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MORE LOST LITERATURE IN OLD AND MIDDLE ENGLISH.

The more we examine the numerous references to be found concerning the Lost Literature of Medieval England, the more we recognise their importance in any general survey of the literature of this period. The point has been stressed by Professor Chambers and further research on the subject has but justified his words. In the following article further examples of works in the vernacular are noted which, for the most part, have disappeared leaving little trace of their existence. But it can be definitely proved that these works once existed and their existence may throw a new light on many of the problems of Medieval vernacular literature.

The work of Alfred the Great in the sphere of literature is usually regarded as being amongst the earliest of its kind in English, and Professor Chambers has shown conclusively that it is from the prose of Alfred that modern English prose is descended. But it is as well to remember that, in his use of vernacular prose as a means towards the education of his people, Alfred had been anticipated by an earlier and a greater scholar. In the account of the death of Bede, written by one of his disciples, we read how, on the day of his death, he was engaged in the translation of the Gospel of St. John and of extracts from Isidore into English for the benefit of his students:

“ In istis autem diebus dua opuscula memoriae digna, exceptis lectionibus, quas cottidie accepimus ab eo, et cantu psalmorum, facere studuit; id est a capite sancti euangelii Iohannis usque ad eum locum in quo dicitur, ‘ sed haec quid sunt inter tantos ? ’ in nostram linguam ad utilitatem ecclesiae Dei conuertit, et de libris Isidori episcopi excerptiones quasdam, dicens: ‘ nolo ut pueri mei mendacium legant, et in hoc post meum obitum sine fructu laborent ’.”¹

¹ *Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, clxii.

Whether any of Bede's disciples followed the example which he set them in the use of the vernacular we do not know. In any case the raids of the Northmen would cut short the development of a vernacular prose in the North and Alfred had to start again from the beginning, probably with no knowledge of the previous work of Bede.

Manuscripts of most of Alfred's major translations seem to have survived, though many of the manuscripts extant were not written until long after his death. Works which have since been lost have been attributed to him, but it is probable that the ascription of most of these is as apocryphal as that of the Middle English "Proverbs of Alured." Such is probably the case with a translation of Aesop's Fables with which he has been credited. These fables were later translated into French by Marie de France. In the Epilogue to her work she tells how, at the request of a certain Count William, she translated her version into French from the English of King Alfred:

" Pur amur le cunte Willalme,
le plus vaillant de cest reialme,
m'entremis de cest livre faire
e de l'Engleis en Romanz traire.
Esope apelë um cest livre,
kil translata e fist escrivre,
de Griu en Latin le turna.
Li reis Alvez, ki mult l'ama,
le translata puis an Engleis,
e jeo l'ai rimé en Franceis,
si cum jol truvai, proprement."²

This seems to be the sole authority for the statement that Alfred was responsible for the translation of Aesop and, late as it is, it cannot have much weight. Nevertheless Marie's statement is important as indicating the existence of such a work in English at a period when extant works in the vernacular are so scanty.

Similarly Alfred is said to have written a book on Falconry, apparently on the sole authority of an entry in the catalogue of

² *Die Fabeln der Marie de France*, ed. Karl Warnke, Halle 1898, p. 327.

the Library of Christ Church, Canterbury. In this catalogue, drawn up by Prior Henry of Eastry in about 1330, item no. 496 seem to be a volume of medical treatises, the contents of which are given as:

“ 496. Liber Galieni, Constantini de malencolia.

In hoc uol. cont.:

Liber medicinalis.

Liber Aluredi Regis custodiendis accipitribus.

Libellus de fleobotomia.

Liber Soracii phisici ad Cleopatram Reginam de mulieribus.”³

We know from the biography by Asser that Alfred was a great huntsman and it is probable enough that such a subject would have interested him. But such an ascription at this date would be merely traditional. Nor is there anything to show that the tract is in English as would surely have been the case had it been by Alfred. In this catalogue we are usually told when the work is in English or French and the lack of any such notice here would seem to indicate that it was in Latin. We cannot, of course, be certain that, unless we are told otherwise, the work in question is in Latin, and the “Liber Aluredi” may possibly have been in English. But on the whole the evidence for an English book on Falconry by Alfred is decidedly weak. Nevertheless it is tempting to equate this entry with the “Libri Haroldi” on the same subject mentioned in the “De Avibus Tractatus,” a manuscript written about 1200 and preserved in the Nationalbibliothek at Vienna. The author seems to have been Adelard of Bath, since excerpts from the same tract under Adelard’s name are preserved in a manuscript at Clare College, Cambridge. At the beginning of the tract we are told: “Ea igitur disseremus que et modernorum magistrorum usu didicimus et non minus que Haraoldi regis libris reperimus scripta, ut quicunque his intentus disputationem habeat si negotium exercuit paratus esse possit.”⁴

³ M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge 1903), p. 60.

⁴ See C. H. Haskins, “King Harold’s Books” (*English Historical Review* 37, 398-400).

The King Harold mentioned here is presumably Harold Godwinsson and we know from the Bayeux Tapestry that he was a keen falconer. If he possessed books on the subject they would almost certainly have been in English. That being the case it would be natural enough that the name of King Alfred should later have become attached to them, whether correctly or not. However, connexion between these two notices, though possible, is not very probable. Nor is it likely that either of these have anything to do with another book on hawks mentioned by Daude de Pradas, a contemporary of the Emperor Frederick II:

" En un libre del rei Enric
d'Anclaterra lo pros el ric,
que amet plus ausels e cas
que non fes anc nuill crestias."⁵

If the Henry referred to here is Henry I, it is, perhaps, possible that the book may have been in English. But it is more probable that the Henry intended is Henry of Anjou in which case " the reference is apparently to a lost work in Provençal, whether prepared under the king's direction or merely dedicated to him does not appear."

Interesting though these examples may be it is by no means certain that the works referred to were in English. In the case of two of them, in fact, it is rather improbable. Some books may now be noted in this same library of Christ Church, Canterbury, which were definitely in English according to the catalogue drawn up by Prior Henry of Eastry. In this catalogue items no. 296 and 297 are given as follows:

" 296. Batte super Regulam beati Benedicti.

In hoc uol. cont.:

Regula Aluricii glosata Anglice.

Liber sompniorum.

De obseruacione Lune in rebus agendis.

Oraciones Anglice.

⁵ See C. H. Haskins, " The ' De Arte Venandi cum Avibus ' of the Emperor Frederick II " (*English Historical Review* 36, 347).

297. Batte secundus.

In hoc uol. cont.:

Expositiones de Prisciano exposite Anglice.

Locutio latina glosata Anglice ad instruendos pueros.

Prophecia sibille.

Excepciones de gradibus Ecclesie.

Epistole Paschasii pape de ordinacione Radulfi
Archiepiscopi.

Epistola Johannis pape ad sanctum Dunstanum.

Examinacio Episcopi antequam consecratur.

Regula Beati Benedicti glosata, Anglice.

Omelie et Sermones quedam.

Consuetudines de faciendo seruicio diuino per annum,
glosate Anglice."⁶

Of these, the first volume has been identified by Dr. James with the British Museum Cott. Tiberius A iii, but the second is not to be identified with any surviving manuscript. However, perhaps fortunately, its contents do not appear to have been of any great interest. The first two pieces may be two of Aelfric's works, the Grammar and the Colloquy, and manuscripts of the Rule of St. Benedict are still extant in English. From the literary point of view there is little of importance in the list; much more interesting are the English books given as items 304 to 320:

"Libri Anglici.

304. Genesis Anglice depicta. (Bodley Junius II ?)

305. Liber Passionum et Sermones Anglice.

306. Dialogus beati Gregorii.

307. Boecius de consolatione.

308. Herbarius Anglice depictus. (Cott. Vit. C iii ?)

309. Liber Sermonum catholicorum Anglice.

310. Liber Sermonum beati Augustini, a.

311. Cronica uetustissima, a. (C.C.C.C. 173)

312. Liber de ordine monastico, a.

313. Cronica secundum Bedam, a. (C.U.L. Kk. 3. 18 ?)

⁶ M. R. James, *op. cit.* p. 50.

- 314. Textus iv Euangeliorum, Anglice. (Royal 1 A xiv)
- 315. Actus Apostolorum, Anglice.
- 316. Liber Sermonum, Anglice.
- 317. Regula Canonicorum, a.
- 318. Cronica Latine et Anglice. (Cott. Dom. A viii)
- 319. Liber Edwini, a.
- 320. Excepciones de Prisciano, a. (C.U.L. Hh. 1. 10 ?)

Only three of these are to be identified with any certainty with surviving manuscripts, though Dr. James considers that the identification of four others is probable enough. It is possible, too, that some of the volumes of sermons still exist, since the pre-Conquest homiletic literature has not yet been completely explored. The copy of Boethius may be identical with the burnt Otho A vi and in other catalogues we hear of still more English copies of Boethius which have since been lost. In the late fifteenth century catalogue of the library of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, we have mention of a "Boecius de consolacione philosophie in Anglicis" in which the opening word on the second folio was "vtterest."⁷ Similarly a "Boeties boc on Englisc" figures in the list of books given by Bishop Leofric to the cathedral church at Exeter.⁸ The Old English version of Boethius is preserved to-day in three manuscripts only. The earliest of these is the fragment of the burnt Otho A vi which may be identical with the Christ Church copy, but the other two manuscripts can, apparently, be identified with neither of the two manuscripts mentioned here. It is possible that the St. Augustine's copy was a version of one of the later translations by Walton or Chaucer and not an Old English copy at all. Of the other books given here the "Liber de Ordine monastico" was probably a Customary which does not now exist. There seems to be no extant Old English version of the Rule of St. Augustine. As to the "Liber Edwini,"

⁷ M. R. James, *op. cit.* p. 51. The identifications given are those of Dr. James pp. xxv ff. and p. 509.

⁸ M. R. James, *op. cit.* p. 302.

⁹ See *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry*, with Introductory Chapters by R. W. Chambers, Max Förster and Robin Flower. London 1933, p. 25.

according to Dr. James: "It seems likely that this may have been a somewhat later book (i.e. written after the Conquest), the production of the early twelfth century scribe Eadwin, whose Bible and Psalter occur just afterwards. The last-named is, of course, the famous Canterbury Psalter at Trinity College, Cambridge."

