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**Title**

Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1tm7x1rv>

**ISBN**

9780814211984

**Author**

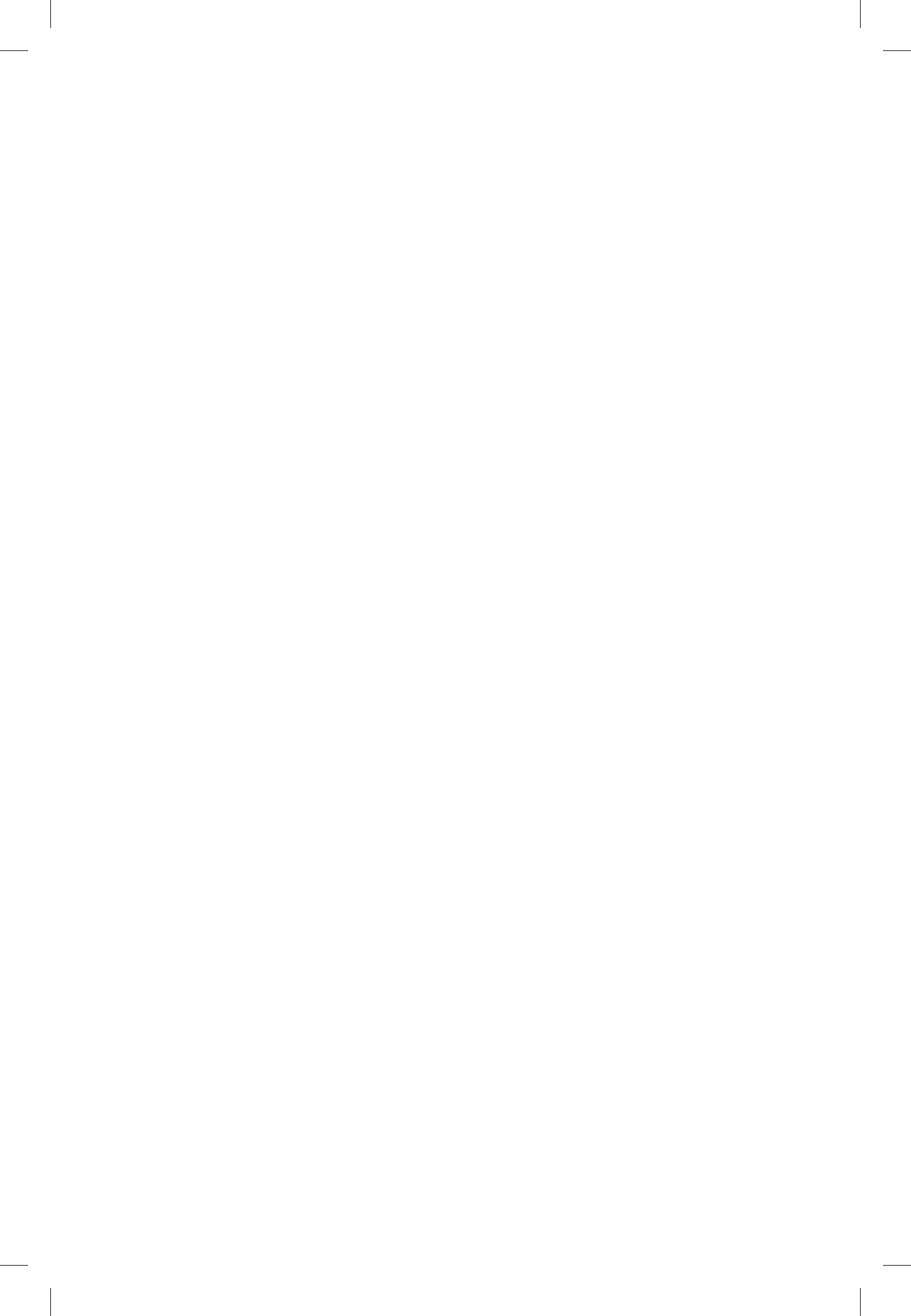
Fisher, Matthew

**Publication Date**

2012

Peer reviewed

Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture  
Ethan Knapp, Series Editor



**S**cribal Authorship and the  
Writing of History in  
Medieval England

**MATTHEW FISHER**



The Ohio State University Press · Columbus

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Fisher, Matthew, 1975–

Scribal authorship and the writing of history in medieval England / Matthew Fisher.  
p. cm. — (Interventions : new studies in medieval culture)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-8142-1198-4 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 0-8142-1198-4 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-8142-9299-0 (cd)

1. Authorship—History—To 1500. 2. Scribes—England—History—To 1500. 3. Historiography—England. 4. Manuscripts, Medieval—England. I. Title. II. Series: Interventions : new studies in medieval culture.

PN144.F57 2012

820.9'001—dc23

2012011441

Cover design by Jerry Dorris at Authorsupport.com  
Typesetting by Juliet Williams  
Type set in Adobe Minion Pro and ITC Cerigo  
Printed by Thomson-Shore, Inc.

♻️ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials. ANSI Z39.48–1992.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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- ANTS Anglo-Norman Text Society
- BL British Library
- CUL Cambridge University Library
- EETS Early English Text Society (OS, Original Series, ES, Extra Series, SS Supplementary Series)
- LALME* *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, ed. Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, and M. Benskin with the assistance of M. Laing and K. Williams, 4 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986)
- MED* *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. H. Kurath, S. M. Kuhn, and R. E. Lewis (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1954–2001)
- New IMEV* *A New Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2004)
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <http://www.oxforddnb.com>
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary Online* <http://www.oed.com>

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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It is a profound pleasure to work closely with medieval manuscripts, and thus it is a pleasure to acknowledge the institutions that have made that work possible. I wish to thank the staff at All Souls College, Oxford; Balliol College, Oxford; Bodleian Library, Oxford; The British Library; Cambridge University Library; College of Arms; Durham Cathedral Library; Durham University Library; Glasgow University Library; Gloucester Cathedral Library; The Huntington Library; Inner Temple Library; Lambeth Palace Library; Lincoln Cathedral Library; National Library of Scotland; The Morgan Library; The National Library of Wales; New College, Oxford; Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge; Princeton University Library; Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; and Trinity College, Cambridge. I am most grateful for the assistance provided by the helpful and knowledgeable staff of these libraries and institutions. I would also like to thank The British Library, the College of Arms, the Department of Special Collections of Glasgow University Library, the National Library of Scotland, and the Pepys Library for permission to reproduce items from their collections. The generous support of The Friends of English at UCLA is gratefully acknowledged. Funding from the Academic Senate at UCLA has made possible my travels to libraries throughout England, Scotland, and Wales.

Then unbeknownst to them and to me, the roots of this project were first shaped by my teachers at the University of California, Berkeley. At the University of Oxford, it was further developed in a thesis supervised by Anne Hudson, whose example as a scholar and a teacher continues to be an inspiration. I would also like to thank my examiners, James Carley and Helen Cooper, for seeing then the seeds of what would become this book. I would particularly like to thank Helen Barr, Ralph Hanna, and Tony Hunt for the generosity with which they shared their knowledge and expertise.

My medievalist colleagues at UCLA have provided a remarkable and welcoming community. I am grateful to Chris Chism, Eric Jager, Andy Kelly, Gordon Kipling, Donka Minkova, and Józsi Nagy for their support. The UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies is a vibrant organization, and I would like to thank its many members, particularly Brian Copenhagen, Patrick Geary, Richard Rouse, Mary Rouse, and Elizabeth Upton. In particular, I am indebted to Zrinka Stahuljak for her collegiality and her friendship.

The undergraduate and graduate students at UCLA are remarkable. As myself the product of public education in California, it continues to be a privilege to offer back some small portion of my debt to the University of California by teaching here, and my students have made me a better thinker and a better person. I would like to thank in particular Tamar Boyadjian, Sara Torres, and the indefatigable Emily Runde.

Of the many scholars it has been a privilege to meet and converse with, I would like to thank Elizabeth Bryan, Patricia Dailey, George Edmondson, Christina Fitzgerald, Matthew Giancarlo, Scott Kleinman, Erik Kooper, Meg Laing, Meg Lamont, William Robbins, and Orietta Da Rold. For always listening to me talk about my work and never permitting their own to be drowned out, my deepest thanks to Antonio Fortin, Alec Jordan, Marisa Libbon, and Sean Walsh.

Christopher Baswell has shaped my understanding of what it means to be a teacher and a scholar of medieval literature and medieval manuscripts in ways I cannot express. My thanks seem a poor offering in exchange.

I am grateful to the readers for The Ohio State University Press, to the series editor Ethan Knapp, and to all those involved for their attentive reading and deeply insightful comments. The work is better for their work, and for that my deepest thanks. Although the expression is conventional, its utterance is no less sincere: any errors that remain are my own.

My extended family have provided so much support over so many years in so many ways that my thanks seem but meager. I am forever grateful for the love and patience that my mother, father, and sister have shown me.

Lastly, I thank my wife, Megan Stephan, who has read every word amidst the beginning and the bourne of so many narratives.

# INTRODUCTION

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To write is to create something, to invent something, to bring meaning into being through words in a way that did not exist before. Yet writing is also mechanical—the physical act of putting pencil or pen to paper, tracing letters so impossibly familiar that we tend not to register their shapes or how we execute them. The divide between creation and realization has, if anything, become still more precarious in the digital age. Writing as a process of invention has taken on a different materiality. The physical work of fingers on a keyboard generates words that may never be anything other than pixels on screens. Though the two senses of writing are intimately connected, they remain distinct. The advent of the web has rendered the creation of text such a ubiquitous phenomenon that the currently-preferred term for those who create it, “content creator,” works to accommodate the heterogeneity of multimedia content, but also serves to retain a distinct space for authorship as a primarily textual endeavor. The gap between composition and inscription was, in some ways, narrower in the Middle Ages. Before the advent of printing, few men and women were engaged in the physical work of writing, and still fewer created those texts. The distinction between the two acts would seem to be clear: medieval authors wrote and medieval scribes copied. Scribes, according to this logic, are not authors.

This book rejects the axiomatic division of scribes and authors by assessing the evidence from history writing in later medieval England. Historiography requires a strange form of composition, in which literary invention is

mediated by a reliance upon sources in order to narrate what happened in the past. Such sources were originally oral, but by the end of the twelfth century were more typically textual. History writing, then, relies upon intertextual transfer, upon generations of texts and narratives being copied, altered, and situated in new texts. Copying, of course, is the province of scribes rather than authors, yet history writing, even derived and assembled from previous texts, is authored. This book will explore that doubling, and the ways in which the work of medieval scribes and the work of the authors of history writing mutually inform each other. Beyond the conceptual overlap between copying texts and composing history, medieval English manuscripts preserve historiographical texts that scribes wrote, in both senses of the term. Some scribes are, in fact, authors.

Authorship is a discourse, not merely a function. As such, it was articulated and framed by medieval thinkers and writers even as it is today by an ever-shifting cast of experts and amateurs. A striking reminder of the ways in which the discourses of authorship tend to erase the work of scribes can be seen in an unexecuted drawing found in the midst of an otherwise fully finished historiated initial on f. 2<sup>v</sup> of London, BL, MS Arundel 74. Arundel 74 was written between c. 1375 and 1406, most likely in East Anglia, for Henry Despenser, bishop of Norwich (d. 1406).<sup>1</sup> The book contains a number of texts by Bede, including the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Suiting its patron, it is an expensive and richly decorated volume, featuring illuminated foliate borders and large initials in gold, pink, blue, and green. The opening folios present to the reader two historiated initials. The first initial, on the opening folio of the codex, is a large “R” in which Despenser’s arms are embedded, a straightforward assertion of the book’s owner and an indication of the luxury of the leaves that will follow. The second initial is rather more problematic. (See figure 1.) The illuminated initial “N” is itself complete: the pink, blue, and white flourishes of the letter sit on a gold ground, and the decorations spiral off the corners to form the foliate border that fills the outer margin of the folio. The initial has been fully and painstakingly executed by an illuminator, and integrated into the composition of the page and its decorative program.

In contrast to the elaborately decorated page, the center of the initial is unfinished. It contains only a sketch of a man seated at a desk, writing a book. Where the reader should encounter the rich colors of a fully illumi-

1. Quite a bit is known about Despenser’s manuscripts, and the atelier he employed in Norwich. See Christopher Baswell, “Aeneas in 1381,” *New Medieval Literatures* 5 (2002): 7–58; the landmark work of Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385* (London and Oxford: Harvey Miller and Oxford University Press, 1986); and Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490*, 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller, 1996).



