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THE SOURCE OF THE ST BRENDAN STORY IN THE *SOUTH ENGLISH LEGENDARY*

By SIMON LAVERY

The St Brendan story was one of the most popular in the Middle Ages, as the number of redactions and manuscripts, as well as the manuscript distribution, show. Not surprisingly, a version of the story is incorporated in the *South English Legendary*¹ (SEL). Recently there has been a resurgence of interest in the SEL, principally through the studies of Manfred Görlach² who, however, expressed some doubts about the sources from which the SEL compiler drew his Brendan material.³ The present essay is an attempt to clarify these sources.

During the Middle Ages the most common version of the Brendan story was the Latin *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* (NSB). Recent work by Orlandi has demonstrated that this version was composed in Ireland, early in the ninth century.⁴ The Latin text achieved immense popularity: about 130 MSS survive from all parts of Europe.⁵ Given the popularity of the work, it is not surprising that vernacular translations soon appeared. The earliest of these is in Anglo-Norman, but there followed many others in Italian, Provençal, Catalan, German, Dutch, Middle Irish, Continental French, Norwegian, and English.⁶

Not a conventional "Vita" of a saint, the story resembles Celtic "immrama" or adventure stories, with a Christian colouring. It relates how Brendan is moved to quit his Irish abbey, choose a party of monks and put to sea on nautical pilgrimage in a small leather coracle to seek the Promised Land of the Saints. Before departing they are joined by a small group of latecomers, whose diverse fates form a connecting thread throughout the episodic narrative, which relates an extraordinary sequence of fortuitous events as the monks sail in circles and liturgical cycles for seven years, returning each year to spend Easter in the Paradise of Birds and Christmas on the Island of the Community of St Ailbe. Before they finally reach their goal they also visit the Isle of Three Choirs, the Island of Grapes, the Crystal Pillar, a fiery hell where Judas suffers torment, and the Island of Paul the Hermit.

The Anglo-Norman poem is preserved in five manuscripts and one major fragment.⁷ Three of the four manuscripts which contain the author's prologue name his patron as Queen Adeliza, who became Henry I's second wife in 1121. In the fourth manuscript the name "Mahalt" appears; this was Maud (or Matilda), who married Henry in 1110, and who died in 1118. Scholars cannot agree to which queen the poet originally dedicated his work, but a date early in the

twelfth century is sufficient for our purposes here. The identity of the poet, "li apostoiles danz Benedeiz" (l.8), remains unknown. He was almost certainly a cleric, but the title "apostoiles" is obscure in this context: it might refer to his status as a monk, papal emissary or legate.⁸

Benedeit's octosyllabic verse is the earliest of its kind in Anglo-Norman, its content, tone and form being suited to a sober reading aloud to a small courtly group at the Queen's command. Superficially hagiographic in subject, the poem has much in common with the slightly later romances.⁹ It is also the first literary work in French to use Celtic material. No hint of a source is given, but l.11 suggests that Benedeit also wrote a Latin version ("en letre") which has not survived, and which perhaps proved so popular that he turned it into French ("en romanz"). This version, in turn, was later reworked into Latin verse and prose.¹⁰

It is usually thought that Benedeit based his poem on a version of NSB now lost: the plots are very similar, and there are several verbal echoes,¹¹ but Benedeit makes a number of changes to the Latin text as we know it, as we shall see. A more coherent, vivid narrative than the Latin NSB results from these changes; yet the Latin is still clearly discernible as the fundamental source for the Anglo-Norman.

There soon followed translations of the Brendan story into Middle English. First came the story incorporated in SEL (last quarter of the thirteenth century); this was turned into prose (as an additional legend) for the *Gilte Legende* (after 1438), which in turn was used as a source for Caxton's version in the *Golden Legend* (1483). The question is, which text or texts formed the basis for these Middle English translations? NSB is generally thought to be the source, but it has been suggested that the compiler of SEL used Benedeit's poem to supplement the Latin.¹² I would argue that SEL shows no signs of deriving from the Anglo-Norman poem, and that the Latin NSB was used as the basis. In order to demonstrate this argument, I have chosen twelve crucial passages in the story where the relationships between the three texts may readily be examined side by side. For convenience I summarise the material and translate from the Latin and Anglo-Norman giving line-references to the original texts.¹³ I reserve comment until afterwards.

