins and Olivier Bertrand (Turnhout: Brepols)

⁴² Douglas Gray notes the equation of cat and devil here as both 'something of a shock' in terms of the passage's 'literary "realism"', and as 'appropriate' to a cat's destructive nature: see his 'Notes on Some Medieval Mystical, Magical and Moral Cats', in *Langland, the Mystics and the Medieval English Religious Tradition: Essays in Honour of S. S. Hussey*, ed. by Helen Phillips (Cambridge: Brewer, 1990) pp. 185-202 (pp. 197-8).

⁴³ Jean Binta Breeze, *Spring Cleaning: Poems* (London: Virago, 1992)

⁴⁴ Other mentions of the 'cleansed' soul carry their own allegorised elaborations; an Anglo-Norman meditation on the Passion in the later thirteenth-century MS Dublin, Trinity College 374 (apparently composed for a religious audience), fols 58va-67ra, imagines the newly washed 'house' of the confessed soul being adorned with the 'flowers' of virtue (fols 65vb-66vc). (Tony Hunt is preparing an edition of this poem). The poem Robin F. Jones edits as 'An Anglo-Norman Rhymed Sermon for Ash Wednesday', *Speculum*, 54 (1979), 71-84, from MS Dublin, Trinity College 312, specifies the necessary removal of spiders and a toad; these represent the seven deadly sins, with the toad as pride, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁵ British Library, MS Additional 28162, fol. 94ra.

⁴⁶ *The Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. by Pamela Gradon, 2 vols, EETS, o.s. 23 (London: Oxford University Press, 1866, reissued 1965), I 171-2.

⁴⁷ See also Renevey, 'Figuring Household Space', above, and Renevey, 'Household Chores', ed. by Beattie et al.

⁴⁸ For reasons of accessibility, I shall refer to the Middle English translation of the Latin text, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, ed. by Candon. All future references to this text are by page-number in the body of the essay.

⁴⁹ Renevey, 'Household Chores', pp. 176-9.

⁵⁰ D. Vance Smith, 'Body Doubles: Producing the Masculine Corpus', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 3-19 (p. 15).

⁵¹ Barry Windeatt presents an abbreviated edition of this section in his anthology, *English Mystics of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 253-8.

⁵² Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, p. 119.

⁵³ Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, p. 124.

⁵⁴ See C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household*, p. 34 and passim, on the predominance of male servants at this time.

⁵⁵ Kenneth Fowler, *The King's Lieutenant: Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster 1310-1361* (London: Elek, 1969), for example, considers that knowledge of the dressing of wounds must come from 'his personal experiences' (p. 193), as must details about the administration of market-places, jousts, tournaments, sieges and hunting (p. 195). In this Fowler echoes E. J. Arnould, *Étude sur le 'Livre des Saintes Médecines' du duc Henri de Lancastre* (Paris: Marcel Didier, 1948), pp. xcvi-cviii. For sieges, see Winthrop Wetherbee, 'Chivalry under Siege in Ricardian romance', in *The Medieval City Under Siege*, ed. by Ivy A. Corfis and Michael Wolfe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 207-23 (p. 209). R. M. T. Hill, however, in 'A Soldier's devotions', *Studies in Church History*, 17 (1981), 77-84 (pp. 80-1), suggests that the household preparations might indeed be a childhood memory of a great household on the move.

⁵⁶ Andrew Taylor offers a slightly different reading of the evidence in identifying a spiritual 'pigheadedness' in Henry, in his 'attach(ment) to his own sinful body'. See his 'Reading the Body in *Le Livre de Seyntz Medecines*', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 11 (1994), 103-18 (p. 115).

⁵⁷ R. B. Pugh, 'Fragment of an Account of Isabel of Lancaster, Nun of Amesbury, 1333-4', in *Festschrift zur Feier des zweihundertjährigen Bestandes des Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchives*, ed. by L. Santifaller, 2 vols (Vienna: Druck und Kommissions-verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1949-51), I (1949) 487-98 (p. 489).

⁵⁸ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Outdoing the Daughters of Syon? Edith of Wilton and the Representation of Female Community in Fifteenth-Century England', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchison, Carol M. Meale, Lesley Johnson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 393-409 (pp. 406, 408).

⁵⁹ Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1982), p. 51.

⁶⁰ Pugh, 'Fragment', p. 490: 'Isabel . . . held her episcopally enjoined claustration not worth an oyster'.

⁶¹ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Petitions to the Pope, Vol. 1, A.D. 1342-1419*, ed. by W. H. Bliss (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896), p. 78.

⁶² For an example of a medieval acceptance of 'realist' detail that also has to undergo some accommodation, however, see C. M. Woolgar's discussion of a manuscript portrayal of the female gatekeeper (which would have been extraordinary in a medieval

household) in the account of Ish-bosheth's death in 2 Samuel 4. 5-7: *The Great Household*, pp. 34-5.

⁶³ Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind*, p. 118.

⁶⁴ *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers*, p. 166. In 1359, Henry, who already has papal licence to enter houses of religious men 'with a suite of twelve', now asks for an extension of the same for 'houses of religious women', and this is granted on 6 June; see *Calendar of Entries*, p. 341.

⁶⁵ Now Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.15. See Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ For an account of the Newarke hospital, see A. H. Thompson, *The History of the Hospital and the New College of the Annunciation of St. Mary in the Newarke, Leicester* (Leicester: Leicestershire Archaeological Society, 1937).

⁶⁷ See Felicity Riddy, "'Women talking about the things of God': a late medieval sub-culture", in *Women and Literature in Britain*, ed. by Meale, pp. 104-27; Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, passim; Wogan-Browne, 'Recent Research on Female Reading Communities', pp. 229-97.

⁶⁸ M. Teresa Tavormina, introduction to her translation of an extract from 'Henry of Lancaster: *The Book of Holy Medicines (Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines)*', in *Cultures of Piety: Medieval English Devotional Literature in translation*, ed. by Anne Clark Bartlett and Thomas H. Bestul (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 19-26 (p. 21).

⁶⁹ For suggestions about Middle English literature's—namely, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*'s—knowingness about, and invocation of, Henry's book, see M. Thiébaux, 'Sir Gawain, the Fox Hunt, and Henry of Lancaster', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 71 (1970), 469-79; W. G. Cooke, D'A. J. D. Boulton, 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: A Poem for Henry of Grosmont?', *Medium Aevum*, 68 (1999), 42-54; Francis Ingledew's book-length study is forthcoming.

⁷⁰ *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 130, ll. 1772-77. Gray also draws attention to the cat's role in the *Summoner's Tale*, 'Notes on Some Medieval . . . Cats', p. 202.

⁷¹ *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwe*, ed. by Mabel Day, EETS, o.s. 225 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

⁷² For a facsimile of the Latin text of *De doctrina*, see *Le manuscrit Leyde Bibliothèque de L'Université BPL 2579, témoin principal des phases de rédaction du traité De doctrina cordis, à attribuer au dominicain français Hugues de Saint-Cher (pseudo-Gérard de Liège)*, ed. by G. Hendrix (Gent: [n.p.], 1980). For an edition of the early fifteenth-century Middle English translation of this text, see Mary Patrick Candon, *The Doctrine of the Hert*. Since, for the allegory in question, the Middle English version

of the treatise follows the Latin very closely, subsequent quotations will be taken from this edition, giving chapter and page number.

⁷³ *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwe: Ancrene Wisse*, ed. by Tolkien, pp.198-200. *Ancrene Riwe*, ed. by Day, pp. 26-7.

⁷⁴ *Doctrine*, 1. 6-25.

⁷⁵ See, for example, *Doctrine*, 2. 77-80.

⁷⁶ Although the allegory of the household is not developed extensively before the 1200s, I have tentatively enumerated similarities between the image of the household in *Sawles Warde* and a short passage in Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, in which the husband and wife, and sons and maids within a household are identified as the various psychological faculties constituting the human mind. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, ed. by M. Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 143, 143A, 143B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979-85), I 30, 32, 35. See Whitehead, *Castles*, p. 121.

⁷⁷ See Robert N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 26-33.

⁷⁸ See, for example, the emphasis placed upon God's grace in the parable of the vineyard in *Pearl*. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, *Patience*, ed. by J. J. Anderson (London: Everyman, 1996, repr. 2002). *Pearl*, IX-XII.

⁷⁹ See my more detailed discussion of household imagery in the *Doctrina*, in Whitehead, *Castles*, pp. 122-8.

⁸⁰ For an innovative discussion of the *Doctrina*'s possible address to communities of beguines, see Renevey, 'Household Chores'.

⁸¹ Luke 11. 24-26; 12. 33; 12. 39.

⁸² 1 Kings 17.

⁸³ For a comprehensive discussion of the female prophetic voice in the late Middle Ages, see R. Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (York: York Medieval Press, 1999).

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the shaping of the 'feminine' in male-authored late-medieval religious texts, see Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁸⁵ Throughout this discussion, I shall refer to the fifteenth-century Middle English translation of Bridget's revelations, *The Liber celestis of St Bridget of Sweden*, ed. by R. Ellis, EETS, o.s. 291 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), which follows the earlier Latin text closely in the passages under discussion. In all instances, I shall cite book and chapter, page and line numbers. A discussion of the influence of this translation upon fifteenth-century English devotional practices can be found in R. Ellis, "'Flores ad

Fabricandam . . . Coronam": an investigation into the uses of the Revelations of St Bridget of Sweden in fifteenth-century England', *Medium Aevum*, 51 (1982), 163-86. The most important recent book on St Bridget is Bridget Morris, *St Birgitta of Sweden* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999).

⁸⁶ The indeterminate character of St Bridget's authorship arises from the extensive early editing of her visions by her confessor, Alphonso of Jaen.

⁸⁷ Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 72.

⁸⁸ Bridget, *Liber*, 1. 33, 60/14.

⁸⁹ Bridget, *Liber*, 3. 30, 244/9-15.

⁹⁰ Morris, *Birgitta*, ch. 2.

⁹¹ Morris, *Birgitta*, ch. 3.

⁹² Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 24-27.

⁹³ Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 25, 182/19-23.

⁹⁴ Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 26, 183/30-32.

⁹⁵ Bridget, *Liber*, 2. 27, 189/9-33.

⁹⁶ Morris, *Birgitta*, pp. 42-3.

⁹⁷ See discussions of readership and influence in; Ellis, "'Flores ad Fabricandam'"; F. R. Johnson, 'The English Cult of St Bridget of Sweden', *Analecta Bollandia*, 103 (1985), 75-93; *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England*, ed. by Rosalynn Voaden (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996).

⁹⁸ St Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons upon the *Song of Songs* are easily the best-known example of this brand of spiritual sensualism.

⁹⁹ Good examples of this new artistic emphasis upon urban, middle-class interiors, often allied with religious subject matter, include Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage*, National Gallery, London; Robert Campin, *Heinrich von Werl Triptych*, Museo del Prado, Madrid, and *Mérode Altarpiece*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rogier van der Weyden, *The Annunciation*, Louvre, Paris; Petrus Christus, *St Eligius in his Workshop*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

¹⁰⁰ Morris, *Birgitta*, pp. 43-4.

¹⁰¹ Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 45.

¹⁰² Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 53.

¹⁰³ Morris, *Birgitta*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁴ Bridget, *Liber*, 3. 29. An example of the homiletic use made of this similitude can be found in Alan of Lille, *Sermones octo. Sermo II: In Annuntiatione Beatae Mariae*, PL 210, col. 202A-D.

¹⁰⁵ Bridget, *Liber*, 3. 29, 241/30-1.

¹⁰⁶ For a more extended discussion of this point, see Whitehead, *Castles*, pp. 130-1.

¹⁰⁷ *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ *Technologies*, pp. 40-9.

¹⁰⁹ *Technologies*, p. 49.

An Eye-Witness Account or Literary Historicism? John Page's *Siege of Rouen*

Tamar S. Drukker

With King Henry V in France was a certain John Page who, according to his own testimony, had witnessed the siege of Rouen (1418-9), its devastating effects on the citizens, the negotiations between the two camps, and finally Henry V's victorious entry into Rouen on 20 January 1419. There are no traces of the notes that Page wrote while in France, '[a]lle in raffé and not in ryme / By-cause of space he hadde no tyme' (ll. 1307-8), but a structured poem of 1314 lines in four-stress rhyming couplets survives complete in a single manuscript and, in part, incorporated into the fifteenth-century continuations of at least ten manuscripts of the Middle English prose *Brut* chronicle.¹ John Page's poem *The Siege of Rouen* initially appears in the *Brut* written as prose embedded within the text with only minor alterations.² However, in the middle of the description of the French citizens' attempt to receive an interview with the English king, the compilers of the *Brut* abandon the prose and copy the poem verbatim, giving up the attempt to disguise its original form. The shift is clearly apparent in the *mise-en-page* of many *Brut* manuscripts, for the scribes not only reproduce the original text faithfully, they also reproduce it in the layout commonly used for poetry, with short verse lines and demarcation of the rhymes.³ This change does not occur at a significant moment in the poem and seems to reflect the compilers' willingness to include the poem within the framework of the chronicle, not merely for its historical or informative value, but for something we may call its poetic quality as well.

The *Brut* has for its models the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, the historical books of the Bible, classical historiography, and monastic chronicles from which the compilers derive both their information and their manner of presentation. The earlier part of the *Brut* relies heavily on earlier chronicles and annals. For the later

chapters, however, and especially for the continuations composed originally in Middle English and not long after the events they record, other sources were used. Among them were songs and ballads composed close to the time of the events, most of which are now lost. Their existence can be detected in the few surviving citations we do have, but also in the shift of tone of the prose narrative itself which assumes 'a certain poetical style.'⁴ And yet, this use of poetic source material occurs within a tradition of prose historiography, which developed beside a tradition of Anglo-Norman and Middle English chronicles in verse. While Latin metrical verse had been the dominant medium for composing any work deemed important from classical times onwards, from the twelfth century and more persistently in the following centuries there is an awareness of the limitations of verse as a medium for writing history.⁵ Nonetheless, short poems appear in chapters 168, 188, and 213 of the *Brut*.⁶ These are anonymous compositions, possibly songs, for they are rich in pattern of rhyme and sound, and reported to have been said or sung by soldiers on both camps during the Anglo-Scottish wars.⁷ These verse lines form part of the historical narrative as records of contemporary 'voice'. Unlike the chronicle as a whole, they are products of their time, the 'primary sources' a historian uses when composing a coherent narrative. The chroniclers' use of songs reflects an attempt to get as close as possible to the reality described, as if these lines are a form of an oral eyewitness account. The same can be said of John Page's poem *The Siege of Rouen*, and it is perhaps as a report of an eyewitness that the poem is principally valued in the *Brut*. The poet bases the authoritative status he claims for his poem on his own presence at the scene, equating eyewitness report with veracity:

And I shalle telle you how hyt was.
And the better telle I may
Ffor with my lege there-at I lay
And there-to I toke a-vyse,
Lyke as my wyt wolde suffyce. (ll. 20-4)

Page can coerce the historical details to fit the literary form he has chosen to use and still claim it is a true and faithful account of the siege because he was there to see and experience the events. Valued already by ancient historians as valid, and considered by Isidore of Seville (d. 636) to be the ultimate guarantee of accuracy, eyewitness report was highly esteemed in legal cases

and in written accounts of all kinds.⁸ The first-person report by someone present at the time was not only considered true, but also authoritative, and yet Page's story is not, and cannot be, objective documentation. Not only the demands of the verse form, but historical and literary models also shape the way in which Page sees, understands, and describes the siege of Rouen. It is not a historical document, such as the soldiers' songs composed on both sides of the Scottish border and included in the *Brut*, but a conscious reworking of historical data into a literary form which, while establishing its truthfulness, also marks the distinction between lived experience and its written transformation.⁹

In the opening lines of the poem, Page equates the siege of Rouen with other famous sieges whose significance lies not solely in their role within world history but also in the many narratives written about them. Henry V's campaign to take Rouen, the capital of Normandy, is presented with patriotic exaggeration as the most important military and symbolic taking of a city '[s]yn Jerusalem and Troy was gette' (l. 16). The sieges of Jerusalem and of Troy serve as models to the poet writing about a siege rather than to the king or his generals who conduct it. These examples from history shed light on the way a siege may be presented in writing, not the way it is to be mounted and won. These two sieges, or rather the written reports of them, had come to represent two different approaches to history and to an understanding of the unfolding of events. Troy, it was traditionally believed, fell as a result of pride as well as by a capricious decision of the gods, and was understood throughout the Middle Ages to be a model for a Boethian interpretation of history as the work of Fortune. Cities, kings, and empires rise and fall with the passage of time, as a natural phenomenon. The fall of Jerusalem, on the other hand, was presented in Christian exegesis as a deliberate act of revenge by God and as an essential part in the divine scheme of history. Thus the siege of Jerusalem neatly represented the Augustinian understanding of history as the unfolding of an inspired enactment of God's will.¹⁰

For the English, who traced their origins to a Trojan hero who was forced to leave his home because of the war, the tragic destruction of Troy was a fortunate fall. The opening chapters of the *Brut* are not concerned with the fate of those who stayed in the city or who were killed while defending it; they follow the adventures of the Trojan descendant Brutus who, metaphorically, has taken the city with him only to rebuild it on the banks of the Thames as 'newe Troye' (Brie I, chapter 5, p. 12). Though the detailed history of this war is not included in the chronicle, the tale of Troy both in

history (or rather pseudo-history) and in epic serves as the starting point as well as the historical and literary context for the *Brut* as a national historical narrative. British history stems from Trojan history, while the tradition of written history in English depends on the accounts of that siege and its aftermath.

Indirectly, the siege of Jerusalem also forms part of English history in so far as it becomes integrated into Christian history, and in so far as the Holy Land is tightly linked with England. There were several sieges of Jerusalem, two of which ended with the destruction of the temple, the burning of the city, and the exile of its population. In both cases, the city suffered months of siege before finally surrendering to the enemy. A short summary of the first siege, set by the Babylonians headed by Nebuchadnezzar, ending in 586 BCE, is found in II Kings 25, and again in the second book of Chronicles 36. 11-21. The prophets also describe this siege and the destruction of Jerusalem as a warning before the actual event as well as afterwards in lamentations. The report in the book of Kings is short and almost laconic, presenting the siege as a punishment set by God on his people for their misconduct, and therefore their suffering is justly deserved. The siege lasts three years, resulting in severe famine which eventually brings down the city's defence:

and a famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And a breach was made into the city: and all the men of war fled in the night. [. . .] came Nabuzardan commander of the army, a servant of the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and the houses of Jerusalem, and every house he burnt with fire.¹¹

The text here does not describe life in the besieged city during the long months preceding its fall. The prophets dwell more than the biblical chroniclers on the suffering and horror of siege and destruction, mostly in a futile attempt to bring their hearers to repent for their sins and thus relieve themselves from such calamities brought about by God's wrath.

The second siege of Jerusalem, which received elaborate attention from contemporary historians, as it has from chroniclers ever since, is the one set by the Romans culminating in the destruction of the second temple in 70 CE. The most detailed report of the siege and its outcomes is found in *The Jewish War* by the contemporary Jewish chronicler Josephus Flavius (37-

95?), known in medieval Western Europe in a Latin translation by Hegessipus. Josephus had spent the greater part of the period of the Jewish struggle for independence from the Empire among Roman troops, and he was present at the scene of most of the battles he records in his book. While the first-century histories of Dares and Dictys were thought to be accurate eyewitness accounts of the Trojan War, and as such reliable authorities,¹² Josephus really was a contemporary, writing his chronicle during and between battles. The destruction of Jerusalem received in Christian thought and history a profound significance as part of the narrative of the life of Christ. There are many medieval narratives of this siege which make a conscious link between the events of the late 60s in Galilee and in Jerusalem, as told by Josephus and known from other accounts, and the historical narratives of the New Testament.¹³

By evoking the memory of Troy and Jerusalem in the opening lines of his poem, John Page presents Henry V's campaign as a symbolic moment in history, and his own verse as stemming from a tradition associated with the great eyewitness narratives that underlie western civilisation and chronicling. The theme of the poem and its central figure also place it within a tradition of the *chansons de geste* and the great romances of battle. It is an effective, and at times a moving poem, but its uncompromising admiration for Henry, as well as its literary imperfections explain its relative obscurity. And yet, its inclusion within the *Brut*, one of the most widely read and diffused vernacular works in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England, ensured for it a reading audience, eager for a story of heroism and chivalry set in their lifetime but echoing great moments from a heroic epoch.

Siege was a common feature of medieval warfare, with a practical as well as symbolically loaded significance. To those writing on warfare, the siege offers an intensive experience of battle, confined to one place and focused on one goal: defending the city from within or breaking that defence from without. Narratives of sieges, both historical and fictional, devote attention to the practical art of mounting a siege, the technical apparatus used, and the strategic considerations on either side. Treatises on warfare circulating in the Middle Ages combined the theoretical knowledge derived from classical military manuals with the accounts of recent wars, notably of the Crusades. The late antique treatise *De re militari* by Flavius Renatus Vegetius (late fourth-fifth century CE) was widely read in the Middle Ages, both in Latin and in translations into the vernacular.¹⁴ Vegetius' description of the Roman army and its warfare was archaic already in the time of

composition, but continued to be read and consulted until at least the late fifteenth century. Among the central themes found in Vegetius, and in other manuals based on this model, are an interest in the commander of the siege, the arrangement of the army, and the weapons and tools used for combat.

John Page does not miss the opportunity to produce a versified report of war and battle, though his main concerns are with the character of the king leading the siege and the political and symbolic significance of his campaign. The story of the siege begins, like many others, with a message from the king to the city, calling on it to surrender peacefully. The offer is rejected, and Page moves on to describe the city, focusing on its wall, gates, and moat, all designed to protect the city and secure it from foreign invasion. The stronger the city, the greater is Henry V's achievement in overtaking it. The detailed description serves the poet's purpose of praising the king and of placing this battle at the same level with the siege of Troy, a noble and strong city, the centre of culture and prosperity, brought down by change of fortune and human pride.

The initial splendour of Rouen also emphasises the extreme suffering and ruin brought on it and its inhabitants during the months of the siege. The great trench around the city 'brode and depe, / And fewe [men] myght fro many hyt kepe' (ll. 105-6), which was meant to secure, becomes the setting for the most painful and humiliating of deaths. It is in this ditch that the hungry children, women, and old men of Rouen must remain, exposed to the winter cold, on top of severe famine. In an attempt to diminish the suffering within the city, the leaders of the besieged city send the weakest citizens outside the city walls, with the hope that they will live a better life elsewhere. However, the English soldiers do not allow them to cross their line and they remain between the besieging army and the starving city, now beyond the reach of these banished citizens of Rouen. Page remarks, with a keen imagining of the comforts they lack, that 'many one there dyde for colde / That warmythe of howesē sauyd [haue] wolde' (ll. 555-6). The ditch, not the walls, becomes the emblem of Rouen, in a painful reversal of a fundamental medieval image of the city as reproduced on countless coins and seals.

When Rouen is brought down and its citizens are desperate, they turn to diplomatic meetings with the hope of reaching an agreement and bringing an end to their suffering. The negotiations between the two camps are another opportunity for Page to elaborate the contrasts between the victorious camp and the miserable Frenchmen. The poet describes the 'tentys' (l. 952; Brie II 413) built by King Henry for the French and the English delegates.

The tents stand in a ditch, but despite the rain, they are dry, offering those inside them warmth and protection. The poet, as an eyewitness, well-informed and eager to expand on the glory of the English camp, lists the names and titles of all the army leaders, describing their banners and extravagant military outfits,

in cotys of dyversyte
As lordys berys in hyr degre.
Gayly with golde they were be-gon,
Ryght as the son for-sothe hyt schone.
(ll. 979-82; Brie II 414)

The scene of these clean and neat soldiers brightens up the cold January day, and stands in a pathetic contrast to the

pore pepylle there were put owte
That ne had vnnethe a clowte,
But the clothys in there backe
To kepē them from rayne and racke.
(ll. 985-8; Brie II 414)

An artistic, rather than a documentary, impulse underlies Page's description of the heralds in contrast with the wretchedness of the French populace. This image is so powerful and telling, that it can still be found in the description of the siege by modern historians.¹⁵ While the compilers of the *Brut* accepted John Page's poem as a historical narrative, it is only because they themselves were writing a history rich with literary parallels, images, and metaphors. While the *Brut* had ceased to be read as 'serious history' already in the late sixteenth century, some powerful images in the poem are still considered 'authentic' by historians today.

As a first-hand report by a member of Henry V's company, the poem shows surprisingly little interest in the machines of war or the weapons used by either camp.¹⁶ Though we know nothing about John Page, we can be almost certain that he was not a combatant. Most of the second half of the poem is comprised of direct speech, presenting diplomacy as the crucial aspect behind the hostility and its final resolution in the essentially static context of the siege. Page offers a description of the war of words exchanged between the French and the English, not a description of actual fighting,

ending around the negotiation table rather than in the battlefield. Henry's victory, therefore, does not depend on his military superiority, but emerges from some other kind of higher position, which is expressed in language. We see Henry engaged in two sorts of verbal communication: he prays to God and he negotiates with the French. Whereas in hearing mass Henry exhibits his piety, his treatment of his enemy and his interviews with them highlight the chivalric ethos guiding his actions as a military leader displaying charity. Page adds to his description of the allowances the king makes towards the French when trying to reach an agreement, that he acted upon 'a poynt of cheualrye' (l. 1145; Brie II 418). The French are defeated because they sin (a word used throughout in the poem) both against God and against the ethical code of chivalry. Their sinning adds a further justification for Henry V's claim to the city. He has the right to govern Rouen not only because of the historical connection linking the English throne with Normandy, but also because of his moral and religious stature that would grant him lordship over other Christian peoples.

The hero of *The Siege of Rouen* is King Henry V, and if the poem aspires to the status of a new national epic, Henry is its chivalric protagonist.¹⁷ The poet is clearly interested in praising the king as part of his overall plan in composing the poem; through the history of the siege emerges the image of the besieger. Though respectful of the citizens of Rouen and sensitive to their suffering, the tone of the poem reflects the poet's partisan stance, siding with Henry and the English cause throughout.¹⁸ The chroniclers of the *Brut*, John Page, and presumably their intended readers, all see in Henry one of the great leaders of their nation, and accept without question his claims for lordship over a great part of France and the necessity for the ensuing battles.¹⁹ The chroniclers report how all the king's men support him in his properly legalistic demand 'of his title þat he had to Normaundy, Gascoyne and Gyan, which was his enheritaunce of righte' (Brie II 552). John Page suggests that King Henry is the legitimate and rightful ruler of Rouen, who after the long siege enters the city not as a victorious conqueror but as one receiving what is his by right. Page has the French citizens welcome the king into the city in this spirit:

Alle the pepylle of that cytte,
They sayde, 'Welcome, oure lege so fre,

Welcome in-to youre ounē ryght,
As hyt ys the wylle of God all-myght.'
(ll. 1275-8; Brie II 421-2)

They accept the English claim over Normandy, and can only blame the French lords and warmongers for resisting Henry and thus subjecting the city to the horrors of the siege.²⁰ Earlier in the poem, Page uses the encounter between the English king and representatives from the city to further praise Henry. Though the English king does not heed their requests, they still come away from their interview full of admiration and respect for his might.

They sayde, 'He ys, to oure a-vyse,
Of alle erthely prycys pryce,
Takyng rewardē of hys chere
And to hys coun-tenaunce so clere,
To hys person in propyrte,
To hys fetowrys and hys bevtē,
And to hys depē dyscrecyon,
That he hathe in possessyon,
And to hys passyng pryncē-hode,
And to hys mykylle man-hode;
And he ys mar-cyfulle in myght
And askysse nothyng but hys ryght.
Thes vertuys ys a gretē thyngē
To be with-yn an erdely kyngē.
Howe shuldē he but wyn honowre?
Howe shulde he be but conquerowre?
Welle we wote with-owtyn wene:
God hym louys, and that ys sene.'
(ll. 929-46; Brie II 412-3)

Page need not glorify the king, when those of the enemy camp seem to do it for him. Their speech is made up of the repetitive structure 'to hys x' in a long list of the king's favourable attributes. These parallel statements, heightened by the strong alliterative pattern, add to the rhetorical effect of these lines, and reflect the poet's careful use of rhymes and sound patterns. To make this praise even more valuable, Page makes a conscious note of describing the Rouenners in the most positive terms. Rouen, before the siege, is a noble and

worthy city, like Troy or Jerusalem, with churches and great houses whose inhabitants, '[a ij] thowsande, or ellys thre, / Rychely a-raydē at the beste' (ll. 374-5). The king is honoured by the dignity, strength, and pomp of his enemy. And yet, not even the most loyal of subjects can ignore the suffering inflicted by the king, in besieging the city, on those trapped inside it.

Since Henry V could not take over Rouen by force, he was determined to starve its inhabitants into submission. Hunger, not military weakness or wrong strategy, brings down the city. Much of the character of the poem's narrative flows from this static situation with no combat but a wealth of emblematic gestures, appeals, and denials. As Page notes, in one of his occasional flights of imagery, 'hunger brekythe the stonē walle' (l. 602), as if echoing the juxtaposition of lack of bread with the city walls being forced open in the biblical description of the fall of Jerusalem in II Kings 25. 3-4 cited above.²¹ Much of the *Siege of Rouen* is devoted to describing the misery of famine, within the city and outside the city walls. Pathetic scenes of hunger occupy many narratives of siege, and Page's description of the famine is something of a set piece. The food shortage results in numerous deaths, too many to allow the living to bury the dead, and those still alive are forced to eat what is not considered fit for human consumption, and are then driven into acts of cruelty and desperate, inhuman behaviour.