Figure 1. London, British Library, MS Arundel 74, f. 2<sup>v</sup> (detail)

nated scene, instead there are pencil lines on parchment. The lack of color at the center of the initial renders the absence striking. The man sits at an angled writing desk, with wooden supporting slats visible at its side. He faces the parchment on the desk in front of him, and holds a pen in his right hand and a knife in his left.<sup>2</sup> Visually, the scene is a trope, a conventional depiction of an author writing his text.<sup>3</sup> Such drawings of authors accompany other

2. The BL Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts describes it as an “unfinished drawing of a seated man (possibly Bede) writing at the desk holding a quill and a knife, and on the bar border, a quadruped (dragon?),” <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6441&CollID=58&NStart=26>. See also the description in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), where the editors suggest the initial “on f. 2<sup>v</sup> was intended to contain Bede seated writing, but this was left unfinished and shows only the first pencil sketch” (lviii).

3. See Kathleen Scott, “Representations of Scribal Activity in English Manuscripts, c. 1400–

manuscripts of Bede's texts, such as that found in the late-twelfth-century full-page miniature of a scribe at work in London, BL, MS Yates Thompson 26.<sup>4</sup> Nor were author portraits uncommon in the late fourteenth century, as seen in a Parisian manuscript, now London, BL, MS Yates Thompson 21.<sup>5</sup> There, the poet Jean de Meun sits at a writing desk with a pen in one hand and a knife in the other, literally writing in the miniature book before him the opening lines of the *Roman de la Rose*, "main/ tes gens / dient / que en / song/es."<sup>6</sup> The unexecuted initial in Arundel 74, then, seems at least in conception to be fairly conventional: it most likely was meant to depict Bede writing the text that follows. As such, the portrait serves to authorize the work, linking the venerated and venerable Saint Bede to the text of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* that follows. Something, however, had gone wrong even before the team of Norwich illuminators went to paint the decorations into Arundel 74.

Bede's *Historia* was an extremely popular text, widely copied and very familiar to the writers and readers of English history. The main text of the *Historia* famously begins "Britannia Oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit [Britain, once called Albion, is an island of the ocean]."<sup>7</sup> In Arundel 74, however, the scribe has made a mess of things. Instead of the well-known beginning of the text, he has written the incoherent "Nocciam insula cui quondam Albion nomen fuit," or perhaps the still incorrect but slightly more meaningful "[i]n occiani insula."<sup>8</sup> (Refer to Plate 1.) In a series of errors, the scribe has somehow omitted "Britannia" entirely, muddled "oceani" into the meaningless "nocciam" or "occiani," and then carried on copying Bede's text

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c. 1490: A Mirror of the Craft?" in Gullick, *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons, and Tools*, ed. Michael Gullick (Walkern, UK: Red Gull Press, 2006), 115–50. See also Michael Gullick, "Self-Referential Artist and Scribe Portraits in Romanesque Manuscripts," in Gullick, *Pen in Hand*, 97–114.

4. The book contains Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* and was written at Durham in the last quarter of the twelfth century. Though MS Yates Thompson 26 is itself richly illuminated, there survives a companion volume that contains only sketches for the program of illuminations, now Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.1.64. See Malcolm Baker, "Medieval Illustrations of Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978): 16–49.

5. See the description in the BL Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8126&CollID=58&NStart=21>.

6. Lineation (albeit, in miniature) is preserved from MS Yates Thompson 21, f. 69<sup>v</sup>. The text replicates precisely that found at the beginning of the codex, "Maintes gens dient / que en songes," MS Yates Thompson 21, f. 3<sup>f</sup>. See the BL Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts description at <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6441&CollID=58&NStart=26>.

7. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I.i, 14–15.

8. MS Arundel 74, f. 2<sup>v</sup>.

as if the nonsensical mess was unproblematic.<sup>9</sup> Worse, the scribe not only left space for the illuminated initial, but must have written an “n” in the margin or in the space reserved for the initial, in order to cue the illuminators when the folio came to them for decoration. The illuminators duly followed the cue, painting the blue and pink “N” that survives.

Not all scribes, of course, were incompetent. A second hand has gone through and corrected the text of Arundel 74. At the top of the second column of f. 2<sup>v</sup>, the correcting hand, working in a different shade of ink, has inserted a caret in the topmost line and added text above the top line that was omitted by the book’s main hand.<sup>10</sup> The corrector was extremely attentive to detail: in the rubric just above the initial “N,” the first scribe concluded the preface to the *Historia* by writing “Expliciunt apitla.” A tiny “c” has been written before the “a,” and a small tick added adjacent to the “1” may be an attempt to correct the word to read, as it should do, “capitula.”<sup>11</sup> This same correcting hand has also done what little he could do with the mess left by the incorrectly cued “N” and the nonsense “nocciam” or “n occiani.” Just to the left of the illuminated initial, nestled amidst the foliage of the frame, there is a caret in the text-ink used by the correcting scribe. In the leftmost margin of the folio, a second caret points up to the word “Britannia,” marking it for insertion. The correction must have taken place after the illuminated “N” and the bar border were decorated, as there otherwise would have been the opportunity to correct the text before the application of gold leaf and expensive pigments. The attempt to correct the text is admirable, but despite his use of a larger display script for the correction, the plain brown ink cannot compete with the pink, blue, and gold of the large historiated initial.

But what of the unexecuted portrait of the author? The most likely explanation is that somebody noticed the scribe’s terrible mistake even before the correcting hand rather hopelessly inserted the marginal “Britannia.” That is, at some point after the initial scribe made a hash of the first few words of the text and mistakenly cued the illuminators with an “n,” after the initial was painted and the borders executed, and after the sketch to fill the initial was made, but before the artist painted the scene laid out by the pencil sketch,

9. Note the description of this manuscript as “very carelessly written” in *Bedaes Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum: Venerabilis Baedae opera historica*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1896), 1: cxxvii.

10. The correcting scribe has remedied the omission of an entire clause, “quibus efficitur ut circuitus eius quadragies octies,” MS Arundel 74, f. 2<sup>v</sup>.

11. MS Arundel 74, f. 2<sup>v</sup>.



somebody actually read the text and recognized its incoherence.<sup>12</sup> Conventionally, author portraits link image to text in order to present that which follows as authorial, and therefore authorized. To complete the portrait of Bede in Arundel 74 would be to magnify precisely how unreliable the text is, and to undo the work of that visual assertion. Were the portrait complete, the crafted presence of the author would be undone by the flawed work of the scribe. Medieval authors went to great lengths to maintain the pretense that medieval scribes were invisible, their labors transparent. Arundel 74 offers an unusual reversal of that convention, leaving the material traces of an author effaced, in effect, by a scribe.

Scribes did much more than copy the exemplars before them. Literate, they were themselves the primary audience for medieval literature, and its primary authors. Medieval authors must have been trained as scribes, and it is likely not much of an overstatement to suggest that nearly all authors were scribes. Not all scribes were authors, and my intention is not to attempt to inscribe any fixed line between the two activities. However authorship is defined, scribes are too often considered to be the purely mechanical means through which textual transmission was accomplished.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, scribes tend to be excluded from the discourses of audience of medieval books. Marginalia attest to scribes reading texts, but are surely a poor and extremely partial indicator of what scribes did read. The copying of a text is not itself usually held to be evidence for a scribe reading his exemplar, yet as Arundel 74 shows, some scribes read the texts they were responsible for copying or correcting. Inasmuch as scribes are implicated in the transmission of medieval texts, they are excluded both from composition and reception. Scribes are underconsidered as the learned audience of medieval texts. Traditional source and analogue study concerns itself with what authors might have read, attempting to detect textual evidence and even distant echoes in order to map the connections between medieval texts. Yet those connections were not necessarily made by authors.

Such intertextuality is particularly dense in the case of medieval history writing. Medieval insular historiography in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Mid-

12. For an interesting comparison, see Baswell's discussion of Dublin, Trinity College MS 177 in *The Life of Saint Alban by Matthew Paris*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Thelma Fenster (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 169–94.

13. For recent exceptions to this trend, see Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, eds., *The Siege of Jerusalem*, EETS OS 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), xci: "Variation testifies neither to the stupidity nor the malignity of scribes." See also Bella Millet's lucid discussion of scribal variation in *Ancrene Wisse: A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 402, with Variants from Other Manuscripts*, EETS OS 325 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), li–lvi.

dle English is not without its literary merits. At the same time, however, the majority of these texts are not poetic performances for the ages. This does not make these texts any less literary, of course, but it opens up a space in which the pressures to delineate or to articulate the authorial do not always exclude the scribal. Indeed, the lines between work and text, between original and variant, or merely between varied-from and varied-to, become much less stable when the stabilizing anchor of an author is removed.<sup>14</sup> Scribes wrote texts, and the rich uncertainty of that activity is the central concern of this book. Their creation may be the product of composition, emendation, compilation, and various nontransparent forms of copying. It is the work of scribes, and the intentions that motivate that work, that constitute scribal authorship.

Many of the texts considered in this book are formed by what I call “derivative textuality.” Discussed at length in Chapter 2, derivative texts are the product of a particular and elaborate methodology, in which composition cannot be neatly or trivially divided from quotation and translation. Derivative texts are complex tissues of quotation and translations, assembled into a narratively continuous and textually coherent whole. It is important to stress that such texts need not be the product of scribal authorship. Named authors, such as the historians Henry of Huntingdon and Robert Mannyng, wrote derivative texts. So, too, Matthew Paris carefully restructured the work of his predecessor at St Albans, copying, expanding, omitting, revising, and commenting upon the *Flores Historiarum* to shape what would become Matthew’s *Chronica Majora*. Derivative texts are the sites of extensive textual transformation. The authors of derivative texts use the words of others in order to create a new textual whole, using old sources in the service of a new textual agenda. Derivative textuality was a particularly common compositional method for vernacular historiography in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. These texts, neither compilations nor translations, but rather assemblages, do not fit neatly with conventional definitions of composition and creation. They resonate more strongly with the copy-and-paste or post-and-comment dialogic textualities of the digital world.<sup>15</sup> Derivative textuality and vernacular historiography fit poorly with theories of medieval authorship that have largely been shaped by Latin theological texts or the great vernacular poetry of the late fourteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

14. Thus, the “fondamentalement mouvante” of medieval texts according to Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, *Collection Poétique* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 73.

15. See Marjorie Perloff, *Unoriginal Genius: Poetry by Other Means in the New Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

16. See Alistair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 2nd ed. (London: Scholar Press, 1984). See, further, Chapter 2 below.

Some scribes read the texts they copied, and they also read texts that do not survive in their hand. In order to be effective, history writing requires a certain degree of authority. In turn, the genre's innate reliance upon texts that have come before requires the writers of history to make critical assessments of those texts. Such judgments were not solely the province of the named authors of history writing, however. On f. 37<sup>v</sup> of London, BL, MS Royal 20.a.xi, a fourteenth-century scribe of the thirteenth-century *Chronicle* of Piers Langtoft complains that the text he has just finished copying is rather a disappointment:

Le liure Mestre Wace . counte plus parfit .  
 E dit tut la lettre . qe peres trop salit .  
 Peres par tut lessa . Meint bone respit .  
 Qe bon fust a lire . e auer la delit .  
 Mestre Wace dit tut . la lettre qil troua .  
 Trufles a verite . tretut complia .  
 Lun liure e lautre . qi bien regardera .  
 Jeo di qe Mestre Wace . plus ouertement parla .

[The story in the book of Master Wace is more perfect, and relates all the details that Piers skips over too often. Piers has held back many lines that are pleasant and beneficial to read. Master Wace relates every letter which he has found written, the trifles and the truth are all complete. Of the one book and the other, well compared, I say that Master Wace speaks more openly.]<sup>17</sup>

The anonymous scribe here offers a stark but not inaccurate assessment of the relative merits of Wace's translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* and of Piers Langtoft's redaction and translation of Geoffrey's text a century later. The scribe of Royal 20.a.xi reduces Langtoft from a named author and translator of Geoffrey to, essentially, a poor scribe of Wace's *Roman de Brut*.

The scribe of Royal 20.a.xi has read three different versions of insular history in two languages: the text he is copying (Langtoft's *Chronicle*), the text translated by the text of his exemplar (Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*

17. MS Royal 20.a.xi, f. 37<sup>v</sup>; translation mine. For a description of the manuscript, see *Édition critique et commentée de Pierre de Langtoft, Le règne d'Édouard Ier*, ed. J. C. Thiolier (Paris: Centre d'Études Littéraires et Iconographiques du Moyen Âge, 1989), 41–45. See also the closely connected verses in Princeton, Princeton University Library, MS Taylor 12 and Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 43.