It seems that at least half of these Old English works, which still existed in the fourteenth century, have since been lost, and it is surprising that such a comparatively large number should have been preserved. If we turn to other early catalogues we find a very different state of affairs. In a catalogue of the Cathedral Library at Durham which was drawn up in the early part of the twelfth century we find, under the heading of "*Libri Anglici*," the following manuscripts noted:

"*Libri Anglici*. Omeliaria vetera duo. Unum novum. Elfredes Boc. Historia Anglorum Anglice. Liber Paulini Anglicus. Liber de Nativitate Sanctae Mariæ Anglicus. Cronica duo Anglica."¹⁰

When later catalogues of the Library were drawn up in 1391 and 1416 all these English books seem to have been already lost. In these catalogues the only book given as being in English is a "*Donatus Anglicè*" of which the incipit of the second folio is rather misleadingly given as "*i. de'or hoc milite*."¹¹ It is possible, perhaps, that some of these books still exist in other collections, but at any rate by 1391 at the latest they had all been scattered from Durham. We have no means of identifying these particular books of homilies from the numerous manuscripts containing Old or Early Middle English homilies. Similarly the brief descriptions of some of the other manuscripts makes identification almost impossible. The "*Chronica duo Anglica*" may represent two manuscripts of the Old English Chronicle. None of the extant manuscripts of this work were written in the North but the northern material incorporated in them indicates that manuscripts were

¹⁰ *Catalogi Veteres Librorum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Dunelm* (Surtees Society 7), p. 5.

¹¹ *op. cit.* pp. 33, 111.

produced and kept up in the North. Moreover, Symeon of Durham, writing in the first quarter of the twelfth century, "uses a form of the Saxon Chronicle intimately related to the ancestor of E."¹² The "Historia Anglorum Anglice" is probably an English version of Bede's "Ecclesiastical History" and may possibly be identical with the extant manuscript preserved as Tanner 10 in the Bodleian. Nothing seems to be known of the previous history of this manuscript but, according to Dr. Miller "There is some resemblance in the facsimile to the last letter of the second line in the page of facsimiles given in the Durham Ritual (ed. Stevenson)."¹³ But what are we to make of the "Liber Paulini Anglicus"? The Paulinus referred to is presumably the Apostle of Northumbria and the book may simply be an English version of extracts from Bede dealing with him, though this is unlikely. We have no record that Paulinus himself ever wrote any books, much less any English books, though he probable spoke English himself. He was sent to England by Gregory the Great in 602 so that, when he fled from Northumbria in 633, he had been in England for over thirty years. Perhaps the book was some kind of elementary religious instruction written for the benefit of his new converts or, more probably, the entry merely indicates some English book which was traditionally connected with his name. In any case its contents must remain completely unknown. Probably the most interesting of these entries is the item described simply as "Elfledes Boc." No indication is given as to who this Elflod may have been but the entry should probably be taken in conjunction with another Aelflaed of whom we hear in connection with Durham. When the tomb of St. Cuthbert was opened in 1827 there was found in the coffin an embroidered stole, a maniple, a girdle and two golden bracelets. On the reverses of the end of the stole and maniple, in the style of the tenth-century Winchester school, was embroidered the in-

¹² J. Armitage Robinson, "The Saxon Bishops of Wells" (*British Academy Supplemental Papers* IV), p. 13, n. 1.

¹³ T. Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, (EETS. 1890), p. xiv.

scription *ÆLFLED FIERI PRECEPIT PIO EPISCOPO FRIÐESTANO*. It seems possible that this stole and maniple is the "unam stolam cum manipulo" which is mentioned amongst the donations made by Athelstan to the shrine of St. Cuthbert during his northern expedition in 934/7. Frithestan was Bishop of Winchester from 909 to 931, in which year he resigned his see, and the stole may have come into the hands of Athelstan on the death of Frithestan in 932-3. The identity of the names suggests that "Elfredes Boc" may also have been one of the gifts of Athelstan to St. Cuthbert. Along with the stole and maniple he is recorded to have presented:

. unum missalem,
et duos evangeliorum textus auro et argento ornatos,
et unam sancti Cuthberti vitam metrica et prosaice
scriptam."¹⁴

One of the manuscripts of the Gospels was burnt in the Cottonian fire but, since it is said to have been written in France, it could hardly have been the book mentioned here. The "Life of Cuthbert" is probably identical with the extant MS. C.C.C.C. 183 which is written in Latin. Consequently, it "Elfredes Boc" was given to the Cathedral by Athelstan, and if the complete list of his donations is given in this charter, both only doubtful possibilities, then presumably it was the other manuscript of the Gospels. We have no means of knowing who the Elfred in question may have been, but it is possibly significant that the second wife of Eadward the Elder, the stepmother of Athelstan, was named *Ælfled*.

Towards the end of MS. 367 in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a short list of English books is inserted: "*Deo englissee passionale and ii englissee dialogas and oddan boc and þe englisca martirlogium and ii englissee salteras and ii pastorales englisce and þe englisca regol and barontus.*"

In the same manuscript is preserved a letter from Hubert, Abbot of Westminster and Edwius, Prior, to the Prior of Worcester, so that it may originally have belonged to the

¹⁴ W. de Gray Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, no. 685.

cathedral library of Worcester. If so the library no longer possesses any of these manuscripts. The list is not particularly interesting. The "ii pastorales" may be the manuscripts now extant as C.C.C.C. 12 and Hatton 20. The "ii englisce dialogas" are translations of the "Dialogues" of Gregory the Great and, in view of the connexion of the manuscript with Worcester, it may be worth noting that the translation was undertaken by Wærferth, Bishop of Worcester, at the command of King Alfred. Similarly the Old English version of the Martyrologium was probably produced somewhere in West Mercia,¹⁵ though there is no reason to suppose that the book mentioned here is to be identified with any of the extant versions. The "englisca regel" is an Old English version of either the Rule of St. Benedict or of Bishop Chrodegang of Metz. The only item which seems to have perished entirely is the "barontus" which seems to have been an Old English version of the Vision of St. Barontus of Pistoja who flourished during the sixth century.

Nothing seems to be known of the "oddan boc." There are several persons of this name connected with Worcester, the most important being Oda the Good, uncle of St. Oswald of Worcester and Archbishop of Canterbury, who died c. 958. The book is not said to be in English so that it may possibly have been the Latin "Vita Odonis" by Eadmer, based mainly on the first part of the anonymous "Vita Sancti Oswaldi," or some earlier version of these works.

Other catalogues of monastic libraries which have been consulted have furnished little information. In the early twelfth-century catalogue of the Abbey Library at Peterborough preserved in MS. Bodley 163, the only two English manuscripts seem to have been items 54 and 65;

"54. Vite sanctorum anglie

65. Elfredi regis liber anglicus."¹⁶

The first of these seems to have been a manuscript of Aelfric's

¹⁵ G. Herzfeld, *An Old English Martyrology*, (EETS. 1900), pp. xixff.

¹⁶ M. R. James, "Lists of Manuscripts formerly in the Peterborough Abbey Library" (*Supplement to the Bibl. Soc. Trans.* No. 5, 1926).

"Lives of the Saints" and, in the absence of further information, it is useless to speculate as to which of the translations of Alfred is represented by the second item. We should have expected the monastic library of Glastonbury to have been fairly rich in English books, but when the extant catalogue was drawn up in 1247-8 little of interest remained. Amongst the "*Diuersi libri de bibliotheca*" we have:

"*Penthateucum Moysy & Josuæ sine glosa. vetust.*

Item duo Anglica vetusta et inutilia."

History is represented in English only by a copy of Orosius, presumably one of the copies of Alfred's translation:

"*Libri Orosii. ii. Latina lingua. tercius in Anglica. vetusti set leg.*"

Homiletic literature is better represented:

"*Liber de diversis sermonibus Anglicis.*

Item sermones Anglici. vetust. inutil.

Passionale Sanctorum Anglice script. vetust. inutil.

Item quidem liber Anglice."

Medicine is represented by

"*Medicinale Anglicum.*"

But these, apparently, were the only English books which still remained in the library at this date.¹⁷ In the catalogue of the Library of the Priory of St. Andrew, Rochester, which was drawn up in 1202 we have the following works only which seem to have been in English:

"112. *Omeliaria anglica* II

162. *Alfricus* I

233. *Medicinale anglicum.*"¹⁸

Again in the fragmentary catalogue of the library of Ramsey Abbey there seems to be only one manuscript which may have been in English. Among the "*Libri Hystoriarum*" there is mention of a "*Chronica Anglica*" but with no further clue by which the precise nature of the manuscript may be investi-

¹⁷ T. Hearne, *Johannis Glastoniensis* (Oxford, 1726), pp. 423-444.

¹⁸ W. B. Rye, "Catalogue of the Priory of St. Andrew, Rochester, A.D. 1202." (*Archaeologica Cantiana*, iii, 54-61).

gated.¹⁹ In the fourteenth-century catalogue of Rievaulx the sole item which may have been in English is entered as:

"Libri de littera Anglica duo."²⁰

It is impossible to be certain of the exact meaning of this entry. It may simply indicate a book written in English script but not necessarily in English. Perhaps the greatest disappointment of all is provided by the inventory of the books of the cathedral library of Exeter which was drawn up in 1327. Remembering the donations of Bishop Leofric we should have expected that a certain number of English books would have still remained in the Library. Actually the only mention of English books which we find are the following:

"Martirologium Latinum et Anglicum. valet 2s.

Psalterium interlineare glosatura de Anglico. precii. 2s.

Penetentiale vetus et alia plura, cum Anglico in fine. 12d.²¹

Then, at the end of the inventory, we have a tantalizing note to the effect that there were also in the library "multi alii libri vetustate consumpti Gallice, Anglice, et Latine scripti, qui non appreciantur, que nullius valoris reputantur." Presumably the extant Exeter Book to which we owe so much of our knowledge of Old English poetry was one of these.

The extant thirteenth-century catalogue of Reading Abbey contains no works in English, but the associated church of Leominster possessed one or two:—

"Rotula cum vita sancti Guthlaci anglice scripta . . .

Medicinalis unus anglicis litteris scriptus . . .

Liber qui appellatur landboc."^{21a}

The three extant Old English versions of the life of St. Guthlac, the poem in the Exeter Book and prose versions in two Cotton Manuscripts, can hardly be identified with the subject of this entry since all three are octavo volumes and not rolls. Versions of the life in Middle English verse are also extant in three manuscripts, but all three manuscripts were

¹⁹ *Chronicon Abbatie Ramesiensis* (Rolls Series 83, Appendix III), p. 356.

²⁰ E. Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries* (London 1859), pp. 333-341.

²¹ G. Oliver, *Lives of the Bishops of Exeter* (Exeter 1861, Appendix III), pp. 301-10.