NSB	SEL	P (= Benedeit)
1. Ch.1: <u>Prologue</u> : Brendan's royal lineage given. He is "father of nearly 3,000 monks" (1-4). ¹⁴	<i>Sein Brandan be holyman was 3end ("yonder") of Irlonde/Monk he was of hard lyf as ich vnder- stonde/Of fastynge and penance inou . and abbod he was</i>	Royal lineage; Brendan is said to have sacrificed wealth and status to become a monk; 3,000 monks under him (19-38).

*bere/Of a housond
monkes (1-4).*

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 2. <u>Ch.6: The Uninhabited Island.</u> A friendly dog leads the monks to an <i>aula</i> . Ch.7: One latecomer dies in this hall, repenting after stealing a silver bridle. (Cf. Item 6) | The dog leads the monks to a fair <i>halle</i> (121). The episode of the thieving monk is not included. | No dog; description of city and house - called <i>castel</i> (267) or <i>Paleiz</i> (273) - much embellished: crystal, gold and jewels abound. The monk steals a golden chalice. |
| 3. <u>Ch.11: The Paradise of Birds.</u> The talking bird's wings sound "like a handbell" (<i>sicut tintinnabula</i>) (29). | <i>As a vipele</i> ("fiddle") is <i>wyngen were</i> (186). | The wings are "like the sound (<i>lit.</i> striking) of a <i>bell</i> " (510 and note). |
| 4. <u>Ch.12: The Community of Ailbe.</u> "An elder of great gravity" meets the monks on their landing (18). | <i>A uair old man & swube hor</i> (261). | The monks are frightened (655) by the old man's great size (654). |
| 5. [Not present.] | [Not present.] | <u>The Life of St Ailbe</u> (721-736). |
| 6. <u>Ch.17: The Isle of Three Choirs</u> (Cf. item 2). The pleasant fate of the second latecomer monk. | [Not present.] | [Not present.] |
| 7. <u>Ch.19: The Gryphon.</u> Just as a gryphon is about to devour the monks, it is intercepted and killed by a bird which in the previous chapter brought them fruit from the Isle of Grapes. | The bird which saves the monks from the gryphon is identified as the one they had spoken to in the <i>Paradise of Birds</i> (432-6). | A vivid and dramatic battle is described, in which a fiery dragon of splendid ferocity destroys the much larger gryphon (1016-26). |

NSB

SEL

P (= Benedeit)

- | NSB | SEL | P (= Benedeit) |
|--|---|---|
| 8. Ch.22: <u>The Crystal Pillar.</u> | [Not present.] | Much expanded and embellished version of NSB (1063-1112). |
| 9. Ch.25: <u>Unhappy Judas.</u> A cloth hangs before him supported by "two iron forks" (4, 44). ¹⁵ These forks had originally been given by Judas to the priests of the temple. | <i>tweie tounge</i> (523); <i>tongen</i> (571). ¹⁶ | This detail not present, though the Judas episode as a whole much expanded. |
| 10. Ch.26. <u>The Island of Paul the Hermit.</u> The 3 narratives give different accounts of the number of years Paul spent at each stage of his life:
His age was 140 years.
He lived on the island for 90 years.
He spent 60 years by a spring.
He lived for 30 years on fish brought by otter.
On arrival at the island he was 50 years old. | His age was 120.
He lived on the island for 70 years.
He spent 40 years by a spring.
He lived for 30 years on fish brought by otter.
On arrival at the island he was 50 years old.
(605-64) | His age was 140.
He lived on the island for 90 years.
He spent 60 years by a spring.
He lived for 30 years on fish brought by otter.
On arrival at the island he was 50 years old.
(1503-1606) |
| 11. Ch.28. <u>The Promised Land of the Saints.</u> Ll.12ff. give a description of this earthly paradise. (Cf. the account of it in Ch.1 by the hermit Barinthus.) | Ll.691-700 give an abridged description. | Ll.1729-67 give a much expanded description. |
| 12. Ch.28. A youth tells the monks that they were unable to find the Promised Land for so long because God wanted to show them "his varied secrets in the great ocean" (25-7). ¹⁷ | <i>Lo he sede her is
bat lond . bat ze
habbeþ isozt wide/
And lengore hadde ac
oure Louerd wolde .
bat ze ssolde abide/
For ze ssolde in þis
grete se . is priuetes
ise[o] (707-9).</i> | [Not present.] |