*regum Britanniae*), and a third work of historiography (Wace's *Roman de Brut*). He expresses an opinion about the merit of individual texts, and he perceives the writing of history as the site of intentionality: Langtoft "skips over" lines where Wace "relates" his source text more thoroughly. These are informed criticisms, and they indicate the scribe's larger sense of responsibility to the historical record, and to the decisions required to translate and copy texts. His concerns become the occasion for authorship. The scribe composed rhymed verses, no less, for an audience who might seek out other texts or produce new manuscripts on the basis of those verses.

The language used by the scribe of Royal 20.a.xi also reveals him to be reading his exemplar closely, not merely copying it, and responding to the tone of his source text. The scribe redeploys the words of Langtoft at the end of the first part of his *Chronicle*, which occur on the recto of the same folio:

Pieres de langetoft . troue ne plus par dit .  
 Qil nad complie . e mis en cest escrit .  
 Les troefles ad lesse . a verite se prist .  
 Nul autre trouera . home qe le list .  
 Si noun li latiners . en son latin mentist .

[Piers Langtoft finds no more said than he has compiled and set in this writing. He has left the trifles and held to the truth. Nothing else is to be found, if a man reads it, unless the translator has lied in his Latin.]<sup>18</sup>

The scribal verses of Royal 20.a.xi turn Langtoft's own vocabulary ("truffles," "verite," "trova," "complia") against his text. Indeed, the scribal verses make clear that Langtoft's claim to textual completeness is conventional, a literary trope rather than a description of Langtoft's methods of writing historiography.<sup>19</sup> The scribe's composition may be little more than light pastiche of Langtoft's lines, but his concerns about historiographical accuracy and textual genealogy are not mere trifles.

Langtoft's *Chronicle* was assessed unfavorably a second time in the early fourteenth century, by an author perpetuating the scribal verses of Royal

18. MS Royal 20.a.xi, f. 37<sup>r</sup>; translation mine. See *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft in French Verse, from the Earliest Period to the Death of King Edward I*, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1868), 1: 264.

19. See Thea Summerfield, *The Matter of Kings' Lives: The Design of Past and Present in the Early Fourteenth-Century Verse Chronicles by Pierre de Langtoft and Robert Mannyng* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 98. The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* also offers "falsehoods" or "frauds" for "truffles," suggesting Langtoft is claiming completeness and truthfulness, as well as distinguishing among more and less important details.

20.a.xi. The Gilbertine historian Robert Mannyng, writing c. 1338, is somewhat unusual in naming himself and in claiming authorship for two texts.<sup>20</sup> The intertextuality of history writing is neatly encapsulated by Mannyng's *Chronicle*: assembled through derivative textuality, the text chiefly translates and adapts two Anglo-Norman sources: Wace's *Roman de Brut* and Langtoft's *Chronicle*. Mannyng also assembles his text from additional materials, including newly written sections, sections from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum* and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and sources both identified and not.<sup>21</sup> Mannyng's *Chronicle* is a typical product of derivative textuality, a tissue of translation, adaptation, and transposition of texts both acknowledged and unacknowledged, framed by original contributions and designed to create a coherent whole. Early in the first part of his *Chronicle*, Mannyng addresses the source texts he employed to construct his history:

þes Inglis dedes 3e may here  
 as Pers telles alle þe manere.  
 One mayster Wace þe ffrankes telles  
 þe Brute, alle þat þe Latyn spelles  
 ffro Eneas tille Cadwaladre.  
 Þis mayster Wace þer leues he,  
 and ryght as mayster Wace says,  
 I telle myn Inglis þe same ways,  
 ffor mayster Wace þe Latyn alle rymes  
 þat Pers ouerhippis many tymes.  
 Mayster Wace þe Brute alle redes,  
 & Pers tellis alle þe Inglis dedes.<sup>22</sup>

20. See Robert Mannyng, *The Chronicle*, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Binghamton, NY: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1996). See also *New IMEV*, 1995, which includes two fragments not mentioned or edited by Sullens. I have had the opportunity to consult only one of the two fragments, Gloucester, Gloucester Cathedral Library, MS 36/8, a single leaf that contains text not present in the edition. On Mannyng himself, see Sullens's introduction, but also the important corrective work of Andrew Taubman, "New Biographical Notes on Robert Mannyng of Brunne," *Notes & Queries* 56 (2009): 197–201. See also Joyce Coleman, "Strange Rhyme: Prosody and Nationhood in Robert Mannyng's *Story of England*," *Speculum* 78 (2003): 1214–38.

21. Thus Sullens: "We can see in the preliminary passages where he was probably translating from Latin prose (e.g., in Part I, lines 201–438 where many lines have only three stresses)" (Mannyng, *Chronicle*, 63).

22. Mannyng, *Chronicle*, l.55–66. "Overhippis" translates "salit" (from "saillir," "to jump up"). The fairly rare Middle English "overhippis" also appears in one of the Middle English "songs" found as part of Langtoft's *Chronicle*.

These lines, comparing the histories of Wace, Langtoft, and the Latin text of Geoffrey's *Historia regum*, are familiar from the verses in Royal 20.a.xi. They again demonstrate a remarkable sense of textual awareness. Mannyng here articulates a rhetorical responsibility to read and assess multiple texts in order to assemble his derivative composition. Mannyng includes among those texts Wace's *Roman de Brut*, Langtoft's *Chronicle*, and Geoffrey's *Historia regum*, but also the scribal verses of Royal 20.a.xi. He translates the verses ("ouerhippis" for "salit") and, more importantly, he took the scribe's advice: Mannyng uses Wace's text as his primary source for the first British section of his *Chronicle*, and turns to Langtoft's only for the "English deeds" that take place after Wace's history has ended.

Mannyng's own text was not free from the opinions of scribes. An attentive and well-read scribe asserted his own, independent knowledge in a fifteenth-century manuscript of Mannyng's *Chronicle*, London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 131. The *Chronicle*, describing its indebtedness to Bede's *Historia*, notes: "þis word of Saynt Bede I toke, / þe fifte capitle of þe boke; / þorgh þat capitle, I wist."<sup>23</sup> In Lambeth Palace Library MS 131, however, the scribe has pedantically corrected the citation of his source, "þyse wordes of seint Bede y tok / þe fifte chaptire of þe secunde bok. / þorow þat chaptire al y wist."<sup>24</sup> The Lambeth scribe's emendation has implications beyond the remarkable chapter-and-verse knowledge of Bede's *Historia*. The scribe is working in the great tradition of history writing in medieval England. His recollection of Bede's text shows the presence of the texts of the past, the way in which even widely separated historiographical narratives take place with a certain historical simultaneity. In this space, the scribes of insular historiography read the texts they copied, formed and articulated judgments about those texts, corrected errors and omissions, and responded to the agendas of the writers of history. Sometimes, that response was to write new histories.

Medieval holograph manuscripts written by named authors, and identifiable as such, may be comparatively rare, but it is unsurprising to find authors acting as their own scribes.<sup>25</sup> Unsurprising, that is, because these authors appear in precisely the contexts in which we would expect to find them; the religious orders and secular *milieux* where books were copied were also where books were composed. Manuscripts surviving in the hands of their authors include works by Dunstan, Ælfric, Eadmer, Orm, Symeon of Dur-

23. Mannyng, *Chronicle*, I.14329–31.

24. London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 131, f. 63<sup>vb</sup>.

25. See my article "When Variants Aren't: Authors as Scribes in Some English Manuscripts," in *Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Anne Hudson and Vincent Gillespie (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

ham, John of Worcester, Thomas Aquinas, William of Malmesbury, Richard of Devizes, Matthew Paris, Ranulf Higden, Dan Michel of Northgate, the anonymous author of *Sir Ferumbas*, William Herebert, John Capgrave, and Thomas Hoccleve. In a list that includes several historiographers, consider the work of Ranulf Higden, whose hand survives in a copy of his *Polychronicon*, San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 132.<sup>26</sup> Higden uses an elaborate system of visual symbols (a barbell with a caret beneath it, and a variety of circles and lines in various configurations) to mark for insertion layers of revisions, additions, and emendations. The manuscript preserves not only Higden's fair copy of his own text, fully rubricated and supplied with diagrams and maps, but also at least two subsequent sets of revisions, added at different times.<sup>27</sup> The manuscript does not somehow exist outside of medieval textual culture—Higden's fair copy was also a foul copy, the site of his working through the text to emend, supplement, and revise it. Moreover, both before and after those revisions HM 132 would serve as an exemplar for copies of the *Polychronicon*.<sup>28</sup> Each author named above was a reader and a writer, a composer and a copyist. HM 132 was, before it was an exemplar, merely a copy. These authorial scribes point to still other holograph manuscripts, to the work of scribal authors, unrecognized as authorial because copying is understood as precluding intentionality or originality.

Addressing scribal intentionality risks becoming entangled in the long debates over the intentions of authors. Yet it is only by asking fundamental questions about the work of scribes that scribal authorship as found in medieval history writing can be fully elucidated. Scribes tend to be anonymous. Pure fantasy might wish the work of scribes copying the poetry of Chaucer or Gower to be invisible.<sup>29</sup> But their work is not invisible, or there would be

26. See V. H. Galbraith, "An Autograph MS of Ranulph Higden's 'Polychronicon,'" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 23 (1959): 1–18; and Richard Beadle, "English Autograph Writings of the Later Middle Ages: Some Preliminaries," in *Gli autografi medievali: Problemi paleografici e filologici*, edited by P. Chiesa and L. Pinelli (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994), 249–68.

27. Thus, for example, see MS HM 132, f. 10<sup>v</sup>, f. 11<sup>v</sup>, or f. 16<sup>r</sup> for just a few of the many symbols Higden uses. Consider the comparable sequence of use in Matthew Paris's holograph manuscript of part of the *Chronica Majora*, London, BL, MS Royal 14.c.vii.

28. As Higden adds the acrostic that contains his name to HM 132, and the additions and emendations in the book are incorporated in later manuscripts of the *Polychronicon*, it seems inescapable that the codex should be read as "the autograph *qua* exemplar." Beadle, "English Autograph Writings," 264.

29. See M. B. Parkes, *Their Hands before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008); M. B. Parkes and A. I. Doyle, "The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century," in *Scribes, Scripts, and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation, and Dissemination of Medieval Texts*, by M. B. Parkes (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 201–48; and Estelle Stubbs, "'Here's One I Prepared Earlier':

no poetry by Chaucer or Gower. Slowly, the names and identities of some scribes have been uncovered and reconstructed.<sup>30</sup> Though scribes are thereby more firmly embedded in the material and cultural economies of medieval England, there remains a basic issue: writing is always intended. Whether that writing is composition or copying, medieval manuscripts did not come into being by accident. In manuscripts, insular history writing is itself historical, copied and authored, by hand, by scribes.

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The Work of Scribe D on Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 198,” *Review of English Studies* 58 (2007): 133–53.

30. Most obviously, see Linne Mooney, “Chaucer’s Scribe,” *Speculum* 81 (2006): 97–138.



# The Medieval Scribe

What constitutes sameness and difference has troubled thinkers from Plato to Aquinas to Benjamin, from Hegel to Heidegger to Derrida. Philosophers have challenged the relationship between Idea and Being, argued over how objects exist and how they are perceived, and interrogated the nature of the connections between “an” original and “a” copy.<sup>1</sup> Asking such questions not of archetypes but of specific historical artifacts requires the clear articulation of the constituent terms of the discussion. Before we can ask “What is copying?” it is important to expose the legacy of significant and longstanding opinions about the nature of what is being copied: that is, what are medieval manuscripts? There are culturally prevalent assumptions that have shaped the answer to that question. Many people, if asked to imagine a manuscript, might call to mind a book that recalls the Book of Kells, or the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duc de Berry, or some other richly illuminated manuscript.<sup>2</sup> Such books, however, do not represent every medieval manuscript any more than art books on a coffee table say anything about the cheap paperbacks stacked on a bedside table. Neither does the

1. See Marcus Boon, *In Praise of Copying* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

2. Neatly illustrating the slippage, the first result of a Google search (August 2011) for “medieval manuscript” is the Wikipedia entry for “illuminated manuscript.” Similarly, a Google image search for “medieval manuscript” returns pages of results that are almost without exception illuminated leaves or details of illuminations and drawings.