^{21a} S. Barfield, "Lord Fingall's Cartulary of Reading Abbey" (*English Historical Review* iii, 113ff).

copied at a date subsequent to the drawing up of the catalogue. In the Harley collection there is a roll, Harley Roll Y. 6, which contains pictures of the life of St. Guthlac. Nothing seems to be known of the original provenance of this roll nor is it known from what source the Harleys obtained it. It is usually assumed to be a product of Croyland but this seems to be merely a guess from the subject of the roll. In any case the inscriptions are in Latin, not English, and the description in the Leominster catalogue seems to indicate a written work rather than a series of pictures. Presumably it was an earlier version of the Middle English poem or else an extract from one of the legendaries.^{21b} The abbey at Burton-on-Trent, according to a catalogue drawn up soon after 1175, had a library of 78 volumes and seven of these were in English, a surprisingly high proportion. The English works consisted of:—

- “ 71. Omeliarum anglicum.
- 72. Psalterium anglicum.
- 73. Passionale anglicum.
- 74. Dialogum Gregorii et historia Anglorum, anglice.
- 75. Apollonium, anglice.
- 76. Evangelistas, anglice.
- 77. Ymnarium, anglice.”^{21c}

Considering the date of this catalogue it seems probable that these works were in Old English, but they add little to our knowledge of Old English literature. The extant fragment of the Old English version of Apollonius is preserved in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 201, and it is probably merely by coincidence that Old English versions of Gregory's “Dialogues” and Bede's “Ecclesiastical History” are also preserved in Corpus Christi manuscripts. Little seems to be known of the original provenance of these manuscripts, but in no case, apparently, can they be connected with Burton-on-Trent.^{21d} According to a thirteenth century catalogue Flaxley

^{21b} See W. de Gray Birch, *Memorials of Saint Guthlac*, Wisbech 1881.

^{21c} H. Omont, “Anciens catalogues de Bibliothèques anglaises” (*Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* ix, 201-222).

^{21d} I have to thank Dr. C. E. Wright for information on these manuscripts and on the Harley Roll.

Abbey also contained three English books in its library, but no indication of the contents of two of them is given:—

“ 69-70. Duo libri anglici . . .

73. Phisicus liber, anglice.”^{21e}

Other monastic catalogues also exist, those for example of Lanthony Priory, of Meaux Abbey, of Leicester, the Grey Friars of Hereford and the Austin Friars of York.^{21f} All these seem to have been important collections but, when the catalogues were drawn up, they contained no English books or, if they did, the librarian considered them unworthy of mention.

So far we have been dealing with actual books which can be proved to have existed but of which no trace now remains. This should not lead us to ignore the immense amount of oral literature which must once have existed but of which little record has been preserved. The songs and legends of the common people had little chance of any written existence and, even with such existence, little chance of being preserved. Only odd references to such literature are to be found but it must have been common and, in the early period at any rate, far more important and influential because more widespread, than the written literature which still exists or which we can prove to have existed. Examples of this oral literature have been given by Professor Chambers and by myself (LSE. ii, 13-47), and a few more items dealing with the Old English period may be given here. In that version of the life of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr, which is preserved in MS. C.C.C.C. 308 we are told how songs were sung before the king telling of the deeds of his ancestors:

“ Nec mora, duo canendi prediti scientia in cordis leticia psallere ceperunt. Erant carmina de regis eiusdem regia prosapia. Quibus ille delectatus abstracta brachio protinus armilla modulantes carmina donat, dum repatriat plurima spondet.”²²

It is instructive to note that Giraldus Cambrensis, who bases

^{21e} H. Omont, *op. cit.* ^{21f} See E. A. Savage, *Old English Libraries* (London 1911).

²² M. R. James, “Two Lives of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr” (*English Historical Review*, 32, 214). I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr. C. E. Wright of the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum.

his own account of the martyr on this life, omits this detail, probably because of the worldly nature of the songs. Ethelbert was the vassal king of East Anglia, but we know little of his ancestors and nothing of the deeds which were celebrated in these songs. He had been summoned to the court of Mercia and there executed by his suzerain Offa in 793. "There was evidently something particularly atrocious about this business, as the young king Aethelbert was reckoned a saint, and became one of the more popular names in the English calendar. Later legends told how he was lured to Offa's court by the promise of the hand of his daughter, Aelfthryth, and then murdered by the contrivance of Queen Cynethryth."²³ But the legends connected with Offa and his wicked queen must have been numerous though brief references are all that remain. Even after the death of that king rumour did not remain silent and legends connected with his burial were still known at the time when Roger of Wendover was writing: "Eodem anno (796) Offa, Rex Merciorum magnificus, constructo fere nobilissimo post inventionem beati Albani monasterio, in villa, quæ Offeleia nuncupatur, juxta multorum opinionem diem clausit extremum; cujus corpus apud villam de Bedefordia delatum, in capella quadam extra urbem, supra ripam Uscae fluminis sitam, more regio dicitur fuisse sepultum. Refert autem usque in hodiernum diem omnium fere comprovincialium relatio, quod capella præfata longo usu et violentia illius fluminis sit subversa, atque ejus rapacitate, cum ipso regis sepulchro, in flumen præcipitata; unde et usque in præsens sepulchrum illud ab hominibus loci, tempore æstivo ibidem balneantibus, quandoque in aquæ profunditate videtur esse conspicuum, et quandoque licet diligentissime quæratur, ac si res fatalis esset, non invenitur."²⁴

There seem, too, to have been legends extant concerning St. Kenelm of Mercia, the supposed son of Coenwulf. That king is said to have died in 821 whilst on an expedition against the Welsh, and more or less contemporary authorities confirm the

²³ C. W. C. Oman, *England before the Norman Conquest* (London 1929), p. 337.

²⁴ Roger de Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, Rolls Series 95 (i), p. 402.

fact that he was succeeded on the throne by his brother Ceolwulf. There is, however, a strange legend that Coenwulf left a son Kenelm who was only seven years old at the time of his father's death but was nevertheless acknowledged as king. After reigning only a few days the boy was murdered by the contrivance of his elder sister Cwenthryth, abbess of Winchcombe. The tale appears first of all in Florence of Worcester:

"Rex Merciorum S. Kenulphus, post multa bona quæ in sua vita gessit opera, ad beatitudinem quæ in coelis est transivit perennem, filiumque suum Kenelmum septennen regni reliquit hæredem. Sed paucis mensibus evolutis, germanæ suæ Quendrythæ insidiis, cujus sævam conscientiam dira cupido regnandi armarat, ausu crudelitatis ab Asceberhto, nutritore suo cruentissimo, in vasta sylvaque nemorosa sub arbore spinosa occulte traditur jugulo; verum qui solo teste coelo est jugulatus, coelo teste per columnam lucis postmodum est revelatus. Absciditur caput Kenelmi natalis et innocentiae candore lacteum; unde lactea columba aureis pennis evolat in coelum: post cujus foelix martyrium, Ceolwlfus regnum suscepit Merciorum."²⁵

Giraldus Cambrensis also knew of legends dealing with St. Kenelm and his wicked sister.²⁶ Later chroniclers all repeat the legend and Roger of Wendover records a distich concerning the saint which was current in his own day:

"Quæ schedula, quoniam Anglicis et aureis litteris fuerat exarata, a Romanis et alliis qui aderant clericis, papa jubente, frustra legi tentatur; sed salubriter Anglus illis adstitit, qui Latinae linguae schedulam evolvens, fecit ut Romani pontificis epistola regibus Anglis compatriotam martyrem indicaret. Habebatur autem inter cætera contentum in charta, 'In clento cou bathe Kenelm kynebearn lith under thorne hæuedes bereaved.'"²⁷

²⁵ *Chronicon Florentii Wigorniensis*, E.H.S. 13 (i) p. 65.

²⁶ *Itinerarium Kambriæ*, Rolls Series 21 (vi), p. 25.

²⁷ Roger of Wendover, *op. cit.* p. 411. Professor Dickins points out that the emendation to "hazethorne" in the distich would give two reasonably good alliterative lines:

In clento cou bathe	Kenelm kynebearn
lith under hazethorne	hæuedes bereaved.

Other late authorities commemorate the fate of Kenelm under his anniversary (July 17th). Historically there seems to be not the slightest justification for the tale, yet Kenelm became a favourite saint in the Middle Ages, and the place where his body was hidden in a brake was a well-known haunt of pilgrims. Similarly stories seem to have circulated concerning Denewulf, Bishop of Winchester, stories which were known to Florence of Worcester and to William of Malmesbury:

"Defuncto Dunberhto Wintoniensi episcopo, successit Denewlf. Hic, si famæ creditur, ad multam ætatem non solum litterarum expers, sed etiam subulcus fuit. Eum rex Ælfredus, hostium violentiæ cedens, et in sylvam profugus, casu sues pascentem offendit; cujus comperto ingenio, litteris informandum tradidit, et postmodum perfectius institutum creavit Wintoniæ præsulem; commentus rem dignam miraculo."²⁸

The life of Alfred provided, of course, much material for legend during the succeeding years as is shown by the tales of the cakes and his adventure in the Danish camp disguised as a harper. Even after death he continued to provide still more material as appears from the strange tale describing the appearance of his ghost which is found in William of Malmesbury and in the "*Liber de Hyda*":

"Aiunt Ælfredum prius in episcopatu sepultum, quod suum monasterium esset imperfectum; mox pro deliramento canonicorum, dicentium regios manes resumpto cadavere noctibus per domos oberrare, filium successorem genitoris tulisse exuvias, et in novo monasterio quietam sede composuisse."²⁹

Much of the later Matter of England must have been extant in one form or another during the Old English period, though little or no trace of it is found until a much later time. Most of these legends were probably extant only orally and would be forgotten long before they had any chance of a written existence. That such legends did exist we know from the fact that many

²⁸ Florence of Worcester, *op. cit.* p. 97; a similar account is given in William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum* (Rolls Series 52), p. 162.

²⁹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, Rolls Series 90 (i), p. 134; the same account is given in the *Liber de Hyda*.

survived to be written down in the Middle English period. We know also from William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon that ballads on Old English subjects were common at the time at which they were writing. Apparently they were still to be heard much later when Peter of Langtoft was writing his Chronicle in French verse. In this work, when dealing with the battle of Ellendoune fought in 825 between Ecgberht of Wessex and Beornwulf of Mercia, he tells us:

“ Desuth Elendoune la guere fu finye.
En proverbe auncyen sovent le ay oye,
Elendoune, Elendoune, ta terre est rubye
Du saunk le ray Bernulphe a sa cravauntye.”³⁰

This Chronicle was translated into English verse by Robert Mannyng of Brunne who completed his work in 1338. He translates the above lines as:

“ Under Elendoune þe bataile was smyten.
Men syng in þat cuntre (fele zit it witen)
‘ Elendoune, Elendoune, þi lond is fulle rede
Of þe blode of Bernewolf, þer he toke his dede.’ ”³¹

It is rather difficult to know what exactly to make of this reference. Important as the result of the battle was, we should hardly have expected a battle between Wessex and Mercia to have been remembered so long in the North. Did Robert Mannyng really know of ballads on the subject or is he merely giving a free translation of Peter of Langtoft? It is tempting to relate this quotation with the reference to the same battle which we find in Henry of Huntingdon. After describing the fierceness of the battle he goes on to say:

“ unde dicitur: ‘ Ellendune rivus cruore rubuit, ruina restitit, fætores tabuit.’ ”³²

It seems probable that Henry of Huntingdon who translated the “ Battle of Brunanburh ” into Latin knew of an Old English poem, since lost, containing brief descriptions of some of the

³⁰ *Chronicle of Peter of Langtoft*, Rolls Series 47 (i), 296.