Page begins by offering an informed report concerning the state of affairs within the city. The number of the dead is high, but still the supply of food is becoming scarce, as he recounts in an almost grimly zestful passage:

They etē doggys, they etē cattys,
 They etē mysse, horse, and rattys.
 An hors quarter, lene or fatte,
 A c s. hyt was atte;
 A horssē-hedde at halfe a pound,
 A dogge for þe same mony round.
 Ffor xxx d. went a ratte.
 Ffor ij noblys went a catte.
 For vj d. went a mous [. . .] (ll. 471-9)

When the people lack food they resort to eating whatever they can find, and the economy of famine sets a high price on each of those items. This is not the first time the *Brut* includes a description of famine, and in the previous occasion too the description includes the unappetising substitutes the hungry people must eat

together with the precise sum these things can fetch. Chapter 189, devoted to the months following the second siege of Berwick, concludes with this paragraph:

And þat same tyme bifelle meny meschyues in Engeland; for
þe pore peple deide in Engeland for hunger; and so miche and
so faste folc deaden, þat vnneþes men might ham bury; for a
quarter of whete was worþe xls., and ij 3ere and an halfe a
quarter of whete was worþe ij mar3; and ofte-tymes þe pore
peple stale childern and ete ham, and ete also alle þe houndes
þat þai might take, and ek Horse & cattes [. . .]

(Brie I 209-10)

Among the possible sources of meat, the *Brut* lists, in passing, children, which the poor hungry Englishmen steal and eat. Page does not describe any cases of cannibalism among the hungry citizens of Rouen, but he does mention mothers depriving their children of the little food they possess and other moving examples of what is perhaps one of his principal themes in the poem, the power of want when 'hunger passyth kynde and loue' (l. 521).

The horrific image of being driven by hunger to eat children can be found already in the Bible and afterwards in other narratives of siege. It is perhaps one of the most recurrent images of human beings in extremity. One of the most shocking of biblical passages concerns a siege on Samaria by the Syrian king Benadad. The narrative of the siege is short, and focuses on a single episode:

And there was a great famine in Samaria: and so long did the
siege continue, till the head of an ass was sold for fourscore
pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of pigeons' dung,
for five pieces of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by
the wall, a certain woman cried out to him, saying: Save me, my
lord O king. And he said: If the Lord doth not save thee, how
can I save thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?
And the king said to her: What aileth thee? And she answered:
This woman said to me: Give thy son, that we may eat him to-
day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son,
and ate him. And I said to her on the next day: Give thy son that
we may eat him. And she hath hid her son. When the king heard
this, he rent his garments, and passed by upon the wall.

(II Kings 6. 25-30)

Once again the narrator describes the famine in terms of the market price that determines the cost of victuals. But the interest shifts quickly from the prices of unacceptable meat to the exchange arranged between two hungry women in the city. The abominable tale of filicide and cannibalism is set within an economic discourse of agreed contract and fair exchange. The grieving woman does not wail her son's death, nor her hunger, but the breach of promise made to her by another mother.

Such a scene, of parents driven by hunger to killing and devouring their own children, appears earlier in the Bible as a warning and the ultimate consequences of sin. If the people of Israel were not to follow God's instructions, they would be made to suffer and act in precisely this way.²² In the passage quoted above, there is no condemnation of any of those present and responsible for the tragedy; neither the Syrian king, nor the helpless King of Israel is blamed for the extreme famine; nor is the mother guilty of killing and boiling her own son. The unnatural death of the child is shocking and grievous, but is not viewed as a crime. If there is a guilty party, it is the second mother who shares the meat of the slaughtered infant but would not sacrifice her own son in return. Can she really be the villain of this tale? Read in the light of the conditions set by God in his commandments, those participating in this drama are living through the punishment assigned to them by God for sins committed earlier. They must act in this way, driven by hunger and by providence, so that the murderous mother and the deceiving mother both fulfil their part in the realisation of God's threat.²³

This reading of the biblical narrative establishes a figure of much importance to Page, the image of the guiltless besieger, the instrument of God's justice. The enemy besieging Samaria—and the same is true of the Babylonians and the Romans who destroy Jerusalem—partake in God's plan as executors of divine justice. If an analogy were to be drawn between the pagan rulers attacking Israel and Henry V in Rouen, the English king, like Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, acts according to God's will. He must be there to inflict on Rouen the punishment it deserves for rejecting the English rule and for the one sin Page alludes to in referring to 'that proude cytte' (l. 59)—its pride. This cardinal sin is the source of the Rouenners' objection to Henry's demands for lordship over them. It is the months of siege and hunger that change the people's constitution so that they become 'so meke' (l. 678; Brie II 405), eventually humble enough to agree to the terms set by the English to end the siege.

But the poem does not so easily efface the question of guilt. When the French leaders of the city send out the starving children, women, the sick, and the old, they assume that the English king will not consider these helpless citizens a threat and will allow them to pass through his lines and seek their fortunes elsewhere. However, Henry understands the laws of war in a different way and prevents the wretched refugees from getting beyond the English camp. They remain, without food or shelter, outside the city wall, between the two warring armies, because '[t]he cytte wolde not lete them yn' (l. 553). Now it is the Rouenners' turn to make a savage judgement to protect their interests. Those left outside the city walls beg the English for some bread, but do not blame Henry's men for the misery they are in but rather 'cursyd hyr ownē nacȳon' (l. 552). Henry will not take responsibility for their condition, addressing the city delegates who wish to arouse the king's pity on their behalf: 'hoo put them there, / To the dyche of that cytte?' (ll. 838-9; Brie II 410). The interview between the Rouenners and King Henry is legalistic, concerning loyalties, duties, and one's judicial responsibility for one's actions, as befits a king whose claim to the French throne is essentially a matter of law, not vaingloriousness or pugnacity. Henry insists on his right to the city and blames the French for bringing their suffering upon themselves.

The severe conditions caused by the siege do not only lead to the eventual surrender of Rouen; they also allow King Henry to bestow his kindness and exhibit his mercy, acting beyond the line of strict justice. The portrait of the king which emerges from the poem is of a just, responsible, and above all a pious monarch, who displays the medieval commander's customary acceptance that non-combatants must suffer because they are part of a conflict. His piety is stressed in repeated mentions of his hearing mass (notably when the French delegates come to see him, ll. 793-6; Brie II 409), and by feeding the hungry on Christmas Day, granting his soldiers permission to share their food with the starving Rouenners. Henry's behaviour seems to indicate that there are different modes of pity and charity. It would have been a sign of weakness were he to show kindness to those starving people turned out of the city, for he would be driven to do so by the circumstances created by his French opponents. However, using the Feast Day to extend his Christian charity to those who are suffering, Henry's action derives from his obligations to God, not to the French.²⁴ Christmas is traditionally a time of charity and an opportunity for Henry to act as a generous Christian:

That seson of Crystysmasse,
I shalle you telle a fayrë grace,
And a mekenys of ourë kyng,
Of goodenys a grete tokenynge.
He sent a-pon Crystysmasse daye
Hys herrowdys of armys in ryche a-raye,
And sayde, by-cause of that hyghë feste,
Bothe to mostë and [to] leste,
With-yn the cytte and with-owte
That werë stores and vytaylys with-owte.
They shulde have mete and drynke inowe
And saue condyte to come there-too. (ll. 557-68)

The king offers food to all those in and outside the city wall, underwritten by the 'saue condyte' that it is his right, as king, to grant. By accomplishing this act of grace (an adjective often used by Page when describing King Henry, here with a strong theological nuance) to all French citizens, the English king indirectly criticises the French for their treatment of their own people. He does not discriminate between the rich and the poor, the useful and the needy, thus pointing to the internal tension between the strong and the weak within the French city. It is their maltreatment by the French that leads the starving crowds to turn against their own leaders, to accuse them of resisting the English rule only because of their 'pompë and [...] gretë pryde,' (l. 1078; Brie II 416).²⁵ Pride leads the wealthy French to subject their own people to starvation instead of saving them and their city by accepting Henry's conditions for surrender.

On January 19, 1419, the citizens of Rouen surrendered and King Henry V received the keys of the city. The following day he entered the gates in a ceremonial procession. His walk through the city, accompanied by his army generals as well as bishops and men of religion and in the sight of the people of the town made an impression on his new subjects and on the poet. Page describes it in detail, sketching the king's route from the city gate to the Cathedral where he heard mass, the splendour of Henry's dress, and the reaction of those present.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw many kings and queens publicly entering a city, encouraging what quickly became a highly-stylised display presented by the citizens of these cities in honour of the ruling

monarch. The *Brut* describes some of these processions, for they were historical events of significance in the lives of the rulers as well as carrying immediate consequences for the cities and their people. By the fifteenth century, the occasion of a monarch's visit to a city, whether after a war, before a coronation, for a wedding, or any other event, was celebrated by an elaborate staging of 'many dyvers showes and sightis' (Brie II 426) as in the reception of Henry V and his French wife Katherine in London in 1420. Unlike the examples from London where the city receives its own monarch, the citizens of Rouen have until the end of the siege been loyal to the king of France and considered Henry as an enemy and an intruder. By describing the Rouenners' reception of the king in terms that echo those of the English royal entries, Page may be suggesting that the French citizens do not simply accept Henry because he has defeated them in battle, but also accept his historic claim to overlordship; they now willingly consider themselves his subjects. Henry, too, is conscious of his acquired title and his responsibility for his new subjects who are still in dire need of food and protection. The poem ends with two entries into the city: the first is that of the Duke of Exeter in preparation for the king's entry the following day. On both occasions, the people of Rouen welcome the English official with cheers, but while Exeter stages a pompous entry, '[t]roppettys blewe there bemys of bras, / Pypys and claryons bothe there was' (ll. 1213-14; Brie II 420), King Henry is more decorous and solemn in his conduct. Page points out this difference, remarking,

[Henry] passyde yn with-owte any pryde,
With-owtyn pype or claryons blaste
Prynce devoutely yn he paste,
As a conqueroure in hys ryght,
Thankyng euër God almyght. (ll. 1270-4; Brie II 421)

In the very manner by which Henry enters Rouen he again, according to Page's report, exhibits the central characteristics that make this conquest justified and right. He is a responsible ruler and a pious Christian, who duly recognises the need for humility, even in his hour of triumph. Unlike the Duke of Exeter, he will not overlook the fact that among those cheering his entry are people whom Page describes with a keen eye:

Mykelle of the folke that were there-yn,
They were but bonys and bare skyn,

With holowe yeen and vysage sharpe,
Vnnethē they myght brethe or carpe,
With wan color as the lede
Not lyke to lyue but vnto dede.

(ll. 1227-32; Brie II 420)

These images of horror are used by Page in contrast to the splendour exhibited by the Duke of Exeter and his company, and the poet will not dwell long on this sight, as he concludes, '[o]ff them y wylle no morē spelle' (ll. 1243; Brie II 421). The king, however, unlike the Duke of Exeter and almost against Page's wish to overlook the painful scenes still visible in Rouen after its surrender, first thanks God, and then turns to tend to the city, '[i]ncresyd of mete, drynke of the beste. / Thorough the grace of God! oure lege' (ll. 1302-3; Brie II 422). Feeding the hungry is only one of the ways by which King Henry 'sette [the town] yn rewle and gouernawnce' (Brie II 391).²⁶ By bringing peace, prosperity, and good governance, Henry justifies the siege and adds his own humility and piety to the reasons for his right over Normandy.

The ceremony in Rouen, unlike similar occasions in England, begins with the symbolic presentation of the keys of the city to the king. The *Brut* lists other battles, sieges, and victories of Henry V in France, which end with him receiving the keys of Calais (Brie II 300-1), Harfleur (Brie II 377), and Caen (Brie II 384), to name just a few precedents. The capture of Rouen, though the capital of Normandy and an important city on the Seine, is not the most important battle Henry V fights, but it acquires prominence in the *Brut* because of the chance existence of a poetic report of the scene to which the compilers had access. Those manuscripts that contain a part of Page's poem highlight the story of Rouen simply by this inclusion, eventually drawing attention to the shift in medium of narration, the use of verse, and the first-person narrative and direct speech. Other versions of the chronicle also single out this event by describing it in more detail than the other French battles and using it to focus on a portrayal of King Henry. There are different reasons for this. The victory in Rouen is won without a battle, and with minimal casualties on the English side. The story of Rouen also fits best the image of the king which the chronicle promotes and can most readily be associated with the great sieges of history. The compilers of the *Brut* share Page's admiration for Henry. Accumulated details in the unfolding of the events concerning the siege of Rouen help to promote the image of the king as

warrior whose engagement in conflict only highlights his piety and charity that are the true sources of his right to rule. The possibly accidental time of the fall of the city, near Christmas, adds to the symbolic overtones that those writing about the siege do not ignore: the timing allows Henry to act mercifully on Christmas Day and to enter victoriously into the city very soon thereafter.

Rouen is more like Troy and Jerusalem than any of the other French cities conquered by an English monarch, because of its splendour, its long endurance, and hence the great suffering of its citizens. Without cancelling the historicity of the siege—and Page's detailed and informed account establishes the historicity of the event—Henry V's taking of Rouen also becomes a symbol and an archetypal case of siege warfare. The tale of justified war and ultimate suffering is used by the poet and the compilers of the *Brut* to exhibit the forces and considerations underlying all tales of siege. The citizens trapped inside the city are punished for their aspirations and success, their defiance of God, and their selfishness. The city, often presented as an enclosed fortress, is the seat of pride and conceit, almost a second tower of Babel, which is punished, and in the case of Rouen given the opportunity to revive once the citizens not only surrender but accept the governance of their new king. Unlike the classical and biblical precedents, the siege of Rouen does not end with destruction, but with Henry's entry and his establishment of order in the city. Since according to the English chroniclers Rouen should have been under English rule all along, the citizens of the city are not considered as enemies, but as rebellious subjects, who, once they accept Henry V as their lord, need not be exiled from their home, and Rouen itself can remain intact and be fortified. Symbolically, by bringing 'rewle and governawnce' to Rouen, Henry equates himself with the great figures of British history, such as Brutus and Arthur, the founding figures who build, or rebuild, cities, and establish in them a stable polity.

The compilers of the *Brut* allow for the inclusion of a distinctively different literary genre in the chronicle in their section devoted to Henry V because John Page's poem assists them in presenting the king as an outstanding figure in English history. While Page presents his poem as a contemporary eyewitness report, the transition from experience to highly-crafted written verse has made his poem into a literary work rather than a historical document. Its descriptions are guided by an aesthetic preference for opposites, and the unfolding of the events follows a literary tradition with classical, biblical and symbolic allusions. Much of the poem is devoted to speeches that are clearly in Page's voice and not exact rendering of the oral

exchanges between the English and the French. Unlike the soldiers' song cited in the *Brut*, 'The Siege of Rouen' is not a primary source, but a work of written historiography, with its own agenda and bias, just like the *Brut* chronicle in which it appears. The inclusion of verse in the prose chronicle exemplifies the compilers' willingness to incorporate into the *Brut* varying sources and written accounts, in an attempt to make this work into a complete and all-encompassing narrative of early British and contemporary English history. The compilers of the *Brut* recognise the artistry behind John Page's poem but do not dismiss it as a-historical. Their compilation, too, is an attempt to compose the history of England which is itself based on literary models and conventions, and guided by political and aesthetic inclinations.

NOTES

¹ Quotations from the complete *Siege of Rouen* surviving in a single fifteenth-century manuscript, British Library, Egerton MS 1995, fols 87r-109v with corrections from four other manuscripts are from *John Page's Siege of Rouen*, ed. by Herbert Huscher (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1927). An earlier edition by James Gairdner was published for the Camden Society under the title *The Historical Collections of A Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, Camden Society n.s. 17 (Westminster: Nichols, 1876), pp. 1-46. The poem is number 979 in Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), and number 297 for the fragment as it appears in the *Brut*; see also Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), p. 114. It is described under section 6, 'Historical Ballads and Poems in Chronicles' of *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, general editor A. E. Hartung (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1989) vol. 5, pp. 1427-8. F. W. D. Brie prints the poem from British Library, Cotton MS Galba E. VIII collated with BL, Harley MSS 266 and 2256 under section D—'Continuation of the *Brut* from A.D. 1418 to 1430, including John Page's Poem of the siege of Rouen'—in the second volume of *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*, EETS o. s. 131, 136 (London: Kegan Paul, 1906, 1908), pp. 405-422. When quoting sections of the poem which are included in Brie's edition, page references to this edition follow the line reference to the poem as edited by Huscher. On other *Brut* manuscripts containing the poem see Lister Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), pp. 133-56 and A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Siege of Rouen: A Bibliographical Note', *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 43 (1996), 403-4, as a correction to the list of manuscripts in the *Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, V 1665.

² See p. xv of Gairdner's introduction, and Frederic Madden's introduction to his edition of the poem taken from *Brut* manuscripts and published as 'Old English Poem on the Siege of Rouen, A. D. 1418', *Archaeologia*, 22 (1829), 350-84. An incomplete version of the poem, from Oxford, Bodleian Library MS E. Mus. 124, was published by J. J. Conybeare as 'Poem, entitled the "Siege of Rouen": written in the Reign of Henry the Fifth', *Archaeologia*, 21 (1827), 43-78.

³ Usually, the poem is written out as verse. There are some manuscripts where the poem appears in long prose lines with punctuation used to mark the division between verse lines. Those are Holkham Hall MS 670; BL, Harley MSS 266, 753; Lambeth Palace Library MS 331; and University of Illinois MS 116. See Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Middle English Verse in Chronicles', in *New Perspectives on Middle English*

Texts: A Festschrift for R. A. Waldron (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 119-28, with a discussion of Page's poem in the *Brut* on p. 122.

⁴ Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), p. 116. On the *Brut*'s reliance on oral traditions, songs, and ballads see also V. J. Scattergood, *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Blandford, 1971), p. 29; and R. M. Wilson, *Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London: Methuen, 1952), p. 198.

⁵ Gabrielle M. Spiegel writes in *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) that by the thirteenth century 'Old French prose had become a privileged instrument for the communication of morally and socially valuable knowledge [. . .]' (p. 56). The *Brut*, originally in Anglo-Norman, depends on these categorical assumptions regarding written compositions from the thirteenth century onwards. On the same theme see Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), chapter 6. For a general description of the Middle English prose *Brut* see Robert Albano, *Middle English Historiography* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 37-40; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1982), II 73-6, 220-6; Edward Donald Kennedy, 'Chronicles and Other Historical Writings', volume 8 of *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500* (New Haven: The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1989), pp. 2629-37, 2818-33; Lister Matheson, 'Historical Prose' in *Middle English Prose: A Critical Guide to Major Authors and Genres*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), pp. 209-14; and John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), pp. 110-32.

⁶ Another example which might help to establish the status of rhyme within prose historiography comes from the second Middle English translation of the Anglo-Norman *Brut* ascribed to John Mandeville. This translation, surviving in two manuscripts, includes a short poem on the battle of Halidon Hill (1333), rendered in prose in all other surviving prose *Brut* versions. The poem appears as Appendix A in the first volume of Brie's modern edition of the *Brut*, pp. 287-9, *IMEV* 3539. Continuations of the *Brut* into the late fifteenth century include also an English mocking song against the Flemings, *IMEV* 2657 and 4034. See Brie's edition, II 582-4, 600-1. For a critical discussion of this poem and its historical and political significance see James A. Doig, 'Propaganda, Public Opinion and the Siege of Calais in 1436', in *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Rowena E. Archer (Stroud: Sutton, 1995), pp. 79-106, esp. pp. 98-9, and Scattergood, *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 23.

⁷ Items 841, 2039.3, and 1934 in *The Index of Middle English Verse*. See Boffey and Edwards, 'Middle English Verse in Chronicles', p. 123.

⁸ See Jeanette Mary Ayres Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages* (Geneva: Droz, 1981), p. 23; Frank Brandsma, 'The Eyewitness Narrator in Vernacular Prose Chronicles and Prose Romances', in *Text and Intertext in Medieval Arthurian Literature*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 57-69; and Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, chapter 3.

⁹ The *Brut* relies on written authoritative accounts of the past. When those are lacking, as in the case of BL, Egerton MS 650, the responsible scribe ends the chronicle with the siege of Rouen, with the following comment: 'Here is no more of the sege of Rone and þat is because we wanted þe trewe copy þerof bot who so euer owys þis boke may wryte it oute in þe henderend of þis boke or in þe forþer end of it whene he gettes þe trewe copy when it is wrytten wryte in þeis iij voyde lyns where it may be foundyn.' (fol. 111r)

¹⁰ For the Augustinian view of history and Augustine's own definition of 'secular history' as opposed to 'sacred history' see R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 17 and *passim*. On these two philosophical approaches and their manifestation in the stories of these two sieges see Malcolm Hebron, *The Medieval Siege: Theme and Image in Middle English Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), chapters 4 and 5, especially pp. 92-7, 112-19.

¹¹ II Kings 25. 3-4, 8-9. Biblical quotations are from *The Holy Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate*, 4 vols. (Douai: English College, 1609, reprinted 1750).

¹² C. David Benson, *The History of Troy in Middle English Literature* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1980), pp. 3-5, and Hebron, *The Medieval Siege*, pp. 95-6.

¹³ Such is the late fourteenth-century Middle English verse *Siege of Jerusalem* which combines the story of the siege with the legend of Veronica. See *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, EETS o.s. 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). The poem is closely related to the metrical romance 'Titus and Vespasian' of which the prose *Siege of Jerusalem* is an abridged re-rendering. See Auvo Kurvinen's introduction to his edition of *The Siege of Jerusalem in Prose* (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 1969), pp. 19-20, 27-31.

¹⁴ A Middle English translation was made in 1408 for Lord Thomas Berkeley. A later fifteenth-century verse translation was edited by R. Dyboski and Z. M. Arend and published as *Knyghthode and Bataile: A XVth Century Verse Paraphrase of Flavius Vegetius Reatus's Treatise 'De Re Militari'*, EETS o.s. 201 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935). See the editors' introduction for a brief discussion of the manuscript and its source. For more on Vegetius in the Middle Ages, see Hebron, *The Medieval Siege*, pp. 11-15.

¹⁵ As in Desmond Seward's description of the famine and of Henry's entry into the city in *Henry V as Warlord* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987), pp. 117, 119; or

Kingsford's narrative of the siege in *Henry V: The Typical Mediaeval Hero* (London: Putman, 1901), chapter 15, especially p. 255.

¹⁶ Hebron, in his study of representations of medieval sieges in the romances, convincingly shows how the detailed knowledge of siegecraft and battle machines is often informed by literature rather than lived experience, with archaic modes of warfare often ascribed to late medieval sieges. See *The Medieval Siege*, especially chapters 2-3.

¹⁷ Henry, as presented in the poem, combines the qualities of piety and mercy with the practicality, seriousness, and responsibility required of a worldly leader. On Henry V in Page's poem see Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate', in *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, ed. by Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 69-107 (p. 86).

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that Page does not profess anti-French sentiments as such, a tone that distinguishes his work from the popular soldiers' songs. Of Page's pity and respect to the citizens of Rouen, see Scattergood, *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century*, pp. 66-7, and Seward, *Henry V as Warlord*, p. 117

¹⁹ BL, Cotton MS Claudius A. VII contains only the section of the *Brut* devoted to Henry V, attesting to contemporary interest in this section in particular.

²⁰ See Scattergood, *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 65, on the attitude of the people of Rouen towards King Henry.

²¹ The axiom of hunger breaking down the city walls can also be found in Vegetius who, in a fifteenth-century Middle English translation, describes the danger of famine: 'Honger within, and enmytee abowte, / A warse foo withinn is then withoute' (*Knyghthode and Bataile*, p. 42, ll. 1130-1).

²² See Leviticus 26. 29 and Deuteronomy 28. 53-7.

²³ A similar story is related by Josephus Flavius concerning a certain woman, Mary, from Jerusalem, who overcome with hunger, kills and roasts her baby, eating half of it and concealing the rest. The smell of roasted meat, however, attracts to her house people who wish to share her food. She offers them the remains of her child, admitting her crime and urging them to share in the meal, and the responsibility, with her. Horrified by what they hear, the people leave without touching the meat, and the mother and her action become a source of great sadness, rather than provoking strong moral objections. See *The Jewish War, Books IV-VII*, trans. by H. St. J. Thackeray (London: Heineman, 1928, repr. 1968), 6. 201-13, pp. 434-7. In the Middle English retelling of the Siege of Jerusalem this scene is used to emphasise the brutality of the Jews in Jerusalem and is presented as the final reason for their tragic loss. See Elisa Narin van Court, 'The Siege of Jerusalem and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-Century England', *The Chaucer Review*, 29 (1995), 227-48.

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²⁴ Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (London: Methuen, 1992), p. 125.

²⁵ It is the danger of human pride and the transience of human aspiration that becomes the central theme in the tales of the fall of Troy. See Hebron, *The Medieval Siege*, pp. 105-9.

²⁶ The last line of at least half of the *Brut* chronicles that end in 1419. See Matheson, *The Prose Brut*, pp. 106-34.

'Doctryne and studie': Female Learning and Religious Debate in Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine*

Sarah James

In his article studying the effects of Archbishop Thomas Arundel's Constitutions on the production of vernacular theology, Nicholas Watson examines a range of religious writings in English in order to support his contention that fifteenth-century examples of this tradition were theologically conservative and intellectually limited.¹ Although he explores a variety of texts from different genres, he refers only very briefly to hagiography, and then only to exclude it from consideration as 'somewhat marginal':

For writers of English theological works whose names we know—apart from Pecoock, hagiographic poets such as Capgrave, Bokenham, and Lydgate (who are somewhat marginal to my discussion here), and, of course, Margery Kempe—we have to wait until the early sixteenth century.²

Watson gives no real indication of the reasons for this casual dismissal; however, he does note that his article will emphasize 'the more intellectually challenging texts', suggesting that his decision arises from a value judgement based on the perceived lack of complexity or intellectual worth of saints' lives.³ If this is the case, he is certainly not alone in his opinion, at least as far as Capgrave's work is concerned; in his study of the author, M. C. Seymour unapologetically condemns both the *Life of St Katharine* and the *Life of St Norbert*:

He translated a Latin *vita* (of uncertain pedigree) and produced a scholarly life of miracles neatly ordered and suitable for piously uncritical literates. Neither life has anything to

recommend it to another audience and neither rises above the general mediocrity of the genre.⁴

Seymour's assumption that the hagiographic genre is blighted by 'general mediocrity' predisposes him to condemn Capgrave's endeavours in this area; the parenthetical sneer at the 'uncertain pedigree' of Capgrave's source material suggests that hagiography can have little to offer to 'serious' scholarship. I wish to argue otherwise, at least in the case of Capgrave's *St Katharine*, suggesting that it is a work of considerable theological subtlety and intellectual sophistication. In particular, I shall argue that Capgrave uses this work to undertake a sensitive and meticulous exploration of the disputed theological ground between orthodox Christianity and Lollardy.

John Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine of Alexandria*, composed in the mid-1440s, is extant in four manuscripts, none of which, unusually, can be directly associated with the author himself, although all are East Anglian.⁵ Also unusual for Capgrave is the lack of a specific dedicatee; he simply says that he has written the work in order 'that more openly it shalle / Be knowe a-bovte of woman and of man' (Prologue, 45-6). Given the text's length and complexity, it seems likely that it was intended for a relatively prosperous and well-educated readership, perhaps including women whose own standard of education might make them especially interested in the saint. The English gild returns of 1391 reveal that there was a Gild of St Katharine in Lynn at that date, and that membership was open to both men and women; the ordinances provide for 'foure dayes of spekyngges tokedere for here comune profyte' every year.⁶ Assuming that the gild was still in existence in the 1440s, it is at least possible that Capgrave's *Katharine* was produced for the gild or one of its members, and it may even have been intended for reading during these four days. Even if we cannot be certain of this, it is clear that East Anglia in the middle decades of the fifteenth century had a wealthy, educated and sophisticated population; such an audience might well have found the *Katherine* to its taste.⁷

This poem of 8624 lines is arranged in rhyme royal stanzas, and is divided into a Prologue and five books. Unlike earlier versions of the Katharine legend, Capgrave's poem gives extensive coverage to the saint's childhood, education and mystical marriage, before providing a lengthy account of her *passio*. Such attention to the *vita* is, as Katherine Lewis suggests, a particular characteristic of fifteenth-century versions of the legend, and Capgrave's alterations to and elaborations of some aspects of the earlier form of the legend are, in the context

of contemporary religious tensions, highly suggestive.⁸ Perhaps the most striking of these is Katharine's learnedness, and it is to this that I first turn.

The Problem of the Learned Woman in Fifteenth-Century England

The amount of textual space which Capgrave devotes to describing Katharine's education is significant, since it is her comprehensive scholarship which enables the saint to assume the controversial role of female teacher and preacher, both within her own household and in the pagan court of Maxentius. Katharine's erudition is not Capgrave's own invention, of course, but his is certainly the most extensive account of her education in the seven liberal arts.⁹ The success of her education is put to the test when, in Book 1, three hundred and ten scholars are summoned to Alexandria to question her, an examination she passes with ease.¹⁰ Such extraordinary intellectual precocity is, of course, a commonplace of hagiographic convention: St Eugenia, for example, 'omnibus liberalibus artibus et litteris erat perfecta' (was accomplished in all the liberal arts and letters), while many saints are described as displaying extreme devotion even as infants.¹¹ However, in Capgrave's version this youthful display of intellect is not merely a conventional flourish, but establishes a scholarly stature which remains central to his representation of Katharine throughout the text.

After the death of her father Katharine is again tested, this time by the great men of the realm as they try to persuade her to marry, and it is at this point that her commitment to scholarship is first clearly expressed. The Speaker of the Parliament petitions her in the name of the whole realm to marry, a request which is accompanied by the injunction 'Ye must now leue your stody and your bookes' (2, l. 125). He has, perhaps unwittingly, struck directly at the heart of the matter: marriage is incompatible with the pursuit of serious studies.¹² Katharine is well aware of this: 'Now must I leue my stody and myn desyre,/ My modir, my kyn, my peple if I wil plese' (1, ll. 184-5). Indeed it is not just the marital relationship which is jeopardized by scholarship: all familial ties, as well as the relationship between a prince and his people, are under threat. Katharine's commitment to learning requires that she reject the roles assigned to her by virtue of her gender and birth: the roles of wife, kinswoman and ruler, or consort of a ruler. This is precisely the effect identified by Labalme in her discussion of female learning from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century:

Many learned women eschewed marriage, with its burdens of childbearing and household management. This was to defy normality, to interrupt, horizontally, that system of marital and dynastic connection so crucial to the power structure of past societies, and vertically, the continuity of the clan.¹³

Katharine's refusal to take a husband results in the breaking up of the parliament, the disappointed lords leaving her to the studies to which she is devoted:

Thus wyth woo, meche care and grutchynge
Thei parte a-sondre, iche man to his hom
Thei goo or ryde or sayle as here lykynge;
ffor wyth the queen wroth thei are iche oon.
She is now left for hem to dwelle allon;
She may stody, reede, reherce and write. (2, ll. 1485-90)

In spite of this early commitment to study, when Katharine is called to debate with the pagan philosophers after her conversion to Christianity, she dramatically rejects her classical learning:

I haue lefte alle myn auctoris olde,
I fond noo frute in hem but eloquens; [. . .]
Be-helde ye, maistres, alle these mennes werkes
haue I stodyed and lerned ful besyly;
Thei were red me of ful sotil clerkes,
There lyue noon better at this day, hardyly:
And in these bookes noon other thyng fond I
But vanyte or thyng that shal not leste.