*New York Times* web site meaningfully represent all of the web pages of every site on the Internet. What, then, is a medieval manuscript? The categorical understanding, that all manuscripts are books written by hand, is true, but not in itself particularly interesting in the medieval world, inasmuch as everything was made by hand. More urgently, manuscripts are *sui generis*, historically specific objects made from the skin of sheep or cows, written by particular men and women in specific months of specific years.<sup>3</sup> These contexts have consequences. Copying, too, is not a de-historicized or idealized process, and the transformation by which an original becomes a copy is not generic. Copying takes place within specific historical moments, and as such is shaped by and shapes the particularities of those circumstances. Copying is a motivated act, an act creating a new text that duplicates, replicates, resembles, or recalls an existing text. Scribes have agency, and copying, like all forms of writing, confronts the problematic array of intentionality.

Such basic observations—that not all medieval manuscripts are the same and that copying designates a spectrum of scribally enacted textual transformations—are the starting point of this book. Many medieval scribes did copy their texts, and many medieval manuscripts were illuminated, but the composition and copying of insular history writing do not fit neatly with many broad assumptions about the nature of medieval textual culture. This chapter argues that the work of modern editors has divided the physical writing of scribes and the compositional writing of authors. Such a division sidesteps the challenge of those textual transformations that were intended or motivated (revision, redaction, rewriting, supplementing) rather than those that were unintended or unmotivated (word or line omission, repetition, and other mechanical errors). This division is particularly problematic for texts such as the Anglo-Norman and Middle English prose *Bruts* and other works of vernacular history writing. The chapter will then turn to medieval descriptions of scribes and copying, and argue that the strenuously erected division between scribes and authors has its origins as a medieval phenomenon, a response to different models of textuality. As portrayed in medieval poems that touch on writing and copying, the threat to medieval authorship was not only the inescapable issue of scribal textual corruption, but the danger of reasoned interventions—scribal invention and scribal authorship. Finally, the chapter will consider the quirks of one medieval scribe who played with

3. In this context, it is interesting to consider recent work on the DNA of the animals used to make parchment in medieval England. See Timothy Stinson, “Knowledge of the Flesh: Using DNA Analysis to Unlock Bibliographical Secrets of Medieval Parchment,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 103 (2009): 435–53. Stinson usefully notes: “Little is known about the medieval parchment trade” (449).

different types of copying within a single manuscript. This admittedly marginal instance of scribal behavior offers an opportunity to interrogate closely how one scribe negotiated the implications of his own textual performance and manifested an awareness of the transformations possible in the course of his work.

I want to begin by considering the texts of the past as they are assembled in the present. The work of modern editors and the production of critical editions of medieval texts rely upon a number of arguments, both explicit and implicit, concerning notions of “original” and “copy,” and what kinds of transformation may have taken place between those two fraught terms. Editing privileges authors, and it has inconsistently addressed scribes as historical actors. Scribal intentionality has largely been erased by the imperatives of the modern editorial project. Scribes copy texts, but the instability of all three of those terms poses dilemmas for the editor.<sup>4</sup> Editing, of course, is essentially the systematic attempt to remove as many layers of textual “error” as possible, whether those errors are introduced by scribes as part of the transmission of texts, or in other circumstances.<sup>5</sup> Modern editors have admitted the underlying importance of scribes, and accounted for scribal variants on a spectrum from idiotic to brilliant, from scribes ruining texts to their inspired reconstruction of lost authorial readings. In all cases, though, the work of the scribe is ultimately the variously blurry lens through which the work of the

4. Consider one of the few areas in which scribes are assigned agency—the so-called improving scribes, as they are ironically known. See Ralph Hanna, “Producing Manuscripts and Editions,” in *Crux and Controversy in Middle English Textual Criticism*, ed. Alistair J. Minnis and Charlotte Brewer (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), 109–30. Hanna, citing a presentation given by Derek Pearsall at the University of California, Los Angeles, on May 17, 1991, notes: “For one cannot distinguish ‘intelligent, meddling, and improving scribes’ without some knowledge of their archetypes” (125). See also *Amys and Amylion*, ed. Françoise Le Saux (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1993): “The additional stanzas in the manuscript, which are unattested elsewhere and are generally very trite, could be due to an ‘improving’ scribe” (17). See also Takako Kato, “Corrected Mistakes in the Winchester Manuscript,” in *Re-viewing Le Morte Darthur*, ed. K. S. Whetter and Raluca Radulescu (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 9–26, where she notes: “Then Scribe A of Winchester realised there was no verb in this sentence, and he decided to improve it. What he did not understand was that the phrase . . . was part of this sentence”; and then concludes: “Both the scribes often attempted to correct the mistakes in their exemplar” (19, 24).

5. The literature on the practice of editing, and on the editing of medieval manuscripts in particular, is vast. In addition to D. C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland, 1994), see Douglas Moffat, “A Bibliographical Essay on Editing Methods,” in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, ed. Vincent McCarren and Douglas Moffat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1998), 25–60; D. C. Greetham, *Theories of the Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Tim Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), particularly chap. 1; and G. Thomas Tanselle, “Textual Instability and Editorial Idealism,” *Studies in Bibliography* 49 (1996): 1–60.

author can, and must, be seen. The last twenty years have seen an enormous amount of intellectual energy spent on vigorous discussions about the goals, processes, products, and theories of editing, although neither the number nor the variety of editions of medieval texts have grown as appreciably as the number of volumes about editing. In the wake of Greg's *The Calculus of Variants* (1927), its transformation in Cerquiglini's *Éloge de la variante*, and the 1990 New Philology issue of *Speculum*, "variant" has become the preferred term to describe multiple possible readings of a text found in multiple manuscripts (and represented in the textual apparatus of a critical edition), in place of the more polarizing aspects of previous terminology ("good" and "bad" readings), which ultimately resolved to a reductive binary of error and accuracy that echoes the divide between scribe and author.<sup>6</sup>

The choice of one term of this oppositional binary, whether understood as good readings against bad, right readings against wrong, textual accuracy versus textual error, the authorial versus the scribal, the intended versus the recorded, or even the choice between two otherwise unjudgable variants, is in some form or another the logic underlying all schools of editing—from the Kane-Donaldson edition of the B-text of *Piers Plowman* to the single-manuscript editions published by Heidelberg University as the Middle English Texts series, such as O'Farrell-Tate's edition of the version of the *Short English Metrical Chronicle* found in London, BL, MS Royal 12.c.xii (a text that will be discussed at length in Chapters 3 and 4).<sup>7</sup> The two poles, Bedier's "truth of the manuscript" and Lachmann's "truth of the author," are a false dichotomy.<sup>8</sup> Skilled scribes undoubtedly made mistakes and introduced error into their texts. Yet even the most incompetent of scribes were members of an educated and literate cultural minority. Scribes were capable of improving texts, and their actions need not be enclosed in the scare-quotes too often used to denigrate active scribal engagement with a text.<sup>9</sup>

6. See Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989). Nonetheless, the language of morality, aesthetics, or value has a long history in manuscript studies—note George Kane, "'Good' and 'Bad' Manuscripts: Texts and Critics," In *Studies in the Age of Chaucer, Proceedings, No. 2*, 1986, ed. John Fleming and Thomas Heffernan (Knoxville: New Chaucer Society, 1987), 137–45.

7. See William Langland, *Piers Plowman: The B Version*, ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (London: Athlone Press, 1975); and Una O'Farrell-Tate, *The Abridged English Metrical Brut: Edited from London, British Library MS Royal 12 C.XII* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2002). On the Kane-Donaldson edition, see also Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 78–113.

8. See Franz Fischer and Malte Rehbein, review of *Digital Philology and Medieval Texts*, ed. Arianna Ciula and Francesco Stella, *Digital Medievalist* 5 (2009), <http://www.digitalmedievalist.org/journal/5/fischer/>.

9. Although quite general, for a broad description of scribes' abilities and education, see

There are a number of assumptions underlying editorial practice for medieval texts, and this chapter will interrogate some ideas central to editing such texts:

- Scribes intended, and attempted, to reproduce an exemplar through duplicative or replicative copying.<sup>10</sup>
- Exemplars always existed. Although some editions identify scribes switching between multiple exemplars during various stints of copying, there is nonetheless a consistent presumption that there is a text being copied, rather than composed or assembled.
- The scribal is always distinct from the authorial. Revision and alteration can be distinguished from composition.

It is important to consider the vocabulary used to discuss these ideas, particularly as the language of morality is endemic to the language of copying, perhaps precisely because of the predominantly religious nature of the texts, readers, and writers around which medieval literacy and book production were centered. The *OED* definition of “scribal” as an adjective offers as its earliest attestations two mid-nineteenth-century uses. Both are pointedly negative formulations. The 1857 usage, from *Fraser’s Magazine*, refers to “scribal corruption.” The 1868 usage, from Richard Morris’s edition of Old English homilies, discusses “scribal blunders.”<sup>11</sup> The indictment of scribes, and their reputation as incompetent, is built into the English language at a basic level. Indeed, one of the first recorded uses of “scriveyn” in Middle English deploys the trope of the cheating scribe, discussed below, in which scribes are condemned for their avarice: “Ase doþ þise scriueyns / þet sseweþ guode lettre / ate ginnynge. and efterward / makeþ wycked.”<sup>12</sup> This early Middle English condemnation of scribes is taken from the *Ayenbite of Inwit*, found in London, BL, MS Arundel 57, one of the few known holograph manuscripts of a Middle English text. Dan Michel, acting as his own scribe, made mechanical errors while copying his own text. Presumably he did not thereby render his own text “wycked” in doing so. Neither the language of

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Rodney M. Thomson and Nigel Morgan, “Language and Literacy,” in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 2, 1100–1400, ed. Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 22–40.

10. Duplicative and replicative copying are discussed below, pp. 37–44.

11. *OED*, “scribal, adj.”

12. *Dan Michel’s Ayenbite of Inwit*, ed. Richard Morris, EETS OS 23 (London, 1866), 44, and *Dan Michel’s Ayenbite of Inwyt or Remorse of Conscience*, ed. Pamela Gradon, EETS OS 278 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

morality nor that of scientific empiricism suit the literary activity at the heart of medieval texts.

The core of Cerquiglini's argument in *Éloge de la variante* is his insistence upon manuscripts as the proper locus of scholarly attention, and the value intrinsic to their variations. He begins by drawing attention to "le manuscrit . . . l'objet tout neuf des analyses [The manuscript . . . now the latest object of analysis]."<sup>13</sup> Reclaiming both the margins of medieval manuscripts and the manuscripts that had themselves become marginal, the thoroughly post-Structuralist New Philology (and New Historicism) challenged the New Criticism and its reliance upon texts that, in turn, were edited with an eye to the "old" discipline of philology.<sup>14</sup> Yet, the radical call to *variance*, to reexamine manuscripts as the foundation for progress in the study of medieval literature, had a curious conservatism about it. Its rejection of the linguistic and the philological is accompanied by a (silent) reliance upon the codicological and the paleographical training required for the kind of manuscript scholarship called for by Cerquiglini. The "codicological imperative," as Keith Busby terms it, found early articulation in work broadly contemporary with Cerquiglini's *Éloge*, marking the general turn to manuscript studies as a broader reflex of the contemporary critical stance.<sup>15</sup> The thoroughly destabilized "text" of New Critical attentions was replaced with the *variance* (or Zumthor's *mouvance*) of the new philological/codicological, but the medieval manuscript is just as fickle and elusive a foundation as the text had proven to be. Underlying the simple generalized singular of "le manuscrit" is an unspoken smoothing over of the plurality of individual variant readings at the expense of the radical heterogeneity of medieval manuscripts, of the ways in which the inherent uniqueness of these artifacts in fact works against generalization. As perplexingly, it privileges difference and the variant over what manuscripts *do* have in common with each other.<sup>16</sup> It is precisely this reductive generalization of manuscripts

13. Cerquiglini, *Éloge*, 9. See also Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, trans. Betsy Wing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), xi.

14. See Keith Busby, *Codex and Context*, 2 vols. (New York: Rodopi, 2002); and Busby, "The Politics of Textual Criticism," in *Towards a Synthesis? Essays on the New Philology*, ed. Keith Busby (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 29–45.

15. Busby, *Codex*, 1: 2. Thus, for example, see the work of John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the Libro de buen amor* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

16. Note Hanna's rejoinder: "For to create his infinitely generating *texte*, Cerquiglini must presuppose the simultaneous social ubiquity of all textual forms, whatever their temporal or spatial disparities" ("Producing Manuscripts and Editions," 121).

that most profoundly troubles the editorial project dismissed by Cerquiglini: editorial theory typically seeks approaches that apply to all manuscripts, regardless of time period, country of origin, language, or the genre of a text. This decontextualization, however, has consequences.