³¹ *Peter Langtoft's Chronicle* (as illustrated and improved by Robert of Brunne) . . . ed. T. Hearne, Oxford 1725, p. 14.

³² Henry of Huntingdon, Rolls Series 74; p. 132.

most famous battles of the Old English period. The different quotations which he gives concerning these battles are possibly a translation into Latin of lines from this poem. It is tempting to assume that the poem was known also to Peter of Langtoft. But the words seem to imply an oral rather than a written source and it is improbable that they are to be directly related to the words of Henry of Huntingdon.

In Robert Mannyng we also find references to Anglo-Scandinavian legends which formed the Matter of England. His reference to the Lay of Havelok the Dane is well-known but, in addition, there are references to legends which no longer exist. Just as the Havelok legend provides an eponymous founder for Grimsby, so we have legends about the founders, real or supposed, of Scarborough and Flamborough. The founders, Scarthe and Flayn, were supposed to have been two followers of one of the early invaders known as Engle from whom the country received its name. Round these two heroes numerous legends had apparently gathered:

“ When Engle hadde þe lond al þorow,
 He gaf to Scardyng Scardeburghe;
 Toward þe northe, by þe see side,
 An hauene hit is, schipes in to ryde.
 fflayn highte his broþer, als seyþ þe tale
 þat Thomas made of Kendale;
 Of Scarthe & fflayn, Thomas seys,
 What þey were, how þey dide, what weys.
 Mayster Edmond seis, as me mones,
 þat þe Engle hadde nynetene sones.
 þyse nynetene, after þe ffader deuis,
 Departed þe lond in nynetene partis.
 Of þo parties fond y non wryten,
 But o partie þat y can wyten;
 þe nyneteneþe partie was þat þynge
 þat langed to seint Edmond þe kynge:
 þys ys þat oþer skyle y fond
 Why hit was called Englelond,

Als Maister Edmond þer-of seys,
& as he seys, y seye þat weys."³³

Apparently Robert Mannyng knew of two works dealing with the exploits of Engle and Scarthe, one by Master Edmond—probably in French—and one by a certain Thomas of Kendale. Both these books seem to have since disappeared leaving no trace beyond the reference quoted above. A summary of the story as told by Master Edmond is given by Robert Mannyng. In this version Scarthe has come to be regarded as a Briton and not a Scandinavian. According to him, after the Angles had won England a British king of the name of Engle came and laid claim to the land. Fearing Engle and his champion Scardying, the Angles made him king of the land. But Thomas of Kendal evidently told a very different story. He knew a more correct form of the hero's name and told also of his brother Flayn, Professor E. V. Gordon has brought these references in Robert Mannyng into relationship with the account of the foundation of Scarborough as given in *Kormáks Saga*: “þeir bræðr (i.e. Þorgils ok Kormákr Ögmundarsynir) herjuðu um Írland, Bretland, England, Skotland, ok þóttu hinir ágæztu menn. Þeir settu fyrst virki þat er heitir Skarðaborg. Þeir runnu upp á Skotland ok unnu mörg stórvirki ok höfðu mikit lið; í þeim her var engi slíkr sem Kormákr um afl ok áræði.”³⁴

Professor Gordon then goes on to show that the Scarthe and Flayn of English tradition are to be identified with the two brothers Þorgils and Kormákr Ögmundarsynir:

“Here we have two celebrated heroes, Scarthe and Flayn, closely associated in legend. We know that Scarthe gave his name to Scarborough, and not far away we find the name of Flayn given to a stronghold in the same way. Is it likely to be the same Flayn as Skarði's brother, or is it a second Flayn? It was not a common name, and it would be rather odd if two men bearing this rare name could be associated with Skarði. It is indeed a tempting hypothesis to suppose that it was Fleinn

³³ *Chronicles of Robert of Brunne*, Rolls Series 87 (ii), p. 514.

³⁴ *Kormáks Saga*, cap. xxvii.

the brother of Skarði who gave his name to Flamborough. And if the hypothesis is right, we have further knowledge of Flein's identity. "Kormáks Saga" tells us that the brother of Þorgils Skarði who went with him to England was Kormak the skald. Flamborough might claim a most distinguished founder.

"Whether or not Kormak gave his name to Flamborough, it is clear that he is identical with the Flayn of English romance. Fleinn must have been Kormak's nickname, remembered by English tradition when his real name was forgotten; Skarði's name has precisely the same history. There is no other indication that Kormak had a nickname, but there is a general probability of it, as nearly every Norseman of the time had his *kenningarnafn*. It is worth observing also that *fleinn* would be a fitting soubriquet for one so impulsive and ready to strike as Kormak was. "Kormáks Saga" gave little attention to nicknames, and that of Þorgils would have been lost too, if it had not been imbedded in two of Kormak's verses."³⁵

From English tradition, however, we know nothing further of the work of Thomas of Kendal or of Master Edmond and the exploits of Scarthe and Flayn are known only from what Mannyng himself tells us. Since this is the case with tales which we know to have once had a written existence, it is not surprising that others, which were never written down, have left even less trace of their existence. Robert Mannyng, for example, knew of legends which had gathered round the name of a certain Ynge but knew definitely, too, that these legends were extant only in an oral form and had never been written down:

" But of Ynge saw y neuere nought,
Neyþer in boke write ne wrought;
But lewed men þerof speke & crye,
& meyntene al-wey vp þat lye."³⁶

It seems improbable that Ynge ever had any historical basis, nor is it probable that he is to be connected with the Ing of the

³⁵ E. V. Gordon, "Scarborough and Flamborough" (*Acta Philologica Scandinavica* i, 320).

³⁶ Robert Mannyng, *op. cit.* p. 515.

Runic Poem. 'Presumably, like Engle, he is simply an eponymous hero formed from the name England who has been provided with an appropriate set of exploits and adventures.

It has always been recognised that the Matter of England represents the oral development of traditional material, but it has usually been supposed that the Matter of Britain is essentially literary in its origins and development. The development of the legend in written literature certainly begins with the appearance of Geoffrey of Monmouth's "*Historia Regum Britanniae*," but, if we reject his tale of the British book from which he took his material, we must look about for other sources. Geoffrey himself was half-Welsh and it has usually been assumed that he made use of much of the floating saga material of that country. Nevertheless it does not follow that, before Geoffrey, stories of Arthur were known only in Wales. It is probable enough that they should have spread orally into England, especially from South Wales. Unfortunately references to Arthurian tales are not, as a rule, found before the appearance of Geoffrey's book and, even though the references may seem to indicate an oral rather than a written source, it is difficult to prove that they do not derive ultimately from Geoffrey. Ailred of Rievaulx in his "*Speculum Caritatis*" tells how a novice confessed to him that he had often been wont to shed tears over the sorrows of a certain Arthur: "Nam et in fabulis, quae vulgo de nescio quo finguntur Arcturo, memini me nonnunquam usque ad effusionem lacrymarum fuisse permotum."³⁷

Now Ailred wrote in 1142 and the first draft of Geoffrey's book appeared c. 1136 so that, if the reference is indeed to Geoffrey, it would indicate that his book must have reached the North very early. In the same way Alfred of Beverley, writing about 1143, tells us that, from hearing tales of Arthur, he was led to borrow the work of Geoffrey and this inspired him to write his own Chronicle. It is impossible to be certain whether the stories which were obviously current at the time were, in every

³⁷ Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 195, col. 565.

case, derived from the book, or whether the previous presence of these stories led people to read the book and to believe in its historicity.

It is not probable that much of the Matter of France has been lost nor, judging by the English versions which still exist, would any lost literature on this subject be at all interesting or important. But we do know of one romance which has since been lost, and the mention of it gives an interesting sidelight on the literary relationship between England and Scandinavia. The Old Norse romance "Af Frú Olif ok Landres Syni Hennar" "enjoys the distinction of being the only Norse romance of which we are certain that the original was written, not in Romance or Latin, but in the English language."³⁸ The opening chapter of the Old Norse account tells us how it came to be translated from Middle English: "Fann þessa sögu herra Bjarni Erlingsson or Bjarkey ritaða ok sagða í ensku máli í Skotlandi, þá er hann sat þar um vetrinn eptir fráfall Alexandri konungs. En konungdóminn eptir hann tók Margrét dóttir virðuligs herra Eireks konungs í Noregi, sonar Magnús konungs, en nefnd Margrét var dótturdóttir Alexandri. Var fyrir því herra Bjarni vestr sendr at tryggva ok staðfesta ríkit undir jungfrúna. En at mönnum sé því ljósari ok megi því meiri nytsemi af hafa ok skemtan, þá lét herra Bjarni hana snara or ensku máli í norrœnu."³⁹

Baron Bjarni Erlingsson of Bjarkey was one of the greatest lords of Norway and was employed, at various times, as ambassador to England and to Scotland. The visit to Scotland here referred to took place in 1286 when, after the death of Alexander III, he spent the winter in that country attending to the interests of the Princess Margaret—the Maid of Norway—and assuring her the throne. He returned to Norway in 1287 taking back with him this Middle English romance which, since he found it in Scotland, was presumably written in Northern English. The original has long since disappeared but the

³⁸ H. G. Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia*, Harvard 1921, p. 241.

³⁹ C. R. Unger *Karlamagnús Saga ok Kappa Hans*, Christiania 1860, p. 50.

translation made from it is still extant. The literary relationship between England and Scandinavia seems to have remained close throughout most of the Middle Ages. Much of the general French culture of the medieval period seems to have reached the North through England. We remember how Canute had filled the North with English bishops and priests. Later still learned Englishmen seem to have been welcomed at the courts of the Scandinavian kings. Symeon of Durham, for example, tells us how Olaf Kyrre of Norway welcomed to his court a certain clerk named Turgot:

"audito itaque quod clericus de Anglia venisset, quod magnum tunc temporis videbatur, eum ad discendos psalmos quasi magistrum sibi exhibuit. Inter haec satis superque abundabat rebus, regis virorumque nobilium largitate proaffluentibus."⁴⁰

In Saxo, too, we have a curious note concerning a certain Lucas of England who, during the first campaign of Prince Christopher in 1170, encouraged the Danes to battle by reciting to them the valiant deeds of their ancestors:

"Tunc Lucas, Christofori scriba, nacionis Britannice, literis quidem tenuiter instructus, sed historiarum sciencia apprime eruditus, cum infractos exercitus nostri animos uideret, mestum ac lugubre silencium clara uoce prorumpens, sollicitudinem alacritate mutauit. Siquidem memoratis ueterum uirtutibus, nostros ad exigendam a sociorum interfectoribus ulcionem tanta disserendi pericia concitauit, ut non solum mesticiam discuteret, uerum eciam cunctorum pectoribus fortitudinem ingeneraret, dictuque incredibile fuerit, quantum uirium in nostrorum animos ab alienigene hominis sermone manauerit."⁴¹

This traffic in subjects for romance and legend was not, of course, all in one direction. The Anglo-Scandinavian traditions of the Danelaw show how Old Norse subjects were welcomed in England. Throughout the period, more especially in the eastern counties, there seems to have been a constant

⁴⁰ Symeon of Durham, Rolls Series 75 (ii), p. 203.