I shall discuss my selected passages in three groups: (1) places where SEL and NSB agree against P; (2) places where SEL appears to offer independent material; (3) places where SEL and P appear to agree against NSB.¹⁸ It is my intention to show that SEL does not, as has been suggested (see note 12), draw upon P for its material, but that it does use NSB. Where SEL offers material apparently independent of NSB and P, it will be seen that this can be accounted for without having to posit the existence of a lost third source. Finally, I shall demonstrate that cases of congruence between SEL and P are inconclusive evidence of borrowing from the Anglo-Norman poem by the Middle English author.

Group One: Items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12

A number of the items in this group are characteristic examples of opportunities for expansion which are taken up in P but ignored in SEL. One of the outstanding features of P, and one which may reflect the tastes of its noble audience, is its indulgence in lengthy descriptions of colourful, exotic or dramatic material, which seem to be of Benedeit's invention. In items 5 and 11 P gives elaborate accounts of the Life of Ailbe (and elsewhere¹⁹ of the sumptuous treasures owned by the Ailbe community) and the delights of the Promised Land. None of the material from P's expansions in such cases is found in SEL. Other examples occur in P's unique treatment in item 2 of the riches seen in the Uninhabited Island; of the gorgeous altar on the Crystal Pillar (in item 8); of lurid, extensive details of Judas's torments (1353-1426). Benedeit exploits the story's dramatic and striking features and amplifies them for the entertainment of his audience (e.g. the fight of gryphon and dragon, 1019-26; the two sea-monsters, 898-915, 933-52). SEL attenuates these features, and adopts none of P's elaborations. Instead it always follows closely, usually in abridged form, the Latin version.

In item 7 (the gryphon fight) P fully exploits the potential spectacle which NSB narrates in its usual economical fashion. The substitution in P of a dragon for NSB's bird is technically shrewd, for in the Latin text the bird reappears from an episode which P omits: it is the helpful bird from ch.18, the Isle of Grapes, which dropped fruit into the monks' boat. SEL misreads the Latin and describes the wrong bird (the one from ch.11 - The Paradise of Birds). This mistake arises from SEL's close adherence to the Latin source and not from P, availability of which could have helped out the English translator.

In item 9, despite omitting NSB's reference to the origin of Judas's forks, SEL closely follows the Latin version by including a reference to the "tongs" - not included by P. But P's considerable expansion of the Judas episode as a whole finds no echo in SEL.

Finally in this group, item 12 indicates how the fundamental aims of the three authors compare. In NSB the purpose of the voyage is "to satisfy curiosity and exhibit marvels".²⁰ Evidently there is a didactic aim as well; this will be discussed below. In

SEL, as item 12 shows, this motif of curiosity is adopted from the Latin. P, however, tends to reduce such elements in its narrative, favouring the inclusion of edifying lessons learnt from each of the marvels and ordeals described.²¹ Benedeit's monks are fated to plunge ever on (793-6) into adventure and the unknown as God wills, learning as they go to trust in his superior power. The vivid narrative is set against a highly moral background in which idle curiosity has no place.²² "From a mere odyssey it becomes a pilgrim's progress, in which the pilgrims pass through a graduated series of trials and so fit themselves to taste the joys of paradise".²³ SEL is in the spirit of NSB in this respect, not of P.