Our conceptions of scribes did not spring, fully formed, out of the contemporary critical projects of paleography and codicology. As long as there have been written texts, there have been scribes to do the writing, from Cicero's scribes to transcribers-for-hire on the web. The divide maintained between author and scribe is not new, and the frustration of authors with their scribes is both historical and conventional. Authors must, at some level, trust scribes to copy their texts. Mistakes might be made, but expectations dictate that scribes for the most part would not encode texts into private alphabets or made-up languages. Yet the implied contract of textual replication was not always honored. Malicious, or more commonly, ignorant transformations tend to dominate discussions of the work of scribes. But medieval scribes were also in a position to emend and correct the texts they copied, and to save authors from their own errors. Moving away from a strict divide between scribes and authors, this chapter considers the problematic doubled role for scribes as incompetent copyists and competent correctors. Script itself is understood as a rhetorical performance, subject to the pressures of both history and content.

If scribes are to copy texts, the texts they copy must be stable. This is a precarious assumption for many medieval texts (particularly for medieval history writing), but its roots can be found in a text with much invested in a singular monovocality—the Bible. The self-authenticating and self-preserving devices of sacred discourse are exceptional, however. The assertion of textual fixity, and thus the danger posed by incompetent scribes, finds early expression in the Bible—both in a textual sense, as in Deuteronomy 4:2, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it,” and more broadly, as in Exodus 25:40, “And look that thou make them after their pattern [Vulgate: *exemplar*], which was shewed thee in the mount” and Revelations 1:3, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”<sup>17</sup> It is fairly clear what is at stake in claiming unmediated transmission for sacred texts. The transmission of composed texts, rather than the functionally authorless Bible, makes different demands upon scribes, and

17. See Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995). Gamble interprets these verses as concerned with “the use of the text as a text—not only its reading and hearing, but also its copying and transmission” (105).

more obviously varies widely across genres. Scripture offers divine textual authority, and thus circularly affirms its own claims to unmediated transmission. Most medieval texts, however, participate in textual traditions—they share a discursive range, including visual and textual conventions and a corpus of antecedents. Variation may stretch the boundaries of recognizable discourse, but it need not be framed in moral or ethical terms.

Exodus 25:40 forms the core of the exemplum of the cheating scribe, found in both the collection of preaching literature known as *Fasciculus morum* and in the *Moralitates* written by the Dominican friar Thomas Waleys (*fl.* 1318–1349).<sup>18</sup> The *Fasciculus* warns of the cheating scribe:

Set adverte: Videmus enim quod aliquando datur scriptori exemplar, ut illa que in illo continentur in aliud volumen seu pergamenum transferat nichil addendo vel minuendo—quia ut communiter scriptores non sunt scioli ad libros corrigendos, addendo vel minuendo nisi errant. Et tamen hiis non obstantibus scriptor falsus quando conducitur secundum numerum linearum aut punctorum que sunt in exemplari, adhuc tamen aliquando transiliit, quia sperat quod sua falsitas non statim deprehendetur. Set postquam sibi fuerit satisfactum, non curat tunc nisi parum, quamvis eius falsitas denudetur. Unde contingit frequenter quod talis scriptor non est dignus mercede, set pocius dignus pena, quia pergamenum omnino est perditum in quo scripsit.

[But notice: We see that sometimes an exemplar is given to a scribe so that he may transfer its contents into another volume or piece of parchment, without adding or subtracting anything—for scribes are usually not sufficiently learned to correct books by adding or subtracting anything without making mistakes. And yet, in spite of this, a faulty scribe, when he is guided by the number of lines or points in his exemplar, still sometimes skips material; he hopes that his fault will not be detected, and once he has been paid, he cares but little if his fault is found out. Thus it happens often that such a scribe is not worth his pay but rather deserves punishment, for the parchment on which he has written is completely wasted.]<sup>19</sup>

18. See Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 81, and her transcription of the *Moralitates* from Oxford, New College, MS 30 in appendix I, 308–9, quoted in Malcolm B. Parkes, *Their Hands before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 49. Waleys's *Moralitates super Vetus Testamentum* survives in at least fifteen other manuscripts. See New College, MS 30, ff. 68<sup>v</sup>–69<sup>r</sup>.

19. *Fasciculus Morum*, ed. and trans. Siegfried Wenzel (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 182–5. Wenzel does not indicate any possible sources for this passage. For the broadly similar version in New College, MS 30, see Smalley, *English Friars*, 308–9: “Scrip-



The primary emphasis here is not the specifics of scribal practice, but rather the deceitful behavior of scribes. The story serves as a broad moral caution—it is an admonition against cheating and engaging in maliciously inferior workmanship to those in the audience, not a warning to scribes. Yet the exemplum reveals something important about medieval understandings of appropriate and inappropriate scribal practices. Beyond ruined parchment, there are two contradictory but fundamental ideas about the work of scribes. The exemplum enjoins a particular type of copying, in which the copyist is expected to transfer an exemplar’s contents “nichil addendo vel minuendo [without adding or subtracting anything].” At the same time, the text implies that a scribe who is sufficiently learned might choose to engage in “corrigendo [correcting]” books precisely by adding or subtracting materials. This tension, in which the ideal scribe transmits his text unmodified, yet is poised to correct a text by adding or subtracting appropriately, is the unresolved contradiction at the center of scribal practice. The exemplum praises a kind of faithful copying as a virtue, but if the source text is faulty, fidelity instead leads to continued textual corruption.

The scribe, faulted both for changing the text of his exemplar and for being insufficiently learned to correct the text of his exemplar by adding or subtracting something, also bears a degree of intellectual responsibility for the texts passing through his hands. Of the two versions of the cheating scribe exemplum, the earlier version in the *Fasciculus*, but not the later version in Waley’s *Moralitates*, contains additional opprobrium against “faulty” and “false” scribes:

Set timeo quod multi sunt falsi scriptores, quibus merces promittitur si bene scribant, set tamen credunt decipere, unde mirabiliter transiliunt. Nam forte satis bene scribunt primam lineam istius exemplaris, que est de Deo vero, et transiliunt secundam, que est de periurio. Scribunt enim forte lineam de furto et omittunt aliam, scilicet de adulterio.

[But I fear that many are faulty scribes, to whom a reward is promised if they copy well, but they still try to cheat and skip in the most breathtaking

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tori datur exemplar ut ea que in exemplari continentur in aliud pergamentum seu volumen transferat, nichil addendo vel minuendo, quia non sunt communiter scriptores (tam) scioli quod scirent addere vel minuere nisi errarent. Hiis tamen non obstantibus, scriptor falsus, quando conducitur secundum numerum linearum vel punctorum que sunt in exemplari, libenter aliqua transilit, quia sperat quod sua falsitas non statim deprehendetur, sed postquam fuerit sibi de suo salario satisfactum. Unde contingit frequenter quod talis non solum non est dignus mercede, sed potius dignus est pena, quia pergamentum omnino est perditum in quo scripsit.”

way. For perhaps they write out the first line of their exemplar quite well, the one about the true God, but then they skip the second, about committing perjury. They write perhaps the line about theft, but omit the next one, about adultery.]<sup>20</sup>

In copying, the work of scribes has moral implications for themselves and for their audiences. Scribes are a conduit for texts, but also an end-point in the process. If one scribe cheats for material gain, unconcerned about skipped lines as long as he receives payment, another scribe threatens to skip morally inconvenient lines—on adultery, on perjury. The exemplum exposes the disturbing plurality of writing: the act of copying is not wholly distinct from the act of composing. Textual transmission is not separate from textual invention. The exemplum confronts medieval scribes as having responsibilities, and thus agency. It assumes that copyists responded to the terms of their source text, and to the other personal, religious, political, and economic pressures of their work. The changes scribes make may be moral or immoral, but for those changes that were unintended, there might also be intended and motivated changes.

In eleventh-century additions to a tenth-century copy of Gregory's *Homilies* found in Switzerland, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek MS 160, a reader notes of the manuscript before him that "iste liber per incuriam ignari scriptoris ita est uiciatus quod a nullo bene potest legi uel intelligi [This book is so ruined through the carelessness of an ignorant writer that it cannot be properly read or understood by anyone]."<sup>21</sup> Later in the manuscript, the same hand laments "Iste liber uitio scriptoris tantum deprauatus est ut nec corrigi a quoquam ualeat [This book is so wrecked by the fault of the scribe that it may not be corrected by anyone]."<sup>22</sup> The marginalia progress from evincing dissatisfaction with the scribe's corruption of the text as a disservice to those who seek to "legi uel intellegi [read or understand]" the manuscript, to the idea that texts *should* be corrected or improved by readers. This particular text may resist such correction, but the eleventh-century scribal reader is keenly aware of the book's flaws, and the possibility that a scribal reader might fix them.

20. *Fasciculus Morum*, 184–85. See also Siegfried Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and Its Middle English Poems* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy, 1978). Wenzel dates the composition of the *Fasciculus* to the late thirteenth century, so the mid-fourteenth-century Dominican Thomas Waleys was likely borrowing from the earlier Franciscan *Fasciculus*.

21. See Richard Gameson, *The Scribe Speaks? Colophons in Early English Manuscripts*, H. M. Chadwick Memorial Lecture (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 2001), 2 n. 6.

22. Gameson, *The Scribe Speaks?* 2 n. 6.

Other manuscripts preserve the words of scribes expressing similar dissatisfactions with faulty texts. A scribe of the late-eleventh- or early-twelfth-century London, BL, MS Royal 15.c.xi laments, “Exemplar mendum tandem me compulit ipsum / Cunctantem nimium Plautum exemplarier istum. / Ne graphicus mendis proprias idiota repertis / Adderet, et liber hic falso patre falsior esset [In the end, the exemplar compelled me, exceedingly hesitant though I was, to make that Plautus an example of faults. May not an idiot transcriber add his own slips to the faults which have been found, and this book/child be falsier than its false father].”<sup>23</sup> The scribe of Royal 15.c.xi is confronted by almost irreconcilable imperatives: while seeking to copy accurately, he also desires to improve an obviously faulty text. The scribe’s injunction not to make matters worse to those who follow him presumes scribal incompetence or carelessness. It also, however, assumes that his colleagues possess the competence to recognize and the desire to prevent additional errors from further corrupting the text.

Ælfric’s well-known words on copying make clear his sense of what can be at stake in the accurate copying of texts:

Nu bydde ic 7 halsige on godes naman gif hwa þas boc awritan wylle þæt he hi geornlice gerihte be ðære bysene. þy læs ðe we ðurh gymelease writeras geleahtrode beon; Mycel yfel deð se ðe leas writ. buton he hit gerihte. swylce he gebringe þa soðan lare to leasum gedwylde. for ði sceal gehwa gerihlæcan þæt þæt he ær to woge gebigde gif he on godes dome unscyldig beon wile.

[Now I pray and entreat in God’s name, that if anyone wishes to copy this book, he earnestly correct it by the exemplar, lest we be blamed because of careless scribes. He who writes falsely does great evil unless he corrects it, so that he brings the true teaching to false heresy; therefore, each one should put right what he previously distorted with error if he wishes to be blameless at God’s judgment.]<sup>24</sup>

If intelligent scribes do not correct their texts, Ælfric suggests, the texts may cease to be strictly orthodox. This, then, is the most alarming threat of the incompetent or careless scribe: that they are responsible for propagating error, and those errors become the reader’s errors, and orthodoxy becomes

23. Gameson, *The Scribe Speaks?* 48.

24. See Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies: The First Series; Text*, ed. Peter Clemoes, EETS SS 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 128–34. Translation from Elaine Treharne, ed., *Old and Middle English, c. 890–c. 1400: An Anthology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 121.

heresy. The binary of error and accuracy that troubles Ælfric is recognizably hierarchical, but also pedagogical—texts instruct their audiences in orthodoxy. Distortion is measured against a singular, fixed, and timeless religious truth, and exemplars are thus assumed to embody those truths.