⁴¹ A. Holder, *Saxonis Grammatici Gesta Danorum*, Strassburg 1886, p. 583.

interest in the happenings in the North. The story of Sverrir of Norway, for example, seems to have become known in England at a comparatively early date. Sverrir only managed to win the throne of Norway in 1184 but the story of his life is already known to William of Newburgh writing before 1200,⁴² whilst Roger of Hoveden also knew it and considered it worthy of inclusion.

Some half-dozen Breton lays, written at various dates, have been preserved in English, but it is difficult to believe that this is all that were ever composed. Marie de France is usually supposed to have been the first to versify the prose *contes* of these lays. Marie herself wrote in French and, although most of her life is said to have been spent in this country, only two of her known lays are extant in English. In one of her lays she seems to imply that English versions of the Breton lays were extant—possibly written even before she began her own work in French. She speaks of an English lay named “Gotelef” as if she knew of its existence:

“ Pur la joie qu’il ot eüe
de s’amie qu’il ot veüe
par le bastun qu’il ot escrit,
si cum la reïne l’ot dit,
pur les paroles remembrer,
Tristram, ki bien saveit harper,
en aveit fet un nuvel lai.
Asez briefment le numerai:
‘ Gotelef ’ l’apelent Engleis,
‘ Chievrefueil ’ le nument Franceis.
Dit vus en ai la verité,
del lai que j’ai ici cunté.”⁴³

If this lay ever did exist it has long been lost. Actually it is difficult to be certain that Marie is speaking of a definite English lay. In another of the lays we are told:

⁴² William of Newburgh, Rolls Series 82 (i), pp. 228 ff.

⁴³ K. Warnke, *Die Lais der Marie de France* (Halle 1900), p. 185.

“ Une aventure vus dirai,
 dunt li Bretun firent un lai.
 Laüstic a nun, ceo m'est vis,
 si l'apelent en lur païs;
 ceo est russignol en Franceis
 e nihtegale en dreit Engleis.”⁴⁴

Here the author seems to be merely giving the English and the French equivalents of the Breton word, and does not infer that lays of these names also existed in these languages. The same may possibly be true of the preceding quotation though the words seem rather to favour the existence of an English lay. Marie de France has, however, usually been given the credit of being the first to versify the Breton lays in French and it would be surprising if, contemporary with her or even earlier, versions of these lays were extant also in English.

One of the most surprising things in Middle English literature is the apparent lack of interest in the “Beast Epic.” On the continent huge poems were composed dealing with the adventures of Reynard the Fox, but in England, before Caxton, only two isolated episodes from this epic are known, the thirteenth-century poem on the “Vox and the Wulf” and Chaucer’s Nun’s Priest’s Tale. But we know from other evidence that the tale was popular in England and it seems probable that the lack of material is due rather to accident than to any lack of interest. In the catalogue of the Library of Dover Priory compiled in 1389 by John Whytefeld, item no. 170 is apparently a volume of miscellaneous tracts the contents of which is given as:

“ 170. <i>Tract.</i>	<i>folio.</i>	<i>Incipit.</i>
Libellus de matre beati thome cantuariensis.		Electus igitur ante con- stitutus
Actus in exilium beati thome cant.	10a.	Honor et gloria beati
Vita beati thome cantua- riensis in gallicis.	20a.	Adeu loenge et soun

⁴⁴ K. Warnke, *op. cit.* p. 146.

Fabula de Wlpe medici (-o ?) in angl.	34b. Hit by ful whylem
Parabole isopi greci metrificate.	38b. Adaneis satus
La Romonse de ferumbras	Seygnours ore escuc' (-tes)
Gesta octouiani imperatoris in gallicis.	123a. Le deu qui en la crois
Stulticie mundi principales in gallicis.	164b. Qui nul bien ne soyt
Recordacio passionis in gallicis.	166a. Vn poy escutes
Libellus de caritate in gallicis.	173a. Chescun home dere
Gesta karoli magni in gallicis.	178b. Ore escutz seignouris
Cato in gallicis.	199b. Seignours oyez
Mrônū vtilitas in gallicis.	203b. Ore voz volum monstrar
Prouerbia hendung in angl.	206a. Ihesu crist al þys." ⁴⁵

Apparently the fourth item in this volume, the "Fabula de Wlpe medici," is a lost episode in the vernacular from the Reynard cycle. There are a number of tales about Reynard which might have come under such a heading as this and it is impossible to make out the exact one which is referred to here. It may possibly be that of which we find a French version in the "Fables" of Marie de France, where the Fox prescribes the heart of a hare for the sick lion.⁴⁶ Another such tale tells how the beasts all assembled together to condole with, and bring remedies for, the sick lion. The fox alone is absent and his absence is duly commented on unfavourably by Isengrim the Wolf. However when the fox does arrive he revenges himself on Isengrim by prescribing that the lion should be wrapped in the newly-flayed skin of a wolf. There are other tales, too,

⁴⁵ M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover*, Cambridge 1903, p. 460.

⁴⁶ K. Warnke, *Die Fabeln der Marie de France*, Halle 1898, "De leone aegrotanti," pp. 227-31.

which would fit such a heading but, whichever of them may have been represented here, this vernacular version has long been lost and we know of its existence only from this entry in the Dover catalogue. We may note also that in this same volume appeared a version of the "Proverbs of Hending." Other manuscripts of this text are, of course, still extant and it is doubtful if the preservation of this manuscript would have added anything to our knowledge of the text. It may be noted that the incipit given here is apparently a version of the beginning of the second stanza in the text as printed by Skeat.⁴⁷

It is difficult to tell how long the medieval legends retained their popularity. Many of the old themes survived to become the subjects of ballads and some of the heroes of romance are still to be found in Elizabethan chap-books. The antiquary Leland, during the course of his travels, found many of the old legends still flourishing. The fame of Wada still survived in a garbled form for "Mougreve [i.e. Mulgrave] Castelle stondith on apon a craggy-hille: and on ech side of it is an hille far higher then that whereon the castelle stondith on. The north hille on the toppe of it hath certen stones comunely caullid Waddes Grave, whom the people there say to have bene a gigant and owner of Mougreve."⁴⁸

In another case we find that local tradition has transformed the Old English word *eoten* or the ON. *jötunn* into the proper name of a giant:

"By this broke as among the ruines of the olde town is a place caullid Colecester, wher hath bene a forteres or castelle. The peple there say that ther dwellid yn it one Yoton, whom they fable to have bene a gigant."⁴⁹

Guy of Warwick was still remembered and the very place where he fought his duel with Colbrand was still pointed out:

⁴⁷ See also Max Förster, "Eine verlorene Handschrift der Sprüche Hendings" (*Herrigs Archiv*, 115 165).

⁴⁸ L. Toulmin Smith, *The Itinerary of John Leland*, London 1907, I, 59; in this connexion we may note that the name Wada seems to lie behind the old forms of the modern "Wat's Dyke," see C. Fox, "Wat's Dyke" (*Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Dec. 1934).

⁴⁹ *op. cit.* IX, 57.

"On the south\side of Hyde Abbay betwixt it and the waulle is a medow caullid Denmark, wher the fame is that Guido Erle of Warwik killid great Colebrande the Dane *singulari certamine*." ⁵⁰

In the same way the cave in which, after his return to England, he dwelt as a hermit was still pointed out:

"There is a right goodly chapell of St. Mary Magdalene upon Avon river, *ripa dextra*, scant a myle above Warwike. This place of some is cauldy Gibclif, of some Guy-clif; and old fame remayneth with the people there, that Guydo Erle of Warwike in K. Athelstan's dayes had a great devotion to this place, and made an oratory there. Some adde unto (it), that aftar he had done great victories in outward partes, and had bene so long absent that he was thought to have bene deade, he came and lyved in this place lyke an heremite, onknowne to his wife Felicia ontyll at the article of his deathe he shewyd what he was. Men shew a cave there in a rok hard on Avon ripe, where they say that he usyd to slepe. Men also yet showe fayr springs in a faire medow thereby, where they say that Erle Guido was wont to drinke." ⁵¹

Such references are not, however, particularly surprising since Guy was one of the favourite medieval heroes and references to the romance are numerous. A more interesting reference possibly tells of a lost cycle of romance:

"Arden dwelling at by Alcestre in Wicestreshire is of a very auncient stok, and, as sum say, derivith his linage from Syr Gerarde of Arden that was yn Guy of Warwikes tyme." ⁵²

This may, of course, merely be an example of a late family tradition concocted to glorify this particular family. If indeed it implies that there was once a romance cycle centring round Gerard of Arden, as round Guy of Warwick, all trace of it has long been lost.

At the time of Leland's travels King Athelstan was still a great figure in legend and it is surprising to find traditions of

⁵⁰ *op. cit.* III, 272.

⁵¹ *op. cit.* V, 45; see also "Guy's cliffe Ho." in EPNS. xiii, 264.

⁵² *op. cit.* VIII, 80.

him as a patron of numerous towns surviving in Cornwall and Devon. Such legends may have a foundation in fact but history knows nothing of his work in these counties. Legends of Brunanburh still remain and there is nothing particularly surprising in finding the battle located near Axminster:

"The chirch of Axmistre is famose by the sepultures of many noble Danes slain in King Æthelstan's time at a batel on Brunedown therby: and by the sepultures likewise (of) sum Saxon lordes slain in the same feld."⁵³

There are too many local traditions about the battle of Brunanburh for this ascription to have much weight. It is more interesting to note that legends dealing with the brother of king Athelstan were still extant: "In this forest or wood [i.e. Morfe] (as some constantly affirme) Kynge Ethelstane's brother ledde in a rokke for a tyme an heremite's lyfe. The place is yet sene and is caullyd the Heremitage."⁵⁴

The life of Athelstan seems to have been a favourite subject for romance and legend, more especially during the early medieval period. William of Malmesbury knew of legends telling of his birth and of the murder of his brother Edwin which, as he says, were still celebrated in ballads by the country people.⁵⁵ The legend of the drowning of Edwin was known also to Symeon of Durham who likewise blames Athelstan:

"Anno DCCCCXXXIII. sanctus Frithestanus obiit. Rex Ethelstanus jussit fratrem suum Edwinum in mare submergi."⁵⁶

Saint Chad, the apostle of Mercia, was still remembered at Alcester since "The people there (Alcester) speke mucche of one S. Cedde Bysshope of Lichefeld, and of injuries there done to him."⁵⁷

And memory of him still lived on at Lichfield itself:

"Stow-churche in the est end of the towne (Lichfield), whereas is St. Cedd's well, a thinge of pure watar, where is sene

⁵³ *op. cit.* III, 243.

⁵⁴ *op. cit.* V, 86.

⁵⁵ *Gesta Regum*, Rolls Series 90 (i), pp. 155 ff.