Group Two: Items 1, 2, 3, 8, 10

In this group appears material found only in SEL, or which SEL alone omits. In item 1 the number of monks under Brendan appears as 1,000 only in SEL; P and NSB both give the figure 3,000. The variant is insignificant, since both are large round numbers, and hagiographers are traditionally vague about such matters. It is certainly insufficient evidence for the existence of a lost third source.

The Thieving Monk's omission from SEL (item 2) is more important, and its explanation will involve some discussion of the membership of the group of monks, in which SEL differs from both NSB and P. In SEL there are twelve monks (1.83) plus two latecomers (11.99-100). NSB and P have fourteen plus three. But SEL is only 734 lines long, where P has 1834 lines and NSB's prose version is also considerably longer than SEL. This example of omission is typical of the way in which SEL abbreviates the text. By having only two latecomers it is able to omit the whole Thieving Monk episode, allowing for just one good and one bad fate for these additions to the party, but whereas the dreadful end of the sinful monk is described in full (11.500-15) the other is left vague.

In NSB at the start of the voyage Brendan prophesies one good fate and two bad for the three latecomers of this version, and the prophecy is repeated for those still remaining by the Ailbe abbot in Ch.12. This second prophecy is omitted in P but occurs in SEL, where the abbot declares that one monk will go to the Isle of Anchorites and the other *to helle al quik* (11.331-2). According to NSB the good monk actually goes to the Isle of Three Choirs, a place which does not appear in SEL which never in fact confirms the fate of the good latecomer.

P's treatment of the latecomers is more complex. Benedeit retains NSB's three latecomers and Brendan's prophecy of sinister fates for two of them and Paradise for the third.²⁴ The repentant death of the Thieving Monk disposes of the first sinful latecomer (NSB Ch.7; P, 11.309-55). The second sinner is dispatched as in SEL, being dragged wailing and cursing to the fiery mountain of hell by demons (NSB Ch.24; P, 11.1195-1202). This version contains no Ailbe prophecy and, like SEL, no Isle of Three Choirs either, so it has to contrive a suitable demise for its remaining latecomer. This takes place, in highly obscure and mysterious circumstances when the

monk simply vanishes from the boat (ll.1494-5). Brendan's "explanation" in ll.1500-04 only clouds the issue further.²⁵ In none of these inventions and changes from the Latin is P followed by SEL, even when SEL itself differs from NSB. Where it might have been expected to use material from P, SEL shows no sign of doing so. As for SEL's alteration of the size of the party from 14 to 12: this seems to be an obvious biblical echo.²⁶

As for the other differences in this group, SEL's substitution in item 3 of "fiddle" for "bell" may be accounted for either by its author's misunderstanding of the Latin, or by his employment generally of an unadorned, homely style. SEL is written in plain manner in the vernacular for an audience of no great sophistication. Hence it has none of P's courtly expansions and embellishments. This accounts for its not including the Crystal Pillar (item 8), whereas P takes advantage of yet another opportunity to display its ornate style. The differences in SEL's item 10 - the numbers of years spent at various periods on Paul's island - may be seen in the light of hagiographical accounts of ascetic saints, in which large or mystically "perfect" or religiously significant numbers often figure in the story, with little relation to chronological verisimilitude.²⁷ Such numbers may come from the Bible, or from seminal hagiographical legends such as the *Vita Antonii*. Further unique SEL additions appear in ll.109-10; 202-3; 288-9; 345; 422; 493-4; 549. All are brief, and attributable to the imagination of the Middle English author alone.