The nature of the text being copied affects the implications of scribal mistakes or interventions. Not all medieval texts are homiletic, or even necessarily religious. The implications of scribal mistakes or interventions are shaped by the ways in which a book anticipates its own reception. Such circumscribed expectations can be seen in the *Philobiblon* of Richard de Bury, the bishop of Durham, civil servant, and one-time interlocutor with Petrarch. The *Philobiblon*, dated by a textual explicit to January 1345, outlines a very particular set of expectations for what it envisions as proper textual production and consumption.<sup>25</sup> Richard de Bury is discussing Latin theological and liturgical texts and books, and his comments should be carefully understood within those broadly generic terms.<sup>26</sup> The *Philobiblon* registers the continued duality of the scribe with regards to sacred texts: it at once condemns scribes as incompetent and guilty of introducing errors through clumsiness, while at the same time praising the virtue of those scribes who work to correct their text. The *Philobiblon* ventriloquizes the books for which it claims to speak, leveling the complaints of books against several groups—against “clericos iam promotos [clerks lately promoted],” and against other ecclesiastics, including members of fixed religious orders and mendicants.<sup>27</sup> The books repeat the now-familiar trope of the incompetent scribe, lamenting of the clerks who write them, “Heu! Quam falsis scriptoribus nos exarandos committitis [Alas, how do ye commit us to blundering scribes to be copied].”<sup>28</sup> Again, the assumption of a single, truthful text is evident. Speaking from the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in England, Richard de Bury perpetuates his textual expectations,

25. See *The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury*, ed. and trans. Andrew West, 3 vols. (New York: Grolier Club, 1889); and Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon*, intro. Archer Taylor (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948). See also Smalley, *English Friars*, 66–74; and N. Denholm-Young, “Richard de Bury (1287–1345) and the *Liber Epistolaris*,” in *Collected Papers of N. Denholm-Young* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1969), 1–41.

26. Carruthers argues the *Philobiblon* suggests that “having a good memory is virtually as good as having the book itself, and better than having an untrustworthy written copy of it.” Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 200. Carruthers’s foundational work on nonwritten means of textual recollection and engagement here takes place within the religiously grounded frames of morality and orthodoxy that are not the primary focus of this chapter.

27. *Philobiblon*, vol. 1. Thus, books speak “contra religiosos possessionatos [against religious possessors]” and “contra religiosos mendicantes [against religious mendicants].”

28. *Philobiblon*, vol. 1, 41; vol. 2, 44.

derived from a particular social and religious moment, for the copying of particular types of books.

Moving away from the inevitable errors introduced by scribes, Richard de Bury also writes of the possibilities of scribal correction and textual improvement:

De istis ad statum pontificalem assumpti, nonnullos habuimus de duobus ordinibus, Praedicatorum [videlicet] et Minorum, nostris assistentes lateribus, nostraeque familiae commensales, viros utique tam moribus insignitos quam litteris: qui diversorum voluminum correctionibus, expositionibus, tabulationibus, ac compilationibus, indefessis studiis [incumbebant].

[When we reached the episcopal state we had some of these men from both orders, namely, the Preachers and the Minors, as a support to our sides and table companions in our household; men as distinguished in morals as in letters, and they with unwearied zeal applied themselves to the correcting, expounding, collating, and compiling of the various volumes.]<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the text actively encourages its readers to correct books, rather than copy them, as the title of the twelfth chapter of the *Philobiblon* indicates neatly: “Quare libros grammaticales tanta diligentia curavimus renovare [why we have taken such diligent care to amend the books of grammar].”<sup>30</sup> Yet, books of grammar, like books of religion, admit of reasonable authority and textual fixity. The doubled and contradictory trope of scribes as at once the locus of textual error, and also the means by which error can be remedied, persists throughout the Middle Ages. The Christian economy of virtue extends to the creation of schemata that render existing books more readily usable, and to the correction and collation of texts and other textual interventions. But the scope of its applicability has slipped from some types of books to all books.

One legacy of the trope of scribal incompetence is that negative depictions of scribes have subordinated the positive performances of scribes. Scribes, after all, corrected texts, recognized source texts as corrupt or erroneous, and offered critical and intelligent readings of their exemplars. There is evidence scribes took the responsibilities of the inherently transformative nature of their work very seriously. The scribe of MS Royal 15.c.xi complained about the quality of his exemplar and imagined subsequent (idiotic) transcribers. Though rather caustic in his contempt, he demonstrates not

29. *Philobiblon*, vol. 1, 72; vol. 2, 77–78.

30. *Philobiblon*, vol. 1, 90; vol. 2, 99.

only intelligent engagement with his exemplar, but a more detailed knowledge of the text he is copying as found in other, presumably better manuscripts. Such a small-seeming point has enormous implications, pointing to a practical experience of textual plurality that accommodates multiple “good” texts that nonetheless differ. A similar instance of a scribe seeking a better exemplar is found in Winchester College MS 11, a fifteenth-century copy of an early-thirteenth-century sermon: “And, treweli, me þinkip þat I haue deseruid ryȝt good rewarde of ȝou, for I haue writen ȝour booke bi a trewe copi. For ȝour book þat ȝe sende for a copy is þe most defectyuest copy þat ony man may write by, and þat is schame for ȝou þat ȝe let it not be correctid.”<sup>31</sup> As if responding indignantly to the exemplum of the cheating scribe, the scribe of Winchester College MS 11 lays claim to added virtue (and higher pay) for having sought out a better exemplar than the execrable exemplar his employer had initially sent. Rather than ignorantly adding errors to texts as he copied, the Winchester scribe records his distinct awareness of the variations in quality across multiple manuscripts of a single text, and indeed, the existence of such texts some two hundred years after the delivery and recording of a sermon.

It should be stressed that most medieval scribes were very good at copying texts, when they were actually copying texts. The assumption that scribes were copying from exemplars is deeply embedded in our understanding of scribal practices. Yet, in reconsidering how scribes understood texts as existing apart from particular exemplars, it becomes clear that in some types of text “contamination,” as stemmatic editors term it, was endemic.<sup>32</sup> Thus, as the scribe of London, BL, MS Egerton 650 notes in a colophon to a copy of the Middle English prose *Brut*:

Here is no more of the sege of Rone [*sic*] and þat is be cause we wanted þe trewe copy þerof bot who so euer owys þis boke may wryte it oute in þe henderend of þis boke or in þe forþer end of it whene he gettes þe trew copy

31. Quoted in Helen L. Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 10, from Winchester College, MS 11, f. 174<sup>v</sup>. Spencer notes: “It may be assumed that not only scribes but all medieval readers were of necessity textual critics, but they none the less exhibit very varying degrees of ability” (11). Note, too, the scribe’s complaint that the patron of Winchester College, MS 11 would not permit correction. The devious way in which the scribe has improved his text by improving his exemplar might suggest the commercial book trade was not without disagreements more closely resembling those embedded in the relationships of patronage.

32. See, for example, Margot van Mulken, “The Manuscript Tradition of the *Cligés* of Chrétien de Troyes: A Stemmatological Approach,” in *Studies in Stemmatology II*, ed. Pieter van Reenen, August den Hollander, and Margot van Mulken (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2004), 113–24.

when it is wrytтын wryte in þeis iij voyde lyns where it may be foundyn.<sup>33</sup>

The rather hopeful three ruled lines that follow the colophon remained blank until a reference was provided to the 1548 edition of Edward Hall's *Chronicle*.<sup>34</sup> The Middle English prose *Brut* and its antecedent, the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut*, are exceptional texts. Both were extremely popular—they survive in hundreds of manuscripts and preserve differences that are difficult to make sense of using existing terminology: “versions,” “redactions,” and even “groups” all pose different biases and privilege different metaphors of spatially- or temporally-determined connectedness. The scribe of Egerton 650 not only reveals his desire for a better exemplar, and his knowledge that more exemplars existed, but for something more significant for texts such as the prose *Brut*. The majority of medieval texts were not fetishized in the same way that religious texts or the works of canonized poets were. The prose *Brut* demonstrates an overwhelming textual complexity, not because scribes were unable to copy their exemplars, but because “copying” wasn’t conceived narrowly with regards to the prose *Brut* and other texts of vernacular history writing. This is not to say that the prose *Brut* wasn’t copied, but to argue that it was not only copied. Vernacular historiography in particular invited textual alteration, addition, supplementation, and other forms of composition. For many vernacular historiographical texts, exemplars were the occasion for copying and composing, for replication and intervention.<sup>35</sup>

Caxton’s earliest printed books transformed the landscape of the book trade in England, but his methods of acquiring and assembling texts were steeped in manuscript culture, and thus reflect continuity with existing medieval textual practices.<sup>36</sup> Caxton’s collation of multiple manuscripts to produce his printed texts was not an unprecedented methodological innovation in the 1480s. In the preface to his second printing of *Canterbury Tales*,

33. London, BL, MS Egerton 650, f. 111<sup>v</sup>. I am grateful to Emily Runde for providing a transcription. See Lister Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), 100–101. See also Mary-Rose McLaren, “The Textual Transmission of the London Chronicles,” in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700*, vol. 3, ed. Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths (London and Toronto: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1992): 38–72.

34. See Alfred Hiatt, “Historical Writing,” in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 171–94.

35. See Sharon Goetz, “Textual Portability and Its Uses in England, ca. 1250–1330” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006). Hiatt describes the prose *Brut* as a “fluid text” that “invited interaction” (“Historical Writing,” 178).

36. See Lister Matheson, “Printer and Scribe: Caxton, the *Polychronicon*, and the *Brut*,” *Speculum* 60 (1985): 593–614; and Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books, 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

he employed a different manuscript than he had for his first edition. He stages a debate in the preface, in which he putatively replies to the accusation that his first printing of the text “was not accordyng in many places vnto the book that Gefferey chaucer had made.” This performance recalls both scribal awareness of the plurality of available exemplars, and a rejection of the trope of the incompetent scribe. Caxton insists, in the rhetoric of the trope, that he “had made it accordyng to my copye, and by me was nothyng added ne mynusshyd.”<sup>37</sup> Caxton here positions himself precisely as a print-culture equivalent of a responsible scribe: he assessed the textual quality of available exemplars, and made informed and intelligent judgments about the nature and purpose of a text both before, and while, copying.

The doubled trope of scribal incompetence and corrective scribal emendation, though most problematic for Latin religious texts, spread throughout a wide range of texts in all of the vernaculars present in medieval Britain. The evidence of scribal concern for the accuracy of exemplars, and the labor of scribes to correct and emend corrupt texts, sits rather uncomfortably alongside the large number of extant medieval manuscripts bearing abundant witness to obvious, incontestable, and unmotivated errors, such as reduplicated copying. Any scholar who has worked with medieval manuscripts is unlikely to be surprised at the almost unimaginably basic mistakes scribes are capable of making. The category of scribal error described by Leonard Boyle as “grammatical inanity” neatly captures something of the problem—scribes make frequent and spectacularly foolish mistakes.<sup>38</sup> The capacity to make such mistakes, and the enormous volume of these uncorrected errors, indicates something important about medieval conceptions of textual “error” itself, and the level of concern with these “errors” in many contexts. The representation of scribes as corruptors of text is so ubiquitous, and so durable, as to be quite obviously a literary trope. The roots of this image extend back to the earliest texts of Western society, found in the verses in Deuteronomy, Exodus, and Revelations quoted above. Eusebius, Quintilian, and

37. Quoted in Barbara Bordalejo, “Notes on the Caxton *Canterbury Tales* Editions and Their Place in the Textual Tradition of the Tales,” in *Caxton’s Canterbury Tales: The British Library Copies*, ed. Barbara Bordalejo (Leicester, UK: Scholarly Digital Editions, 2003). Bordalejo recounts that “Caxton assures the reader that at the request of a gentleman he produced his second edition from a better manuscript which was in the possession of the gentleman’s father. Independently of whether Caxton was telling the truth about the existence of this ‘gentleman,’ he indeed produced a second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* for which he used a different manuscript.” A facsimile of the Caxton edition is available through Early English Books Online ([http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:9274:2](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:9274:2)).

38. Leonard E. Boyle, “Optimist and Recensionist: ‘Common Errors’ or ‘Common Variations,’” in *Latin Script and Letters, A.D. 400–900*, ed. J. J. O’Meara and B. Naumann (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 264–74.



Origen all complained about scribes and textual infidelity.<sup>39</sup> Greetham notes: “Both Cicero and Martial complained about the widespread incompetence of scribes, and the complaints have never stopped.”<sup>40</sup> Setting aside the question of the unauthorized “publication” that plagued Eusebius (although issues with the circulation of *Piers Plowman* and the *Canterbury Tales* have led scholars to argue for similar scenarios), the trope of the scribally-corrupted text continues to enjoy powerful resonance. Scribal incompetence has long been constructed as a plague inflicted upon all texts, even as generations of scribes have dutifully and carefully copied the opprobrium heaped upon their own heads.