(4, ll. 1324-5, 1345-50)

This rejection notwithstanding, Katharine continues to employ the fruits of her study in the ensuing contest: her study of rhetoric and dialectic allows her to meet and defeat her adversaries in debate, while her knowledge of astronomy, for example, informs her arguments about the planets as mere created bodies. The comparison between Katharine and the *Golden Legend's* presentation of the learned female saint Eugenia, who also rejects classical learning in favour of Christian truth, is instructive:

Philosophorum sillogismos scrupuloso studio transegimus, aristotelica argumenta et Platonis ideas et Socratis monita; et breuiter quicquid cantat poeta, quicquid orator et quicquid philosophus excogitat hac sententia excluduntur. Dominam me uerbis usurpata potestas, sororem uero sapientia fecit; simus ergo fratres et Christum sequamur.¹⁴

[We worked our way with meticulous attention through the philosophers' syllogisms, Aristotle's arguments and Plato's ideas, the precepts of Socrates, and, to be brief, whatever the poets sang, whatever the orators or the philosophers thought; but all that is wiped out by this one sentence. A usurped authority has used words to make me your mistress, but wisdom makes me your sister. Let us then be brothers, and follow Christ!]

Although expressed in more general terms, Eugenia's rejection of pagan authorities is similar to Katharine's own. The difference, however, becomes clear as the legend unfolds; from this point of rejection onwards, Eugenia ceases to give any sign of her previous learning. Her early learnedness has no lasting part to play in her legend, and there is no sense in which scholarly concerns influence her later behaviour. By contrast, Katharine's learning permeates her entire life, before and after her conversion. Her rejection of classical authorities in favour of Christianity does not signal an end of her studiousness, but instead a development of it, as she moves from contemplation of the mysteries of philosophy to those of the Christian God. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, it is her scholarship which places her in the powerful position of preacher to, and converter of, numerous pagan opponents, most of whom are men.

In the context of fifteenth-century England, Katharine's scholarly credentials, and specifically her role as a female teacher or preacher of Christian doctrine, are problematic. The Lollard emphasis on the reading of Scripture in the vernacular raised the possibility that those outside the circle of Latinate clerics could study, and potentially teach, religious doctrine. This naturally included not merely lower-class men, but also women of all social classes. Thus any woman displaying knowledge beyond a bare minimum was likely to come under suspicion of heresy.¹⁵ Contemporary poets were quick to draw such conclusions: the orthodox *Friar Daw's Reply* (c. 1419-20) to the Lollard tract *Jack Upland*

makes the point, with the added emphasis that such female learning is incompatible with matrimonial happiness:

Who marriþ more matrimony, 3e or þe freris?
Wiþ wrenchis & wiles wynnenn mennes wyues
And maken hem scolers of þe newe scole.¹⁶

Hoccleve, too, inveighed against learned women in his anti-Lollard poem of 1415 addressed to Sir John Oldcastle:

Somme wommen eek, thogh hir wit be thynne,
Wole argumentes make in holy writ.
Lewed calates, sittith down and spynne
And kakele of sumwhat elles, for your wit
Is al to feeble to despute of it.¹⁷

The fifteenth-century mystic Margery Kempe was a frequent quoter of Scripture and accordingly found herself accused of Lollardy on several occasions, while in the 1428 heresy trial of Margery Baxter at Norwich, we find the following testimony:

Dixit eciam ista iurata quod dicta Margeria rogavit istam iuratam quod ipsa et prefata Johanna, famula sua, venirent secrete in cameram dicte Margerie noctanter et ibidem ipsa audiret maritum suum legere legem Christi eisdem, que lex fuit scripta in uno libro quem dictus maritus solebat legere eidem Margerie noctanter, et dixit quod maritus suus est optimus doctor Christianitatis.¹⁸

[Also this witness said that the said Margery proposed to this witness that she herself and the aforesaid Johanna, her servant, came secretly to the chamber of the said Margery nightly, and in that same place heard her husband read the law of Christ to them, which law was written in a book which her said husband was accustomed to read to the said Margery nightly, and said that her husband is the best teacher of Christianity.]

While it is not claimed that Margery read this book herself, nevertheless her access to its contents, albeit mediated by her husband, enabled her to debate

matters of doctrine with her neighbour Johanna Clyfland, who subsequently testified against her. Thus Johanna tells of one occasion when Margery debated doctrine with her 'sedens et suens cum ista iurata in camera eiusdem iuxta camenum' (sitting and sewing with this witness in the chamber of the same, near the fire-place).¹⁹

Learned women in fifteenth-century England were not necessarily condemned to be viewed as heretics, however; an intriguing counter-example is presented by the case of the noblewoman Eleanor Hull, who produced a translation from Old French of a commentary on the penitential psalms some time before the middle of the century. A manuscript colophon explicitly credits her with authorship: 'Here endeth the vij psalmus the wheche Dame Alyanore Hulle transelated out of Frensche in-to Englesche'.²⁰ Hull's noble status may have legitimized her learning in a fashion impossible for women of more modest social origins; both her father and husband were intimately associated with the Lancastrian regime, and Hull herself had been an attendant of Joan of Navarre, the widow of Henry IV.²¹ As the daughter of a king, Katharine's learning, like Hull's, may be authorized by her noble status, yet it remains the case that her scholarly credentials could be regarded as ambiguous. It is all the more curious that it is only in fifteenth-century texts that her education is so heavily emphasized, and, given that among these Capgrave's coverage of her education is by far the most comprehensive, this surely demands some explanation. He cannot have been ignorant of the issue; friars of all orders found themselves involved in the prosecution of heretics, being called as expert theological witnesses to examine alleged Lollards.²² I have found no evidence to suggest that Capgrave himself ever appeared as a witness at a heresy trial, although his scholarly reputation demonstrates that he was qualified to do so. There is also no evidence that he was resident at Lynn when the heresy trials, including that of Margery Baxter, took place in Norwich, between September 1428 and March 1431, but he can hardly have been unaware of them, if only from some later date.²³ Thus it seems certain that Capgrave would have recognized the perceived links between female scholarship and heresy; why then would he go to so much trouble to expand upon the traditional version of Katharine's life, to include this controversial representation?

As a highly educated Augustinian friar, Capgrave clearly felt a particular affinity with a saint so closely associated with scholarship, as he makes clear in the Prologue to Book III:²⁴

Be-cause þou wer so lerned & swech a clerk,
Clerkes must loue þe, reson for-sothe it is!
Who wyll oute lerne, trost to me, I-wys,
he dothe mech þe bettyr if he trost in þis may.
þus I be-leue, & haue do many a day. (3, ll. 38-42)

Yet he can hardly have been unaware of the potential implications of his choice; that he was not is, I believe, revealed by a moment in the Prologue, when Capgrave discusses the relationship between Katharine and St Athanasius:

There was a clerke with þis same kataryne,
Whos name we clepe in latyn Athanas;
he tavghte hir the revles, as he covde dyuyne,
Of god of heuene, of ioie and of gras,
And she hym also, for be hir he was
I-turned on-to cryst and on-to oure feyth;
he was hir ledere, as the story seyth. (Prologue, ll. 127-33)

This is a very curious stanza, which manages to obscure rather than explain the association between the two saints. The initial statement that Athanasius taught Katharine appears quite clear, although the phrase 'as he covde dyuyne' may suggest the teacher was not entirely confident about the information he was imparting. Nevertheless, he is presented as Katharine's instructor in faith. However, Capgrave immediately undercuts this assertion, explaining that the reverse situation is the case; Katharine is now the teacher, while Athanasius is the student being converted to Christ and Christianity. Thus both are presented as teacher, and both as student. It may be that we can resolve this apparent paradox by differentiating Athanasius, teaching about God in heaven, from Katharine, who concentrates upon Christ: each might then be teaching a specific area of faith to the other, Athanasius concentrating on the Old Testament and Katharine on the New. Yet if Athanasius also teaches Katharine about 'ioie' and 'gras', this surely moves beyond the Old Testament law of the just God in heaven, towards the New Testament grace of Christ. Both, then, teach the same thing to each other, and so the position remains confused. This confusion, I suggest, betrays Capgrave's anxiety in explaining Katharine's teaching role. It is significant that the syntax in this stanza does not juxtapose Katharine with the act of teaching at all: instead, the reader is required to supply the verb to make sense of 'And she hym also',

carrying it forward from an earlier clause, where Athanasius *is* directly connected with teaching. Capgrave concludes by taking pains to note that Athanasius was Katharine's 'ledere', although he does not elaborate on what this might mean,²⁵ and then completes the fudging of the issue with a lame 'as the story seyth'. In this single stanza, using a combination of ambiguous diction and strained syntax, Capgrave succeeds in partially obscuring his contentious subject-matter; yet the very process of obfuscation draws attention to the controversy he seeks to suppress, and reveals his anxieties about it. However, such anxieties do not prevent him from attempting to negotiate a path through the difficulties, albeit inconclusively; this willingness to engage with problematic material belies Watson's claim for the marginality of saints' lives to his discussion of fifteenth-century vernacular theology.

The Power of Debate

Whatever ambiguities arise from Katharine's well-emphasized learnedness, the extensive use of dialogue in Capgrave's text does offer the saint clear opportunities to display her rhetorical and intellectual powers. Her dispute with the philosophers in Book 4 is paralleled in the text's structure by Book 2, containing the discussions in the marriage parliament: taken together they account for over two-fifths of the poem. The allocation of such a significant proportion of the text to dialogue is striking, suggesting as it does a commitment at the structural level to the processes of argument, including listening to all sides to a dispute and seeking out the means by which resolution may be brought about. It may also be a self-conscious decision on the part of the author to imply a lack of direct narratorial involvement; by presenting arguments in this form, Capgrave is speaking in the persons of others, and hence, theoretically at least, relieving himself of personal responsibility for the views expressed.²⁶

The use of debate as a device for exploring ideas was standard practice in medieval academic circles, and could be deployed with great subtlety, enabling difficult or contentious questions to be explored without any sense of final commitment to a particular polemical stance.²⁷ Furthermore, by offering controversial views through the mediation of a created *persona*, the author is protected from being too closely identified with those views, allowing him to remain (or appear to remain) uncommitted. This may help to explain Capgrave's strategy; by using the dialogue form he enjoys a high degree of freedom to

explore contentious and potentially dangerous questions. However, the issues debated by Katharine and the pagans are interestingly restricted; during her examinations by the emperor and the philosophers, Katharine is questioned on several points of faith, among them the Trinity, the virgin birth, Christ's dual nature and the Resurrection. While these doctrines are vigorously (if ultimately unsuccessfully) challenged by her pagan antagonists, contemporary readers would have found nothing controversial in the discussions. However, two subjects are raised which have the potential to be much more contentious: baptism and images.

The former can be dealt with quite briefly. When the pagan philosophers convert to Christianity they are condemned to be burned as heretics. They accept this willingly, but their leader, Aryot, begs for baptism before the sentence is carried out:

In this world, as for me, I wil no more,
But that we shulde be baptised or we deye:
Than were we redy to walke th[at] goodly weye. (5, ll. 208-10)

Aryot continues his plea for more than forty lines in a lengthy assertion of the need for and power of baptism. Although no one is available to perform the ceremony before the philosophers are executed, Katharine teaches them the doctrine of baptism by blood, and they die duly comforted. Katharine herself has already undergone this sacrament; during her visit to the Heavenly City in Book 3, Christ orders that she be baptized by her priest, Adrian, and explicitly rehearses the orthodox position on baptism:

Myn aungellis wyll I noght occupye wyth þis dede,
It longyth to mankynd, wyth-outen drede:
And ȝet þowȝ we myght of our hye power
Graunte on-to aungellis þis specialtee
þat þei schuld baptize men in erde here,
ȝet wyll we noght þat þei occupied schuld bee
Wyth swych-maner offyce as to humanyte
longyth, & schal longe, as for most ryght. (3, ll. 1056-63)

There is no room here for Lollard objections to baptism, and thus a potentially contentious issue is rendered harmless. On the subject of images, however, Capgrave does employ genuine debate in order to present a much more complex series of views, which I shall examine in the following section.

The Images Controversy

During her first examination by Maxentius, Katharine roundly condemns the pagan idols in the temple:

These maumentis I mene, bei can not sitte ne ryse;
Thei ete not, [bei] drynke not in no maner of wise;
Mouth wyth-oute speche, foot that may not goo,
Handes eke haue thei and may noo werk doo. (4, ll. 592-5)

Maxentius is unable to offer any response to this criticism, but when the fifty philosophers are assembled the question is raised again. Katharine differentiates between her God and the gods of the pagans, since her God is the creator of all things, whereas the pagan images, which are themselves created, can do nothing:

Sprynge of all þinge þat euere be-gynnyng hadde
Soo is he called; in whom alle þing is eke,
Of whom all good þing, and no thyng badde,
Procedeth [. . .]
Make no comparyson be-twyx ȝour god and myn!
ffor my god hath made al þing of nought,
Eke your goddis arn not soo goode as swyn -
Thei can noȝt grunten whan hem eyleth ought.
(4, ll. 1471-4, 1478-81)

One of the philosophers identifies what he believes is Katharine's true objection to the pagan idols—that 'her ymages whiche we worship heere / May noȝt feelee ne haue noon poweere' (4, ll. 1497-8). A sophisticated dialectician, he acknowledges the justice of such an objection but rejects it on the basis that it is founded upon an error of understanding:

This wote I weel, thei ben but figures,
Representynge other-maner thyng,
Liche to these fayre riche sepultures
Whiche be-tokene in her representing

That there is beryed duke or ellis kyng –
Soo am these [ymages] tooknes of goddis oure.

(4, ll. 1499-1504)

Images, he explains, are merely reminders of other things (in this case the pagan gods), and are not considered to be gods in themselves. This justification of images as reminders or memorials is, of course, a standard argument of Christian orthodoxy in favour of images; Archbishop Arundel, for example, is reported by the Lollard William Thorpe as using precisely this explanation:

For, lo, erþeli kyngis and oþer lordis, which vsen to senden her lettris enselid wiþ her armes or wiþ her priuy sygnetis to men þat ben wiþ hem, ben worschipid of þese men; [for whanne þese men] resceyuen her lordis lettris [...] in worschip of her lordis þei don of her cappis or her hoodis to her lettris. Whi not þanne, siþ in ymagis maad wiþ mannes hond we moun rede and knowe manye dyuerse doingis of God and hise seintis, schulen we not worschipen her ymagis?²⁸

The use of a Christian orthodox argument by a pagan philosopher is surprising and unsettling, and serves to give the philosopher something of an advantage over his saintly antagonist. Katharine, he suggests, has misunderstood the nature of pagan worship, failing to recognize the representative nature of the images; such a failure might be regarded as indicative of a lack of both orthodoxy and theological sophistication. Katharine's response to this position is to denounce the pagan deities thus represented, pointing out their moral failings: 'Alle to vices set was her laboure' (4, l. 1547). Another philosopher takes up the challenge, reproaching Katharine for emphasizing the bad and ignoring the good. He suggests that she has failed to understand because she is not versed in the secret language with which the pagans obscure their loftiest concepts:²⁹

We haue in this mater ful mysty intelligens,
Whiche may noȝt be comon to euery man;
But to you, lady, soo now as I can,
Wil I þat comon, right for this entent,
Be-cause youre-selue of wit soutil bee. (4, ll. 1566-70)

Acknowledging that Katharine's intellect qualifies her to be party to information usually reserved for a select few, he imparts the 'ful mysty intelligens' that the pagan gods are allegorical, representing eternal natures such as time, fire and air, which are considered divinities among the pagans.³⁰

Thus are oure goddis in maner of Allegorye,
Resemble to natures whiche that be eterne.
Than is oure feyth grounded on noo lye,
But on swliche thyng whiche is sempitern. (4, ll. 1583-6)

This argument has two advantages for the pagans: it demonstrates the eternal nature of their deities, thus placing them on an equal footing with the Christian God, while also serving to add another hermeneutic layer between the image and what it represents. No longer is it simply the image of what is worshipped; it has become the image of an allegory of what is worshipped. Thus image and deity are forced further apart, thereby reducing the possibility that the image will be worshipped for its own sake.³¹ Katharine remains unmoved by the force of this argument, which she regards as hiding behind 'figures and colouris' to conceal a fatal flaw in pagan reasoning:

Arn not these planetes knowen wonder wyde?
May we not seen hem whan thei shyne soo clere?
The sonne, the mone, whiche shyne on vs here,
This wote we weel that these been noo men.
Why arn thei grauen thus of stoon and of tree?
This errour is ful esy for to keen
That men arn thei noȝt, ne neuere-[more] shal bee.
(4, ll. 1608-14)

Katharine argues that the images depict something they are not; the representation of the planets as though they were men, when everyone knows this is not so, is an error likely to mislead worshippers, and thus such carving 'of stoon and of tree' cannot be justified. This objection appears to echo the wider Lollard complaint that richly decorated images mislead Christians:

And siȝ þes ymagis ben bokis of lewid men to sture þem on þe
mynde of Cristis passion, and techen by her peyntur, veyn

glorie þat is hangid on hem [is] an opyn errour azenus Cristis gospel. Þei ben worþi to be brent or exilid [. . .] And so of ymagis of pore apostlis of Crist, and oper seyntis þat lyueden in pouert and gret penaunse, and dispiseden in worde and in dede þe foul pride and vanyte of þis karful lif, for þei ben peyntid as þoghe þei hadde lyued in welþe of þis world and lustus of þeire fleyshe as large as euere dide erpely man.³²

If we move beyond the debate with the philosophers in Book 4, we find Katharine once more condemning images, this time in response to the emperor himself. Maxentius has promised to create an image of Katharine, fashioned 'of stoon' and 'of clene metal' (5, ll. 406-7). The statue will be erected in a public place and all who see it will be required to honour it, on pain of punishment. But anyone who flies to the statue for protection, 'what-maner offens that he hath doo', shall be forgiven 'for reuerens of yow, mayde' (5, ll. 413-14). Katharine's reply continues in the same vein as previously:

[The statue] shal be insensible,
Stonde liche a ston, and byrdes flye rounde aboute,
As I suppose it shal be right possible
That þei shal come sometyme a ful grete route,
her on-clene dunge shul thei there putte oute
And lete it falle right on the ymagis face. (5, ll. 470-5)

The implication is that such a fate is, in fact, fitting for a statue which is 'insensible', unable to see, hear or walk, even after the greatest efforts of the workmen who create it. Moreover, the transient nature of such an image reveals it as mere 'forned veynglorie' (5, ll. 482), of no profit to Katharine's soul, or indeed to anyone else's.

The remarkable nature of this debate cannot be over-emphasized. The pagan philosophers have made use of orthodox Christian defensive strategies to uphold their position, while Katharine the Christian saint has made use of language and arguments which appear to support an iconomachal, and finally iconoclastic, position—and which, moreover, could be regarded in fifteenth-century England as bearing a specifically Lollard stamp. This represents an astonishing divergence from the conventional roles we might expect to see played out in hagiography; a pagan might be more usually represented as genuinely

believing that the images of his gods are indeed the gods themselves, and contain within them something of the gods' powers.³³ Similarly, if hagiography is indeed an entirely conventional genre we would expect the saintly heroine to be depicted rehearsing the orthodox position of Christianity, rather than proclaiming heretical doctrine in a spirited and convincing performance.

The position is not quite as simple as this, however, for the images that Katharine condemns are not Christian icons but pagan idols, and as such there can be no real objection to her call for their destruction, since they are false gods. Any statue of herself created by Maxentius will be a secular memorial which he proposes to treat as a religious icon, and should therefore be shunned. Thus the question of images is problematized further: the reader must maintain a simultaneous awareness of the conflicting claims of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, of paganism and Christianity, and of the sacred and secular. By presenting the images debate in this many-faceted fashion, Capgrave achieves the effect of destabilizing the viewpoint of his readers; we believe that we should agree with the heroine, yet her position cannot be reconciled entirely with orthodoxy. For Capgrave's orthodox contemporaries this would have been a startling development, forcing them to admit at least the possibility of agreeing not with the saint but with declared pagans.³⁴

The centrality of the images debate may be particularly appropriate to the life of St Katharine since, as a highly popular late-medieval saint, images of her would have been widely circulated. Indeed, she appears to have become something of a focus for argument, a test-case for orthodox or heterodox views on this issue, as two chronicle entries suggest. Henry Knighton recounts the tale of two heretics who chop up a statue of the saint to make firewood, with the cynical comment that 'per securim et ignem nouum pacientur martirium' [by axe and fire she will undergo a new martyrdom].³⁵ Rather less well-known is a short entry from Walsingham's *Chronicon Angliae*:

[E]t inter omnes major fatuus, Johannes Mountagu, qui in tantam lapsus est vesaniam, ut cunctas imagines, quas apud manerium de Shenlee antecessores sui erexerant in capella sua, deponi faceret et in locis abditis collocari. Unum solummodo [privilegium adepta est] imago Sanctae Katerinae, quam in pistrinum suum deferri permisit, quia plures afficiebantur eidem.³⁶

[And more foolish than the others was John Montagu, who slipped into such madness that all the images, which his ancestors had erected in his chapel at the manor of Shenley, he caused to be got rid of and stored in a secret place. One image alone, of Saint Katherine, received individual treatment, being permitted to be brought into his flour-mill, because many were well-disposed towards the same.]

Katharine's, it appears, is a special case; the 'privilegium' her image enjoys may be beneficial, in that a Lollard sympathizer such as Montagu stops short of destroying it, or it may be detrimental, as in the case of Knighton's heretics, whose burning of the statue acts as a bench-mark demonstrating the depth of their sin. Thus real images of Katharine are subject to a similar range of fates to those envisaged by Maxentius and the saint herself for her proposed statue.

The Desire for Religious Unity

Capgrave's unexpected distribution of arguments in the image debate, giving them to the 'wrong' people and hence unsettling the reader, is unusual and suggestive; nevertheless, it should not lead us to overlook the significance of the fact that the debate takes place at all. Given that images had been the subject of religious controversy for centuries, and taking account of their particular relevance to the problem of Lollardy, it is surely remarkable that Capgrave is prepared to devote considerable space within his text to this matter. Contrary to Watson's assessment of fifteenth-century vernacular theology, far from seeking to eliminate debate and dissent Capgrave appears to have embraced it. The reason for this strategy is revealed most clearly by turning briefly to his other writings, most notably the *Life of St Norbert*.

At the beginning of the *Norbert*, Capgrave explicitly calls for brotherhood and understanding between different religious orders, praying to God for unity: 'O lord Ihesu, of alle religious men / Abbot and maystir, bryng us to vnyte'.³⁷ Later in the same work he debates the problem of the varied interpretations of the Rule of St Augustine:

Felawis, drede not þis dyuersite.

Alle Goddis weyis are grounded, witzouten ly,

Vpon his treuth and upon his mercy.
Alpouȝ þese reules be in dyuers manere,
ȝet are þei not contrarie in no wyse;
Thouȝ þese customes which are vsed here,
Be othir men be set in othir assyse
In othir place as hem lest deuyse,
ȝet are þei grounded alle on o charite,
Whech is loue of god & neybour here by the. (ll. 1307-16)

In the final line quoted above Capgrave is referring directly to the opening sentence of the traditional medieval *Regula Augustini*: 'Ante omnia, fratres carissimi, diligatur deus, deinde proximus' [Before everything, dearest brothers, let God be loved, then your neighbour].³⁸ The orders of Austin friars (Capgrave's own order) and canons, among them the Premonstratensians founded by Norbert, were based upon this Rule, although with some variations in its practical application. That there was a need to emphasize the fundamental unity of the orders is clear. As early as 1327 rivalry had erupted between the Austin canons and Austin friars throughout Europe, when Pope John XXII granted custody of the body of St Augustine to the friars, thereby supplanting the canons, its previous custodians.³⁹ Relations deteriorated further in England when Geoffrey Hardeby, an Austin friar and Master Regent at Oxford, produced his treatise *De Vita Angelica* in 1357. In this treatise Hardeby examined the problems of whether St Augustine had personally founded the orders of friars and canons which bore his name, and whether Augustine himself had been a friar or a canon.⁴⁰ In 1380 William Flete, an Austin friar living as a hermit in Italy, wrote to the English Prior Provincial of his order:

The friars are to preach peace and concord to the whole kingdom. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. [. . .] Let them preach charity to all—to bishops, priests, friars, monks, canons, and all men: that the whole English Church may be one spirit in God. 'Physician, cure thyself.' Many religious are deceived. They keep the external observances of religious life—silence, attendance at the chapter-house and in the refectory, and so forth—but they have not charity. They are envious, they criticize, they murmur, they blacken one another's character, they form parties in the community, setting one order

against another, or brother against brother in a single order, according to their state and degree.⁴¹

It is at least possible that Capgrave saw a copy of this letter, since it was copied by an Austin friar named Adam Stocton who spent time at the friary at Lynn, as well as at Cambridge and Bedford.⁴² Although Capgrave was, of course, writing somewhat later, the rivalry had not diminished by the fifteenth century. Around the year 1442 Capgrave wrote a work, now unfortunately lost, which was dedicated to 'þe abbot of Seynt Iames at Norhampton [. . .] whēch boke I named Concordia, be-cause it is mad to reforme charite be-twix Seynt Augustines heremites and his chanones.'⁴³ Equally important was the Latin sermon which Capgrave gave at Cambridge in 1422, concerning the various orders under the Rule of St Augustine; in 1451 he translated the sermon into English, revised it and dedicated it to Nicholas Reysby of the Gilbertine canons. In this revised version he makes explicit reference to the issue at the heart of the rivalry between friars and canons:

[Concerning the Canons Regular] If þese men be-gunne with Augustin in his cherk in þe same degre as þei stand now, sum men haue doute: but I wyl not stryue. I be-leue wel þat þere had þei her beginnyng [. . .]. I wel be-leue þat her first fundacion cam fro Augustin. (pp. 146, ll. 29-31, and 147, l. 2)

Capgrave is prepared to concede that the claim of the canons to have been established by Augustine is justified, unlike 'sum men'—presumably from his own order of friars—who continue to doubt. This is an important concession from a man who, within two years of producing this revised version of his treatise, would become Prior Provincial and hence in a position to exert considerable influence over his order. It is significant that the Premonstratensians and the Gilbertines, both recipients of Capgrave's hagiographical endeavours, were orders of canons rather than friars; perhaps his lives of Norbert and Gilbert of Sempringham were produced as a specific response to Flete's earlier injunction to 'preach peace and concord'.

Capgrave appears to make a further reference to this need for unity between the orders in the *Katharine* itself. In Book 3 he introduces the hermit, Adrian, who will be Katharine's guide in heaven, and concludes his description with a very curious passage:

Alle blyssydly in abstinens & prayer
þis lyffe led he, þis ermyte or þis frere -
ffor frere was name þan to all crysten men
Comon, I rede, & ermytys wer þei called
þat dwelt fro town, mylys sex or ten,
Wer þei growen, wer þei bar or balled;
Be-cause þei wer eke all soole I-walled,
Sume men called hem munkys, wyth-owte drede -
ffor þeis wordes, munke & soole, ar on, as we rede. (3, ll. 83-91)

Friars, hermits and monks are simply different words for what are essentially the same things, Capgrave seems to suggest. Yet alongside this concern for unity, and inextricably mingled with it, runs a recognition of diversity and the need to remain intellectually open to alternatives. The injunction in *Norbert* to 'drede not þis dyuersite' (l. 1307) is followed later by a striking incident in which the devil teaches unlearned men to read (ll. 1898-1911). Unsure of how to respond, Norbert consults an 'eldeman' who counsels patience:

'Suffir now, maystir, þis þing for a while.
It schal be wist ful weel and openly
Wheithir it comth fro þe fendis gile
Or elles it comth be reuelacioun fro hy.' (ll. 1926-9)

The *Norbert* was completed in 1440 and its reference to the teaching of unlearned men may well reflect continued concerns over Lollard literacy; the fact that it is the devil doing the teaching surely strengthens this probability. Yet there is no outright condemnation either of the men or the devil, but rather an acceptance that only time can prove where right lies. Elsewhere Norbert is portrayed as a peacemaker, striving to resolve a variety of disputes between princes, citizens and even rival workmen in a series of episodes which seem to suggest that even the bitterest of contention can, if dealt with properly, result in an enhanced unity.⁴⁴ Similarly, in his *Life of St Gilbert of Sempringham* Capgrave again takes up this theme:

Thus he [Gilbert] sette hem lawes medeled with swech
attemperauns þat ammongis dyuers kyndes, dyuers habites,
dyuers degrees, he exorted hem in our Lord þei all schuld haue
but o soule and on hert fixid in God. (p. 67, ll. 25-8)

Viewed in this context, the *Katharine's* exploration of controversial issues can be seen as consistent with a larger project of seeking unity through a recognition of diversity. Capgrave himself was by no means a Lollard sympathizer, famously describing Wyclif's followers as 'erroneous doggis', yet this did not prevent him acknowledging the value of engaging in a dialogue with their ideas.⁴⁵

The subtle and questioning approach which Capgrave brings to the *Katharine* does not accord with Watson's view of fifteenth-century vernacular theology; far from cowering away from contentious topics of religious debate, Capgrave was prepared to continue to engage with them, albeit not always entirely openly. His example demonstrates that he was committed to maintaining some form of dialogue with heretical positions, and even to gesture towards oblique approval of some of those positions. With its emphasis on female learning, teaching and preaching, the *Katharine* is a text which serves to draw attention to a number of issues with contentious implications for fifteenth-century religious orthodoxy; it also provides a dazzlingly complex matrix of views on images, combining the orthodox and heterodox with the sacred and secular, in a discussion in which a Christian saint seems to champion iconoclasm. The images debate in particular introduces an uncomfortable degree of instability regarding what actually constitutes orthodoxy, and would surely have given its original audience pause for thought.