⁵⁶ Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, Rolls Series 75 (ii), p. 124.

⁵⁷ Leland, *op. cit.* V, 51.

a stone in the botom of it, on the whiche some say that Cedde was wont nakyd to stond on in the watar, and pray. At this stone Cedd had his oratorie in the tyme of Wulphere Kynge of the Merchis.”⁵⁸

An interesting entry concerns Oxney and is, no doubt, concerned with some local tradition which has long since been lost:

“ Yet parte of Oxeney in Kent, and part in Southsax. Sum say that it is or hath bene al in Southsax. Sum caulle it Forsworen Kent, by cause that were the inhabitantes of it were of Southsax they revoltid to have the privileges of Kent.”⁵⁹

So far we have been dealing mainly with the romances and legends of the Middle English period. This is, no doubt, by far the most interesting section of the lost literature but it is only fair to remember that much of the didactic and religious literature of the period has also been lost. A glance at the works of Bale is enough to give some idea of the mass of this lost religious and didactic literature. Many manuscripts would be completely worn out by the hands of generations of pious readers, and much more must have perished on the break-up of the monastic libraries. Much, too, of the polemical literature of the period would be as ephemeral as it is to-day. No doubt the proportion of didactic and religious literature which has been preserved is far greater than is the case with any other kind, the mere fact that it must all have been written down, whereas much of the literature of romance depended on oral transmission for its existence, would partly account for this. Here we shall give only a few examples of this lost religious literature in the vernacular. In a manuscript preserved as Harley 1706, containing matter ascribed to Richard Rolle, Dr. G. R. Owst finds mention of a book “ cleped Toure of all Toures ”⁶⁰ though all trace of such a book seems to have long since been lost. Again in the records of the Benedictine monastery of St.

⁵⁸ *op. cit.* V, 99.

⁵⁹ *op. cit.* VIII, 63.

⁶⁰ G. R. Owst, *Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England*, p. 78, n. 5.

Swithin's, Winchester, we find mention of payments made to minstrels who entertained the monks, amongst others:

"cantabat ioculator quidam nomine Herebertus canticum Colbrondi, necnon gestum Emmae reginae a iudicio ignis liberate, in aula prioris."⁶¹

The "canticum Colbrondi" was doubtless some version of the romance of Guy of Warwick, since Colbrond was the name of the Danish warrior vanquished by that hero. The "gestum Emmae reginae" probably told of some legend concerning Emma, the wife of Ethelred II and later of Canute. Legends about her seem to have flourished more especially at Winchester. According to one of them, she was accused of adultery and imprisoned by her son Edward the Confessor. In order to clear herself she demanded to be allowed to undergo the ordeal of the red-hot ploughshares. By the help of St. Swithin the ordeal was carried through successfully to the great honour of his monastery⁶². It is possible that these legends were told in Latin by Herebertus though at this date, 1338, it seems more probable that the language of a 'ioculator' would have been English or French. But if an English version of the "gestum Emmae reginae" ever existed it has long since been lost. Some of the English writings of Wyclif have also been lost. This is not particularly surprising since most of his works were probably deliberately destroyed in his own lifetime. For many of them, in fact, we are dependent on manuscripts of Bohemian origin preserved only on the continent. About the time when his personal influence was at its height he issued a work entitled "The Thirty Three Conclusions on the Poverty of Christ," which was written in English as well as in Latin; of these versions, however, the Latin only is extant to-day.⁶³ The early-sixteenth century catalogue of the library of the Brigettine monastery of Syon⁶⁴ shows a fair amount of religious and

⁶¹ T. Warton, *History of English Poetry*, from the Twelfth to the close of the Sixteenth century, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, 1871, ii, 97.

⁶² *Annales de Wintonia*, ed. H. R. Luard in *Annales Monastici*, Rolls Series, 36 (ii), p. 20ff.

⁶³ H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif*, Oxford 1926, i, 312.

⁶⁴ ed. M. Bateson, London, 1898.

didactic literature which has since perished. By this date, of course, it is impossible to be certain whether the book in question is a printed work or whether it is in manuscript since the catalogue gives no information on this point. Moreover until the promised bibliography of "Fifteenth Century Writings in English" by Professor J. E. Wells is available, it is not possible to be certain that the work in question does not still exist. Most of the English works are quite uninteresting but some of them may be noted here:

B 6

. Tractatus in anglico de medicinis & vnguentis, & eorum vsu & confectione. f. 203

B 29

. Dietarium rithmizatum in Anglicis

B 40

Tractatus de medicinis in anglicis

M 17

. Vita trium Regum Colonie in anglicis, f. 89. Vita sancti Ieronimi in anglicis cum Epistolis Augustini & Cirilli in latinis, f. 116. De leone sancti Ieronimi in fine libri in anglicis.

M. 86

. Vita beati Francisci Confessoris, in anglico, f. 121

T. 34

. Sentencie generales in anglico, f. 2

Other English works are given in the index but are not to be found in the catalogue itself. Amongst others we have the following:

Elizabeth de howngria in suis reuelacionibus in anglica. M 20.

Rogerus frater de Syon in suis sermonibus in anglica. S 36.

Sanctus *Thomas* de Alquino Idem in opere solenni super lucam & Iohannem in anglico. H 43

As a rule the monk responsible for the catalogue tells us when the work in question is not written in Latin. This does not, however, seem to be invariable since in several works where no information is given on this point the incipit to the second

"ipsemet (i.e. Canute) ore proprio jocunditatem cordis exprimens, cantilenam his verbis Anglice composuit, dicens, cujus exordium sic continetur:

Merie sungen ðe Muneches binnen Ely.

ða Cnut ching reu ðer by.

Roweð cnites noer the land.

and here we þes Muneches sæng."

et cætera quæ sequuntur, quæ usque hodie in choris publice cantantur et in proverbiiis memorantur."⁶⁵

If we could believe this legend we must regard Canute as the earliest writer of lyric poetry in English. Actually the earliest lyric writer whose name we know seems to be St. Godric, the hermit of Finchal. He seems to have led an adventurous life and, thanks to his biographers, more especially to the monk Reginald of Durham, we know quite a lot about him personally. But practically the whole of his lyric poetry has been lost. Fragments of three of his lyrics are all that remain and they happen to have been preserved because they are quoted by his biographers and in some of the contemporary Latin Chroniclers.⁶⁶

It seems to have been a favourite practice of Medieval preachers to quote from the vernacular in their Latin sermons and fragments of many lost lyrics are found embedded in Latin sermons.⁶⁷ This is not, perhaps, so surprising when we remember that in one of the most famous of all Medieval sermons, the preacher takes as his text the opening lines of a French love poem or *lai*, "Bel Aliz matin leva." This sermon was for long ascribed to Stephen Langton who seems to have done a good deal of his preaching *in vulgari*.⁶⁸ However such ascription is apparently no longer possible.⁶⁹ Snatches of medieval lyric

⁶⁵ D. J. Stewart, *Liber Eliensis*, London 1848, p. 202.

⁶⁶ For St. Godric and his extant works see J. Hall, *Selections from Early Middle English*, Oxford, 1920, i, 5; ii, 241-5.

⁶⁷ See G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*, pp. 231, n. 1; 272; 273, n. 3; etc.: *Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England*, p. 6.

⁶⁸ F. M. Powicke, *Stephen Langton*, p. 42.

⁶⁹ See A. Lecoy de la Marche, *La Chaire française spécialement au XIII siècle*, pp. 91-4.

may be found in almost any kind of work, in Latin Lives of the Saints, or in books of edification. In connexion with the latter kind of work we may note the two lines which we find in the "Ancren Riwe":

"euer is þe eie to þe wude leie,
þerinne is þet ich luuie"⁷⁰

These lines were taken to be a contemporary proverb by the editor, but, as Professor Carleton Brown points out, they read much more like a quotation from some popular love song. The version given in the Cleopatra manuscript is interesting:

"ach eauer is þe echze to þe wodeleze
& þe halte bucke climbeð þeruppe.
Twa & þreo hu feole beoð þeo.
þreo halpenes makeð a peni."

It almost looks as though the scribe of this manuscript knew the song himself and were quoting from a different verse. Here, too, we may note the lines found in two manuscripts in the cathedral library of Worcester. The volume catalogued as "F. 64. Libri sententiarum II, III, IV" has eight leaves of other matter at the beginning, on the last of which appear the lines in English:

"He may cume to mi lef bute by þe watere.
wanne me lust slepen þanne moti wakie
Wnder is þat hi luuie."⁷¹

Similarly at the end of "Q. 50. Expositio Donati" are "five apparently amatory, but (as they are written) unintelligible English verses, subscribed, 'dixit Robertus seynte Mary clericus'."⁷² These lines are given by Professor Dickins as:

"Explicit expliceat ludere scriptor eat
Qui scripsit carmen sit benedictus amen
Ne saltou neuer leuedi tuynklen

⁷⁰ J. Morton, *The Ancren Riwe* (Camden Society 1852), p. 96.

⁷¹ J. K. Floyer and S. G. Hamilton, *Catalogue of Manuscripts preserved in the Chapter Library of Worcester Cathedral*, Oxford 1906, p. 30.

⁷² *op. cit.* p. 133. The two fragments have been edited with full commentary by Professor Dickins, "Two Worcester Fragments of Middle English Secular Lyric," *LSE*, iv. 44).

Wyt þin eyen hic abbe ydon al myn youth
 ofte. ofte. ant ofte. longe yloued ant
 yerne ybeden ful dere it his a bout.
 dore go þou stille go þou stille e yat hic
 abbe in þe boure ydon al myn uyllee."

Similarly at the end of a fifteenth-century manuscript whose contents are described as "Provinciale, Sermons, etc." and which is preserved in Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library, we find the following verses:

" I haue grete marvell off a bryd
 That w^t my luff ys went a way
 Sho byldis hyr a noþer sted
 Ther ffore I morne both nyght & day
 I cothe neuer serffe þ^t bryd to pay
 Ne frenchypp w^t hyr con I none ffynd
 bot ffast ffro me she fflys a way
 a las þ^t euer sho was unkynd
 a las qui is sho w^t me wroth
 & to þ^t bryd I trespass noght
 3e gyff sho be neuer so lothe
 Sho shall come owte off my thought
 Now off me sho gyffis ryght noght
 bot byldis hus fer under a lynd
 In bitter balns sho has nu boght
 a las þ^t euer sho was unkynd
 a las qui is þis brydis
 I wen luff "73

These snatches of lyric are found in the most inappropriate books. Any blank piece of vellum seems to have been regarded as a suitable place for the recording of an odd verse which has stuck in the hearer's mind or for the writing down of their own compositions. We even find a fourteenth-century lyric on the back of a papal bull. In 1199 Pope Innocent III issued a bull to the Priory of St. James by Exeter. This was

⁷³ R. M. Woolley, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library*, Oxford 1927, p. 95.

copied in a contemporary hand and on the back of this copy some fourteenth-century writer has noted down a lyric beginning "Bryd one brere."⁷⁴ We find medieval lyrics in even more surprising places. A fragment of a Middle English love song has been scribbled on one of the pillars of the now half-ruined church at Duxford, Cambs.:

" With wiel my herte is wa
 & closyd ys wt care
 L & S sekurly
 (Ca)use me to syth full far [sar ?]
 I &
 for to smarte
 V & Y withall
 joy come to thin hert."