Group Three: Item 6

The only major item in this group is a point of omission shared by SEL and P: the Isle of Three Choirs. I have already shown how the absence of this episode in SEL leaves the fate of the good latecomer undecided - a loose end which P at least attempts to tie up. This large, shared omission seems, however, characteristic of a common attitude to certain kinds of material in SEL and P, which both tend to omit episodes in which little opportunity for homiletic comment arises. They likewise leave out NSB's lengthy quotations of liturgical versicles or descriptions of rites. Thus in NSB Ch.11 (the Paradise of Birds) the lists of hours sung by the birds are much reduced in SEL and P. Versicles and hymns appearing elsewhere in NSB are not found in SEL or P;²⁸ and NSB's frequent references to monastic offices and rules are likewise greatly reduced or omitted.²⁹ The authors of SEL and P, on the other hand, share a liking for episodes which lend themselves to practical didactic homily, rather than pious quotation or monastic celebration. SEL, however, when the chance for homiletic comment arises, tends to interpolate its own material, and not to appropriate it from P. Since this shared preference for homily is not backed up by actual material in common, the obvious conclusion is that P was *not* available to the composer of SEL. Cases where SEL invents its own moralising remarks, without deriving material from P, are found at ll.53; 65-6; 283-6; 512; 562-70; 717-20, etc.. Interpolations in P are longer, and independent of SEL: e.g. ll.241-4; 359-68; 371-6; 819-20; 953-7; 1172-82. With this similarity in

the types of additions in the two poems where they point a moral, it is unlikely that SEL would not have borrowed some of P's fluent, almost formulaic inventions in such passages, had they been accessible. As it is, when SEL does deviate from NSB, it reveals no influence at all from P.

Only once does SEL display a distinctively original, idiomatic touch in its additions to the story, at ll.491-4:

Hou þincþ þou quap sein Brandan . was þis a murie pas
 We ne wilneþ come here namore . an end of helle it was
 And þe deuel[en] hopede wel of us . habbe iheuēd a god
 cas
 And ihered be[o] Iesu Crist . hi caste ambes as

The other interpolations are less happy. At l.549 the author places a tag in praise of the Virgin; at l.624 a reference to St Patrick's Purgatory which would please his audience; further minor additions appear at ll.728-34. Innumerable other locutions of this insignificant type appear throughout the text (e.g. at ll.15-17, 19-20, 22, 33, 44-5, 50). In most cases they result from necessary shifts from NSB to accommodate the rhyme, and are always commonplace. These "original" expressions often repeat themselves (e.g. ll.411, 413); favourite adjectives are used as padding - *luber*, *grislich*, *uair*; rhymes are over-employed (e.g. *inou/drou*; *(s)ende/(w)ende* - twice in ll.701-4; *beo/seo*). Line-filling is common (ll.342, 460, 463-4, etc.) and invention limited (l.507 repeated at l.552). Figures of speech are few and clichéd (l.40: *brigtore . . . þanne þe sonne*; l.376: *stille so eni ston*). The homespun style produces the rather charming idea of fish at *one hepe* (l.445), but goes on in uninspired fashion to say they looked *aslepe* (l.446) for an easy rhyme (repeated in ll.453-4). These are typical examples of how the SEL author constantly includes material of his own (i.e. not found in NSB), but he never resorts to P for ideas, phrases or descriptive touches. Instead for his additions he draws upon a limited and common stock of expressions and formulae consisting almost entirely of clichés and hackneyed colloquialisms. It is unnecessary to postulate a further text now lost in order to account for this material.

Conclusion

The items from my three groups show first that the source of SEL in most passages is manifestly the Latin and not the Anglo-Norman text: SEL usually adopts NSB's version, not P's. Many more examples may be found where an alternative option to NSB was available to SEL in P's text; but in these instances SEL always sticks to NSB. To give just a few more from early in the story: NSB Ch.1 contains a preliminary account of the Paradise of the Saints reported to Brendan by Barinthus. Several differences occur in the details given, e.g. Barinthus is described as a hermit in a wood with 300 monks only in P; his sadness as he speaks to Brendan does not appear in P. More importantly, the description of Barinthus' voyage to the Paradise is kept back in P until the end

of the poem, where it is greatly expanded. No trace of this shift or embellishment can be found in SEL. Further additions to NSB can be adduced in P at ll.112, 117-22, 125-34, and 137-44, none of which appear in SEL.