There is no evidence to suggest that the ecclesiastical authorities were concerned about the *Katharine's* possible heterodoxy, or about its use of English for the discussion of what is sometimes highly controversial material. Capgrave's fraternal status may have provided him with some level of protection from criticism. As a friar he enjoyed exemption from many of the restrictions imposed upon parish clergy, and the ability of the episcopal and archiepiscopal hierarchies to intervene in fraternal matters was severely restricted.⁴⁶ More importantly, the death of Archbishop Chichele in 1443 changed the nature of the response to heresy within the province of Canterbury. Chichele had been an indefatigable prosecutor of heretics, as his impressive legislative record demonstrates.⁴⁷ By contrast, his successor, John Stafford, showed little desire to pursue a similar course; indeed, Thomson demonstrates that no major heresy prosecutions took place in the Canterbury province during Stafford's incumbency.⁴⁸ The loss of the architect of much of England's anti-Lollard legislation may well have reduced the pressure on the episcopate to seek out and destroy Lollardy, and in such a climate the expression of heterodox views was unlikely to represent a significant risk.

Perhaps the most important factor in explaining the nature of Capgrave's *Katharine*, however, is its likely audience. The population of East Anglia at this time was, as I have pointed out, sophisticated and well-educated, with a reputation for an unusual degree of religious toleration, and it would have provided Capgrave with an audience very capable of engaging with the theological complexities of his work to arrive at its own reasoned conclusions. Located within such a milieu, the challenges posed by reading the *Life of St Katharine* become more explicable. Confident of a sympathetic and receptive audience able to engage with his ideas, Capgrave was free to explore the sometimes contradictory implications of female learning, the images debate and his twin commitments to unity and diversity. This freedom to explore did not result in firm conclusions, and indeed Capgrave sometimes appears distinctly uncomfortable with the direction of his own work, as is suggested by his evasive approach to Katharine's relationship with St Athanasius. But significantly this does not lead to an attempt to impose false resolutions, or to adduce explanations to render problematic issues doctrinally more acceptable. The contradictions and difficulties are revealed and explored, but remain unresolved.

NOTES

¹ Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409', *Speculum*, 70 (1995), 823-64 (p. 823). The definition of 'vernacular theology' is discussed in detail on p. 823, n. 4.

² Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 833.

³ Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 824, n. 4.

⁴ M. C. Seymour, *John Capgrave* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), p. 21.

⁵ Peter J. Lucas, *From Author to Audience: John Capgrave and Medieval Publication* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1997), pp. 13-14. The manuscripts are listed in Seymour, *John Capgrave*, p. 53. The work can be dated quite closely as a result of Bokenham's reference to it in his own version of the life of Katharine: Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooley Wummen*, ed. by Mary S. Serjeantson, EETS o.s. 206 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 173, ll. 6354-60. Much of Capgrave's literary output has been lost, but of that which remains most of the manuscripts are either in Capgrave's autograph, or have been amended by his hand, or are otherwise closely associated with the house of friars at Lynn, suggesting that he exercised considerable control over the production and dissemination of his works. Capgrave's care in this regard has made his manuscripts invaluable to dialectologists. See *John Capgrave's Abbreviation of Cronicles*, ed. by Peter J. Lucas, EETS o.s. 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), where the editor makes the following observation: 'From the historical linguist's point of view autograph or holograph manuscripts that can be precisely dated and localized, and some facts about whose author are known, represent an ideal [. . .]. Such ideal texts are provided by the autograph and holograph manuscripts of vernacular works by Capgrave [. . .]. The Capgrave material probably constitutes the single most important corpus of linguistic evidence for the W. Norfolk area in the fifteenth century' (p. xlv). See also the references to Norfolk manuscripts in Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels and Michael Benskin, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, 4 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986); entries relating to Capgrave's manuscripts appear in I 67, 102, 105, 108, 146, 218 and 223, and III 320-21, 328 and 333-4.

⁶ *English Gilds*, ed. by Toulmin Smith, intro. by Lucy Toulmin Smith, EETS o.s. 40 (London: Trübner, 1870), pp. 67-8 (p. 67).

⁷ For discussions of the population of fifteenth-century East Anglia, see Richard Beadle, 'Prolegomena to a Literary Geography of Later Medieval Norfolk', in *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of 'A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English'*, ed. by Felicity Riddy, (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), pp. 89-108; Gail

McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 19-46; Emma Lipton, 'Performing Reform: Lay Piety and the Marriage of Mary and Joseph in the N-Town Cycle', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 23 (2001), 407-35 (pp. 420, 434); and Norman P. Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich 1370-1532* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1984). The gild returns of 1389 reveal that Lynn had a greater number of gilds (51) than any other recorded town: H. F. Westlake, *The Parish Gilds of Mediaeval England* (London: SPCK, 1919), p. 38.

⁸ Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 14. Other fifteenth-century versions of the legend include the prose life in Harvard University, MS Richardson 44, edited by Henry Hucks Gibbs as *The Life and Martyrdom of Saint Katherine of Alexandria, Virgin and Martyr* (London: Nichols, 1884); a shorter and later version of the prose life from Southwell Minster MS 7, printed as *St Katherine of Alexandria: The Late Middle English Prose Legend in Southwell Minster MS 7*, ed. by Saara Nevanlinna and Irma Taavitsainen (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993); and Caxton's version, *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton*, ed. by F. S. Ellis, 7 vols (London: Dent, 1900), VII 1-30. The version in MS Richardson 44 has also been published in a modern English translation: *Chaste Passions: Medieval English Virgin Martyr Legends*, ed. and trans. by Karen A. Winstead (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 115-63 and Appendix B. In addition Katharine's story appears in numerous legends and sermon collections. The best study of Capgrave's sources is still Auvo Kurvinen, 'The Source of Capgrave's *Life of St Katharine of Alexandria*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 61 (1960), 268-324.

⁹ Great powers of scholarship are a traditional attribute of the saint and may have been derived from the assimilation of details from the life of the pagan philosopher Hypatia into the Katharine legend. Indeed, it is possible that the Katharine legend owes its very existence to Hypatia, a renowned female scholar living in Alexandria, who was put to death by the Christian authorities c. 415. See Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, trans. by F. Lyra (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), for a discussion of Hypatia's history and her subsequent connection with the Katharine legend. For an analysis of the historical evidence for the existence of St Katharine, see Jennifer Relvyn Bray, 'The Legend of St Katherine in Later Middle English Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Birkbeck College London, 1984), pp. 6-17.

¹⁰ John Capgrave, *The Life of St Katharine of Alexandria*, ed. by Carl Horstmann, EETS o.s. 100 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1893), I, ll. 400-27. All subsequent references will be by book and line number in the text. A modern English edition is also available: *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. by Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).

¹¹ For St Eugenia see Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. by Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Florence: Galluzzo, 1998), II 925-6. The translation is from *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. by William Granger Ryan, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), II 165, slightly emended. All future Latin quotations will be from *Legenda Aurea*, with translations (amended where necessary) from *Golden Legend*, trans. by Ryan. For infant saints see *Golden Legend*, I 21 and 102; II 303. For English saints see S. Baring-Gould, *Lives of the English Saints* (Lampeter: Llanerch, 1990), particularly St Ethelburga, p. 75; St Aldhelm, p. 13, was academically precocious.

¹² Such a view had been commonplace for centuries, though usually in the context of male scholarship being disrupted by wives. Perhaps the most famous (and vitriolic) expression of this idea came from St Jerome: 'Primum enim impediri studia Philosophiae; nec posse quemquam libris et uxori pariter inservire. [. . .] Si doctissimus praeceptor in qualibet urbium fuerit, nec uxorem relinquere, nec cum sarcina ire possumus' [Indeed, first the study of Philosophy is hindered; no one can serve books and a wife at the same time.[. . .] If the most learned teacher is in any of the towns, we can neither leave our wife behind, nor go with the burden]: *Adversus Jovinianum*, in *PL* 23, cols. 276-7. Fascinatingly, Heloise employed the same argument, effectively against herself, when resisting Abelard's proposal of marriage: 'Quae enim conventio scholarium ad pedissequas, scriptoriorum ad cunabula, librorum sive tabularum ad colos, stylorum sive calamorum ad fusos? Quis denique sacris vel philosophicis meditationibus intentus pueriles vagitus, nutricum, quae hos mitigant, naenias, tumultuosam familiae tam in viris quam in feminis turbam sustinere poterit? Quis etiam inhonestas illas parvulorum sordes assiduas tolerare valebit?' [What agreement is there of scholars with waiting-women, of writing desks with cradles, of books or writing-tablets with distaffs, of styluses and pens with spindles? Who, indeed, in his contemplations of sacred or philosophical purposes, will have been able to bear infants crying, the lullabies of the nurses soothing them, and the confused hubbub of men and women of the household? Who, indeed, will be able to tolerate the unremitting and unseemly squalor of the little ones?]: Abelard, 'Epistola I, seu Historia Calamitatum', in *PL* 178 col. 131. It should be noted, as Blamires makes clear, that these words are in fact Abelard's; he is reporting the view of Heloise in a letter to a third party: *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, ed. by Alcuin Blamires with Karen Pratt and C. W. Marx (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 87-8.

¹³ *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, ed. by Patricia H. Labalme (New York: New York University Press, 1980), p. 5.

¹⁴ *Legenda Aurea*, II 925-6; *Golden Legend*, trans. by Ryan, II 165.

¹⁵ For a detailed consideration of female learning and its association with Lollardy, see Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), chapter 2. See also Claire Cross, "Great Reasoners in

Scripture": The Activities of Women Lollards', in *Medieval Women*, ed. by Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), pp. 359-80; Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 137, 165 and 188-9; and Shannon McSheffrey, *Gender and Heresy: Women and Men in Lollard Communities, 1420-1530* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 47-72.

¹⁶ Jack Upland, *Friar Daw's Reply and Upland's Rejoinder*, ed. by P. L. Heyworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), *Friar Daw*, ll. 99-101.

¹⁷ Thomas Hoccleve, 'The Remonstrance Against Oldcastle', in *Selections from Hoccleve*, ed. by M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), ll. 145-9. Not all contemporary poets took such a jaundiced view, however; see Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1989), pp. 221-42, for Chaucerian references to maternal advice and education.

¹⁸ For the accusations against Margery see *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by Barry Windeatt (Harlow: Longman, 2000), for example pp. 95-6, 229 and 252. Margery Baxter's trial is recorded in *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-31*, ed. by Norman P. Tanner (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), pp. 47-8.

¹⁹ Johanna Clyfland's testimony appears in *Heresy Trials*, ed. by Tanner, pp. 43-9 (p. 44).

²⁰ Hull's translation is extant in a single manuscript, Cambridge University Library, MS Kk.1.6. It has been edited by Alexandra Barratt in *The Seven Psalms: A Commentary on the Penitential Psalms translated from French into English by Dame Eleanor Hull*, EETS o.s. 307 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); the colophon quoted appears on p. 202. For the dating of the manuscript, see Barratt's introduction, p. xxii.

²¹ For Hull's biography see *Seven Psalms*, pp. xxiii-xxxiii; see also Alexandra Barratt, 'Dame Eleanor Hull: A Fifteenth-Century Translator', in *The Medieval Translator: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Roger Ellis, Jocelyn Price, Stephen Medcalf and Peter Meredith (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), pp. 87-101. For studies of female literacy and book ownership in late medieval England, see the chapters by Felicity Riddy, Carol Meale and Julia Boffey in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. by Carol M. Meale, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²² For fraternal involvement with heresy trials, see for example John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, intro. by John Stoughton, ed. by Josiah Pratt, 4th edn, 8 vols (London: Religious Tract Society, 1877), III 107-8 (trial of William Swinderby, 1389), 235-6 (trial of John Badby, 1409) and 583 (trial of William Taylor, 1422). While Foxe may not be an objective and dispassionate witness, Hudson suggests that he is 'trustworthy to a fairly high degree': *Premature Reformation*, p. 40.

²³ The trials must have attracted a good deal of notice; William White, Hugh Pye and John Waddon were burnt for heresy in Norwich in 1428: *Heresy Trials*, ed. by Tanner, p. 8.

Nicholas Drye from Lynn was tried in August 1430 and sentenced to do penance; a fellow-citizen of Lynn acted as surety to guarantee that he performed his penance and remained free from heresy: pp. 25 and 173-4.

²⁴ Bray also makes this point: 'The Legend of St Katherine in Later Middle English Literature', pp. 174-75. Eleanor Hull, too, recognized an affinity with this most learned of saints; in her will of 1460, she leaves 'vijs. in worship of Seynt Kateryn'. See *Seven Psalms*, Appendix, p. 203. Such an interpretation may be further supported by Capgrave's decision to write a life of St Gilbert of Sempringham; from the earliest days of the foundation of the Gilbertine order in the twelfth century, it had made education available to girls as well as boys. Significantly the libraries in the Gilbertine double houses were administered by a nun—a *precentrix*—rather than a canon. See Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order c. 1130 - c. 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 170-87.

²⁵ The *MED* cites five broad definitions of 'ledere', two of which may be relevant. The first, 1(a), is 'ruler, lord, king', and is probably not what is required here, although the emphasis on social and political authority may be worth noting. More likely is definition 2(a), 'one who leads the way', or, if understood figuratively, 2(b), 'guardian on a journey, chaperon'.

²⁶ See Alastair Minnis, *Magister Amoris: The 'Roman de la Rose' and Vernacular Hermeneutics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 219-34. Capgrave may have sought to provide himself with a further degree of protection by stressing that his work is a translation: Prologue, ll. 232-3.

²⁷ The dialogue form has a long and distinguished history, its most famous early incarnation being in the Socratic *elenchus* reported in Plato's dialogues, and medieval university education relied heavily on dialectic and techniques of disputation. See Martin Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der Scholastischen Methode*, 2 vols (Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1909 and 1911); for academic use of the dialogue form, see especially p. 98 (Greek writers), pp. 193-4 (Alcuin), pp. 222-4 (Berengar of Tours and his Eucharistic heresy), p. 264 and pp. 317-22 (Anselm). Also useful is M.-D. Chenu, *La Théologie Comme Science au XIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 1957), chapters 1 and 5. See also Janet Coleman, 'The Science of Politics and Late Medieval Academic Debate', in *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Rita Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 181-214 (esp. p. 193).

²⁸ *Two Wycliffite Texts*, ed. by Anne Hudson, EETS o.s. 301 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 57, ll. 1086-94. The concept of the image as a reminder owes a good deal to Augustine's discussion of signs in *De Doctrina Christiana*, which starts from the premise that 'signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire' [a sign is a thing beyond its appearance, which thrusts itself onto the senses, making something different from itself come to mind]: *De Doctrina Christiana*, in *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, 176 vols (Paris: Brepols, 1954-65), vol. 32, book II, i (1).

See also Margaret Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular', in *From Ockham to Wyclif*, ed. by Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), pp. 281-330 (p. 288, n. 19), for the theological idea of the *signa recordativa*.

²⁹ In an illuminating discussion of Evrart de Conty's *Eschez amoureux*, Alastair Minnis cites Evrart's explanation of ways in which fiction may be employed: Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, pp. 282-92. One of these is in order to speak more secretly: 'Here the commentator defends deliberate obscurity on the grounds that on occasion meaning should be withheld from the unworthy' (p. 288).

³⁰ Again this argument appears to be foreshadowed by Evrart de Conty: 'there is no good thing imaginable to a reasonable man that the ancient poets, who were wise and great philosophers, have not meant to express by various gods and goddesses—neither maintaining nor believing that they were real deities (!)'. Minnis, *Magister Amoris*, p. 285.

³¹ The argument given by Capgrave to the pagans here is identical to one dismissed by Augustine, who equates it with spiritually-unaware Gentiles. 'Et si quando aliqui eorum illa tamquam signa interpretari conabantur, ad creaturam colendam uenerandamque referebant. Quid enim mihi prodest simulacrum uerbi gratia Neptuni non ipsum habendum deum, sed eo significari uniuersum mare uel etiam omnes aquas ceteras, quae fontibus prouunt? [. . .] Quid ergo mihi prodest, quod Neptuni simulacrum ad illam significationem referretur, nisi forte ut neutrum colam? tam enim mihi statua quaelibet, quam mare uniuersum, non est deus' [And if ever any of them attempted to interpret these statues as signs, they related them to the worshipping and venerating of a created thing. For what good is it to me that an image of Neptune, for example, does not contain a god in itself, but by it is to be signified the whole sea or indeed all other waters that rush forth from springs? [. . .] Therefore what good is it to me that an image of Neptune is assigned this significance, except perhaps that I might worship neither? As far as I am concerned, a statue is no more God than the whole sea is]: *De Doctrina Christiana*, Book III, vii (11).

³² *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. by Anne Hudson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 83-4.

³³ For example, in the legend of St Sebastian the prefect's slaves are afraid to lay hands on their idols and destroy them, for fear of divine retribution: *Golden Legend*, trans. by Ryan, 199.

³⁴ See also James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 420-9.

³⁵ *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. by G. H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 296 and 297. For an excellent examination of the important connections between St Katharine and the images debate, see Sarah Stanbury, 'The Vivacity of Images: St Katherine, Knighton's Lollards, and the Breaking of Idols', in *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm*

in *Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image*, ed. by Jeremy Dimmick, James Simpson and Nicolette Zeeman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 131-50.

³⁶ Thomas Walsingham, *Chronicon Angliae 1328-1388*, ed. by Edward Maunde Thompson, Rolls Series 64 (London: HMSO, 1874; reprinted New York: Kraus, 1965), p. 377.

³⁷ John Capgrave, *The Life of St Norbert*, ed. by Cyril Lawrence Smetana (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1977), ll. 64-5.

³⁸ Aubrey Gwynn, *The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 4.

³⁹ Gwynn, *English Austin Friars*, p. 43.

⁴⁰ For an account of the treatise and its exacerbation of the rivalry between Austin friars and canons, see Gwynn, *English Austin Friars*, pp. 90-5. The Austin friars also argued among themselves (pp. 90-1).

⁴¹ Trinity College, Dublin, MS A.5.3., quoted and translated by Gwynn, *English Austin Friars*, p. 207.

⁴² The Trinity College manuscript belonged to Stocton and was copied in his own hand in the 1370s and 1380s: Gwynn, *English Austin Friars*, pp. 236-9.

⁴³ John Capgrave, *Lives of St Augustine and St Gilbert of Sempringham, and a Sermon*, ed. by J. J. Munro, EETS o.s. 140 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1910), p. 146, ll. 5-7. St James's abbey in Northampton was home to the Canons Regular: Lucas, *From Author to Audience*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ See, for example, *Norbert*, ll. 554-609, 631-7, 1751-64 and 2304-10.

⁴⁵ John Capgrave, *Abbreviacion of Cronicles*, p. 197.

⁴⁶ During FitzRalph's dispute with the friars, 1356-57, it was alleged that fraternal exemptions interfered with the duties of the ordinary clergy; however, in 1359 Innocent VI issued a bull confirming these privileges: Gwynn, *English Austin Friars*, pp. 80-89. For Arundel's order specifically exempting friars from the licensing requirements of the Constitutions, see *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, ed. by David Wilkins, 4 vols (London, 1737), III 324. For Chichele's objections to exemptions, see E. F. Jacob, *Henry Chichele and the Ecclesiastical Politics of His Age* (London: Athlone, 1952), pp. 8-12, and chapter 6, pp. 230-1.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, III 358-65, 378, 393, 433, 438-59 and 493.

⁴⁸ John A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414-1520* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 237-8.

**'Wher ioye is ay lastyng':
John Lydgate's *Contemptus Mundi* in British Library MS
Harley 2255¹**

Joseph L. Grossi, Jr.

Scholars of Middle English verse are acknowledging with ever-increasing frequency the significance of John Lydgate, Benedictine monk and sometime resident of the great abbey at Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.² While not a repository of his 'major' works such as *The Fall of Princes* or the *Troy Book*, London, British Library, MS Harley 2255 is nevertheless an important fifteenth-century 'anthology' of some 45 mostly moralistic and didactic shorter poems.³ Its contents are as follows:⁴

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| fols 1 ^r -3 ^r | 1. ' <i>Consulo quisquis eris</i> ' |
| fols 3 ^v -5 ^v | 2. 'As a Mydsomer Rose' |
| fols 6 ^r -7 ^r | 3. 'Horns Away' |
| fols 7 ^v -11 ^v | 4. 'Look in thy merour, and deeme noon othir wight' |
| fols 12 ^r -14 ^r | 5. 'A Song of Vertu' |
| fols 14 ^r -17 ^r | 6. 'A Pageant of Knowledge, another version of the last part' |
| fols 17 ^r -21 ^r | 7. ' <i>Misericordias Domini in eternum cantabo</i> ' |
| fols 21 ^r -24 ^r | 8. 'A Praise of Peace' ⁵ |
| fols 24 ^r -32 ^v | 9. 'The Legend of St Austin at Compton' |
| fols 32 ^v -39 ^v | 10. 'An Exposition of the Pater Noster' |
| fols 40 ^r -43 ^v | 11. 'On <i>De profundis</i> ' |
| fols 43 ^v -45 ^v | 12. ' <i>Te Deum laudamus</i> ' |
| fols 45 ^v -47 ^r | 13. 'The Letter to Gloucester' |
| fols 47 ^r -66 ^v | 14. <i>The Testament of Dan John Lydgate</i> |
| fols 66 ^v -69 ^v | 15. ' <i>Quis dabit meo capiti fontem lacrimarum?</i> ' |
| fols 70 ^r -71 ^v | 16. 'Prayers to Ten Saints' |
| fols 72 ^r -88 ^r | 17. ' <i>Fabula duorum mercatorum</i> ' |
| fols 88 ^r -93 ^v | 18. 'The Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary' |
| fols 93 ^v -95 ^v | 19. Stanzas from <i>The Fall of Princes</i> , books V and VI |

fols 95 ^v -103 ^r	20. 'The Legend of Seynt Gyle'
fols 103 ^r -103 ^v	21. ' <i>Stella celi extirpauit</i> (I)'
fols 104 ^r -110 ^v	22. 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ'
fols 111 ^r -111 ^v	23. 'A Prayer upon the Cross'
fols 111 ^v -113 ^r	24. 'To Mary, the Queen of Heaven'
fols 113 ^v -114 ^r	25. 'On <i>Verbum caro factum est</i> ' (part III)
fol. 114 ^r -115 ^r	26. 'A Prayer to St Leonard'
fols 115 ^r -115 ^v	27. 'To St Katherine, St Margaret, and St Mary Magdalene'
fol. 116 ^r	28. 'To St Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins'
fol. 116 ^v	29. 'To St Ositha'
fols 117 ^r -118 ^v	30. 'The fifteene toknys a forn the doom'
fols 118 ^v -119 ^v	31. 'They That No While Endure (First Version)'
fols 120 ^r -126 ^r	32. ' <i>Letabundus</i> '
fols 126 ^v -128 ^v	33. 'The World Is Variable'
fols 128 ^v -131 ^r	34. ' <i>Timor mortis conturbat me</i> '
fols 131 ^v -135 ^r	35. 'The cok hath lowe shoone'
fols 135 ^r -139 ^v	36. ' <i>Gloriosa dicta sunt de Te</i> '
fols 140 ^r -141 ^v	37. ' <i>Ave, Jesse virgula</i> '
fols 142 ^r -143 ^r	38. ' <i>Benedictus Deus in donis suis</i> '
fols 143 ^v -146 ^v	39. 'Measure is Tresour'
fols 146 ^v -148 ^r	40. ' <i>Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac</i> '
fols 148 ^r -150 ^r	41. 'God is myn helpere'
fols 150 ^v -151 ^v	42. 'Undir a park full prudently pyght'
fols 152 ^r -153 ^r	43. 'To St Edmund' (incomplete; ll. 25-96 only, l. 96 marking the end of the poem)
fols 153 ^v -156 ^v	44. 'The Hood of Green'
fol. 157 ^r	45. 'Against Millers and Bakers'

Reflecting a growing tendency among fifteenth-century manuscripts to gather together the works of a single author, Harley 2255 is one of 'a number of substantial collections of [Lydgate's] shorter poems which take his authorship as an organising principle'.⁶ Lydgate's authorship is even taken for granted in some cases: although 'The Hood of Green' (fols 153^v-6^v),⁷ for example, has come under suspicion, it is nevertheless ascribed to Lydgate in this codex. An only slightly less obvious 'organising principle' than Lydgate's presumed authorship is his religious didacticism: the Monk of Bury wrote in many genres and for many kinds of reader, but students of Harley 2255 might well agree

with Derek Pearsall's observation that 'The contents, even allowing for the inclusion of a satirical poem like *Horns Away* [fols 6^r-7^r], are selected for their appropriateness to the cloister'.⁸ Eleanor Hammond was the first to suggest that Harley 2255 was produced in c. 1430-50 at the abbey of Bury, perhaps as a gift for William Curteys, Lydgate's abbot from 1429-46; and most subsequent scholars, like Pearsall, have concurred with this supposition.⁹

In a forthcoming article, however, Stephen Reimer and Pamela Farvolden challenge the traditional dating and circumstances of the manuscript's composition.¹⁰ Although they agree that Harley 2255 is of Bury provenance, they persuasively argue that it was compiled sometime after 1460 and suggest (without being dogmatic, it should be noted) that it may be the work of Kathleen Scott's 'Edmund-Fremund Scribe', the copyist of, *inter alia*, Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund* in British Library, MS Yates Thompson 47 and in the Arundel Castle manuscript.¹¹ In the present essay I accept Farvolden's and Reimer's conclusions, though to avoid poaching on their territory—they describe the script, *ordinatio* and decoration of the manuscript in great depth—I confine myself here largely to some consideration of the contents of Harley 2255 which, to the best of my knowledge, have attracted little sustained interest since the early nineteenth century.¹² The purpose of the present study, then, is mainly to shed light both on the manuscript's dominant 'theme'—that Christian transcendence confers higher, eternal power on those who aspire to it—and on the persona who articulates it, a world-weary Lydgate who renounces the active life of a courtly writer in favour of the contemplative retirement of the Benedictine cloister. Rather than as the 'poet-propagandist to the Lancastrian dynasty', in Derek Pearsall's well-known phrase,¹³ Lydgate emerges from Harley 2255 primarily in the role of a monkish moralist who rejects courtly life and literature. Harley 2255 places in the foreground Lydgate's very orthodox monastic piety; yet far from being bland and abstract, that piety abjures the mutable world by equating its mutability with the pagan heroic glories celebrated in classical literature. By implication the manuscript casts off the same courtly career which had brought Lydgate into sustained contact with that literature.

It is true that Lydgate is sceptical of the Greco-Roman pagan heritage throughout his works. Whether or not his long 'courtly' *Troy Book*, *Siege of Thebes* and *Fall of Princes* betray 'humanist' leanings,¹⁴ they do reveal the Black Monk's ability to question the achievements of ancient Greece and Rome while simultaneously enjoying or aspiring to Lancastrian patronage.¹⁵ Harley 2255 reveals his doubts more consistently, however. If *The Fall of*

Princes, for example, implicitly embraces a literary tradition stretching from Homer to Ovid to Chaucer and 'skips across the tradition the Vernon Manuscript preserves',¹⁶ Harley 2255 barely concedes the prestige of classical *auctores*. Instead, it deploys hagiography and monastic didacticism to align its intended audience with the devotional temperament of fifteenth-century England and, if we accept the manuscript's traditionally accepted provenance, of East Anglia especially.¹⁷ While it is by no means clear that Harley 2255 represents a conscious effort by its scribe to 'decommission' the poetic influence of Chaucer himself,¹⁸ it does gesture beyond the authority of secular poets and their patrons to grasp at a holiness which strives to efface its own socio-political contexts. The overarching theme of Christian transcendence frames individual poems like '*Misericordias Domini in eternum cantabo*' (fols 17^r-21^r), 'A Praise of Peace' (fols 21^r-4^r), 'They That No While Endure (First Version)' (fols 118^v-119^v), '*Gloriosa dicta sunt de Te*' (fols 135^r-9^v) and 'Measure is Tresour' (fols 143^v-6^v), to cite but a few. As conventional as these poems may be in voicing Lydgate's *contemptus mundi*, they also show the Monk of Bury renouncing the prestige of Greece, Rome, Troy and Thebes, whose epic stories he had formerly rendered into English for his Lancastrian patrons.¹⁹ Lydgate here pursues, and evidently wishes his reader to pursue, salvation in the Eternal Jerusalem, where, according to the phrasing of a version of 'A Pageant of Knowledge' preserved in Harley 2255, alone is to be found the one 'lyf wher ioye is ay lastyng' (fol. 17^r, l. 144). This manuscript confirms how thoroughly adaptable Lydgate's verse was to prevailing fifteenth-century tastes in devotional manuscripts.²⁰ Moreover, it also shows how thorough a compiler could be if he sought, as I claim he did, to de-politicise the Monk of Bury, to present the poet primarily as a monastic moraliser who infers lessons about humility from the Crucifixion and the lives of the saints, rather than as a historian keen to derive universal lessons on statecraft from the downfalls of potentates and of whole civilisations.