A lyric rather more suitable to the surroundings has also been scratched on the wall of Barrington church, Cambs.:

" lo fol how the day goth
 Cast foly now to the cok
 Ryth sone tydyth the wroth
 It ys almost xii of the klok."⁷⁵

And so, in addition to the regular manuscript collections, in odd places here and there we can catch glimpses of a rich medieval lyric literature, the greater part of which has since perished. But a glimpse is all that can be caught. In the Middle English romance "Richard the Lion-Heart" we read how the sailors

" rowede hard, and sungge ther too:
 ' With heuelow and rumbeloo.' "⁷⁶

but the songs which they sung, like the songs of the Sirens, we can never know. Too often we are tantalized by references which give us only an odd stanza, or even a single line, of some song which must have been well-known to the author and his

⁷⁴ J. Saltmarsh, "Two Medieval Love Songs set to Music" (*Antiquaries' Journal*, xv, pp. 1 ff.).

⁷⁵ G. G. Coulton, "Medieval Graffiti" (*Cambridge Antiquarian Society's Communications*, vol. xix and *Medieval Studies, Second Series*, No. 12, London 1915), p. 57.

⁷⁶ H. Weber, *Metrical Romances*, Edinburgh 1810, ii, 99.

contemporaries. Giralduſ Cambrenſis, for example, in his "Gemma Eccleſiaſtica," tells the well-known tale of the prieſt who, whiſt celebrating maſs, found that his mind was full of a 'carole' which had been ſung in the church-yard all the night. Conſequentialy, when diſmiſſing the people, inſtead of ſaying the words "Dominus vobiſcum" he inadvertently uſed the words of the refrain of this 'carole' ſaying "Swete lamman dhin are," an occurrence which cauſed a terrible ſcandal in the neighbourhood.⁷⁷ The words quoted by Giralduſ are actually found as one of the lines of a lyric preſerved in MS. Harley 2253, but this manuſcript was not written until a century after the time of Giralduſ and it is unlikely that that lyric is at all like the 'carole' of which the prieſt was thinking. In another ſtory which is not quite ſo well-known Giralduſ gives us, in Engliſh, a monkish pledge and the reſponſe:

"Ubi et res quaſi ſaeculares deri(den)tes, ipſos nimia abſtinentia afflictoſ eſſe putanteſ, talem provocacionem ad bene potandum, Anglico more, necnon et Anglice, tanquam *Wesseil* proponenteſ audivit:

"Loke nu frere,

Hu ſtrong ordre is here."

Et reſponſionem hanc quaſi loco *drincheil* :

"Ihe, la ful umiſ,

Swide ſtrong ordre is dhiſ."

cum capitiſ quoque non ſeria quidem ſed tanquam irriſoria concuſſione. Quod et Latinis verbis ſic exponi poteſt: "Vide frater quia fortis eſt hic ordo nimis;" et reſponſio: "Vere intolerabilis eſt hic ordo frater, et importabilis."⁷⁸

The old objection to the monopoly of all the beſt tunes by the devil is alſo to be found during the mediæval period. In the Red Book of Oſſory is preſerved a collection of Latin hymns in a fourteenth-century hand. Prefixed to theſe, and in the ſame hand, are tags of Engliſh and Anglo-Norman ſongs. A note in the manuſcript informs uſ that the Latin hymns were

⁷⁷ *Giralduſ Cambrenſis*, Rolls Series 21 (ii), p. 120.

⁷⁸ *Giralduſ Cambrenſis*, *Speculum Eccleſiae*, Rolls Series 21 (iv), p. 209.

composed by the Bishop of Ossory, perhaps Richard de Lesdrede who was bishop from 1318-60, in order to displace "cantilene teatrales turpes et seculares." It seems probable, as Wells suggests, that the tags are quoted from these ballads in order to indicate the airs to which the hymns were to be sung. Following are the odd lines of the half-dozen English lyrics which have been preserved in this way:

1. Alas hou shold y syng,
 Yloren is my playnge
 Hou sholdy wi3 zat olde man
 To leuen and let my leman,
 Swettist of al zinge.
2. Haue mercie on me frere: Barfote zat ygo.
3. Do. Do. nightyngale syng full myrie;
 Shal y neure for 3yn loue lengre karie.
4. Haue God day my leman.
5. Gaueth me no garlond of grene
 Bot hit ben of Wythones yuroght.
6. Hey how 3e cheualdoures woke al nyght.

Of these no. 3 is repeated again in slightly different form:

Do. Do. ny3tyngale syng wel miry;
Shal y neure for 3yn loue lengre kary.

In addition there are two fragments of French love songs:

1. Harrow! ieo su trahy
 Par fol amor de mal amy.
2. Heu alas pur amour,
 Qy moy myst en taunt dolour.⁷⁹

Not one of these songs seems to be known elsewhere and this is probably significant as giving some indication of the richness of the Middle English lyric literature.

Occasionally we know only the first line of some Middle English lyric which has otherwise been lost. It will be remembered that in the Nun's Priest's Tale, Chauntecleer and Pertelote on arising sang "in sweete accord, 'My lief is faren in

⁷⁹ J. E. Wells, *Manual of the Writings in Middle English, Third Supplement*, p. 1176; see also St. John D. Seymour, *Anglo-Irish Literature 1200-1582*, Cambridge 1929, p. 97.

londe.' " We have been fortunate in this case since the stanza of a song of which this is the first line was discovered in a manuscript in Trinity College, Cambridge, by Professor Skeat and is, no doubt, the song of which Chaucer was thinking. No such good fortune is to be met with in the case of a fifteenth century poem on the Timor Mortis theme. In one of the stanzas of this poem we are given the first line of two other lyrics, one in English and one in French:

" Whoso woll beholde and se
 Pys wordill mutabill variance,
 How vayne glorie and false filyte
 Pat eternaly may no man avance,
 And in pys wordyll wanne borne whe be
 To wo, travayle, and to penance,
 And how deth is 3eff vs in fe,
 Whe schold neuer lust, hop, ne dawnce,
 Noþer syng no song of þis new ordenance,
 As, ' Herte myne, well may þou be, glad and lusty
 to be '
 Or ellys, ' Ma bell amour, ma ioy en esperance.'
 But sey, ' Timor mortis conturbat me.' "

As in the case of the Ossory Fragments, the stanza " provides a new bit of evidence for the preoccupation of medieval religious men with the replacing of frivolous songs by grave and spiritual ones."⁸⁰ Apart from the snatches given here, presumably either the first line or else the refrain, nothing is known of the two lyrics from which the author quotes. Again, in the tale of the Dancers of Colbeck, as told by Robert Mannyng of Brunne we read how they sung in their ' carole ':

" Equitabat Beuo per siluam frondosam,
 Ducebat secum Merswyndam formosam.
 Quid stamus? cur non imus? "

and then follows an English version:

" By þe leued wode rode Beuolyne,

⁸⁰ R. L. Greene, " A Middle English ' Timor Mortis ' Poem " (*Modern Language Review*, 28, 235).

Wyȝ hym he ledde feyre Merswyne;

Why stonde we? why go we noht?"⁸¹

It seems probable that this English is simply Robert Mannyng's version of the Latin and the change in the names is only for the sake of the rhyme. Still it may possibly represent an English version current at the time.

A class of medieval poetry which has left little trace behind it is that of the soldier's songs. It is not surprising that songs of this kind should only occasionally and accidentally achieve a written existence. Such poetry is essentially oral and popular and has little chance of being written down at a time when the art of writing is still a prerogative of the clergy. The name of one writer of such songs is known to us, that of Laurence Minot who seems to have acted as a kind of unofficial Poet Laureate to Edward III, but for the most part, as we should expect, those of them which have survived are quite anonymous. Probably the earliest example of this type of poetry which still exists is the fragment of a song which is said to have been sung by the followers of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, during their ravages in the Fen Country. In one of the manuscripts of the "*Historia Anglorum*" of Matthew Paris there is preserved the tradition that the earl and his followers mockingly sang of their wild doings:

"Facti enim amentes cantitabat unusquisque Anglice,

I ne mai a liue

For Benoit ne for Ive."⁸²

The references here are apparently to the seizure and fortification of the Benedictine monastery of Ramsey and to the destruction of the town of St. Ives by Geoffrey and his followers. It is interesting to note that, on the evidence of this fragment, some of his mercenaries in the ravaging of the Fen Country must have been Englishmen. A close analogy to this is the line or two of a song given by the same author and said to have been sung by the Flemish mercenaries of the Earl of Leicester in 1173 whilst they ravaged the countryside:

⁸¹ F. J. Furnivall, *Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne* (EETS. 1901) lines 9045 ff.

⁸² J. H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, London 1892, p. 213.

"Qui etiam, quando ad aliquam planitiem gratia pausandi
diverterant, choreas ducentes patria lingua saltitando cantabant,

"Hoppe, hoppe, Wilekin, hoppe, Wilekin,
Engelond is min ant tin."⁸³

But by far the greater number of such songs which have been preserved are those which deal with the wars with Scotland. Parts of songs composed by both Scots and English against each other have been preserved, mainly in contemporary chronicles. A good number of these, usually translated into French, are found in the Chronicle of Peter of Langtoft. Occasionally, when he seems to have tired of the work of translation, the English original still remains. When Robert Mannyng translated the Chronicle of Peter of Langtoft into English verse he restored the original English of these songs and occasionally he gives us an expanded version showing that they were known also to him and that he is not simply translating Peter of Langtoft. Similar songs are quoted by the author of "The Brut" and by Fabyan in his Chronicle. The following is said to have been sung by the English at the siege of Dunbar:

"& þo saide þe Englysshe-men in reprof of þe Scottis:—

"Thus staterand Scottes,
holde y for sottes,
of wrenches vnwar,
Erly in a mornynge,
in an euel tyming
went 3e fro Dunbarr."⁸⁴

Similarly, in Fabyan we have the stanza of a song said to have been made by the Scots after the relief of Berwick:

"What wenys kynge Edward with his lange shankys
To haue wonne Berwyk all our unthankys
Gaas pykes him
And whan he hath it
Gaas dykis hym."⁸⁵

⁸³ *Matthaei Parisiensis Historia Anglorum*, Rolls Series 44 (i), p. 381.

⁸⁴ F. W. D. Brie, *The Brut* (EETS. 1906-8), p. 190; a slightly different version of the same stanza is found also in *Fabyan's Chronicle*, ed. Ellis, p. 398.

⁸⁵ *Fabyan*, p. 398.