From this scrutiny of the texts, it is possible to affirm that whilst NSB is probably SEL's main source, no secondary material is drawn from P. Where it differs from NSB, the SEL's inventions are unique but commonplace, or else agree only coincidentally with similar variations in P (usually because of a similar abridging method and attitude, and similar didactic purpose). Furthermore, it is clear that P is based on NSB, but with a series of artful expansions and rearrangements by a poet of some merit. It is a measure of SEL's independence of P that none of Benedeit's distinctive artifices is discernible in the English text.

NOTES

- ¹ Ed. Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, EETS 235-6, 244, 3 vols. (London, 1956-9) I, pp.180-202.
- ² *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Leeds, 1974); *The South English Legendary, Gilte Legende and Golden Legend* (Braunschweig, 1972); *An East Midland Revision of the South English Legendary*, Middle English Texts, 4 (Heidelberg, 1976).
- ³ *Textual Tradition*, pp.167-8; p.276.
- ⁴ G. Orlandi, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani: Introduzione* (Milan, 1968). M. Lapidge has revised and translated Prof. Orlandi's invaluable book as a forthcoming volume in *Studies in Celtic History*. The NSB is edited by C. Selmer, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* (Notre Dame [Ind.], 1959). There is a convenient English translation by J.J. O'Meara, *The Voyage of St Brendan* (Dublin, 1978). See also D.N. Dumville, "Two Approaches to the Dating of *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*", *Romanobarbarica* (forthcoming), who produces cogent arguments for dating the work not "later than the third quarter of the eighth century".
- ⁵ The earliest MS dates from the end of the tenth century. Two others were copied before the close of that century. Selmer places 14 in the eleventh century, 23 in the twelfth, 29 in the thirteenth, 19 in the fourteenth, and 28 in the fifteenth (*Navigatio*, p.xxvii).
- ⁶ See C. Selmer, "The Vernacular Translations of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*: A Bibliographical Study", *Medieval Studies* 18 (1956) pp.145-57.
- ⁷ The recent edition by I. Short and B. Merrilees, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan* (Manchester, 1979) has been referred to for this article. Their edition supersedes that of E.G.R. Waters, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan* (Oxford, 1928), but Waters has a long and useful introduction, and the text of the later Latin prose version.
- ⁸ See R.L.G. Ritchie, "The Date of *The Voyage of St Brendan*", *Medium Aevum* 19 (1950) pp.64-6; and M.D. Legge, "Anglo-Norman Hagiography and the Romances", *Medievalia et Humanistica* n.s. 6 (1975) pp.41-9, who shows that writers of romance may have known the Anglo-Norman poem, with which they have much in common; also her *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963) pp.8-18; 70; 84-5; 244; 273; 367.
- ⁹ In addition to Short and Merrilees' comments and references (p.22) in this connection, one should consult Waters and Legge in the places cited and, more recently, Robin F. Jones, "The Precocity of Anglo-Norman and the *Voyage of Saint Brendan*" in *The Nature of Medieval Narrative*, ed. M. Grunmann-Gaudet and Robin F. Jones (Lexington [Kentucky], 1980) pp.145-58.
- ¹⁰ This is Legge's argument, and it seems convincing. It is expounded in *Anglo-Norman Background* p.10, and again in her article in *Medievalia et Humanistica*. Jones (art.cit., pp.148-9) suggests that the repetitions of "en letre" be translated "in writing", and not "in Latin": one does not then have to assume that there is a lost Latin original by Benedeit intervening between the *Navigatio* and his Anglo-Norman poem. The two extant Latin Brendan stories in verse and prose related to the Benedeit poem have been shown by Waters to derive from the Anglo-Norman poem, and not vice versa (see his Introduction, Chapters VI-VII). For the text of the Latin

prose translation, see C. Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1910) II, pp.270-92, where it is called the "Vita Secunda". It is also printed beneath Waters' text of Benedeit's Anglo-Norman poem. Cf. E. Pfitzner, *Das anglonormannische Gedicht von Brendan als Quelle einer lateinischen Prosafassung* (Halle, 1910); (also in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 35 (1911) pp.31-66). The Latin verse translation was published by E. Martin, "Lat. Übersetzung des altfranz. Gedichts auf S. Brandan", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum* 16 (1873) pp.289-322; cf. P.F. Moran, *Acta Sancti Brendani* (Dublin, 1872) pp.45-84: "Vita Metrica".