The religious quality of this codex extends, by the way, to its charitable perspective on Lydgate's patrons. While secular life and, I believe, secular courts come under its textual scrutiny, the manuscript subjects none of the poet's patrons to overt criticism. On the contrary, in 'Prayers to Ten Saints' (fols 70^r-1^v) Lydgate asks St George to pray for Henry VI and 'al this regioun' for victory over specifically worldly rather than spiritual enemies. The 'Letter to Gloucester', present in Harley 2255 (fols 45^v-7^r) and in other manuscripts, and excerpts from Lydgate's long *Fall of Princes* (fols 93^v-5^v) likewise link the poet explicitly to Lancastrian patronage. The 'Letter' and the

stanzas from the *Fall*, however, depict power and patronage in an ambivalent light,²¹ while the concern shown on Henry VI's behalf in 'Prayers to Ten Saints' takes up but a single line of verse out of the many hundreds in the manuscript. It is Christ rather than the Lancastrian monarch who establishes the true model of kingship; and Lydgate's praise of the former rings out in poems like the 'The Fifteen Oes' (fols 104^r-10^v), which describes the Lord as 'Above all kyngis kyng of most puissaunce' (fol. 107^v, l. 170) despite His 'meek passioun' (fol. 106^v, l. 144). Even if Lydgate's version of the 'Fifteen Oes' resembles other fifteenth-century versions of this poem in rendering Christ as a more passive Saviour than He had been in earlier versions,²² it still acknowledges the Lord alone as supreme king. This notion would hardly have shocked anyone at the time, whether Lancastrian king or Yorkist usurper; but it is precisely this use of Christian transcendence which enables the scribe to elide, almost completely, the social and historical conditions both of his own labours and of Lydgate's Lancastrian commissions, the latter merely hinted at in 'The Letter to Gloucester' and the excerpts from the *Fall*.

The first item in Harley 2255, '*Consulo quisquis eris*' (fols 1^r-3^r) translates and expands a Latin couplet which the scribe has included as a prefacing rubric: '*Consulo quisquis eris, qui pacis federa queris, consonus esto lupis, cum quibus esse cupis*' [I counsel whoever you may be who seek treaties of peace to be agreeable towards wolves, with whom you desire to be]. Commentators disagree on the poem's merits: one finds its message 'pestilent' while another attacks its 'pointless absurdity'.²³ What they do agree on is that in its proverbial wisdom it approximates to 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'²⁴ and, at least on the surface, offers deeply contradictory advice. The first eight stanzas counsel readers to conform themselves to prevailing morality, or rather to the lack thereof; the second half of the poem, also comprising eight stanzas, implicitly repudiates this specious advice by appealing to higher, absolute standards of conduct. Recalling the theme of Chaucer's lyric 'Truth'²⁵ though with an even more explicitly religious thrust, the second part of '*Consulo*' urges love of God above all else, though there is nothing in the opening lines of the poem which prepares the reader for the speaker's later abrupt volte-face:

I conseyl what so euyr thou be
Off policye foresight and prudence:
Yiff thou wilt lyve in pees and vnite
Conforme thy sylff and thynk on this sentence:
Wher so evere thou hoold residence,

Among woluyss be woluyssh of corage,
Leoun with leouns, a lamb for innocence.
Lyke the audience, so vtir thy language.

The vnycorn is cauht with maydenys song
By dispocicioun, record of scripture;
With cornerawntys make thy nekke long;
In pondys deepe thy prayes to recure;
Among ffoxis be ffoxissh of nature;
Mong ravynours thynk for avauntage.
With empty hand men may noon haukys lure;
And lyke the audience, so vtir thy language. (fol. 1^r, ll. 1-16)

The first letter of the poem, 'I', incorporates a heraldic emblem, 'azure three crowns *or* (arms of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds)',²⁶ which thus trumpets monastic authority as a prelude to the text it announces. For this reason the '*Consulo*' seems a decidedly baffling poem, at least in its first stanzas. The opening text of a manuscript whose contents were, it has been said, 'selected for their appropriateness to the cloister' counsels not transcendent piety but opportunism: 'Mong ravynours thynk for avauntage. / With empty hand men may noon haukys lure'. The advice 'Conforme thy sylff' better befits life outside the cloister, indeed life at court;²⁷ and Alexandra Gillespie has argued that '[t]his sort of instability may be linked to anxiety about the definition of the court itself, its boundaries disrupted by the verbal, rather than real "felaship" ([fol. 1^v] l. 29) between a king and his flattering courtiers, its hierarchies overturned by the difficulty of maintaining a consistent rhetoric of authority, given the insistent relativity of language'.²⁸ Gillespie further argues that the poem's speaker resolves this apparent 'verbal anarchy' by suggesting that princes ought to practice the virtue counselled by philosophical advisers.²⁹ Strictly speaking, Gillespie is concerned primarily to shed light on the relationship between the poem as it appears in Wynkyn de Worde's c. 1510 quarto edition of *The prouerbes of Lydgate* and the climate surrounding the accession of Henry VIII, an event which presented new opportunities for would-be courtiers. Even so, her argument usefully illuminates the unstable vicissitudes of courtly life at any time, vicissitudes obscured by '*Consulo*' in the fifteenth-century manuscript context of Harley 2255 as well as in de Worde's early printed edition.

The topical elusiveness of this poem seems to have been a matter of conscious choice on Lydgate's part. In the first half of the text, the speaker indirectly warns of the Placebos who plague the world at all times, not only in his own lifetime; and, in the second half, he aspires to equal universality when he advises all spiritual pilgrims in this world to reflect on the lasting order of God's transcendence. While conceding the real purpose of Lydgate's generalities, however, I share Gillespie's assumption that political and historicist readings of '*Consulo*' can serve to amplify the implicit critique of court life which those generalities tactically muffle. Not only in de Worde's imprint but also in Harley 2255 '*Consulo*' may well address life at court as well as life in the world. If this is the case, then the sharp contrast in tone between the first and second halves of the poem suggests, as we shall see, that there can be no middle way between life in time and life in eternity, or, to be somewhat less abstract, between self-compromise at the royal court and self-fulfillment through prayer within the monastic cloister. A former life needs to be rejected if a new one is to be fully embraced, and it is possible that the former life hinted at here is Lydgate's own career as a Lancastrian court poet.

As commentators on '*Consulo*' have pointed out, the second half of the poem clarifies its real meaning, urging the kind of complete loyalty to God and His directives which the speaker of the poem judges to be nobler than advancement in this world. Mere conformism in ethical matters diminishes one's humanity. What distinguishes the first from the second half of '*Consulo*' is that the former indirectly warns us that should we mindlessly adopt the world's standards we shall reap the whirlwind, while the latter explicitly exhorts us not to make that choice. Immediately before the section in which the speaker declares his own view of the matter in his role as translator of the proverb, he illustrates the dangers of adhering to convention; at this point, mock prescription (e.g. 'Among woluyss be woluyssh of corage') is left behind in favour of earnest if exasperated description:

This litel ditee concludith in menyng:
Who that cast hym this rewle for to kepe,
Mot conforme hym lyke in euery thyng,
Wher he shal byde, vnto the felashipe;
With wachmen wake; with sloggy folkes sleepe;
With woodmen wood; with frentyk folk savage;
Renne with beestys; with wilde wormys creepe;
And like the audience, vtir thy language. (fol. 2^r, ll. 49-56)

In lines 50-1, Lydgate no longer gives advice but rather asserts that private decisions will lead to public consequences ('Who that cast hym...Mot conforme hym...'): unlike St Benedict's own *Regula*, which was intended to restrain appetites and to lead monks heavenward, the *rewle* of ethical accommodation to the world endangers the spiritual integrity which ensures one's humanity. Pearsall finds the imagery ineffective and argues that the poem is 'awkward and fumbling',³⁰ but it is precisely those people who reject God whom Lydgate wants to depict as awkward and fumbling: the breathless pace of lines 53-5 suggests the poet's bewilderment at the inchoate condition into which those without principles hurl themselves. Such persons, in living like 'beestys' and 'wilde wormys', become hybrids of human will and bestial behaviour, more inwardly corrupt than even the prostitute of 'The Hood of Green' (fols 153^v-6^v) whose skin alone is likened to that of 'an howndfyssh or of an hake' (fol. 154^v, l. 58). Although the first part of '*Consulo*' conjures up a world in which human beings in effect must imitate wild animals if they would thrive in a climate hostile to ethical principle, the second part, prefaced with the rubric 'verba translatoris' (fol. 2^r), hints that this *translator* will have the last word by appealing to transcendent absolutes, in effect translating the 'conseyl' to a higher plane. Even the first stanza's laudable goal of 'pees and vnite' is qualified in the poem's second half by the exhortation 'In cheef love god, and with thy love ha dreed, / And be feerful ageyn hym to trespase' (fol. 2^r, ll. 59-60). Here is an early announcement of that theme of transcendence which pervades the entire anthology and calls to order the seemingly wayward 'counsels' of the first part of '*Consulo*'.

It is worth dwelling for a few moments on Lydgate's critical recontextualisation, in this poem and elsewhere in the manuscript, of otherwise perfectly sensible secular values which appear in his longer works in a more flattering light. '[P]olicye foresight and prudence', counselled in the poem's second line, are not necessarily bad in themselves: indeed, Lydgate elsewhere remarks on them neutrally or even extols them, as he does in *The Fall of Princes* and *The Siege of Thebes*.³¹ Nevertheless, practicing these same virtues to seek merely temporal ends may jeopardise one's soul, at least according to the logic of the '*Consulo*', because doing so enables one to thrive amidst the rapacious. Even 'pees and vnite' (fol. 1^r, l. 3) can lead to moral decay if they result in one's self-accommodation to surrounding evils. Justified elsewhere as part of a Lancastrian effort towards dynastic self-legitimation,³² and defended even in 'A Praise of Peace' (fols 21^r-4^r),³³ which will be discussed in a moment, earthly peace and unity finally matter

less to the Black Monk than salvation in Heaven. To pursue this, one must, in the wording of the aforementioned poem, 'Live in quyetē fro sclandre and diffame; / Our Lord Ihesus he muste love and drede' (fol. 22^r, ll. 58-9). Although 'A Praise of Peace' can be described as a pro-Lancastrian poem in that it defends Henry V ('The ffifte herry preevyd a good knyht [. . .]' (fol. 24^v, l. 177)), even it indicates that the work needed to bring about lasting concord must always be a work-in-progress. Rather than ending with the realisation of earthly goals by earthly kings, sincere efforts at peace must begin with an otherworldly, spiritual impulse unburdened by political aspirations. '*Consulo*' expresses a similar idea in somewhat different terms: while it offers no explicit praise for the ruling dynasty, it makes essentially the same point that 'A Praise of Peace' does, that supernatural rewards outweigh temporal successes because the former prove more substantial than the latter. This theme recurs in the poem 'The World is Variable' (fols 126^v-8^v), a fourteen-stanza poem apparently unique to Harley 2255 and very loosely organised around the theme of the untrustworthiness of earthly conditions. Warning in an Aesopian vein that antagonists in the animal kingdom neither get on well with one another nor observe treaties of peace (fol. 127^r, ll. 41-8), the poem suggests that there is such a thing as specious concord, 'Colowryd tetry' (fol. 127^r, l. 47), the result of dishonest arrangements which harm everyone. The speaker of 'The World Is Variable' never criticises specific kings or policies; he merely complains that those who are 'contrarye' to order in the state 'destroyeth the body political' (fol. 128^r, l. 79). '*Consulo*' and 'A Praise of Peace' are similarly general in implying that the bonds of society are but an evanescent afterglow of an enduring, higher power.

This generalised emphasis on disembodied sanctity appears in many poems in the manuscript, but 'A Praise of Peace' (fols 21^r-4^r) merits further consideration because its ostensible subject is secular rather than sacred harmony, and because it appears to lavish praise on a temporal ruler, Henry V. As we have already seen, while this poem concedes that

The ffifte herry preevyd a good knyht
By his prowesse and noble chivalrye,
Sparyd nat to pursue his riht,
His tite of Fraunce and of Normandye (fol. 24^v, ll. 177-80),

it also points out that the same king 'Deyed in his conquest, and we shall alle dye' (fol. 24^v, l. 181). Supernatural concord is needed. Indeed Lydgate prays that 'God [will] graunt vs alle now aftir his discees / To sende vs grace', which will allow France and England 'to live in parfihit pees' (fols 24^v-4^r (*sic* in the manuscript; the proper numbering should be fol. 25^r), ll. 183-5). By contrast, however, 'Criste cam with pees at his Natiuite' (fol. 24^r (for 25^r), l. 185): although Lydgate is silent on the matter, the pairing of these figures impresses upon one the difference between king and Saviour. Christ ushered peace into the world immediately He entered it, while lasting peace would elude Henry V and, from the poem's perspective, continues to elude the two realms of France and England. All Lydgate can do is to pray that after we have ended our lives, we too shall 'come to evir lastyng pees' (fol. 24^r (i.e. 25^r), l. 192). Familiar enough with politics, Lydgate understood why the late Henry V had sought the throne of France; but in 'A Praise of Peace' he aspires, and asks his readers to aspire, to a transcendent peace that passeth understanding. Again we find a theme which has been anticipated in 'Consulo': although that poem's monastic author warns us that we shall have to assume extremes of guises to conform to and succeed by the world's standards, he also prays that Christ will 'gouverne our wordly pilgrimage', preserve the distinction 'Tween vice and vertu' from the tendency to confuse them, and speak through human beings: 'to vtren our language' (fol. 3^r, ll. 118-19). Lydgate evidently hopes that what his readers 'utter' as a result of Christ's grace will be more coherent than what they hear around them.

While 'Consulo' anticipates connections with texts which are distant from it within Harley 2255, it admits of more suggestive links with its near neighbours. The second poem in the manuscript, entitled by MacCracken 'As a Mydsomer Rose' (fols 3^v-5^v), shares with 'Consulo' a scepticism about purely human ability while praising Christ as the source of all higher virtues—'Counsayl, confort, discrecioun, and prudence,/ Prouisioun, foresight, and providence' (fol. 3^v, ll. 4-5). That the last four can be read as synonyms for one another reflects either Lydgate's trademark rhetorical redundancy or his desire to drive home his point so that none will fail to grasp it. The first virtue in this list being 'Counsayl', the scribe of Harley 2255 echoes the declamatory first line of the preceding poem. The verbal link must have been exploited consciously, for the truly transcendent counsel of the second half of 'Consulo' finds an immediate parallel in 'As a Mydsomer Rose'. Having evoked animal behaviour purposefully in the first poem, Lydgate imagines an Aesopian parliament in the second in order to underscore folly in the

world of politics (fols 3^v-4^r, ll. 25-39). Lee Patterson has argued that in *The Siege of Thebes* Lydgate tacitly admits 'that poetry and power can never be brought to a perfect identity of purpose',³⁴ and it is a point which 'Rose' makes with abundant clarity in its refrain 'Al stant on chaung, lyk a mydsomer roose' (fol. 4^r, l. 40 and *passim*). Neither the illustrious personages of biblical Israel nor the heroic figures of antiquity can withstand the mutability of time, especially when they enjoy power or privilege in this life. The former comprise David, Solomon, Absalom and Jonathan (fol. 4^v, ll. 65-72); while the Greco-Roman tradition is represented by Julius Caesar, Pyrrhus, Alexander the Great, Cicero, Homer and Seneca (fol. 5^r, ll. 73-88). Recalling Lydgate's longer productions, the references to 'Troian knyhtis, grettest of alliaunce' (fol. 5^r, l. 93) and 'The Theban legioun, example of cheularye' (fol. 5^v, l. 99) are especially important. All of these pale in comparison to Christ the eternal Rose:

It was the Roose of the bloody feeld,
Roose of Iericho that greuh in Beedlem:
The five Roosys portrayed in the sheeld,
Splayned in the baneer at Ierusalem.
The sonne was clips and dirk in euery rem
Whan Crist Ihesu five wellys lyst vncloose
Toward Paradys, callyd the rede strem,
Off whos five woundys prent in your hert a Roose.
(fol. 5^v, ll. 113-20)

The turn to Christ decisively abandons the pagan heroism of the pre-Christian past and signals a major preoccupation of Harley 2255 as a whole: Lydgate's self-distancing, or the scribe's distancing of Lydgate, from the subjects of his Lancastrian commissions. In the poet's view, the glory of Christ's wounds outlasts that of the heroes who suffered at Troy, Thebes and elsewhere, partly because of the redemptive power of the Crucifixion *in se*, and partly because of the role worshippers are expected to play in perpetually remembering that redemptive event. The importance of recalling the significance of Christ's blood is acknowledged in this poem and in others in the codex, e.g. in 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ' (fols 104^r-10^v):

Fro thy ffive woundis so large a flood
Thoruh al the world the streemys did spreede
To wassh our surfetis with thy precious blood.
(fol. 109^r, ll. 246-8)

Although not especially 'mystical' poems, 'The Fifteen Ooes of Christ' and 'As a Mydsomer Rose' ably capture the increasing emphasis on the physicality of Christ which had come to characterise lay devotion in fifteenth-century East Anglia and throughout England.³⁵ In this manuscript, that piety becomes a vehicle which enables the Lydgatean speaker to renounce courtly aspirations.

His moralisation always reveals Lydgate to be a teacher or spiritual adviser, but the nature and meaning of that moralisation in part depend on its manuscript contexts. Seth Lerer intriguingly claims that the verse collected in Huntington Library MS 140, for example, 'becomes progressively less exemplary and more explicitly pedagogic' as the reader proceeds from Lydgate's *Life of St Albon and St Amphibalus* and Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale* to several Lydgatean lyrics found also in Harley 2255, like 'As a Mydsomer Rose', 'A Song of Vertu' (fols 12^r-14^r), 'A Prayer upon the Cross' (fols 111^r-111^v), and the verse *Testament* (fols 47^r-66^v).³⁶ According to Lerer, Huntington MS 140 constructs Lydgate's own paternal literary authority at the expense of its readers' autonomy: 'As its tone becomes more pedagogic, its audience becomes, in effect, more childish: more in need of direct instruction, but also more pointedly inscribed through the child-figures of the texts'.³⁷ Might not a poem like 'As a Mydsomer Rose' or 'Consulo' have affected or been intended to affect its readers in a similar way in Harley 2255? To some extent the latter codex does presuppose its readers' willingness to become children again, but insofar as it envisions a Gospel model for that return to childlike innocence, which I think it does (compare, for example, Luke 9. 46-8, 10. 21; 18. 15-17), Harley 2255 finally has different aims from those of Huntington MS 140. The latter, according to Lerer, 'codifies a kind of literary servitude to the example of Lydgatean authority with which it had begun and to which each of its poems has done homage'.³⁸ Instead, the Harley codex removes Lydgate from an exclusively 'literary' environment (if by 'literary' is meant something like 'relating to a secular poetic tradition inaugurated or reified by the master Chaucer') and restores him to the cloister. We might not suppose these two Lydgatean roles—courtly and cloistered—to be mutually exclusive, but medieval

scribes may have had their own reasons to keep them distinct from each other. More needs to be said about the intended audience of Harley 2255 than is possible in the present essay; whether they were monks (as I suspect)³⁹ or members of a lay confraternity associated with St Edmunds Abbey, the readers of this codex were intended to submit (willingly) to catechesis rather than to undergo 'infantilisation'.⁴⁰ Recalling the humane and self-critical protagonist of *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, the monkish narrator of the poems of Harley 2255 receives as well as imparts counsel, accrues authority even as he confesses his occasional blunders in life, and seeks to soar above the plane of either royal or literary politics. Just as the Christian dispensation eclipsed the glories of Thebes and Troy, so too Lydgate's strategic meditation on Christ and the Eternal Jerusalem at the very end of 'As a Mydsomer Rose' suppresses the naming of those earlier mighty cities and indeed his own earlier contribution to their afterlives. The last lines of that poem, quoted above, reflect the tone of much of the manuscript as a whole.

The devotional tenor of Harley 2255 drowns out the pomp and circumstance of Troy, Thebes and other epic matters wherever they appear in the codex. Individual poems which specifically recall those storied cities do so merely to announce their irrelevance save as cautionary tales; the short poems only hint at their histories rather than enlarging upon them in the manner of the longer 'courtly' works. 'Mesure Is Tresour' (fols 143^v-6^v), for example, recommends moderation and virtue to a wide range of contemporary social classes from popes and prelates (fol. 143^v, l. 11) all the way down to plowmen and ditch-diggers (fol. 145^v, ll. 105-6); the classical past is evoked, but only because its illustrious pagan civilisations yield a wealth of grim object lessons. The excesses of Alexander the Great had cost him dearly in the end, 'For which, ye lordys, lefft vp your eyen blynde' (fol. 144^r, l. 37), but indeed all the heroic achievements of Greece and Rome are swept away by Lydgate's categorical denunciation:

Knyghthood in Grece and Troye the Cite
Took hys principlys and next in Rome toun,
And in Cartage, a famous greet cuntre,
Recoord of Hanybal and wourthy Scipioun.
The greete debaatys and the devisioun
Among these kyngdammys by marcial labour,

Fynal cause of ther destruccioun,
Was fawte of vertu and lakkyng of mesure.

(fol. 144^r, ll. 41-8)

'Mesure Is Tresour' and other short poems in Harley 2255 undermine the prestige of the ancient world more decisively than do Lydgate's longer translations such as *The Siege of Thebes*, the *Troy Book* and *The Fall of Princes*, which, while condemning certain of its aspects, also implicitly pay tribute to it in the course of their lavishly detailed and amplified sprawl. The tone of the short poems considered here is more straightforwardly anti-classical. Even so, it should be conceded that the impression made by any one of these texts depends in part on the company it keeps, as I have suggested above. Read in isolation, 'As a Mydsomer Rose' or 'Mesure Is Tresour' might not seem especially critical of classical Greece, Rome and Troy; but when read as a constituent part of a manuscript like Harley 2255, each one intimates a theme which can be seen to govern the book as a whole.

Another poem in this manuscript, 'A Song of Vertu' (fols 12^r-14^r), may be read either as a commentary on secular poetic apprenticeship or as an expression of monastic piety, depending, perhaps, on the kind of codex in which the text appears. Lerer sees it in the former light: in his view, its presence in Huntington MS 140 'reaffirms the relationship of virtuous practice and ethical instruction'; and Lerer infers lay 'ethical instruction' from the poet's command to 'Reede in bookys of antiquyte, / Of oold stooryes beglad good thyng to heere'.⁴¹ I suspect that, regardless of the manuscript context of this particular poem, the phrase 'bookys of antiquyte' refers to the Benedictine *lectio divina*. The scribe who compiled Huntington MS 140 may well have had an agenda of his own and heard in 'A Song of Vertu' Lydgate's praise of profane as well as sacred literature. As a component text of Harley 2255, however, the poem clearly connects the reading of old books to monastic or perhaps lay religious 'virtuous practice'. This topic is not broached right away: rather, the poem first considers knights, merchants, mariners and messengers as instances of vocations which, like so many others, function in ways appropriate to their natures (fol. 13^r, ll. 57-62). In general terms, the undifferentiated, unspecified audience is counselled to 'Love hooly chirche' (fol. 13^r, l. 65), 'no pooreman oppresse' (fol. 13^r, l. 68), and 'In aduersite be pacient with meeknesse' (fol. 13^r, l. 71). In the tenth stanza, however, Lydgate finally addresses readers who lead a

specific kind of life well known to him, a life best enhanced by the reading of edifying books:

Touchyng also thyn occupacioun,
Depart thy tyme prudently on thre:
First in prayer and in orisoun.
Trauayl among is profitable to the.
Reede in bookys of antiquyte:
Of oold stooryes beglad good thyng to heere,
And it shal tourne to gret comodite.
Sewe aftir vertu and vertu thu shalt leere. (fol. 13^v, ll. 73-80)

These are highly evocative verses. Dividing his readers' day into times for 'prayer and [. . .] orisoun', 'Trauayl' and the reading of 'bookys of antiquyte' for the sake of hearing 'good thyng', Lydgate echoes St Benedict's exhortations to 'holy reading', 'prayer' and 'manual labour'.⁴² The 'bookys of antiquyte' or 'oold stooryes' recommended as part of this regimen are more likely to have been sacred than profane. If Lydgate had anything specific in mind, it could have been Scripture, John Cassian's *Conferences* or *Institutes*, Athanasius' *Life of St Antony*, or even the Benedictine *Rule* itself.⁴³ Whether cloistered or lay, the audience that Lydgate imagines are being asked to conform their lives to a monastic model. This seems to be the form of life commended in 'A Praise of Peace' as well, in which Lydgate moves from a consideration of the philosophical serenity in poverty shown by Diogenes (fol. 21^v, ll. 25-32) to a reflection upon the life of the Benedictine monk and priest:

Ther is also a pees contemplatif
Of parfiht men in ther professioun
As som that leede a solitary lif
In fastyng, prayng and devout orisoun,
Visite the poore and, of compassioun,
Nakyd and needy and hungry, socourlees
And poore in spirit, which shal haue ther guerdoun
With Crist to regne in his eternal pees. (fol. 21^v, ll. 33-40)

The lines praising solitude, fasting, praying and the singing of the divine office call to mind the monastic life proper, while the verses on ministering

to the needy remind us that long before Lydgate's time it had become common for Benedictine monks to be ordained as priests.⁴⁴

In 'A Song of Vertu', the stress in the line 'Touchyng also thyn occupacioun' (l. 73) should be laid, I think, on the possessive adjective *thyn*, for placed there the emphasis would serve to draw readers' attention away from the various kinds of *vita activa* mentioned earlier and to remind them of their own form of *vita contemplativa*. The moralistic speaker in the eleventh stanza urges one to 'Be no sluggard, fle from ydilness' (fol. 13^v, l. 81), the Benedictine's bugbear, and 'With vertuous lyff [to] take heed of this mateere' (fol. 13^v, l. 86). This counsel is explained in the next stanza when Lydgate encourages his reader, 'wrouht to be celestial' (fol. 13^v, l. 89), to rein in lustful desire ('flesshly and bestial' [fol. 13^v, l. 91]) as well as vanity (fol. 13^v, l. 92). Finally, the thirteenth stanza concludes the poem by urging the audience to recall their sins and show the 'contricioun' which makes possible 'Shriff, and hosyl and hooly repentaunce' (fol. 14^r, ll. 98-9). In its use of these specific words, 'A Song of Vertu' anticipates the ending of the next poem in the manuscript, 'A Pageant of Knowledge' (fols 14^r-17^r), even as it harks back to the final stanza of the earlier 'As a Mydsomer Rose' by exhorting penitents to confess their sins

With a cleer mynde of crystes passioun,
His.V.wonndys and blood that railleth down;
Vpon the cros he bouht the so deere,
Cleyme of his mercy to haue possessioun,
With hym to dwelle above the sterrys cleere.
(fol.14^r, ll. 100-4)

In light of the poem's gesture beyond the physical world towards unification with Christ in Heaven, it seems even more likely that the 'bookys of antiquyte' earlier thrust upon the reader (fol. 13^v, l. 77) are intended not to praise the classical tradition but to bury it. For their part, readers who heed Lydgate will 'Sewe afir vertu' (fol. 13^v, l. 80, and *passim*) until they have left Greece and Rome behind and arrived at the place where time itself no longer has meaning.

Transcendence is a clear *leitmotif* of Harley 2255, and one which the scribe sought to keep in his readers' minds by grouping together poems with similar topics and diction. Frequently remarked upon in the manuscript, the inadequacies of all that is 'chaungable' occupy Lydgate in the poem

immediately following 'A Song of Vertu' in the anthology, which MacCracken described as a variant of 'A Pageant of Knowledge' (fols 14^r-17^r). Contrasting 'The world so wyd' to 'The celyman so litel of stature' (fol. 14^r, ll. 1-2), this poem dwells on the merely 'mutable' (fol. 14^r, l. 3) nature of the earth itself. If readers but study closely their always changing surroundings, they will correctly judge 'this lyff a pilgrimage / In which ther is no stedfast abydyng' (fol. 16^v, ll. 135-6). Having disabused them of any exaggerated reckonings of the world's value, Lydgate then commands his audience to turn their gaze heavenward to pray to an utterly transcendent God,

the lord which is Eternal
That sitt so ferre above the sterrys sevene
In his Paleys moost Imperyal[.] (fol. 17^r, ll. 138-40)

For a moment the poem's readers may find themselves poised awkwardly between two worlds, one fickle but solid and just beneath their feet, the other eternal but 'ferre above' not only their grasp but also the celestial spheres themselves. Lydgate is there to bridge the abyss between creation and Creator. Echoing the end of 'A Song of Vertu' and sounding a theme suffused throughout the codex, this poem directs the faithful to ask God specifically for the grace which will enable 'Contricioun, shrift, [and] hoosyl' and carry them 'Toward that lyf wher ioye is ay lastyng' (fol. 17^r, ll. 142, 144).

As if to furnish the reader with additional means of arriving at 'that lyf', the seventh poem in the manuscript, '*Misericordias Domini in eternum cantabo*' (fols 17^r-21^v),⁴⁵ specifically praises divine mercy and mortal humility as sources of power in the monk's own struggles against pride. Bearing in mind Derek Pearsall's sensible caution against inferring Lydgate's personal feelings from his highly conventional expressions of piety,⁴⁶ we should still note that '*Misericordias*' urges a form of renunciation appropriate to this particular poet's courtly career. Lydgate acknowledges his awareness of 'songis' which celebrate heroic feats in the temporal realm, but he also indicates that he has abandoned them:

Ther be Canticulis of Conquest and victorie
That be songe at feestis marcial,
And ther be songis of palmys transitorye [i.e. 'transitory
triumphs']
With corious meetrys that be poetical;

Laureat tryvmphes, proud and Imperial
With boosty blowe in charys cleer shynyng.
Al this left off with voys memoryal,
Eternally thy Mercies I shal syng. (fol. 17^v, ll. 33-40)

The Black Monk implicitly renounces the 'Laureat tryvmphes' which had long occupied him. The 'Bildyng of Ylioun in many stoory told' and the 'Getyng of Troye by the brasen hors' (fol. 18^r, ll. 58-9) interest him little now: of this achievement 'Gret boost is maad but as for me no fors' (fol. 18^r, l. 57). Similar apathy is now aroused by 'Thebes the Cite [which] was reysed and maad strong' (fol. 18^v, l. 75). From Statius and other classical poets who commemorated antique civilisations Lydgate takes pains to distance himself, asserting that

what so evir they wroot in ther feynyng,
Our lord Ihesu to preise and magneffye
Eternally his Mercies I shal syng. (fol. 18^v, ll. 78-80)

Among the great poets of history, Chaucer too is evoked: Lydgate's line 'Al this left off with voys memoryal' (fol. 17^v, l. 39) echoes the famous appeal to Polyhymnia 'Singest with vois memorial in the shade' in *Anelida and Arcite* (l. 18). It is unclear, however, whether by this intertextual link the Monk of Bury is genuinely paying tribute to his literary forebear or implicitly casting him off as well in order to turn completely to God. That Lydgate lifts the line from a Chaucerian poem partly indebted to Statius's *Thebaid* and places it in a poem renouncing Thebes, Statius and other classical *auctores* makes the latter interpretation plausible. At the end of the poem Lydgate enumerates the various categories of the blessed 'in the *heuenly* cristal toures / Wher evir is ioye and brihtnesse ay lastyng' (fol. 20^v, ll. 181-2, italics mine; note the echo in l. 182 of 'A Pageant of Knowledge', fol. 17^r, l. 144). He furthermore prays that Jesus may grant all of his readers the power to sing His mercies 'out of al mortal shoures' (fol. 20^v, l. 183), that is, beyond temporality itself. While the classical literary tradition doubtless mattered to Lydgate at all stages of his long career, Harley 2255 represents his attachment to the glories of ancient Greek and Roman culture as but a 'phase', as something that he has evolved beyond.