Incompetent scribes are a literary trope, but complaint is a genre. Authors complained about scribes, scribes complained about other scribes, and readers complained about scribes and authors. Such complaints are no less real for being conventional. Interrogating complaint as a rhetorical stance assumed in relation to the written word and the physical textual object, however, reveals the more ambiguous nature of error, and the manifold varieties of medieval writing. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did not lack for complaints about scribes, most notably, of course, Chaucer’s complaint about Adam Scriveyn.<sup>41</sup> Chaucer’s rebuke to Adam is well known, yet it warrants quoting in full:

Chauciers wordes . a Geffrey vn to Adame his owen scryveyne /  
 Adam . scryveyne / if euer it þee byfalle  
 Boece or Troylus / for to wryten nuwe /  
 Vnder þy long lokkes / þowe most haue þe scalle  
 But affter my makyng / þowe wryte more truwe  
 So offt a daye . I mot þy werk renuwe /

39. Gamble notes: “The currency of unauthorized, excerpted, or corrupted texts is so frequently given as the reason for publication that it is almost a topos in the literature of the period” (*Books and Readers*, 118). Gamble also mentions Thomas Wirth’s claim “that the topos is merely an authorial convention” (291 n. 110).

40. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship*, 48. See also Daniel Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), who records complaints about scribal incompetence by Galen, a number of Arabic authors, Maimonides, and Roger Bacon, among others (165–66).

41. See Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 174–93, particularly his observation: “Chaucer’s awareness of the ways he might be misunderstood was not only fastidious, however; it was also prescient. He knew that he was *sui generis*, that he made demands of a unique sort on contemporary transmission procedures. These forms of transmission were geared to other kinds of textual production—for example, the varieties of active redaction that typify surviving versions of Auchinleck romances” (175). On the Auchinleck manuscript, see, further, Chapter 4 below.

It to . corect / and eke to rubbe and scrape /  
 And al is thorough . by necglygence and rape /.<sup>42</sup>

Adam Scriveyn's miswritings, miscopyings, and mistranscriptions, as lamentable as they may be, are the kinds of errors that *can* be rubbed and scraped. Adam's work may be more or less "truwe" to Chaucer's original *Boece* or *Troilus*, but the errors and variations he is accused of perpetrating upon Chaucer's text are precisely the scribal variants that can be corrected. The mechanical corrections to which Chaucer on the surface refers are a far cry from more troublingly transformative types of scribal copying and manuscript transmission. The verses articulate the frustrations attendant upon errors that can be corrected, yet in doing so, expose those that cannot be easily fixed. Chaucer de-authorizes Adam Scriveyn's work, and thus narrows the discourse of what constitutes authorship. Purely mechanical errors, those which can be rubbed or scraped, do not challenge the paradigmatically distinct roles of author and scribe. Chaucer's verses may humorously lament the tide of scribal error, which is inevitable, but they are not an attempt to hold that tide back.

The threat of "new writing" is not that it introduces scribal error, but rather that it can obscure, overwrite, or even eclipse the authorial. "Writing new" can be a mechanical act—copying in the most limited sense as enacted by Adam to produce another copy of one of Chaucer's poems. But, it can also be a creative proposition. Underlying the verses to Adam are concerns about the transformations that cannot be corrected, that is, about precisely the kinds of writing that produced the two texts to which the verses refer. *Boece* and *Troilus* are both, in the broadest sense, translations. Both record an author negotiating the challenges of writing new texts that are already old texts. *Boece* translates from a number of Latin and French sources, and also adds translations of supplementary commentary.<sup>43</sup> In *Troilus*, Chaucer repeatedly dramatizes the difficulties of situating a new Troy story amidst the many old Troy stories. Between Homer and Boccaccio, Dares and Dictys, and Joseph of Exeter and Guido della Colonna, Chaucer's new writing relies upon imagination and invention, revision and redaction, and other complex transformations that cannot be carefully delimited or contained. A

42. The text presented here is that of Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.20, as printed in Alexandra Gillespie, "Reading Chaucer's Words to Adam," *Chaucer Review* 42 (2008): 269–83.

43. Apart from translating Boethius's Latin *Consolatio*, Chaucer also translates materials from Jean de Meun's *Li livres de confort de philosophie* and Nicholas Trevet's Latin commentary on the *Consolatio*. See *Sources of the Boece*, ed. Tim Machan with the assistance of Alistair J. Minnis (Athens, GA: University of Georgia, 2005).

new manuscript copy of an old poem can be new writing, but so too is a new poem on an old subject.

The famous lines from the end of Book Five of *Troilus and Criseyde* similarly suggest what is at stake in scribal writing as a potential site of authorship and invention. The lines are well known but warrant quotation as they register the tensions between variation and originality:

And for ther is so gret diversite  
 In Englishh and in wrytyng of oure tonge,  
 So prey I God that non myswrite the,  
 Ne the mismetre for defaute of tonge;  
 And red wherso thow be, or elles songe,  
 That thow be understonde, God I biseche!<sup>44</sup>

A recent editor of the text notes of these lines: “Chaucer refers to the diversity of dialects in English, whose confusion can lead to the scribal corruption of poetic texts in such matters as the pronunciation of final *-e*.”<sup>45</sup> Given the seeming ubiquity of medieval “mis-writing” that critical editions and scholarly commentary imply, it is curious that the *MED* indicates these lines provide the sole attested usage for both “mismetren” and “miswritten.”<sup>46</sup> Chaucer, of course, is a master at framing a unique complaint as if it were a universal problem. The modern note reproduces part of Chaucer’s agenda in condemning the kinds of mechanical miswriting in the verses to Adam, those leading to mismetered lines or altered by dialectal variations that potentially obscure rhymes. However, the (mis)pronunciation of final *-e* does not fundamentally compromise the terms of the prayer that Chaucer offers up in the final line. Chaucer prays that the *Troilus* will be *understood* by its readers, not that the entire poem scans correctly.<sup>47</sup> Chaucer, as a poet, clearly cares deeply about final *-e* and the scansion of his poetry; that the less formally-inclined amongst his audience cared, or even understood that or why they

44. See *Troilus and Criseyde*, V.1793–98, in Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson, 3rd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

45. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2006), 423 n. 2.

46. *MED*, “mismetren” and “miswritten.”

47. Interestingly, the complaints about final *-e* and the scansion of Chaucer’s poetry go back at least to Dryden, who in describing Speght’s 1602 edition states: “I cannot go so far as he who publishd the last Edition of him [Chaucer]; for he would make us believe the Fault is in our Ears, and that there were really Ten Syllables in a Verse where we find but Nine.” *Fables Ancient and Modern*, in *The Works of John Dryden: Poems, 1697–1700*, ed. Vinton A. Dearing, vol. 7 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 34.

should care about final *-e*, is less clear.<sup>48</sup> The final verses of *Troilus* are deeply and densely entangled with the poem as a whole, and its final narrative shift to an elevated perspective and spiritual ending. Chaucer stresses the plurality of possible forms of transmission and reception for his poem: written or miswritten, metered or mismetered, read aloud or silently, or sung.

The variety of textual transmissions and the attendant changes are, of course, precisely those Chaucer's poetry has endured. Whether it is the circulation of two versions of the so-called Plowman's Tale with the *Canterbury Tales*, the unstable and changing order of the *Tales* themselves, the unique envoy to Vache attached to Chaucer's "Truth" in a single manuscript, or the different versions of the prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, Chaucer's "originals" have not only been miswritten, but substantively reimagined, re-mediated, and re-presented.<sup>49</sup> Mechanical correction does not address these types of textual variation and transmission. Chaucer, like *Troilus* himself, seeks a higher good—a perspective set apart from the din of the earthly world. Beyond dialectal transformation and beyond those errors that can be rubbed or scraped are the variations that seem to trouble Chaucer most. For example, considering the envoy to "Truth," omission in particular can undermine the stability of the poetic text. Like reduplication, omission can be a purely mechanical error. But it also always threatens to be meaningful in a way that duplication is not—omission can be intended, as the exemplum of the cheating scribe worries itself about the scribe who omits the verses on adultery. Omission can be accidental, but it can also be editorial, reflecting a motivated and intended intervention. Chaucer uses those errors that can be corrected as the occasion to assert his particular vision of authorship, and thus the relationship between author and text. In doing so, he redefines the discourse of authorship to exclude scribal variation. Variation is admitted and deplored, but Chaucer moves to preclude the other, more dangerous end of the spectrum of scribal practices—those scribal interventions that were not accidental, but rather intentional.

Lydgate found in Chaucer's work formative ideas about literary authorship and poetic tradition. For Lydgate as for Chaucer, literary invention and textual variation are troublingly entangled with concerns about poetic origi-

48. See Thorlac Turville-Petre, "Putting It Right: The Corrections of Huntington Library MS Hm 128 and BL Additional MS. 35287," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 16 (2002): 41-65, and the muddle he describes in the practices of the best London scribes and, effectively, everyone else in recognizing the grammatical, syllabic, or vocalic function of final *-e*. Turville-Petre offers an important reminder about "the very considerable trouble . . . scribes took to get their text right, if possible even righter than their exemplar" (41).

49. See, generally, the textual notes to the *Riverside Chaucer*. For the Plowman's Tale, see *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*, ed. James M. Dean (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991).

nality and the anxiety of inheritance. Following Chaucer's privileging of the errors that can be rubbed or scraped over those new writings that cannot be mechanically corrected, Lydgate takes up the processes of textual transmission and transformation as a subject matter in his *Troy Book*.<sup>50</sup> He does so in the midst of an appeal to authority and a performance of humility that pairs textual transformation with concerns about authorship and innovation. Toward the end of Book V of *Troy Book*, after offering a prayer for Henry V, Lydgate performatively avails himself of the modesty topos, asking his readers, "For in metring þouȝ þer be ignoraunce, / ȝet in þe story ȝe may fynde plesaunce / Touching substaunce of þat myn auctour wryt."<sup>51</sup> The oppositions between "meter," "story," and "substaunce" recall most immediately Chaucer's *Troilus*.<sup>52</sup> The stress Lydgate places on the importance of "substaunce" as against metrical failures (even those created by the poet as part of his translation project from the text of Guido della Colonna) echo the concern that a text should be understood not in spite of, but rather in the midst of, variation. Having echoed the Chaucerian, Lydgate negotiates the legacy of Chaucer himself. Lydgate frames his poetic master as offering moral rather than literary exemplarity when confronted with mechanical and presentational infelicities:

For he þat was gronde of wel-seying,  
 In al hys lyf hyndred no makyng,  
 My maister Chaucer, þat founde ful many spot—  
 Hym liste nat pinche nor gruche at euery blot,  
 Nor meue hym silf to parturbe his reste  
 I haue herde telle, but seide alweie þe best,  
 Suffring goodly of his gentilnes  
 Ful many þing enbracid *with* rudnes.<sup>53</sup>

The Chaucer of these lines, kindly and at ease with the spots and blots left behind by careless scribes, sits uneasily with superficial readings of Chau-

50. The body of critical literature on Lydgate has grown considerably in recent years. See Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and the collection of essays in *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England*, ed. Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

51. John Lydgate, *Lydgate's Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, EETS ES 97, 103, 106, 126 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co and Oxford University Press, 1906–35), V.3491–93.

52. The literature on the relationship between Lydgate and Chaucer is substantial. In addition to the works cited above, see also Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge, 1970).

53. *Troy Book*, V.3519–26.

cer's verses to Adam Sciveyn. Instead of an adversarial relationship between author and scribe and an underlying anxiety about where the lines between those roles might be, the inevitable errors of hand-produced manuscripts become an occasion for celebrating Chaucer's virtue. Lydgate depicts Chaucer rising benignly above the trivial flaws introduced by others, meeting rudeness with that quintessentially Chaucerian virtue, *gentillesse*.