- 11 Waters, pp.xcix-c.
- 12 M. Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, p.168, says that the source is "ultimately" NSB, "but the exact relations between the SEL version and the Latin and Anglo-Norman accounts have not been sufficiently investigated". He points out (p.276, n.158) that in her dissertation on the legend, Bälz deduced that the SEL compiler used a French and Anglo-Norman poem to supplement his Latin source, but Görlach reserves his judgement until a thorough investigation is made.
- 13 Translations from NSB are taken from the version by J.J. O'Meara, with the original quoted from Selmer's text (see above, note 4). SEL is quoted from the edition of D'Evelyn and Mill (see note 1) and Benedeit's poem, designated P, from the edition of Short and Merrilees (see note 7). Translations from Middle English and Anglo-Norman are my own.
- 14 Selmer, *trium milium fere monachorum pater*.
- 15 Selmer, *Duas furcellas ferreas and furcas ferreas*.
- 16 It is interesting to note that when the SEL verse story was rendered into prose in the *Gilte Legende* of 1438 the *toung* ("tongs") were misrepresented as "tongues", a bizarre mistake taken over by Caxton when he drew on the *Gilte Legende* for his *Golden Legend* of 1483. The latter was edited by F.S. Ellis (London, 1900) Vol.7, pp.48-66. There is no modern edition of the former, although quotations from its Brendan story appear in Görlach's 1972 publication (cited in note 2 above).
- 17 Selmer, *Diuersa sua secreta in oceano magno*.
- 18 There are cases where material from one passage could be placed in more than one of my groups, e.g. item 2: the treatment of "Hall"/"Castle" would place the item in Group 1, for SEL/NSB alone agree; but the Thieving Monk episode in this passage places it in Group 2, for SEL alone omits it.
- 19 E.g. in ll.673-86.
- 20 Waters, p.ciii.
- 21 E.g. ll.147-8; 219-26; 243-6; 359-68; 472-8; 903-4; 975-80; 987-94; 1173-82. The same key or rhyming words often appear in these hortatory, didactic interpolations.
- 22 In ll.39-70, Brendan's desire to see the Promised Land is couched in terms of pious longing rather than of curiosity. Ll.501-5 suppress the outburst of amazement and curiosity in Brendan (as narrated in NSB) at the sight of the bird-covered tree. In ll.1089-90 he again controls a desire to know God's secrets.

- 23 Waters, p.civ.
- 24 P, 11.199-201, though Benedeit alters Brendan's prediction a little. Cf. NSB Ch.5, 11.7-9.
- 25 Benedeit appears to make of this monk a dreadful example to other sinners, and of his Thieving Monk a case of a penitent sinner, tempted by the Devil, whose soul goes to Paradise (11.349-50).
- 26 Besides, NSB becomes quite muddled over the number of monks at times: in Ch.17 Brendan divides fruit into 12 parts for his men, for example. In Ch.12 there is a sign that again Brendan's party numbers 12 (lines 60-1). Possibly this is where SEL got its figure from.
- 27 The variation between 1000 and 3000 in item 1 is another example. See Charles Allyn Williams, *Oriental Affinities of the Legend of the Hairy Anchorite*, pt. II (Christian), *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 11, no.4, Nov. 1926: an illuminating survey of these legends, and helpful for an understanding of the Paul the Hermit episode in the Brendan story.
- 28 E.g. NSB Ch.12, 11.33-5, 48, 104ff.; Ch.15, 11.14-15; Ch.26, 11.29-30; Ch.27, 11.15-16.
- 29 E.g. NSB Ch.6, 11.52-3, 59; Ch.12, 11.82, 108.