This 'evolution' is fully evident where Lydgate abandons the 'Bildyng of Ylioun' and the 'reys[ing]' of Thebes to turn instead to 'Patriarkys and

prophetis alle, / Apostlys, Martirs, bisshopis, confessoures' (fol. 20^v, '*Misericordias Domini*', ll. 177-78). Depending on their own places in biblical and Church history, these figures either typologically or literally praised Jesus. The sentiment is repeated later in the manuscript, in Lydgate's Englishing of '*Gloriosa dicta sunt de Te*' (fols 135^r-9^v).⁴⁷ Mary is the poem's subject; David typologically sang her splendours and figured her as the holiest city of all, easily eclipsing literal cities commemorated by poets of old:

Auctors sumtyme gaf a prys to Troye,
Laude and honour and comendacioun
In Remembraunce of hire old Ioye
That sumtyme was vsyd in that toun;
And eeke of Rome for domynacioun,
Citees that tyme of mooste souereynte.
But al hire boost may now be leyd a doun;
So gloryous thinges be songe and seid of the.
(fol. 135^v, ll. 25-32)

Praise of Troy and Rome should be 'leyd a doun' as if it were a book, like the heroic canticles, poems, songs and 'Laureat tryvmphes' which will be 'left off' by the monk who vows *Misericordias Domini in eternum cantabo* (fol. 17^v, ll. 33-40). Are we meant to recall the *Siege of Thebes*, *Troy Book* and *Fall of Princes*, through which Lydgate had perpetuated the 'boost' of pagan cultures even while tracing their demises? Recalling the wording of '*Misericordias Domini*' (fol. 20^v, ll. 177-78), Lydgate in the '*Gloriosa dicta sunt*' writes that Mary is

Of Patryarkys the honour and the glorie,
And of prophetys chief fundacioun,
To the apostelys laude of ther victorye,
And to martirs her laureat Renoun,
Of confessours the consolacioun. (fol. 139^v, ll. 217-21)

These poems and others, such as 'A Praise of Peace' (esp. fol. 24^r-24^v, ll. 153-68) and 'Mesure is Tresour' (fol. 144^r, ll. 41-8, discussed above), represent the supersession of Judeo-Christian over pagan themes as linear historical progress, even as the scribe of Harley 2255, in organising materials under the seal of St Edmund's Abbey, figures it as a spatial displacement. That is to

say, certain of the poems and the coat of arms on fol. 1^r of Harley 2255 relegate the court to the background of Lydgate's career while evoking the monastery as an immediately present physical place, one where a monk can retire to the contemplative life after enduring trials and tribulations in the world. Monastic life is hinted at or explicitly described in 'A Praise of Peace', 'A Song of Vertu', *The Testament of Dan John Lydgate*, 'The Legend of Seynt Gyle', and 'To St Edmund'; and within this textual space, the matters of Troy, Thebes and Rome cease to matter at all. 'Laureat tryvmphes' yield pride of place to the 'laureat Renoun' of Mary ('*Gloriosa dicta sunt*', fol. 139^v, l. 220) and to the enduring example of the saintly East Anglian monarch himself, the 'laureat marter stable as a stoon wall' ('To St Edmund', fol. 152^v, l. 63). Lydgate may have come gradually to renounce courtly life and courtly tastes and to favour the use of the term 'laureate' in hagiographical rather than purely secular poetic contexts. This is the impression given by Harley 2255, despite the conventionality of the *Testament*, '*Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac*' (fols 146^v-8^r), 'God is myn helpere' (fols 148^r-150^r) and other poems cited already.⁴⁸

A natural objection to my hypothesis here is that Lydgate's authorial roles cannot be so neatly divided into worldly courtier and retiring monk, and the objection is well taken, for these roles overlap in the poet's work. Moreover, although Harley 2255 extols Christlike humility, it bears the sign of power. If the codex is connected with the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds, 'one of the half-dozen richest abbeys in England',⁴⁹ then its orbit around the prestige and largesse associated with Lancastrian royal favour does matter. Arresting the reader's attention on the very first page of the manuscript, St Edmund's coat of arms proclaims monastic privilege even as it emblematises monastic transcendence. As Gail McMurray Gibson has observed, however, 'if the cloister wall came less and less to stand for the physical reality of contemplative withdrawal in the busy world of a monastic center like Bury St. Edmunds, it still remained a cogent and powerful *symbol* of the mental aspiration toward heaven that defined the ideal spiritual life'.⁵⁰ Bury's accommodation to worldly power diminished neither Lydgate's earnestness in calling for the renunciation of that power, nor the sincerity with which this textual appeal was copied in Harley 2255. The scribe, consciously or otherwise, has elevated Lydgate above the trend of what Christopher Cannon has tactfully described as the later medieval 'variation' from St Benedict's own early ideals.⁵¹ In doing so, he has selected texts which amplify Lydgate's concern for the spiritual welfare of his audience.

Poems like 'The Letter to Gloucester' (fols 45^v-7^r), *The Testament of Dan John Lydgate* (fols 47^r-66^v), the lengthened version of '*Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac*' preserved here (fols 146^v-8^r), and 'God is myn helpere' (fols 148^r-50^r) stand out in their attempt to render convincingly the figure of an elderly monk who, while preparing to depart this life, is keen to offer advice relevant not only to himself but to his readers as well.

A few additional cautions are appropriate, however. Scholars would agree that Lydgate's advisory voice is a conscious response to the conventional piety of fifteenth-century England. As Rosemary Woolf has pointed out, the piety of the medieval lyric often springs less from the unique feelings of its author than from his or her sources and, ultimately, from devotional tradition.⁵² Derek Pearsall situates himself firmly in Woolf's camp by downplaying hints of autobiography in conventional-sounding poems like the *Testament*.⁵³ But much can be made of even the illusion of Lydgate's 'personality' in this and in other poems, an illusion heightened by the scribe of Harley 2255. Whoever he was, this person sought to elicit from readers a sympathetic response to a person named John Lydgate who wished to write for an audience; a poet who would appear to be more than a mere author-figure or a disembodied voice parroting bland, institutionally approved moralisation. Commenting on the 'notional' poet laureateship emerging from the speaking voices of texts like the *Troy Book*, Robert Meyer-Lee writes that '[i]n the pose of a laureate, Lydgate is at once idealized and historically concrete; his poetic "I" signifies a specific, flesh-and-blood person who at the same time is a personification of literary and moral authority'.⁵⁴ This authority clearly emerges in a different work like the *Testament*, despite, or rather in part because of, its revelation of the monk's earlier bad behaviour as a novice; in fact, this seemingly confessional quality enhances rather than diminishes one's sense of Lydgate as a real person.⁵⁵

In this anthology Lydgate's range of literary topics and public stances has been consciously narrowed, the poet himself presented as a primarily monastic rather than courtly or even 'occasional' versifier, and one with an almost tangible commitment to his pastoral vocation. This persona may be a fiction, a 'voice' articulated by the text as opposed to an actual 'presence';⁵⁶ and even the manuscript's intended audience of like-minded devout Catholics ready to accompany Lydgate on a textual pilgrimage of faith may amount to nothing more than an 'imagined community', their ostensible orthodoxy a hoped-for, fanciful construct of both the poet and the scribe.⁵⁷ Certainly the manuscript 'fashions' its audience by appealing to the orthodox faithful; all

but ignored are dissenters like the Lollards, who remained active in Norfolk and Suffolk well into the fifteenth century.⁵⁸ On occasion, these become the poet's explicit target: in 'Mesure Is Tresour', Lydgate explains that the duty of ecclesiastics, 'Spiritual heerdys' (fol. 146^r, l. 123), is to guard Christ's flock against

wolvys fell rygour,
That heretikys quenche nat the lyght
Of Crystes feith nor of iust mesour. (fol. 146^r, ll. 126-8).

Such references are rare, however. If one attempted to generalise about East Anglian religious attitudes on the basis of this manuscript alone, filled as it is with its reverence for the institutional Church, its indulgences and its saints, one would mistakenly suppose that the region had scarcely scented a whiff of heresy. Yet while the intended audience of this codex was limited and select, its exclusivity does not necessarily make that readership a fiction. Lydgate and the compiler of Harley 2255 may have had specific readers in mind; they certainly trusted what their own instincts told them about prevailing literary and devotional tastes; and they were sufficiently attuned to orthodox East Anglian piety to accommodate those tastes.

What I hope I am showing, even in an incomplete survey of the manuscript's contents like this, is that the 'compiling presence' behind Harley 2255—to borrow Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards' useful term⁵⁹—consciously seeks to depict Lydgate as a poet whose real treasures had been laid up first in Heaven, next in Bury St Edmunds, and last and least in Westminster. Lydgate's poems need not be 'given the last word' on the matter of their interpretation in all circumstances, but the 'first word', so to speak, needs to be heeded with an especially attentive ear.⁶⁰ As readers of this manuscript with purposes far removed from those of its original audience, we do well at least to acknowledge the social realities of its composition, the process whereby author, scribe and illustrator sought to preserve for posterity a Benedictine monk's reflections on the divine end of human life.⁶¹ John Lydgate wore many masks, however, and the Harley short poem anthology which we have been considering here favours one role out of the many which he assumed in his long life. In a valuable recent article in *PMLA*, Seth Lerer explores the idiosyncrasy and fragmentariness of medieval writing when recovered in its original manuscript contexts. 'The idea of the anthology', he observes, 'controls much of the English medieval notion of the literary'.⁶²

This insight applies as well to the anthology of Lydgateana considered here as to any other codex, for its scribe sought to control contemporary notions of an author whose vast output encouraged selective compilation. Building upon Ralph Hanna's remarks on manuscript circulation in his book *Pursuing History*, Lerer points out that anthologies and miscellanies 'represent "private, individual canons" rather than global ideas of canonicity or literariness'.⁶³ The Lydgate of Harley 2255 is, if not quite a fiction, at least a collaborative creation by a scribe who sought to intensify the devotional impulse already present in Lydgate's works. The author who emerges from this codex is something of a 'private, individual' Lydgate, a Benedictine monk rather than 'poet-propagandist to the Lancastrian dynasty', a moral counsellor well suited for a readership comprising either monks or, perhaps, male and female members of the lay confraternity of St Edmund's Abbey.⁶⁴ Although in Harley 2255 Lydgate seems to soar beyond the constraints of patronage in order to alight at the monastery, represented as the last stop before the Celestial Jerusalem, even this anthology does not define the poet for all time. Rather, it selects from a range of didactic, hagiographic, satiric and courtly roles which fifteenth-century scribes and readers understood to be simultaneously representative of Lydgate, commensurate with the prestige and sanctity of St Edmund's Abbey, and only somewhat less 'variable' than the world in which the Monk of Bury himself had had to live.

NOTES

¹ This essay originated with research undertaken at the British Library in the summers of 2002-04 and papers based on it presented at the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, in July 2003; at Canisius College in Buffalo, New York in November of the same year; and at the 'Text and Contexts' conference at Ohio State University in October, 2004. For helpful suggestions and encouragement at various stages of this project, I wish to thank the participants in those conferences as well as Frank Coulson, the conference organiser at Ohio State; A. S. G. Edwards; Alfred Hiatt; George Keiser; Stephen Reimer; Paul Thomas, the session organizer at Leeds; Andrew Wawn; and the anonymous reader for *Leeds Studies in English*. Any injudicious arguments are mine alone. Thanks also are due to my friends and English hosts Kevin Rea and Jennifer Rhoads; to my colleagues at Canisius College who supported this project, especially by means of a Summer Research Grant awarded me in 2004 by the Dean's Office; and to the staff of the British Library Manuscripts Room for permission to consult MS Harley 2255.

² For general studies and bibliography, see especially Walter Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, translated by Ann E. Keep (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970); Alain Renoir and C. David Benson, 'John Lydgate', in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, vol. 6 (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1980), pp. 1809-1920, 2071-2175; and Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371-1449): A Bio-bibliography* (Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 1997).

³ On the Middle English 'anthology', see Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Literary Texts', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III: 1400-1557*, ed. by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 555-75; and Seth Lerer, 'Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology', *PMLA*, 118 (2003), 1251-67, especially pp. 1255 and 1265, n. 8. Two other manuscripts of Lydgate's religious verse are related to MS Harley 2255: Jesus College, Cambridge MS 56 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 683. These have been discussed by Eleanor Prescott Hammond, 'Two British Museum Manuscripts (Harley 2251 and Adds. 34360): A Contribution to the Bibliography of John Lydgate', *Anglia*, 28 (1905), 1-28 (pp. 24-5); Julia Boffey, 'Short Texts in Manuscript Anthologies: The Minor Poems of John Lydgate in Two Fifteenth-Century Collections', in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. by Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 69-82 (pp. 71-2 and n. 17); and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Fifteenth-Century Middle English Verse Author Collections', in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. by A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent

Gillespie and Ralph Hanna (London: The British Library, 2000), pp. 101-12 (p. 104). These two manuscripts and the comments on them by Boffey and Hammond are cited also by Stephen Reimer and Pamela Farvolden, 'Arms and the Manuscript: The Date and Provenance of Harley 2255', forthcoming in *The Journal of the Early Book Society*, 8 (2005).

⁴ When citing Lydgate's poems, I use for the sake of convenience the titles supplied by Henry Noble MacCracken in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, Part 1: Religious Poems*, EETS, e.s. 107 (London: Oxford University Press, 1911 (for 1910)); *Part 2: Secular Poems*, EETS, o.s. 192 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934 (for 1933); repr. 1997). When quoting them, I provide first the folio number from Harley 2255 and then line numbers as they appear in the corresponding printed texts in MacCracken. In general I have followed MacCracken's capitalisation, removal of caesural virgules, and expansion of scribal abbreviations. In the present study such abbreviations are expanded silently, however (differently from MacCracken's use of italicised letters, e.g. 'dispoicioun'); and I depart from MacCracken's use of boldface type to indicate underscoring of words in the manuscript. The light modern punctuation is my own, but parallel indentation of lines within stanzas is as found in the manuscript.

⁵ The last lines of 'A Praise of Peace' appear on what should be fol. 25^r but in fact has been erroneously numbered fol. 24^r by a modern paginator. To avoid confusion I have followed the erroneous pagination, which continues throughout the codex.

⁶ Boffey and Edwards, 'Literary Texts', pp. 558-9. Boffey and Edwards remark on an increasingly widespread form of manuscript production after c. 1400, that of the 'coherent collection [which] parallels the vogue for the single-work codex by amalgamating the works of a single author': 'Literary Texts', p. 558. Compare Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 375-76; Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279-315, especially pp. 279-80; and Linne Mooney, 'Professional Scribes? Identifying English Scribes Who Had a Hand in More Than One Manuscript', in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (York: York Medieval Press / Boydell Press, 2000), pp. 131-41, especially pp. 138-9.

⁷ See also *The Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. by Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), no. 2237. The *Index* will be cited hereafter as *IMEV*. For the debate about this poem, see especially Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, pp. 77-8, where he takes issue with MacCracken's rejection of it from the Lydgate canon in *Minor Poems*, I xxxi.

⁸ *John Lydgate*, p. 77. Regarding Harley 2255, A. S. G. Edwards writes that it 'is seemingly in some way connected with Lydgate's own monastery there [at Bury St Edmunds]': 'Fifteenth-Century Middle English Verse Author Collections', p. 104. See also note 39, below.

⁹ Hammond first speculated on a connection between Curteys and Harley 2255 in 'Two British Museum Manuscripts', pp. 24-25. According to Derek Pearsall, Harley 2255 'is an old MS., a very good one, with texts of excellent authority, and it was probably prepared under Lydgate's direction as an anthology of his own religious and didactic verse, as a personal present for his abbot' (*John Lydgate*, p. 77), a view echoed later in the same author's *Bio-bibliography*, p. 82. As he indicates in his book-length study (*John Lydgate*, p. 82, note 65), this theory was advanced also by Samuel Moore, 'Patrons of Letters in Norfolk and Suffolk, c. 1450', *PMLA*, 27 (1912), 188-207 (p. 207); and by Hammond, *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1927; repr. New York: Octagon Press, 1965), p. 79.

¹⁰ 'Arms and the Manuscript'. This study takes issue with Hammond's speculation about the coat of arms in the manuscript (fol. 1^v) in 'Two British Museum Manuscripts', pp. 24-25. Edwards, 'Fifteenth-Century [...] Author Collections', agrees with Reimer that '[t]he earlier view that the opening initial contains Curteys's arms seems incorrect' (p. 111, n. 29). I wish to thank Professors Reimer and Farvolden for showing me their essay, with its very full description of the manuscript, prior to its publication.

¹¹ See also Kathleen Scott's remarks about Harley 2255 in 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund: A Newly-Located Manuscript in Arundel Castle', *Viator*, 13 (1982), 335-66 (p. 343, n. 33). I assume that one scribe rather than two compiled Harley 2255, but the matter is far from settled: see Scott, 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund', p. 343, n. 33; and Reimer and Farvolden, 'Arms and the Manuscript'.

¹² See the summary of the manuscript's contents in *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols (1808; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olm, 1973), II 592-4.

¹³ *John Lydgate*, p. 169. For a pertinent study of the monastic narrator of Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*, see Scott-Morgan Straker, 'Deference and Difference: Lydgate, Chaucer, and the *Siege of Thebes*', *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 52 (2001), 1-21. I am grateful to Alfred Hiatt for directing me to Straker's article.

¹⁴ The progress of this continuing debate cannot be evaluated here. James Simpson and Alessandra Petrina have independently challenged Pearsall's well-known refutation (in *John Lydgate*, pp. 14-16) of earlier arguments for a humanist Lydgate advanced by Walter Schirmer and Alain Renoir. See Simpson's *Oxford English Literary History: Volume 2: 1350-1545: Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 52 *et seq.*; and Petrina's *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth-Century England: The*

Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester (Leiden: Brill, 2004), especially pp. 282-4. For postscripts by both Pearsall and Simpson, see the former's 'Apotheosis of John Lydgate', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 35 (2005), 25-38; and Simpson's response in 'Not the Last Word', in the same issue of *JMEMS*, pp. 111-19.

¹⁵ An ability noted by Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, pp. 15, 131, 141-3; and A. J. Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1982), pp. 137-9. See also Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate', in *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, ed. by Jeffrey Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 69-107 (especially pp. 96-7). For a perspicacious reading of Lydgate's complex attitudes towards Julius Caesar in his lone prose tract, see Maura Nolan, 'The Art of History Writing: Lydgate's *Serpent of Division*', *Speculum*, 78 (2003), 99-127. These penetrating studies show that while Lydgate may have objected to the violence and paganism of Greece and Rome, he did not do so unthinkingly but rather explored those cultures with sophisticated agendas of his own.

¹⁶ Christopher Cannon, 'Monastic Productions', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 316-48 (p. 341).

¹⁷ Recent pertinent studies of East Anglian piety include Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Victor I. Scherb, *Staging Faith: East Anglian Drama in the Later Middle Ages* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001); Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), esp. chapter 2, 'Some East Anglian Magdalenes', pp. 50-99.

¹⁸ On the impulse in Lydgate and Hoccleve towards the simultaneous memorialisation and 'decommissioning' of Chaucer's poetry, see John J. Thompson, 'After Chaucer: Resituating Middle English Poetry in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period', in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies*, ed. by Pearsall, pp. 183-99.

¹⁹ No textual evidence proves a Lancastrian commission for the *Siege of Thebes* (or, to use James Simpson's preferred title, *The Destruction of Thebes*), though scholars have long noted that the work speaks to Henry V's French ambitions. See, for example, Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 156; Patterson, 'Making Identities', pp. 74-5, 93-7; Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, pp. 105-06. Simpson puts forth his case for the renaming of *The Siege of Thebes* in "'Dysemol daies and fatal houres": Lydgate's *Destruction of Thebes* and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*', in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. by Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), pp. 15-33.

²⁰ For an intriguing study of the relationship between Lydgate's reputation and post-medieval *print* culture, see Joseph A. Dane and Irene Basey Beesemyer, 'The Denigration of John Lydgate: Implications of Printing History', *English Studies*, 81 (2000), 117-26.

²¹ Space limitations prevent me from developing this point here, but even a casual perusal of the 'Letter' and of the enormous *Fall of Princes* reveals this ambivalence.

²² Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 248-53.

²³ '[T]he Advice is pestilent enough', according to the early nineteenth-century compiler of the contents of the manuscript in *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts*, p. 592, column 1. Derek Pearsall has called Lydgate's poem 'a peculiar piece of work' whose 'multiplication of instances [of conformism] leads him into [. . .] pointless absurdity'; '[t]he whole poem is awkward and fumbling: the limited applicability of the original proverb leaves Lydgate with no clear directive, and he gropes forward as if every breath will be his last' (*John Lydgate*, p. 209).

²⁴ Noted by several commentators: MacCracken, *Minor Poems*, II 750; Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 209; Alexandra Gillespie, "'These proverbes yet do last": Lydgate, the Fifth Earl of Northumberland, and Tudor Miscellanies from Print to Manuscript', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 215-32 (p. 223).

²⁵ E.g. 'Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal! / Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al' (ll. 18-19); the poem is printed in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn, general editor Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 653. Subsequent references to Chaucer's works will be to this edition.

²⁶ Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II 225 and 307, with specific reference to the arms as they appear in British Library MSS Harley 2278 and Yates Thompson 47, respectively.

²⁷ Despite their different contexts, the first part of the poem is also reminiscent of Arcite's far blunter advice to Palamon in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*: 'And therefore, at the kynges court, my brother, / Ech man for hymself, ther is noon oother' (*Canterbury Tales*, frag. I, ll. 1181-2).

²⁸ "'These proverbes yet do last'", p. 223.

²⁹ "'These proverbes yet do last'", pp. 223-4.

³⁰ See above, note 23.

³¹ In *The Fall of Princes*, ed. by Henry Bergen, 4 vols, EETS, e.s. 121-4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924-27), see I, ll. 5510-12; V, l. 1174. In *The Siege of Thebes*, ed. by Axel Erdmann and Eilert Ekwall, 2 vols, EETS, e.s. 108 and 125 (London: Oxford University Press, 1911-1930), see I. 682.

³² See *The Siege of Thebes*, ll. 4698-4703. For exhortations to peace and unity in short poems addressed to Henry VI, see e.g. 'The Title and Pedigree of Henry VI', ll. 76

and 156; 'Ballade to King Henry VI', ll. 126 and 140; 'Henry VI's Triumphal Entry into London', l. 448 (*Minor Poems*, II 615, 617, 629, 630 and 645, respectively).

³³ In this poem Lydgate asserts that striving for earthly peace can effectively preserve 'monarchies and famous regioun[s]' (fol. 22^r, l. 44) from strife.

³⁴ 'Making Identities', p. 93.

³⁵ The scholarship on late medieval English piety is vast, but see especially the works cited above in notes 17 and 22, and the following: Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992); and Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). Rosemary Woolf notes Lydgate's poetic indebtedness, especially in the *Testament*, to contemporary Crucifixion iconography: *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*, pp. 208-9.

³⁶ Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 100-8 (p. 106).

³⁷ *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 108.

³⁸ *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 114.

³⁹ This suspicion is hardly mine alone; Reimer and Farvolden ('Arms and the Manuscript') are the latest scholars to argue that Harley 2255 was produced for St Edmund's Abbey, and their reasons are the most convincing of all that have been adduced since Eleanor Hammond's time.

⁴⁰ Miri Rubin's analysis of Lydgate's 'Exposition of the *Pater Noster*' is especially useful in situating this poem and, by extension, others like it in their contemporary lay catechetical context: *Corpus Christi*, pp. 100-1. The whole chapter 'Beyond Design: Teaching and Reception of the Eucharist' (pp. 83-163) is especially rich.

⁴¹ *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 107, though I print the text of the poem as it appears in Harley 2255 (fol. 13^v, ll. 77-8), including MS 'beglad' for 'be glad'.

⁴² 'Lectiones sanctas libenter audire, orationi frequenter incumbere'; 'Otiositas inimica est animae, et ideo certis temporibus occupari debent fratres in labore manuum, certis iterum horis in lectione divina': *The Rule of St Benedict, in Latin and English with Notes*, general editor Timothy Fry, OSB (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981), chapters IV, ll. 55-6 and XLVIII, l. 1. This edition will be cited hereafter as *RSB*.

⁴³ On St Benedict's own programme of recommended readings for monks, see *RSB* chapter LXXIII, ll. 3-5 and the explanatory notes on p. 297.

⁴⁴ Dom Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, 2nd edn (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961), pp. 293-5.

⁴⁵ The refrain echoes Psalm 88, as noted by Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 260.

⁴⁶ For example, in *John Lydgate*, pp. 5 and 17.

⁴⁷ Adapted from Psalm 87 (Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 275).

⁴⁸ A number of seemingly unique poems appear in this manuscript, most but not all of which in the last thirty folia or so. While space prevents me from considering all of them here, they include 'The World is Variable', 'Mesure Is Tresoure', the final three seemingly autobiographical stanzas of '*Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac*' (a poem extant in three other manuscripts without those stanzas), 'God Is Myn Helpere', 'Undir a park full prudently pyght' (IMEV 3821; the poem may not be Lydgate's), 'The Hood of Green', and 'Against Millers and Bakers'. Did this scribe have special access to a cache of Lydgatean verse available only at Bury? According to John J. Thompson, 'What is clear is that some of the religious houses of the day were not only important centres for the production and transmission of Middle English religious literature but also provided copyists with privileged access to the resources upon which sophisticated editorial judgements could be based': 'Textual Instability and the Late Medieval Reputation of Some Middle English Religious Literature', *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*, 5 (1991), 175-94 (pp. 177-8, building on the work of A. I. Doyle (cited in note 12, p. 189)).

⁴⁹ Pearsall, *John Lydgate: A Bio-bibliography*, p. 12. Other studies of the Abbey include J. C. Cox, 'Houses of Benedictine Monks', in *The Victoria History of the County of Suffolk*, II, edited by William Page (London: Constable, 1907), pp. 56-72; A. B. Whittington, *Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk* (1971; London: English Heritage handbook, 1992, repr. 1999), based on the same author's 'Bury St. Edmunds Abbey: The Plan, Design and Development of the Church and Monastic Buildings', from 'Report of the Summer Meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute at Ipswich, 1951', *Archaeological Journal* 108 (1951), pp. 168-87; and Robert Gottfried, *Bury St Edmunds and the Urban Crisis: 1290-1539* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 73-84.

⁵⁰ *Theater of Devotion*, pp. 127-8; italics in original.

⁵¹ 'Monastic Productions', pp. 316, 318. For his part, Butler concedes that 'the medieval presentation of Benedictine life' did in fact witness 'a complete transformation of the manner of life planned by St Benedict at Monte Cassino'; but he also demonstrates that the process had begun at least as far back as the eighth century, and that previously even Benedict had departed from some of his own original ideals (*Benedictine Monachism*, pp. 293-303 (especially pp. 298-9)).

⁵² *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 5-6.

⁵³ *John Lydgate*, pp. 5 and 17. For a different view, see Sheila Delany, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England: The Work of Osbern Bokenham* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 6. Julia Boffey carefully reasons that '[s]everal manuscripts preserve it [the *Testament*] as part of the corpus of Lydgate's minor poems, sometimes giving it extra prominence as if to highlight its status

as an autobiographical document. . . . The copy in British Library, MS Harley 2255 draws attention to Lydgate's reputation with the heading "Testamentum Johannis lidgate nobilis poete" (fol. 47^v): 'Lydgate, Henryson, and the Literary Testament', *MLQ*, 53 (1992), 41-56 (pp. 49-50).

⁵⁴ 'Laureates and Beggars in Fifteenth-Century English Poetry: The Case of George Ashby', *Speculum*, 79 (2004), 688-726 (p. 696).

⁵⁵ For a wider discussion of the phenomenon of medieval poets simultaneously demonstrating their authority while conceding their human flaws, see A. J. Minnis, 'The Author's Two Bodies? Authority and Fallibility in Late-Medieval Textual Theory', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their Scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, ed. by Pamela R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot: Scolar, 1997), pp. 259-79.

⁵⁶ On the Derridean distinction between 'voice' and 'presence' in the pursuit of the Chaucerian narrator of the *Canterbury Tales*, see H. Marshall Leicester's introduction to *The Disenchanted Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 1-31, especially pp. 8-10.

⁵⁷ I am, of course, adapting and echoing an already oft-echoed concept of Benedict Anderson's. See his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991, repr. 1996), especially the preliminary observations on such communities on pp. 6-7.

⁵⁸ *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-1431*, ed. by Norman Tanner, Camden Society, 4th series, 20 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977). For stimulating discussion of the Lancastrian dynasty's manipulation of the Lollard threat, see Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 32-62.

⁵⁹ 'Literary Texts', p. 560.