Both authors, too, give us the first stanza of a song said to have been sung by the Scots after the defeat of the English at Bannockburn: "þerfore maidenenes made a songe þerof, in þat contre, of Kyng Edward of Engeland and in þis maner þai songe:

Maydenes of Engelande, sare may 3e morne,
 For tynt 3e haue 3oure lemmans at Bannokesborn
 wip heualogh
 What wende þe Kyng of Engeland haue ygete Scot-
 lande
 wip Rombylogh."⁸⁶

Wyntoun, one of the earliest Scottish chroniclers in the vernacular, gives us eight lines of a popular lament for the death of Alexander III:

"Pis sange was made of hym forþi:
 'Qwhen Alexander our kynge was dede,
 Þat Scotlande lede in lauche and le,
 Away was sons of alle and brede,
 Off wyne and wax, of gamyn and gle.
 Our golde was changit in to lede.
 Crist, borne in virgynyte,
 Succoure Scotlande, and ramede,
 Þat is stade in perplexite.'"⁸⁷

In the following book we have a fragment of song made by the English against Black Agnes of Dunbar:

"Off þis (seige) in þar heythyng
 þe Inglis oyssit to mak carpyng:
 'I wow to God, scho mais gret stere,
 þe Scottis wenche ploddeyr.
 Cum I are, cum I lat,
 I fande Annote at þe 3hat."⁸⁸

In "The Brut" we also have mention of songs made against the Flemings⁸⁹ but all these are only the accidental survivors

⁸⁶ *The Brut*, p. 208; cf. also *Fabyan* p. 420.

⁸⁷ F. J. Amours, *Wyntoun's Original Chronicle* (STS. 1903-14) vii, 3620.

⁸⁸ *op. cit.* viii, 4993. ⁸⁹ *op. cit.* pp. 582 600, etc.

of what must have been a rich and flourishing literature. The same is probably true of much of the popular poetry on the contemporary political events of the day. A certain amount of this has been preserved in Latin, French and English, but much must have disappeared with the particular situations which gave rise to it. An early reference showing the importance of this type of poetry is to be found in Roger of Hoveden. One of the charges made by Hugh of Coventry against William of Longchamp, Bishop of Ely and Chancellor of Richard I, was that:

“Hic ad augmentum et famam sui nominis, emendicata carmina et rhythmos adulatorios comparabat, et de regno Francorum cantores et joculariores muneribus allegerat, ut de illo canerent in plateis: et jam dicebatur ubique, quod non erat talis in orbe.”⁹⁰

These songs would, presumably, have been in French but we have references to similar ones in English. For example there is the episode of how, in the first year of Richard II, a courtier from Woodstock came to Oxford and was there insulted by the students. These came outside his lodgings and sang “a certain rhyme in English that contained words against the honour of the king” and ended up their frolic with a general discharge of arrows: “Eodem anno (1378) miles quidam de familia Regis venit de Wodstoke ad Oxoniam. Scholares quidam nocte venerunt et stabant coram hospitio suo facientes de eo quendam cantum rythmice in Anglico continentem certa verba contra honorem Regis. Et miserunt sagittas ad fenestram hospitii.”⁹¹

Again there is the curious story, contained in “The Brut,” of how the Scots after the failure of an English expedition against them during the early years of the reign of Edward III, affixed a certain rhyme against the English to the south door of York Minster:

“and at þat tyme þe Englisshemen were cloþe alle in cotes & hodes, peyntede wiþ lettres & wiþ floures ful sembli, wiþ longe

⁹⁰ Roger of Hoveden, Rolls Series 51 (iii), p. 143.

⁹¹ Eulogium, Rolls Series 9 (iii), p. 348; see also H. B. Workman, *John Wyclif* i, 307.

berdes; and þerfore þe Scotese made a bille þat was fastenede
 oppon þe cherche dores of Seint Peres toward Stangate. & þus
 saide þe Scripture in despite of þe Englisshe-men.

Longe berde hertles,
 peyntede Hode witles,
 Gay cote graceles,
 makeþ Engl(i)ssheman þriftles."⁹²

In the MS. Lansdowne 418 there is preserved the first stanza of a long ballad which the scribe tells us he copied out of "a smale olde book in parchment called the booke of Ross or of Waterford." This is the present MS. Harley 913 but the part containing this ballad has been lost and the first stanza, as copied into Lansdowne 418, is all that remains of it. It seems to have been a warning to the young men of Waterford against the le Poer family and is evidently an Anglo-Irish production. The copyist, who apparently had difficulty in reading his text, tells us:

"There is in this book a longe discourse in meter putting the youth of Waterford in mind of harme taken by the Powers, and wishing them to beware for ye time to come. I have written out the first staffe only.

Young men of Waterford learne now to play
 For youre mare is plowis i lai beth away
 Secure 3e 3ure hanfelis yt lang habith ilei
 And fend 3ou of the powers that walkith bi the wey
 I rede
 For if hi takith 3ou on and on
 from ham scapith ther never one
 I swer bi Christ and St Jon
 That of goth 3ur hede
 Now hi walkith etc."⁹³

As Dr. G. R. Owst says of the poetry of satire and complaint — "Surviving manuscripts of varying date supply us with a

⁹² *The Brut*, p. 249; cf. a slightly different version in *Fabyan*, p. 440, where it is said to be quoted from a certain Guydō.

⁹³ In the version given by St. John D. Seymour, *Anglo-Irish Literature 1200-1582*, p. 88, line 7 has been inadvertently omitted.

few scattered examples of the rude poetry in question at various stages of development. Their survival is clearly indicative of a much larger output now irretrievably lost to us."⁹⁴

Most of the Middle English ballads which have been preserved to us date rather from the early modern period than from the Middle Ages proper. But this date almost certainly refers rather to the time at which they were written down than to the date of their composition. The ballad is essentially a type of popular oral literature. It is written down, as a rule, only by antiquaries and at a time when they are no longer being composed. The ballads of Robin Hood are not found until late in the Middle Ages but they seem to have long been popular throughout the North and Midlands. His fame was, of course, well-known to Leland:

"Along on the lift hond a iii. miles of betwixt Milburne and Feribridge I saw the wooddi and famose forest of Barnesdale, wher they say that Robyn Hudde lyvid like an owtlaw."⁹⁵

His fame had spread to Scotland and he was well-known to Wyntoun:

"Litol Iohun and Robert Hude
Waythmen war commendid gud;
In Ingilwode and Bernnysdaile
pai oyssit al pis tyme par trawale."⁹⁶

Tales of Robin Hood are found also in the *Scotichronicon*. The earliest reference to the famous outlaw has long been thought to be the well-known passage in *Piers Plowman* where Langland speaks of the

"rymes of Robyn Hood and Randolph erle of Chestre," but Dr. A. H. Smith has shown that he must have been famous long before, since the name is found as a place-name at the beginning of the century. In a document dated 1322 and preserved in the Monk Bretton Cartulary there is mention of the "stone of Robin Hode." The site probably corresponds with the present-day Robin Hood's Well in the Skelbrooke

⁹⁴ G. R. Owst, *Literature and the Pulpit in Medieval England*, p. 213.

⁹⁵ *Leland's Itinerary* VII, 13. ⁹⁶ *Wyntoun* vii, x, 3525.

township of the West Riding. References to the present name are found early enough to show that it is not a mere modern invention. This, together with the topography, is said by Dr. Smith to be enough to associate the older place-name with the Robin Hood of the ballads and not with some other otherwise unknown individual.⁹⁷

The North, in fact, seems to have been the district in which the ballad was most favoured, due perhaps to a state of life less influenced by continental culture and more primitive than the more southerly parts of the country. In any case the earliest ballad of which we know seems to have been composed in the North. During the fourteenth century there was a law case between Lord Neville of Raby and the Prior of Durham records of which still remain. Apparently as a rent for his lands at Raby, Lord Neville was supposed to bring a stag to the monastery at Durham on the feast of the Translation of St. Cuthbert—September 4th. This was offered at the shrine of St. Cuthbert and afterwards removed to the kitchen of the Prior. But dispute seems to have grown up concerning the manner in which this offering was to be made. The Prior said that Lord Neville should come with a few servants, hand over the stag, and go away again. Lord Neville, on the other hand, claimed that the stag should be brought into the cathedral to the sound of the horns of his followers. Afterwards he and his servants should take possession of the Prior's house, turn out the servants of the Prior, and feast there for the following day and night. In 1290 when the offering was duly made on the 4th of September, there was a regular battle between Lord Neville's men and the monks. The monks, armed with the great candlesticks used in the service, succeeded in driving Lord Neville's men out of the cathedral and retained possession of the stag. After this, during the lifetime of that Lord Neville, the offering was given up. In 1331, however, his son proposed to revive it but the Prior objected until Lord Neville brought a writ of novel disseisin against him. This curious case in which a tenant insisted in

⁹⁷ A. H. Smith, "Robin Hood" (*Modern Language Review* 28, 484).

paying rent to a reluctant landlord was lost by Neville. But during the course of it the Prior produced an interesting piece of evidence to show that the offering had once been made on Holy Rood Day. This is the fragment of a lament which, he said had been sung after the death of Lord Neville's great-grandfather, Robert de Neville, who died c. 1280:

"Argumentum contra eum quia solet semper offerri in die sanctæ Crucis; unde mortuo Roberto de Nova Villa, proavo istius, cantabatur Anglice, in luctum ejus,

" Wel, qwa sal thir hornes blau,
 Haly Rod thi day?
 Nou is he dede and lies law
 Was wont to blaw thaim ay,"⁹⁸

And so, amid these Latin records, we come across this odd stanza of a lost Middle English ballad. But in this odd stanza we can perceive the authentic note of the ballad, appearing long before the earliest written secular ballads which are still extant, and suggesting a rich literature, most of which is completely lost or preserved only in much later copies.⁹⁹

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⁹⁸ Raine, *Hist. Dun. Scrip. Tres* (Surtees Society, 9), p. 112; see also Madeleine Hope Dodds, "Northern Minstrels and Folk Drama" (*Archæologia Aeliana*, Fourth Series, vol. 1, p. 133).

⁹⁹ An interesting reference, pointed out at the last moment by Professor Dickens, indicates that, in the reign of Edward I, English as well as French was understood by the aristocracy. Walter of Hemingburgh (*Chronicon Walteri de Hemingburgh* ii, 6-7, English Historical Society, London 1848) gives the following stanza of a song sung by the sons of the Barons whilst their elders were in council:

"Cum autem teneret rex quoddam parlamentum, et filii magnatum starent coram eo in vespertis, dixit eis, "Quid loquimini inter vos quando nos sumus in consilio cum patribus vestris?" Et respondit unus, "Non offendamini si veritatem dicam?" Et rex, "Non certe." "Domine mi rex, nos dicimus sic,—

Le Roy cuvayte nos deneres
 E la Rayne nos beau maners
 E le Quo voranto
 Sale mak wus al to do."

Edward himself spoke English (Walter of Hemingburgh i, 337).