⁶⁰ Here I echo and respond to the language of Strohm's statement of methodology in *England's Empty Throne*, p. xiii. The texts examined in his book do indeed disclose complex meanings which belie their surface 'enunciation[s]', and I find myself in agreement with some of the basic assumptions of Strohm's approach (e.g. that authorial intent does not circumscribe the total meaning of a text). As this essay suggests, however, I hesitate to assume that all texts may be 'potentially deceptive' (p. xiii).

⁶¹ Compare Lee Patterson, 'Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch: Psyche and Clio in Medieval Literary Studies', *Speculum*, 76 (2001), 638-80, p. 679; and Nicholas Watson, 'Desire for the Past', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 21 (1999), 59-97 (p. 97).

⁶² Seth Lerer, 'Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology', p. 1253.

⁶³ 'Medieval English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology', p. 1253. Lerer quotes Ralph Hanna III, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts*

(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 9. Hanna's remarks on that page deserve full quotation in their own right: 'Miscellaneous books testify to acts at least analogous to canon-formation as we understand it, but these are most normally private, individual canons. There was no general late-medieval vernacular literary public, only a range or spectrum of literary communities.'

⁶⁴ See Ralph Hanna III and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1996), 11-35, p. 18, n. 24 and 25 for bibliography on some of the fraternity's most illustrious members. Compare Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, p. 27 and note 16. I am grateful to Professor Edwards for providing me a copy of his co-authored article.

Deconstructing Skelton: The Texts of the English Poems

A. S. G. Edwards

John Skelton (c. 1460-1529) is the first English poet whose works were disseminated in significant forms in both manuscript and print during his lifetime. The extent to which the decisions to publish his works in a particular medium were considered ones cannot be finally resolved; but it seems probable that in such respects they were deliberate, determined by the nature of a particular poem's subject matter and/or Skelton's sense of its potential audience.

That publication was for Skelton a circumstance driven by occasion goes some way towards accounting for the curiously ad hoc nature of the early printing history of his poems. Unlike such contemporaries as Hawes¹ and Barclay,² Skelton does not appear to have had any stable relationship with a particular publisher, but found it necessary to deal with a number of different ones over time, from Wynkyn de Worde, who printed two editions of the *bowge of courte* in [1499] (STC 22597) and [c. 1510] (STC 22597.5), and also probably printed *Elinor Ruming* [1521] (STC 22611.5), to Richard Faques (to whose relationship with Skelton I will turn shortly), to John Rastell who printed *agaynste a comely coystrowne* [1527?] (STC 22611) and *dyuers balettys and dyties solacyous* [1528?] (STC 22604), and to Richard Pynson with whom the sequence of printed editions during his lifetime concludes with *A replycacion agaynst certayne yong scolers* [1528] (STC 22609). There is no evidence that the manuscript transmission of Skelton's poems was any more systematic. They occur in contexts that vary from the random—scribbled, for example, on the flyleaves of printed books, or extracted in manuscripts otherwise devoted to other subjects—as well as in fuller forms in larger compilations, albeit still of a miscellaneous kind, like John Colyns' so-called commonplace book,³ or the 'Welles anthology',⁴ or in de luxe household collections like British Library, Royal MS 18 D. II, a manuscript in which

Skelton's early poem on the death of Henry Percy, fourth earl of Northumberland forms part of a larger celebration of the Percy family's achievements.⁵ But there is no surviving evidence of contemporary attempts to assemble Skelton's poems systematically or extensively in manuscript. In general, it is hard to be sure of the extent to which Skelton achieved any distinctive identity through manuscript circulation. Apart from Royal 18 D. II, only the spacious layout of BL, Cotton MS Vitellius E. X, a copy of *The Garland of Laurel*, now fragmentary, suggests an inclination to produce any of Skelton's separately circulating poems in a relatively elaborate form.

The picture of such early circulation in both manuscript and print is necessarily incomplete. Much has doubtless been lost. There is, for example, a tantalizing entry in the notebooks of the eighteenth-century antiquary, Thomas Hearne, in which he describes 'two Leaves, cut out of some old Book, on one side of w^{ch} verses, in old English, ad Patrem, filium & Spiritum Sanctum, by Skelton the Poet Laureat, perhaps written by his hand [. . .]'.⁶ And the flurry of posthumous printed editions that appeared in the twenty or so years immediately after his death testifies to commercial attempts to satisfy a continued demand for Skelton's verse. Some of these posthumous editions are of considerable textual interest since they constitute the earliest surviving forms of a work: for example, the c. 1530 edition of *Magnificence* by John Rastell (STC 22607), or Richard Kele's 1545 edition of *Why Come Ye Nat to Court* (STC 22615). In addition, it is clear that these posthumous editions do not represent the full extent of Skelton's appeal in the years after his death. Rastell's inventories of the late 1530s show evidence of several editions of his poems now lost.⁷ It is futile to speculate on how these lost editions would affect the editing of Skelton. But they do serve to remind us of the irretrievable loss of possibly crucial stages in the early transmission of his works and thus of some of the difficulties that any attempt to establish his texts must confront.

Clearly any attempt to examine the text of Skelton's verse must consider issues of some complexity to do with the forms of its transmission and the relative authority with which these forms can be invested. Hence the use of the term 'deconstructing' in my title. I use it in a literal sense to suggest that the texts of some of Skelton's English poems warrant re-examination in ways that will require the dismantling of the forms in which they have been permitted to exist for a very long time.

To be precise since 1843. In that year Alexander Dyce published his two-volume edition of *The Poetical Works of John Skelton*. It is appropriate to say a little about Dyce. He was born in 1798, and after early flirtations with both the law and the cloth he established himself as one of the prolific and distinguished editors of the first half of the nineteenth century. His main interest was dramatic literature: he produced editions of, among others, Peele, Middleton, Webster and Shakespeare, with a kind of metronomic efficiency that nonetheless demonstrated considerable scholarly acumen. He died in 1869 and the old *DNB* pays tribute to his 'deep and varied learning, his minute accuracy, and his nice discriminations [. . .]. So long as the best traditions of English scholarship survive his name will be respected'.⁸

These qualities are reflected in his edition of Skelton. This seems to have been an unusually long meditated work. Wordsworth, himself an admirer of Skelton, wrote to Dyce in January 1833 to ask about progress, so one must assume that the conception of the edition considerably antedates that point.⁹ When it finally appeared a decade later it was clear that the wait had been justified. Dyce's edition was by any standards an extraordinary achievement. It presented for the first time a comprehensive canon of Skelton's poetry, together with *dubia*; it was based on an examination of all the known early prints and manuscripts and was supported by careful commentary. It is a testimony to that achievement that nothing to surpass it has appeared in the subsequent history of Skelton studies. All collected editions of Skelton henceforward were based on Dyce, although there have been a few separate editions of individual works.¹⁰ I say this notwithstanding the most important subsequent such edition, John Scattergood's *John Skelton: The Complete English Poems*, which pays tribute to Dyce in its preface,¹¹ and which seems to have used Dyce's text as setting copy, sometimes down to its misprints.¹² Although Scattergood's edition is a considerable advance over its predecessor in its annotation, its textual basis is still Dyce. And hence it is Dyce's text on which modern critical discussions have been based, either directly or indirectly.

That nearly all forms of modern scholarship on a major early modern writer should be grounded on an edition now over one hundred and fifty years old can be seen as evidence of its lasting value, or to the textual incuriosity of most subsequent students, or possibly both. The time may be at hand for some assessment of the textual bases of Dyce's edition to determine the extent to which it reflects in an appropriate way the evidence of Skelton's text.

A fundamental problem in any such examination is the question of transmission: the determination of the relationship, and hence the relative authority of the various surviving forms of each of Skelton's texts. I begin with a brief but much anthologized poem, 'Manerly Margery Milk and Ale'. This describes an exchange between a clerk and a serving girl, in four five-line stanzas, the first three with a two-line refrain, the final one with one of four lines. Until recently it was known only in a single witness, BL, Additional MS 5465, fols 96v-9r, the Fayrfax manuscript, a famous collection of Tudor music. But I recently identified another version in manuscript, copied on the flyleaf of a copy of a Caxton edition of the *Dictes and Sayeingis of the Philosophres* in Trinity College, Cambridge.¹³ This includes one completely new stanza and a number of variants of arguable superiority to the Fayrfax version. It may also be the earliest surviving copy of any of Skelton's poems. I print this new stanza below:

ye play full play ye breke my net bend
 qwat hav I Rouselit yov criste it for fende
 ye ware vs ye tere vs ye seldom vs a mend
 yett suffer good maisters & som what god wyll send
 I haytt such harskaldes at nothyng wyll spend

The following lines appear at the corresponding point in BL, Additional 5465:

Iwiss ye dele uncurtesly
 what wolde ye frompill me now fy fy
 what and ye shal be my piggesnye
 be Crist ye shall not no no hardely
 I will not be japed bodely (15-19)

The discovery of such a new version is simply the benefit that time confers on a later generation of editors. But its implications are of interest, especially as they apply to this new stanza. How is it to be accounted for? How is its canonicity to be established? And how is it to be accommodated into the existing text of Skelton's poem?

No ready answers present themselves to such questions. There are no secure stylistic criteria by which its authorship can be established. The version in the Fayrfax manuscript is set to music, a medium in which Skelton had

evident interest. This suggests something about the social environment in which a form of the poem may have circulated: that is, to be sung for a listening audience. But there seems no obvious transmissional hypothesis that can demonstrate that one form of the poem derives from the other. Indeed, the recognition of such an environment adds, rather than diminishes the difficulties of formulating any explanation that can ascribe both versions confidently to Skelton. For poems circulating within such social environments are susceptible to appropriation by unauthorized hands.¹⁴ The most reasonable assumption might be that what survive are forms of the same lyric perhaps adapted to fit different occasions; and that both are possibly, but not certainly, by the same author. An assumption of the retrievability of a single text from the surviving evidence would serve to construct an entity that does not exist, that somehow accommodated, for example, the unique stanza of 'Manerly Margery' into the British Library version to produce a conflated text. But, as I have already suggested, there seem no secure grounds for following this assumption. The surviving versions lack the evidence of transmissional clarity that would make this a proper way of proceeding. The variant forms of 'Manerly Margery' suggest that the circulation of Skelton's occasional verse does not invariably justify presenting it as a single critically edited text.

These lines focus our attention on the survival of variant versions of poems ascribed to Skelton. The verses to celebrate the English victory over the Scots at Flodden in 1513 provide another example of this tendency. There are two forms of these verses associated with Skelton, the longer of which seems to be an amplification of the shorter. The shorter, titled *A ballade of the scottyshe king*, was published by Richard Faques in [1513] (STC 22593). The earliest surviving edition of the longer version, *Against the Scots*, is dated [1545?] (STC 22594),¹⁵ but must have been first published close in time to the events to which it alludes, possibly again by Faques. The texts are verbally related and if one accepts that both are by Skelton,¹⁶ they provide further testimony to his tendency not be content with a single version of a text but to see it as potentially adaptable to differing circumstances that cannot be readily recovered. Perhaps as more details of the victory emerged Skelton was prompted to capitalize on the circulation of the earlier poem by producing a more detailed account of the English triumph.¹⁷ Such an impulse to amplification is hardly surprising, especially in occasional verse that may have struck a popular chord. And Dyce and other editors do print both poems separately. But they may provide a little further weight to a view that Skelton's

verse cannot necessarily be edited under a controlling assumption that there is a single form of the text of a work to be recovered through collation and comparison of variants.

Such an assumption goes to the procedural heart of Dyce's edition and its modern followers. The form of Skelton's oeuvre we find in these editions is one shaped in ways that, at times, crucially ignore the implications of available textual evidence to construct a single form of the text that lacks authority. We find this tendency evidenced in its most extreme form in the poem we now call *Speke Parrott*.¹⁸

As it is printed by Dyce and later editors this poem forms a satire on Cardinal Wolsey, in 520 lines, largely in rhyme royal stanzas. The textual situation, as reflected in the surviving witnesses, is rather more complex than this form of presentation indicates. *Speke Parrott* survives in two forms, in part in manuscript, in BL, Harley MS 2252, fols 133v-40, which includes lines 1-56, 225-520, that is, about 350 lines out of 520. This version can be dated to the 1520s; hence it was copied in Skelton's lifetime.¹⁹ There is also a series of printed versions of the poem, the earliest of which is dated c. 1545 (STC 22598-600); these versions include lines 1-232, 265-9, 274-7. That is, out of a total of 241 lines, these editions provide about 175 lines not in the manuscript. This form of the text appears only in witnesses that all significantly postdate Skelton's death in 1529.

It is unusual to find the forms of a poem so closely corresponding to the mode in which they have been transmitted, manuscript or print. There is little overlap of content between those parts of the text in these different modes. Only the opening fifty-six lines, and seventeen lines from the middle parts of the poem are common to both the manuscript and printed forms of the text. In fact, *Speke Parrott* as we are accustomed to read it in modern form does not exist in the witnesses to its text. The first time these witnesses were merged into a single entity is in Dyce's edition. He notes that the manuscript 'has supplied much not given in the printed copies' (II 1), but offers no hypothesis for the poem's transmission nor any rationale for the form of text he has constructed, one that creates a single entity out of manuscript and printed forms that have only a small amount of material in common.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Dyce felt the poem he had constructed to be 'very obscure' (II 338). Nor is it unsurprising that subsequent critics have followed him in acknowledging the poem's difficulties. Indeed, responses to it show even the best of Skelton's critics to poor effect. Some have actually

noted the textual situation and drawn conclusions of varying degrees of pessimism from it about the possibility of discussing the poem. But that has not inhibited them from doing so.

For example, William Nelson, in his pioneering study, gives a concise summary of the textual problems here. He then concludes: 'For convenience, the poem as a whole may be split into two gross divisions, the first including the text as it appears in the printed version, the second consisting of the added matter that appears only in the manuscript.'²⁰ He does not explain what the benefits of such 'gross divisions' are, nor why he establishes the order he does when the manuscript part is actually earlier in date. A. R. Heiserman takes a more pessimistic view of the textual situation here: 'Today, most of *Speke Parrott* is nonsense to the critic and a stumbling block to the historian.'²¹ He does go on to note 'the curious bibliographical [*sic*] state of the text' and to observe that 'no bibliographical [*sic*] analysis of the texts has yet been published'.²² But this observation comes in the middle of an analysis of the poem that runs to more than sixty pages (pp. 126-89). Stanley Fish characterizes this as 'Skelton's most baffling poem' and discusses the textual problems it poses which he numbers among difficulties 'which would seem to render any reading provisional'.²³ But in spite of this he feels that 'a more or less satisfactory reading of the poem becomes possible' if it is approached through 'the psychology of the speaker'.²⁴ In the most recent discussion of the poem's textual states F. W. Brownlow draws this conclusion:

The evidence, interpreted economically, shows that *Speke Parrot*, having begun as a clearly shortened piece of work, proceeds, like several of Skelton's poems, simply to grow, and the two versions allow us to see it at a stage in its growth.²⁵

He then argues that the different parts of this poem should be printed in reverse order.²⁶ The logic of this is not easy to grasp. What is striking about the two forms of the poem is their relative lack of overlap, a circumstance which seems to suggest less a 'growing' poem than one in which a small body of shared material was redeployed for different purposes. Obviously there is a difference here from the textual situation in the Flodden poems where there is clear verbal evidence of a relationship between the two versions that points to the likelihood that one is an expanded form of the other. In *Speke Parrott* it is the lack of relationship between the two portions of the poem beyond the

opening lines that is striking. There seems no textual or bibliographical justification for printing both forms as one—or in reverse order.

So far as I know, no one has considered the codicological evidence that suggests that the manuscript version reflects some form of booklet circulation, even if it is not constituted as a booklet in the manuscript itself.²⁷ Folios 133-40 of Harley 2252 are copied by a different hand from those of the preceding texts and its outer leaves were originally blank. It clearly represents therefore some contemporary form of circulation for Skelton's poem and therefore has some claim to an autonomous identity within Skelton's own lifetime. Clearly the posthumous printed editions offer another version with less obvious claims to authority.

It is not easy to hypothesize a situation in which the poem could have become split into two parts through transmission unless one assumes once again some form of versioning in which the opening part of the poem was employed to some different/related/unrelated purpose from the rest. The poem is, of course, an occasional satire, and while Skelton may have engaged in some form of adaptation or revision it is also possible that someone else used part of it for emulative variation or elaboration, possibly in the hope that it might be ascribed to Skelton since a version by him on this subject was already circulating. But, leaving aside the attributional question, there seem no grounds for conflating two quite distinct texts into a single poem, and then using that version as a basis for critical study. The proper course would seem to be to print both forms separately. The durability of Dyce's construct indicates the unwillingness of generations of literary critics to confront the implications of the textual evidence for this poem.

The questions of textual integrity that *Speak Parrott* raises can be explored again in a more difficult problem, one which no-one hitherto seems to have even felt to be an issue. It occurs in *The Garland of Laurel*. *The Garland* is again a poem that survives in both manuscript and print versions. The manuscript version is in BL, Cotton Vitellius E. X, fols 208r-25v, possibly dating from the 1520s; the print is a contemporary edition by Richard Faques, *the garlande or chapelet of laurell* [1523] (STC 22610). Thus it is the only one of Skelton's major poems that may survive in both manuscript and printed forms from Skelton's lifetime. But the manuscript contains only a fragmentary text of the poem, now lacking lines 246-720 and from lines 1136 to the end. The passage that concerns me here occurs only in Faques' edition.

It begins at line 1261 and is an interpolation that appears in the course of the lengthy enumeration of the canon of Skelton's own works (lines 1170ff). This portion of the poem is composed in rhyme royal stanzas. In the course of the enumeration Skelton mentions 'Of Phillip Sparrow the lamentable fate' (1254). Immediately after this point the poem breaks off to incorporate part of the text of *Philip Sparrow* itself, hence shifting into short couplets or Skeltonics, before then reverting to the rhyme royal stanza otherwise used for the rest of the main text of this part of the *Garland* and continuing the list of Skelton's works. The interpolated lines correspond to lines 1261-1372 of *Philip Sparrow*, the ending of the poem, which is described in the earliest surviving printed text as 'an addicyon'.²⁸

Why should this poem be singled out for such extended rehearsal here when no other of Skelton's works are? Some critics have linked the lengthy quotation to an earlier postulated quarrel between Skelton and Alexander Barclay to which Barclay seems to allude in his translation of the *Ship of Fools* in 1509,²⁹ shortly after the generally assumed date of composition of *Philip Sparrow*.³⁰ But it is hard to see what purpose would be served by adverting to such a quarrel nearly fifteen years later, nor how this passage bears on it directly in the context of autobiibliography in which it occurs.

The positioning of this passage as a supplementary ending or 'addition' in *Philip Sparrow* itself obviously makes it possible that it could have been detached in transmission from the main text. If so, then it may also be possible to see its presence in *The Garland of Laurel* rather differently from the way it has been presented editorially as a seamless part of the *Garland*.

A couple of further points may be relevant. The *Garland* was published by Faques, who had previously published at least one of Skelton's Flodden poems in 1513. This earlier poem appears to have been Faques' first foray into printing verse and he did not do a very good job of it: there are frequent errors which testify to a lack of expertise in printing verse. Indeed, he published very little other verse before returning a decade later to the *Garland*. Hence, his handling of the text might again reflect some general uncertainty about how to properly treat a poem in a number of different verse forms.

This does not explain why Faques would have been able to interpolate part of the text of one poem into another. Once again, speculation is all that is possible. We have, in fact, no early complete edition of *Philip Sparrow*: the earliest is [1545?] (STC 22594) and no text of it survives before that included

in the *Garland*. Yet, the allusion to it in the *Garland* makes clear that the composition of *Philip Sparrow* must antedate its inclusion in that poem:

Of Phillip Sparow the lamentable fate,
The dolefull desteny, and the carefull chaunce,
Dyvysed by Skelton after the funerall rate;
Yet sum there be therewith that take grevaunce
And grudge therat with frownyng countenance;
But what of that? Hard it is to please all men;
Who list amende it, let hym set to his penne. (1254-60)

Possibly Faques himself had published an earlier edition of *Philip Sparrow*. If so, it would not be difficult to imagine circumstances in which, in a not very efficient printing house, with little experience of printing verse, materials might become incorrectly conflated, not least if loose sheets of more than one work by Skelton were in close proximity. It may be that the presence of *Philip Sparrow* in the *Garland* is the result of some fortuitous interpolation of extraneous material that happened to be circulating within the printer's orbit rather than as a deliberate reiteration here by Skelton of part of another poem. None of the other works enumerated by Skelton in the *Garland* is treated in this way.

A factor that bears on the possibility of erroneous interpolation is the number of lines from *Philip Sparrow* in the *Garland*. There are a hundred and sixteen (lines 1260-1375). This number is readily divisible to form either a single leaf, in double columns (58 lines to a page, 29 to a column), or a bifolium, in single columns (29 lines to a page). Hence these lines form a distinct unit that could have been intercalated into existing materials that may themselves have been rather messy. (The *Garland* seems to have been composed over a considerable time, probably beginning in the 1490s, and in different verse forms, circumstances that could have added to problems of dealing with printer's copy in a house unaccustomed to handling complicated verse texts.)

It is obviously unfortunate for the argument I seek to make that Faques' printed edition has the only complete version of the *Garland*. Only three quires of the manuscript version in BL, Cotton Vitellius E. X survive, each of six leaves, now folios 208r-25v; one can infer from the amount of text these contain that four further gatherings of six leaves have been lost, that is, twenty

four leaves, two quires (B-C) containing the missing lines 246-720, two (F-G), containing the missing text from lines 1136 to the end.

The missing quires B and C contained 475 lines, or an average of 237 lines to a quire. The number of lines per quire tends to go down during the transcription of the poem. The scribe was never disposed to compress his text anyway; the layout throughout is quite spacious. The number of lines to a page varies from eight (fol. 222v) to twenty four (fols 210r-v, 223r), with generous spaces allowed for headings. With one exception (fol. 220r) the text is copied in single columns.

The complete version of the text as printed by Dyce comprises a further 513 lines from line 1136. If one assumes two quires of six leaves have been lost that would mean that there would an average of 256 lines to a quire; that is, significantly more than occur in any previous quire in spite of the evident tendency towards fewer lines to a quire as the manuscript proceeds. If, however, one assumes that the Philip Sparrow portion was not there, that is lines 1261-1374, the total number of lines drops to about 400, a number that could be readily accommodated into two six-leaf quires.³¹ Even if one assumed that the short *Philip Sparrow* lines would have been written in double column and hence accommodated into smaller space it would have been a tight squeeze to get onto a single leaf and hence unlikely to occasion very much reduction in overall space.³² This argument is obviously speculative, constrained by the paucity of evidence. But it may suggest that the text of the *Philip Sparrow* portion of the *Garland* needs to be treated with some caution and warrants more discussion than it has yet received.³³

If, as I have argued, a number of aspects of Skelton's text have been given misleading appearances in the modern forms in which they have been represented for us, what needs to be done to replace Dyce with a version of Skelton's poetry that more accurately reflects the textual evidence provided by the surviving witnesses to his corpus? What might a new edition of Skelton's verse look like?

At the heart of the textual issues are two matters that need to be grasped more clearly than they have been that will necessarily affect the presentation of the text. One is the issue of textual intractability: as I have suggested, some of what are termed 'works' by Dyce are actually variant forms that were welded into single entities hundreds of years after their creation in ways that seem at odds with the textual evidence. These variant forms are different in kind from either the local variations that inevitably occur in manually

transmitted texts or the larger scale divergences evident in the multiple forms of a work like *Piers Plowman*. They seem to demonstrate instead an intermittent disposition on Skelton's part to adapt materials for different circumstances now no longer recoverable and that these materials cannot be fruitfully compressed into a single text. The general thrust of my arguments is clearly that the idea of critical editing, insofar as this presupposes a belief in the recovery of a single, final intention may not be applicable for some of Skelton's poems.

If one allows such poems to retain their distinct, multiple identities the text will become a lot messier. Variant forms of a text, like those for the lyric 'Mannerly Margery', simply stand separately without any attempt to reconcile them into a single entity. A poem like *Speke Parrott* would have to be printed in a way that reflects both of its textually indeterminate states. It may be that the status of the final part of *Philip Sparrow* warrants reconsideration, if, as may have been the case, it enjoyed circulation separate from the larger text.

In a number of instances, another more technical issue may contribute to this messiness. This is the question of copy text. I use the term in the classic formulation of W. W. Greg's 'Rationale of Copy Text',³⁴ a formulation that has had enormous implications for the editing of Renaissance texts as well as, increasingly, those of later periods. But Greg began his career as a medievalist and at least some editions of Middle English works reveal some understanding of the methodology he advocates.

Greg's arguments relate to the choice of a base text to give form to the accidentals or non-substantive aspects of a text. In essence he suggested that it would be most sensible to choose the earliest surviving form of the text as copy text, a decision that did not mean an editor was bound to its substantive readings.

If one were to apply the implications of the argument to Skelton, his text would look rather different. For example, the final section of *Philip Sparrow*, which survives in its earliest form in the *Garland of Laurel*, antedates the next surviving version by more than twenty years. It differs significantly in orthography, offers forms that are potentially closer to the author's original, and contains a number of substantive variants.³⁵ Yet, as a textual witness it has been wholly ignored by editors of *Philip Sparrow*. Any responsible future edition of this poem must take account of its status and the authority of its readings, both accidental and substantive.

There are other instances where Dyce has ignored earlier manuscript versions in favour of later printed ones. He rejects the version of *Colyn Clout* in BL, Harley 2252, probably copied in the 1520s, seemingly on the grounds that it omits two passages, totalling about a hundred lines that appear in the earliest printed edition by Godfray ([1531?]; STC 22600.5), almost certainly produced after Skelton's death.³⁶ Yet it is possible to argue, on the grounds of general theories of copy text, that since Harley is the only witness during Skelton's lifetime it has some claim to be the basis for those portions of the copy text it can provide. One might also argue again that as a distinct contemporary version the Harley text has some claim to an autonomous status. But even if one believed that the later printed version preserved Skelton's final version of the poem, it would be proper to employ the Harley manuscript for those portions of the text it contains, that is, most of its 1265 lines, since it preserves the earliest form of its accidentals. And the effect of adopting the manuscript as copy text can be to produce a rather different sense of the poem, one that is not adequately indicated in Dyce's text. Take this passage from Godfray, with part in parallel in Harley:

Godfray

Fyckell falsenesse
Varyablenesse,
With unstablenesse
And yf ye stande in doute
Who brought this ryme about,
My name is Collyn Cloute. (44-9)

Harley

And fyckell falsenesse,
And varyablenesse,
With vnstedfastnes
And yf they stande in doute [. . .]

The claims of the readings in Harley here seem in general at least as compelling as those of Godfray's edition and possibly more so. The passages are clearly different in rhythm and in substance. It would be possible to argue that, in the case of the most significant substantive variant ('unstablenesse' / 'vnstedfastnes', 46), that Harley offers a more precisely focused reading in the context. ('Unstablenesse' lacks the heavier weight of moral opprobrium that 'vnstedfastnes' has).

Throughout, the variants between manuscript and printed versions often suggest that Harley deserves more consideration than it has received. To clarify the point I will examine a slightly longer passage:

Godfray

Or bokes to compyle
Of dyvers maner style
Vyce to revyle
And synne to exyle
To teche or to preche
As reason wyll reche
Sey this and sey that
His heed is so fat
He wottyth never what
Ne whereof he speketh
He cryeth and he creketh
He pryeth and he preketh
He chydeth and he chatters
He prayeth and he patters (9-22)

Harley

Or bokes to compyle
Of dyvers maner of style
Vyces to revyle
And syn for to exile
To teche or to preche
As reason wold reherse
Say this or sey that
Hys heed ys so fatte
He sayeth he wott not whate
Nor wherof he spekythe
He cryeth he creketh
He pryeth he preketh
He chydeth he chatters
He prayeth he patters

There is substantive variation in all but four of the fourteen lines (9, 11, 13, 16) and extensive orthographic variation throughout. Some of Harley's readings do seem easier than Godfray's, as when Harley reads 'maner of style' for Godfray's 'maner style' (10) or 'for to exile' for Godfray's 'to exile' (12). But at times Harley does offer a potentially superior variant as in the reading 'He sayeth he wott not whate' for Godfray's 'He wottyth never what' (17), where the direct attribution of the clause to Wolsey ('He sayeth [. . .]') gives a more direct force to the satire. More difficult is a point where Harley reads: 'As reason wold reherse', while Godfray has: 'As reason wyll reche' (14); that is, 'as reason will direct', rather than Harley: 'as reason would explain'. Obvious arguments in support of Godfray are that it rhymes with line 13 and makes acceptable sense. However, Harley also makes acceptable sense. And at other points in the poem, in lines 65, 546-8 the irregular rhyme pattern of skeltonics is not sustained.³⁷ The collocation of *reason* [. . .] *reherse* is a stock alliterative one, found elsewhere, for example, in *Piers Plowman*, B XI 415 and *Richard the Redeles*, l. 315. And *reherse* is a word that Skelton uses with some frequency elsewhere, albeit only once elsewhere in an alliterative context (*Garland of Laurel*, 840). The arguments for preferring Harley are not conclusive, of course; but it is defensible.

The variation between the two texts often does not differ in terms of sense. An edited version of these lines must confront the problems of choice of copy text and decisions on emendation. In general terms, it seems proper to adopt the Harley manuscript as copy text since it is earlier than Godfray's print and hence less subject to processes of regularization that may have obtained in the printing house (at least in theory). But this produces a form of the text at times rather different from that to which modern readers of Skelton are accustomed. Such a form presents an orthographically, rhythmically, and (at times) substantively distinct Skelton from that we encounter in Dyce.

The late Fredson Bowers once famously remarked that:

it is still a current oddity that many a literary critic has investigated the past ownership and mechanical condition of his second-hand automobile, or the pedigree and training of his dog, more thoroughly than he has looked into the qualifications of the text on which his critical theories rest.³⁸

The editorial incuriosity that has surrounded Skelton's poems suggests that Bowers' point still has force. But if Skelton is to be studied with any degree of seriousness some understanding of the crucial limitations of the only significant edition of his complete works is necessary. A new edition of Skelton's English poems is an important desideratum of early modern literary studies and an essential preliminary to the proper study of this most difficult poet.³⁹

NOTES

¹ See A. S. G. Edwards, 'Poet and Printer in Sixteenth Century England: Stephen Hawes and Wynkyn de Worde', *Gutenberg Jahrbuch* (1980), 82-8.

² See David Carlson, 'Alexander Barclay and Richard Pynson: A Tudor Printer and his Writer', *Anglia*, 113 (1995), 283-302.

³ Now British Library, Harley MS 2252.

⁴ Now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS C. 813; see *The Welles Anthology MS. Rawlinson C. 813: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Sharon L. Jansen and Kathleen H. Jordan (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991).

⁵ For description of this manuscript see, most recently Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II 282-5, and the further references cited there.

⁶ *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, ed. by C. E. Doble et al., 10 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895-1915), IV 214; this is not noted in R. S. Kinsman, *John Skelton, Early Tudor Laureate: an annotated bibliography c. 1488-1977* (Boston: Hall, 1979).

⁷ See R. J. Roberts, 'John Rastell's Inventory of 1538', *The Library*, 6th series, 1 (1979), 34-42. The missing editions include one of 'ware the hawke' (36 [20]), a fragment of which has recently surfaced in a private collection. (I am much indebted to the owner for allowing me to examine this and for confirming the edition as Rastell's.)

⁸ *DNB*, XVI 277.

⁹ *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. by E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), p. 638.

¹⁰ By R. L. Ramsay, *EETS* e.s. 98 (London, 1906) and Paula Neuss of *Magnificence*, *Revels Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980); by F. W. Brownlow of the *The Book of the Laurel* [i.e. *The Garland of Laurel*] (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990); by Julia Boffey of the *Bowge of Court*, in *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and by David Carlson of the *Latin Writings* (*Studies in Philology*, Texts and Studies, 1991). In addition, there is a well-annotated selection by Robert S. Kinsman, *John Skelton: Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

¹¹ *John Skelton: The Complete English Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983): '[. . .] whose magnificent two-volume edition of 1843 this book in some sense tries to replace' (p. 13). All line references are to Scattergood's edition unless otherwise specified.

¹² This point is made by F. W. Brownlow in his edition, *The Book of the Laurel*, p. 39 and n. 28.

¹³ For text and further references see A. S. G. Edwards and L. R. Mooney, 'A New Version of a Skelton Lyric', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 10 (1994), 507-10.

¹⁴ Contemporary evidence of this tendency to unauthorized adaptation survives explicitly in Dunbar's poem, 'Schir, I complane off iniuris' in which he protests about the actions of one 'Muris' who has 'magellit' one of his poems and presented it to James IV; see *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. by Priscilla Bawcutt, 2 vols (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1998), I 199.

¹⁵ It appears in *Certayne boke compiled by mayster skelton* (STC 22598).

¹⁶ Once again, there are attributional problems. There is no early authority for assigning this poem to Skelton. He is not named in Faques's edition; nor is there any mention of either Flodden poem in his account of his canon in the *Garland of Laurel*; the earliest attribution comes in the c. 1545 edition.

¹⁷ For discussion of the two versions which broadly reflects this assumption, see John Scattergood, 'A defining moment: the battle of Flodden and English poetry,' in *Vernacular Literature and Current Affairs in the Early Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Jennifer Britnell and Richard Britnell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 62-70, especially pp. 73-6.

¹⁸ Skelton refers to it in *The Garland of Laurel* as 'Item the Poppingay, that hath in commendacyoun / Ladyes and gentylwomen suche as deservyd, / And suche as be counterfettis they be reservyd' (ll. 1188-90).

¹⁹ For discussion of the dating of this part of the manuscript see the important study by Carol M. Meale, 'The Compiler at Work; John Colyns and BL MS Harley 2252,' in *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. by D. Pearsall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), pp. 82-103, especially pp. 95-6. I am also grateful to Dr Meale for extended private conversation about Harley 2252 and for confirming my own conclusions.

²⁰ William Nelson, *John Skelton Laureate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), pp. 159-60.

²¹ A. R. Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 127.

²² Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, p. 134, fn. 16.

²³ Stanley Fish, *John Skelton's Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 139-40.

²⁴ Fish, *John Skelton's Poetry*, p. 140.

²⁵ F. W. Brownlow, 'The Boke Compiled by Maister Skelton, Poet Laureate, Called Speke Parrot,' *English Literary Renaissance*, 1 (1971), 3-26 (p. 7).

²⁶ Brownlow, 'The Boke Compiled by Maister Skelton', pp. 7-8.

²⁷ On booklet circulation in medieval English texts see, most recently, Ralph Hanna III, *Pursuing History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 21-34 and the references cited there.

²⁸ This characterization is itself an indication of Skelton's typically accretive technique, his disinclination to impose upon many of his poems a single moment of closure, but rather to see the invocation of such a possibility as the prelude to a series of deferrals.

²⁹ This view is summarized by Scattergood in his edition, p. 406.

³⁰ This is generally held to be c. 1505; see R. S. Kinsman and T. Yonge, *John Skelton: Canon and Census* (New York: Renaissance Society of America, 1967), p. 11.

³¹ To posit three missing quires would implausibly reduce the number of missing lines to a quire to about 171, whereas elsewhere it never drops below 200.

³² For example, on fol. 220, the only point where short lines are written in double columns (925-53) in the manuscript, only 28 lines occupy a full page, i.e. 14 to a column. If the same layout were to be employed for the *Philip Sparrow* portion the text would run to two full leaves (four pages). It would mean that the remaining 400 lines would average twenty to a page. The pages on fols 224r-5v immediately preceding the missing part of the text have 11, 18, 17 and 14 lines respectively. The layout is too irregular to permit any confident conclusions, but the general trend to fewer lines does provide some measure of support for my hypothesis.

³³ I can, however, invoke in my support the response of one earlier reader, possibly the seventeenth-century antiquary, Elias Ashmole (it occurs in a copy of the edition of the *Pithy pleasant [. . .] workes of maister john skelton*, generally ascribed to John Stow (1568; STC 22608) in the Ashmole collection in the Bodleian Library): 'The following staves [. . .] be here displaced: as belonging to Philip Sparow by way of additions you have the afterward at the sheet U iii.' It appears in the facsimile reproduction of this copy by the Scolar Press (Menston, 1970), sig. Di^r.

³⁴ W. W. Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy Text', originally published in *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950/1), 19-36; reprinted in revised form in *The Collected Papers of Sir Walter W. Greg*, ed. by J. C. Maxwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 374-91.

³⁵ For example, 1261. For the] 1268. The; 1313. that] 1326. the; 1338. Of] 1351. And; 1367. that] 1375. as. (The lemma is the reading in the *Garland*; the reading after the lemma is that of *Philip Sparrow*, prefaced by line number).

³⁶ See Scattergood's edition, p. 465, where it is said the manuscript lacks lines 431-58, 479-556. In fact, this account of the missing lines is incorrect. The manuscript lacks lines 431-458, 479-559, 576-80; there are other smaller omissions, generally of a line, or couplet throughout the text in Harley 2252.

³⁷ Also (arguably) line 654; line 1037 is incomplete in Godfray.

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³⁸ *Textual and Literary Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 5.

³⁹ I am grateful to Professor Julia Boffey and the readers of *Leeds Studies in English* for comments on drafts of this paper.

Reviews

Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Holy Woman, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser. (London and New York: Routledge, 2005). xv + 266 pp + 8 plates. ISBN 0 4153 0858 5 (Hardback), ISBN 0 4153 0859 3 (Paperback).

This collection of essays is a very welcome set of approaches to the study of Christina of Markyate's life and the texts associated with her. The methodologies deployed by its contributors are varied, but each essay is rooted in a consciousness of the nature of the textual evidence and the importance of reading it in context. In 'Christina of Markyate: the introduction' (pp. 1-11), Henrietta Leyser sets Christina's life in 'a world shaped and scarred by the Norman Conquest' (p. 1), and in particular by East Anglian rising and counter-rising. As Leyser points out, however, Christina's family were associated in a variety of ways with the Norman elite, and her *Life* shows no negative attitudes towards Norman rule. Leyser goes on to chart, with reference to the essays in the collection, what is known about Christina's biography and the relationship and function of her *Life* and the St Albans Psalter, and to situate Christina's devotion to the Virgin Mary both in longstanding pre-Conquest traditions and in trends newly imported from Continental Europe in the twelfth century. Christina is thus positioned from the start of the collection as a figure who encompasses, and is constructed as embodying, both continuity and change.

In 'Christina of Markyate: the literary background' (pp. 12-24), Douglas Gray stresses the marginality of the *Life* of Christina in terms of genre and periodisation, and raises interesting questions about the nature of the composition of the *Life* and the political-linguistic culture in which Christina lived and in which her *Life* was written. Stephanie Hollis and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne situate Christina in the context of 'St Albans and women's monasticism: lives and their foundations in Christina's world' (pp. 25-52), and explore 'the possibilities and expectations of Christina's situation' (p. 25). They offer an exceptionally well researched and carefully argued demonstration of how the available linguistic, textual and social options mean that Christina's personal and literary lives are a kind of improvised collation of the continuing and the new.

In 'Christina of Markyate and the double crown' (pp. 53-78), Samuel Fanous highlights the skill of the author of the *Life* of Christina in combining two hagiographic traditions: that of the virgin martyr and that of the ascetic martyr.

Fanous demonstrates that the author of the *Life* would have had access through the St Albans library and the traditions of the site itself to key texts from both traditions, and concludes that the *Life* is 'a testament to what was possible within the conventions of medieval biography'. Neil Cartlidge continues the theme of taking the *Life* seriously as a work of literature, rather than simply mining it for biographical details, in 'The unknown pilgrim: drama and romance in the *Life of Christina of Markyate*' (pp. 79-98). Through a careful stylistic analysis of the 'vanishing pilgrim' episode, Cartlidge shows how the author draws on the kind of exegesis deployed by medieval drama and romance to create a text which does not present itself as realistic, but rather as 'expressionistic' (p. 95).

Two related chapters follow. C. Stephen Jaeger examines 'The loves of Christina of Markyate' (pp. 99-115) in the context of 'the conceptual *tour de force* of twelfth-century thought on the experience of love: to incorporate the act of love itself [. . .] into the idealism of love' (p. 99). Jaeger shows how the *Life's* narrative structure is based on Christina's relationships with men, which allow the author to focus on the tension between physical and spiritual passion, and to present Christina's progression from the one to the other. Thomas Head's 'The marriages of Christina of Markyate' (pp. 116-37), an abridged version of his article of the same name published in *Viator* in 1990, with a brief new afterword, takes Christina's marriage to Christ as its central topic, and emphasises the concrete nature of that marriage for Christina and her hagiographer. R.I. Moore's 'Ranulf Flambard and Christina of Markyate' (pp. 138-42) is another reprinted piece (previously published in his *Belief and Culture*), which offers a brief reading of the episode in which Christina thwarts Flambard's attempt to 'commit a wicked deed' with her. Moore's succinctly-argued proposition is that 'Christina did not so much refuse to take over the duties of her aunt as insist on reinterpreting them' (p. 141).

Rachel Koopmans examines the relationship between Christina and her hagiographer, and the influence each of them might have had on the *Life*, in 'Dining at Markyate with Lady Christina' (pp. 143-59). Koopmans ponders whether Christina would have approved of the *Life*, and whether it, and her image in the St Alban's Psalter, might have been intended 'to shape Christina's own image of herself' (p. 157). In 'Alternative intimacies: men, women and spiritual direction in the twelfth century' (pp. 160-83), Dyan Elliott constructs a typology of spiritual direction, to show how Christina's experience compares to older and newer versions of this relationship. Elliott shows how these relationships are often presented as an alternative to marital intimacy, but concedes 'the difficulty in evading a matrimonial paradigm' and notes, perceptively, that 'Christina was stalked by the

spectre of marriage' (p. 161). Kathryn Kelsey Staples and Ruth Mazzo Karras provide a further exploration of the dynamics of desire in 'Christina's tempting: sexual desire and women's sanctity' (pp. 184-96), arguing that Christina's temptation reflects twelfth-century changes in views on the sexual temptation of women.

The next two essays focus on texts associated with Christina. 'The St Alban's Psalter: the abbot and the anchoress' (pp. 197-216) by Jane Geddes examines the Psalter in detail, and section by section, for indications of what prompted its production, and of how it might have been received. Geddes concludes that the Psalter reflects most strongly the concerns of Abbot Geoffrey de Gorran. Tony Hunt's study concentrates on 'The *Life* of St Alexis, 475-1125' (pp. 217-28), provides an account of the development and transmission to twelfth-century England of the story of Alexis, shows that the St Albans Psalter version of the *Life* of St Alexis is 'a mature version' (p. 224) of the legend, and proposes that the relationship between Alexis and his bride is intended to reflect that of Abbot Geoffrey and Christina.

In its final essay, E.A. Jones' 'Christina of Markyate and *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*' (pp. 229-53), the collection turns from hagiography to historiography. Jones is engaged in the completion of a revision of the 1914 book by Rotha Mary Clay to which his essay title refers, and in this essay he offers a critique of Clay's methodology and presents a list, organised by county, of hermits and anchorites in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Huntingdonshire, which he uses to situate Christina in the context of contemporary solitaires. A Select Bibliography and a very useful index of names and places follow the essays.

Fanous and Leyser have assembled a collection which performs two very significant roles. It provides a badly-needed sustained analysis of Christina and her *Life*, and also is resolute in setting both in a range of contexts, rather than treating them as isolated and unusual. It is especially refreshing and stimulating to see Christina's life and the texts associated with her examined as emerging from pre-Conquest traditions and preoccupations as well as from post-Conquest ones. The essay by Hollis and Wogan-Browne is perhaps the strongest example of this, and will stand as an important model for the study of twelfth-century English devotional practices and related texts. Overall, the collection opens up its important central subject to readers experienced and new and offers important contributions to the study of major themes related to religious writing, women's lives and the complex cultural influences of the twelfth century.

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Turpines Story: A Middle English Translation of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, ed. by Stephen H. A. Shepherd, EETS o.s. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). 170 pp. ISBN: 0-19-722325-7.

This edition presents, for the first time, the unique Middle English translation of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, the medieval *gesta* of Charles the Great. The text is edited from San Marino, California, Huntington Library MS HM 28,561, accompanied by a comprehensive critical apparatus. Previous comments on the scribal hands and decoration, as well as the relationships with related texts are closely analysed alongside some very exciting discoveries, notably the identity of the owners, their political allegiance, and the cultural context for the production of the miscellany including this text.

The manuscript contains, alongside the translation of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, John Trevisa's translations of Pseudo-William of Ockham, Richard Fitzralph, Pseudo-Methodius, Ranulf Higden's *Polychonicon*, accompanied by Trevisa's *Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk*, his *Epistle* to Thomas IV, Lord Berkeley, and a plethora of Latin and English documents relating to the Lancastrian claim to the throne of England, taking the form of historical notes, poetry and a genealogical table. The variety of texts included in this collection, together with the unfinished borders and decorated initials, leads Shepherd to conclude that this is 'a project of considerable ambition gone awry' (p. xvi). From this perspective, the identification of the owner(s)/ commissioner(s) through the arms displayed on fols 1r and 88r as the Mull (alias Mill or Myll) family of Harescombe in Gloucestershire (quartermaster Rous, also of the same location), sheds particular light onto a web of local political and cultural affiliations during the Wars of the Roses.

The Mulls increased their 'family prominence' through land acquisition and Thomas Mull's extensive service on royal commissions in Gloucestershire from the 1430s to the 1450s and as Justice of the Peace during the same period. He was also Sheriff of Hereford and MP for Gloucestershire in the 1430s and 1440s, positions which brought him into contact with political figures of his day, like Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, whom he served as steward, the Boteler and Despenser families, and, more importantly, the Talbots and the Berkeleys. Thomas's son, Hugh, continued the administrative, legal and political career of his father, serving in the same positions during the 1460s, and, after the accession of the Yorkist Edward IV, becoming involved in the famous 1468 'Cornelius plot', designed to support the Lancastrian Margaret of Anjou's attempt

to regain the crown for Henry VI. Interestingly, Shepherd notes, another member of the lesser gentry possibly involved in the same plot was Sir Thomas Malory, the Lancastrian writer of romance who had similar connections with magnates of the day and enjoyed history and romance (p. xx).

The political allegiances of the Mulls are well documented: Thomas and his son are said to have raised an opposition against Richard, Duke of York (p. xxi), and the subsequent forfeiture of the Mull properties during the Yorkist rule proves the unswerving loyalty of the family to the Lancastrians. The situation deteriorated further due to their support to the Talbots in the famous Berkeley law suit. As Lord Berkeley had been the patron of Trevisa's translations, Shepherd suggests that the commissioning of the Mull manuscript was intended as a cultural weapon against the Berkeleys, 'a symbol of the appropriation of their heritage which was the goal of the lawsuit', which would furthermore demoralize the Berkeleys because of the 'evident determination of [Thomas Mull's] antagonism' (p. xxiv). The Talbot family, enemies of the Berkeleys, would thus have been favourably disposed towards the Mulls, whose manuscript could function as an 'extra-legal commitment [...] to preserving the literary heritage' of the Talbot successors.

On the basis of the Mulls' Lancastrian allegiance and the unfinished state of the decorative elements, Shepherd dates the composition of the manuscript around 1460-1, the time of the deaths of Thomas Mull and his eldest son, Sir William. At this time the Mull properties were forfeited under the Yorkist rule. The dating is also supported by linguistic and palaeographical evidence, while the choice of the story of Charlemagne might be seen as a continuation of the *Polychronicon* as urged by Higden (p. xxvi), as well as a reflection of the renewed interest in Charlemagne, who was one of the medieval Nine Worthies. The latter element is read by Shepherd as a further indication of Lancastrian influence; Queen Margaret became the Tenth Worthy in the celebratory pageant at her coronation, and on that occasion the Talbots presented her with a deluxe manuscript containing romances and historical material, something the Mulls might have tried to emulate in their own commission.

Shepherd acknowledges the various agendas employed in the use of this text across periods, and discusses at length the relationships among this translation and several other variants of the story, notably through analyses of the exempla of good governance and Christian behaviour. The 'Englishing' of the translation encompasses elements ranging from a possible deliberate reading of Milo, father of Roland, as an Englishman, three times in this translation (the

Mulls also claimed, through the Rous ancestry, their descent from a famous English Milo, Earl of Hereford, in the twelfth century [p. li]), to identifying Roland as Tristan's father, similar to other English historical accounts, like *Castleford's Chronicle*. The Mull family thus attempted to emulate the cultural patronage of the Talbots by 'inscribing with their arms, their identity both as custodians of history and [. . .] as guarantors of a specific dynastic future' (p. liii). The journey through which this medieval account of Charlemagne's great deeds found its way into the miscellany commissioned/consumed in a household of the lesser gentry during the Wars of the Roses prompts us to reconsider the cultural and political aspirations of members of this social class. Alongside recent editions and analyses of miscellanies containing *Brut* chronicles and romances in the vernacular, this edition draws attention to the importance of studying the context of the production of manuscripts in this period. Complete with dialectal analysis, a comprehensive commentary on literary and historical analogues, and a glossary, this excellently produced edition certainly proposes an invaluable source for further research, which will no doubt spark future projects on the cultural, literary and political implications of reading romance and chronicles in late medieval England.

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Emily Steiner, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Middle English Literature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). xvi + 266 pp. ISBN 0 521 82484 2.

The history of the book and the history of the document have traditionally been conceived as separate enterprises. Yet as Emily Steiner's *Documentary Culture and the Making of Middle English Literature* shows, the two are intertwined to the extent that one cannot be understood without the other. Steiner explores the ways in which legal documents figure in—or, at times, actually figure—medieval literature. Starting from the observation that documents are literary as well as historical artifacts—carefully constructed along formal lines, dependent upon legal fictions, they embody but also determine social and political relations—Steiner focuses on the significance of documents in a variety of literary contexts. At the core of the book is a study of the function of the document in two distinct but related groups of texts: *Piers Plowman* and the 'Piers Plowman tradition', and the Middle English 'Charters of Christ'. But as its title suggests, the book's scope

is much wider, extending from *Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine* of Guillaume de Deguileville to the attempts of the Lollards Margery Baxter and William Thorpe to interfere with official documentary practices in order to effect a form of self-representation. An intriguing epilogue points out the recurrence to documents in the writing of Margery Kempe, a dedicated auto-archivist. The fictional documents in most of these works have long attracted attention; Steiner, however, is the first to attempt to analyse these manifestations of the document in the broader context of what she terms 'documentary culture'. The results are fruitful.

Crucial to Steiner's analysis is the idea that documents are not static or rigidly hierarchical: as their appearances in various Middle English texts show, they are highly adaptable. Further, she sees documentary culture as not restricted to official discourse, and by no means monologic: rather, it is a site of contest between various institutional and social forces. And documents provided English literature with something more than a trope: Steiner argues for the presence of a 'documentary poetics' in Middle English texts, one that helped 'shape an identity', imbuing the very formulation and practice of literary texts. The strength of the book lies in its subtle readings of these documentary presences, readings that draw on Steiner's awareness of the manipulation of documentary form, and her insight into the ramifications of such manipulation. An excellent section on the Charters of Christ—poems that represent the body of the crucified Christ as a legal document, given by God to 'all present and future'—notes the way the 'crucified Christ becomes a sacramental body through documentary forms of address' (p. 64), and observes that the sorrowing speaker of the document simultaneously becomes a legal actor (p. 65). The poem rests on a play on wills: the crucified body testifies to the abjection of the will; but via the document it becomes a legal subject, embodying the will to act; finally it figures the conversion of affective memory to legal memory, as the poem 'transforms the suffering body of Christ into an efficacious one' (p. 69). Here and throughout Steiner profitably picks up on the performativity of documents, a quality embedded in documentary formulas ('by my present charter I have confirmed'), and which gave them important capacities: not merely authority, but enactment, replayability, awareness of audience.

Similarly, Steiner's treatment of the role of documents in *Piers Plowman* provides refreshingly new readings of key scenes. Doubtless the most controversial of these is her reassessment of the famous 'tearing' of Truth's Pardon by Piers. Truth's pardon, Steiner persuasively argues, should be understood as a chirograph—that is, a document written in duplicate or triplicate which was

meant to be torn, or cut, with one copy held by each of the parties involved in the legal act. Specifically, Truth's pardon is the *chirographum dei*—and the long Pardon that precedes it is an expansion of the first line of the short Pardon, instituting a system of good works. Hence Piers' 'tearing' of the pardon is an affirmative act 'because it performs the contract of the *chirographum dei*' (p. 135), enacted in imitation of Augustine's commentary on Psalm 144 in *Enarationes in Psalmos*, which identifies a divine bond with the Athanasian Creed, and ultimately in *imitatione dei* (p. 137). Whereas previous Langland scholars have seen documents dissolving into scripture, Steiner argues that in *Piers Plowman* scripture is conceived as documentary in form and nature (p. 164). Here the exploration of documents as inherently public texts is important: 'certain legal instruments [. . .] were public because their rhetoric of universal notification and their open presentation established a reciprocal relation between the proclamation and the reception of a text that was nothing less than contractual' (p. 158). That tension between community and the self inherent in documentary form is followed through in discussion of the 1381 Rising letters, and *Mum and the Sothsegger*, with particular concern for the restorative function of the document: '[f]or the *Mum*-poet literary making becomes public healing when encased in legal documents' (p. 189).

The potential for documentary form to be co-opted for radical, even heretical, purposes is explored in the final two chapters of Steiner's book. Here she argues that Lollard adaptations and annotations brought out the 'radical political implications' of Christ's charter, particularly its construction of unmediated interaction between human and divine, suggesting on the basis of Langland's revisions to the B-text of *Piers Plowman* that 'perhaps by the 1380s [. . .] Christ's charter had already begun to be co-opted for Lollard polemic' (p. 217). Although speculative, this section is sensitive to the manuscript contexts of the charters of Christ, and careful comparison of the A, B, and C versions of the Charter successfully identifies some important differences. Moreover, the following chapter, on Margery Baxter and William Thorpe, puts more flesh on the Lollard documentary culture bones. The argument that Baxter sought to invoke 'an alternate [Lollard] documentary culture' at her trial (e.g. via references to a charter of salvation in her womb) is plausible; and a convincing analysis explores the ways in which Thorpe's account of his trial—his *Testimony*—not only shows familiarity with documentary formulas, but the ability to gloss them to his advantage.

From time to time Steiner overstates her case: the charter of Christ is said to 'embod[y] all the expectations and fears of vernacular literary production [. . .]' (p. 228) (all of them?); we are told that for certain medieval writers 'the legal document classified the lyric as a genre by making it quite literally a social contract' (p. 90) (all lyric?); Langland apparently 'invents public poetry from the matter of documentary culture' (p. 143); and 'in late medieval England documentary culture always constituted the matter from which even an anti-establishment agenda could proceed' (p. 239). These claims are too sweeping, but they seem to me to be understandable given the lack of attention to the significance of the document for literature prior to Steiner's work. And the book finishes strongly, showing the ways in which an eye for documents can cast new light on well-trodden ground: Steiner's consideration of Margery Kempe's insistence on collecting documents that testified to her encounters with ecclesiastical authorities—texts that ensured her safe passage, but that also constituted her own personal archive—ends with the point that documentary and literary cultures operated 'not through analogy but through reciprocity' (p. 246). If the argument that the document—or better the idea of the document—'makes' literature is overstated, the book nevertheless outlines compellingly the ways in which the document enables the redirection of official discourse: by means of its public nature, and by means of its simultaneous recognisability of form and its malleability and adaptability to particular agendas—by means of its capacity to incorporate and to be incorporated.

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Medieval Virginites, ed. by Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans and Sarah Salih. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003). xiv + 296 pp. hb ISBN 0708317634, pb ISBN 0708317626

Medieval Virginites opens not with the medieval but with the modern fascination with virginity: not only is medieval virginity studies a rapidly growing 'mini-discipline' among contemporary scholars, but the profile of virginity is also rising rapidly in popular culture (p. 1). Yet as editors Sarah Salih, Anke Bernau and Ruth Evans insist in their introduction, '[m]edieval virginity [. . .] is no more self-evident than the medieval itself. It is precisely because medieval virginity so often fantasizes itself (and is fantasized by others) as self-identical and ahistorical that

we need to theorize and historicize its various manifestations' (p. 2). In order to break away from this monolithic view of virginity, they and their contributors argue for the multiplicity of virginities, both secular and sacred. Building upon current work as well as setting out in new directions, the 'collection aims to trace some of the specific manifestations of virginity in late medieval culture' using literary, historical, and art-historical approaches (p. 7).

As a collection, *Medieval Virginities* has many strengths. The three editors are uniquely qualified for such an undertaking, having already made a significant contribution to the field. Indeed, not only does their introduction effectively situate the work within the research that has already been undertaken as well as delineating possible areas for future scholarship, their own individual contributions are among the most thought-provoking. Moreover, the range of topics and methodologies offered by the essays is breathtaking, ranging from new studies in secular female virginity (Kim M. Phillips) and masculine virginity (John H. Arnold and Joanna Huntingdon), to the more obscure subjects of alchemy (Jonathan Hughes), chastity tests in Welsh prose (Jane Cartwright), and the depiction of sheela-na-gigs—naked women displaying 'oversized genitals' (p. 33)—in stone sculpture (Juliette Dor). Robert Mills and Evans discuss the more traditional topic of female virgin saints, yet even these more predictable studies enter unpredictable territory. Mills, for example, uses postcolonial theory to move beyond the 'intractable double bind' of 'victimization and empowerment that appears to characterize the virgin martyr's condition' in order to examine how she plays a role in not one, but many networks of gender, class, and religious identity (pp. 187-8). Likewise Evans analyses how the passion narratives of virgin martyrs 'are shaped by the absent presence of the Jew, especially in his fantasized relationship to the Eucharist' (p. 169). Some of the chapters, such as those by Salih and Hughes, initially seem only indirectly related to the study of virginity per se, but upon further consideration usefully demonstrate the wide range of the subject's applications. Furthermore, the presence of a complete bibliography as well as a detailed index for the entire collection ensures greater ease of reference.

The greatest strength of the volume is the concluding essay by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, a prominent scholar in the field for many years. As might be expected, she places the collection in the context of past studies and suggests possible directions for further research, but she also argues for the modern relevance of such studies. In her examination, both amusing and chilling, of recent medical textbooks, she reveals that the female urogenital systems are, even in the 1990s, still described in terms of inferiority and absence when compared to

those of the male. Returning the reader to the present day, she does not end where the collection begins—with the role of virginity in horror films and the popular music scene—but with the 'damaging cultural valuations and constructions of virginity' that remain widespread, namely female genital mutilation (p. 247). Whether in Britain or abroad, examining the past, the present, or looking towards the future, she reminds us that 'the politics of who does what to whom in the name of the custody of women's bodies and virginities does not permit simple answers' (p. 248).

If *Medieval Virginites* has a weakness, it is that its enormous breadth of scope sometimes leaves little room for depth. The wide range of virginities on offer makes it difficult for any particular variety to be explored in great detail. Likewise, the number of chapters (twelve) means that each contribution is relatively short. Some contributions, however, would have benefited from having a little more space to explore concepts. For example, Salih opens with a fascinating discussion about the need to examine the slippage between erotic and religious language rather than establishing them as discrete categories, but her examination of this slippage in the *vita* of Saint Gilbert of Sempringham and *The Life of Christina of Markyate* seems cramped. Still, the dazzling range of approaches on display more than compensates for such deficiencies, offering not a single end, but many new beginnings.

Overall *Medieval Virginites* is a collection of essays with a great deal to offer the student or the scholar who has undertaken not only the study of virginity, but many other facets of literary studies as well as the religious, social, and cultural history of late medieval Britain and north-western Europe. A reading of the various contributions reveals that virginity is not only difficult to define or contain, but that examining the issues surrounding virginity leads to a deeper understanding of societal practices. As Wogan-Browne concludes, '[t]hinking hard about all our virginities and who has what kind of stake in them is valuable cultural work' (p. 248).

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