Yet, framing textual corruption as an opportunity for virtue does not solve the ongoing presence of errors, ink blots, and corrections. Lydgate continues to stress the intense physicality of the writing process and the tools necessary to its practice. He acknowledges that he and others who attempt to follow in Chaucer's footsteps "was neuer noon . . . þat worþi was his ynkhorn for to holde."<sup>54</sup> Lydgate draws the audience's attention to the physical instantiation of the text being read:

And in þis lond 3if þer any be,  
 In borwe or toun, village or cite,  
 Þat konnyng haþ his traxis for to swe,  
 Wher he go brood or be shet in mwe—  
 To hym I make a direccioun  
 Of þis boke to han inspeccioun  
 Besechyng hem, *with* her prudent loke  
 To race & skrape þoru3-oute al my boke,  
 Voide & adde wher hem semeth nede.<sup>55</sup>

This request continues to echo the language of Chaucer's verses to Adam in its use of "race" and "skrape." Lydgate also embraces the variety of scribal labor as seen in the two aspects of the trope of the incompetent scribe. Lydgate's lines treat textual correction and emendation as proper to the role of the reader. They also very precisely trust the competence of scribal readers to improve a text, rather than corrupt it, by removing and adding material according to their judgment, "wher hem semeth nede." For Lydgate, unlike Chaucer, poetry is not gospel, and errors made in its copying do not compromise poetic authorship.

If Chaucer haunts Lydgate's works generally, it is *Troilus*, of all of the texts of the Troy tradition, that worries the *Troy Book* in both its presence and absence as a source. In a passage of Book II of his *Troy Book*, Lydgate

54. *Troy Book*, V.3528–30.

55. *Troy Book*, V.3531–39. The passage echoes a similar sentiment from slightly earlier in Book V, in lines that immediately follow those recalling Chaucer's *Troilus*, "And þou3e so be þat any word myssit, / Amendeth it, with chere debonair" (V.3494–95).

finds himself about to embark upon the rather daunting task of describing Criseyde.<sup>56</sup> Turning from Guido della Colonna, situating himself *vis-à-vis* Chaucer's *Troilus*, and lamenting his own "crokid lynys rude," Lydgate celebrates Chaucer's transformation of the English language and his use of "þe gold dewe-dropis of rethorik so fyne, / Oure rude langage only tenlwyne."<sup>57</sup> There are two sets of imagery at play in these lines. On the one hand, Chaucer "enlumines" the English language through his use of rhetorical "colors," and Lydgate positions his verse as less metrical, eloquent, and rhetorically sophisticated.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, Lydgate stresses the emphatically physical nature of books themselves. His language very specifically recalls the illumination of manuscripts.<sup>59</sup> Lydgate continues speaking of Chaucer's poetry in metaphors of bookmaking and decoration: "Whan we wolde his stile counterfet / We may al day oure colour grynde & bete, / Tempre our a3our and vermyloun: / But al I holde but presumpcioun."<sup>60</sup> The emphasis on grinding and beating of raw materials into the necessary inks for writing and decorating manuscripts is not merely metaphorical. Azure and vermilion are used to make the red and blue inks used for the alternating paraphs that essentially define the appearance of English manuscripts after 1200.<sup>61</sup> To counterfeit style cheaply is forgery. For books, it is not forgery, but rather visual convention and tradition. Poetic style may be impossible to copy, but reproducing the appearance of manuscripts is simply conventional. Lydgate suggests the process of physically writing and illuminating manuscripts is analogous to the complex processes of textual transformation that constitute his more flexible conceptions of authorship.

56. *Troy Book*, II.4691–4727. I am particularly indebted to Christopher Baswell, "Troy Book: How Lydgate Translates Chaucer into Latin," in *Translation Theory and Practice in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeanette Beer (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 215–37.

57. *Troy Book*, II.4699–700, 4705. The phrase and the passage have received much critical attention.

58. See also Robert Meyer-Lee, "Lydgate's Laureate Prose," in Scanlon and Simpson, *John Lydgate*, 36–60, in particular his discussion of "enlumyned" and the rhetoric of poet laureate in the prologue to *Troy Book* (49).

59. The *MED* first records "enluminen" as a verb indicating manuscript decoration (sense 2b, "to illuminate [a book with letters of gold]") in Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. However, note Chaucer's earlier use of a different form of the word in the same sense, "Kalenderes enlumyned," in *An ABC*, line 73.

60. *Troy Book*, II.4715–18. See Nigel Morgan, "Technology of Production of the Manuscript Book: II. Illumination—Pigments, Drawing, and Gilding," in Morgan and Thomson, *The Cambridge History of the Book*, 84–95, who notes: "Many illuminated manuscripts show a much wider range of colours than the vermilion, azure and gold cited in these accounts [of expenses and payments for illuminations and materials]" (86).

61. Morgan, "Technology of Production," 84: "Most medieval manuscripts are either undecorated, or decorated only from c. 1200 with red and blue initials flourished with pen-work of the other colour."

Copying, then, occupies stylistic registers as well as being a more superfluously textual phenomenon, and it can incorporate emulation, not only duplication. Lydgate's concern with copying plays with the overlap between his interpretation of Chaucer's poetic style and the visual conventions of vernacular literary manuscripts. The next section interrogates different types of copying as intentional performances that frame the reception of texts. The very imprecision of the term "copying" warrants clarification. The modern senses of "translation," particularly Walter Benjamin's meditations on the matter, better capture some of the nuance of the processes implied by the varied uses of the term copying as applied to medieval scribal practice.<sup>62</sup> The debates about the nature of translation are, of course, extensive, but the concern with what is borne or carried over (the Latin etymological roots of "translation," *trans* + *latio*) applies not only to meaning, but to the physical translation of text from one codex to another—that is, copying.<sup>63</sup> What can be thought of as the scribal equivalent of word-for-word translation is what I will term duplicative copying. Duplicative copying is the type of copying in which an effort is made to retain lineation, *mise-en-page*, marginalia, annotations, decorations, and other features beyond the strictly textual.<sup>64</sup> This holistic type of copying is more commonly, but not exclusively, found in connection with Bibles and other devotional texts, and texts that accrued complicated commentary traditions, including canon law books, Psalters, and encyclopaediae such as the fourteenth-century *Omne bonum*.<sup>65</sup> A second type of copying will be called replicative copying. Replicative copying can be

62. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 70–82.

63. See Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

64. This list of paratextual features is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather broadly indicative. See M. B. Parkes, "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to William Hunt*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), 115–41; reprinted in M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts, and Readers*, 35–70. See also the important qualification by Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, "Ordinatio and Compilatio Revisited," in *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*, ed. Mark Jordan and Kent Emery, Jr. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 113–34. In a narrower sense, Hanna uses the phrase "facsimile" copying colloquially, noting: "The very few 'facsimile' copyings, notoriously two copies of *Piers Plowman* B, are pretty well recognized as interesting sports." Ralph Hanna, "Middle English Books and Middle English Literary History," *Modern Philology* 102 (2004): 157–78, 163 n. 14.

65. See the groundbreaking work of Christopher de Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Booktrade* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1984); and Lesley Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page: Manuscripts of Theology in the Latin West to 1274* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001). For legal texts, particularly the collection known as *Statuta Angliae*, see D. C. Skemer, "From Archives to the Book Trade: Private Statute Rolls in England, 1285–1307," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 16 (1995): 193–206.



understood as verbatim copying, but it is important to distinguish it from duplicative copying. Replicative copying's primary concern is the reproduction of text, not gloss, of content, not context. Replicative copying does not reproduce an exemplar's paratextual features—it is, in some sense, the copying of a text, not that of a book. It should be stressed that neither duplicative nor replicative copying addresses the dialectally motivated varieties of copying, such as “litteratim” (letter-for-letter) copying. Both duplicative and replicative copying can translate the dialect of a source text partially or completely without otherwise changing either the layout or even a single word of an exemplar.

Most manuscripts fall short of the quintessential exemplarity of the Bible, and the act of copying also struggles against an archetypal vision of the activity. It is uncontentious to claim that the scribes of the exquisitely beautiful Lindisfarne Gospels were exceptionally careful in writing the text of the Gospels, although there are, of course, “errors” in the manuscript's text.<sup>66</sup> The nature of the variants preserved in the manuscript cannot be casually, or causally, dissociated from their beautiful, painstakingly written forms. That is, the scribes of the Lindisfarne Gospels meant to copy their exemplar(s), and meant to establish their new text as definitive. Although errors exist, the pages of the codex were neither seen nor employed as the site for revision, redaction, or invention. Looking to the other end of the Middle Ages, the commonplace book Oxford, Balliol College MS 354 belonging to the London grocer Richard Hill offers a different type of scribal intentionality. The manuscript contains, among numerous other texts and accounts, some excerpts from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.<sup>67</sup> The editor of Gower's poem notes of the passages that they are “not very correct, and short passages or couplets are omitted here and there,” an observation that reflects the editor's very particular set of interests in an (accurate) text of the *Confessio*.<sup>68</sup> This particular manuscript, written over one hundred years after Gower's poem was composed, contains a series of interconnected exempla taken from the *Confes-*

66. See Michelle Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 153: “Insular scribes and scholars do exhibit an interest in comparative readings and a respect for copies of texts which were ultimately associated by tradition or inscription with venerated figures in Church history. . . . The texts . . . of the Lindisfarne Gospels . . . incorporate fewer variants from the Vulgate (as defined by printed editions which have themselves relied upon such manuscripts to establish their readings, thereby necessitating a rather circular approach) than other Gospelbooks made in Britain, Ireland or Insular centres on the Continent.”

67. See Alexandra Gillespie, “Balliol MS 354: Histories of the Book at the End of the Middle Ages,” *Poetica* 60 (2003): 47–63.

68. See *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, EETS ES 81 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1900), 1: clxvi.

sio, rather than presenting a continuous text.<sup>69</sup> Richard Hill's book does not preserve a "bad" text, nor was it poorly copied—the extraction, presentation, and organization of its heterogeneous texts must be considered in terms of the manuscript itself, and read as a distinct historical process. It cannot be argued that the scribes of the Lindisfarne Gospels were more careful than the London grocer who copied excerpts of Gower's Middle English poetry. The necessarily different intentions of different scribes render the idea of copying as itself relative, and historically conditioned.

Duplicative copying can most readily be conceptualized (and identified) in multiple manuscripts of a single text that share *mise-en-page* and other paratextual features. As Christopher de Hamel notes: "Twelfth-century scribes did not often devise their own methods of page layout. They copied texts with remarkable faithfulness to the actual arrangement of their exemplars."<sup>70</sup> Such conservatism in this particular variety of scribal practice is unsurprising, given both the nature of the sacred texts being copied and the largely monastic scribes doing the copying during this period. Moving away from monastic scriptoria in the twelfth century to the nascent commercial book trade in Paris at the end of the thirteenth century, Richard and Mary Rouse identify seven connected deluxe manuscripts of the text known as *Somme le roi*, all of which share both a text and an extensive program of illuminations, that "radiated from a single centre . . . the court of Philip the Fair."<sup>71</sup> Such a program can only be transmitted through duplicative copying. Parkes's well-known and oft-cited article on *ordinatio* demonstrates very clearly the processes behind the development and transmission of sophisticated layouts; he notes of the complex organization of Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 568, a presentation copy for Louis IX of Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius*: "the concomitant apparatus of headings, running-titles, *tabulae*, and other devices was disseminated along with the compilations."<sup>72</sup> In its earliest incarnations, duplicative copying enabled the transmission of complex page layouts, whether text and gloss or text and image. These books, some coming from a centralized locus of production, others shaped in a common milieu and connected by a common imagined

69. See also Kate Harris, "John Gower's 'Confessio Amantis': The Virtues of Bad Texts," in *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 1983), 27–40; and Derek Pearsall, "The Manuscripts and Illustrations of Gower's Works," in *A Companion to Gower*, ed. Siân Echard (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 73–98.

70. De Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible*, 26.

71. Richard Rouse and Mary Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500* (Turnhout, Belgium: Harvey Miller, 2000), vol. 1, 145.

72. Parkes, "Ordinatio and Compilatio," 64.

reception, are a salutary reminder that the layout and execution of all books, both in the vernaculars and in Latin, in deluxe codices and private commonplace books, was anything but unconsidered.<sup>73</sup>

By the middle of the fifteenth century, duplicative copying was less common. The nature, number, and types of texts being composed and copied had proliferated, and the nature of the book trade had changed fundamentally.<sup>74</sup> Nonetheless, some fifteenth-century manuscripts employed duplicative copying as the basis for a particular visual rhetoric, a way in which to cue audience expectations about genre, and to participate in recognizable textual traditions. Vincent Gillespie observes of the visual similarity found among some thirty manuscripts of *Pore Caitif* and also among 115 manuscripts of *Prick of Conscience* that “accurate scribal work might well have consisted not only in careful attention to the copying of the text but also in the perpetuation of the structures and layout of the text in the scribal exemplar.”<sup>75</sup> It is clear that *mise-en-page* and extratextual features including running heads and marginalia were frequently copied. This visual style marks copying that takes place with an agenda, and with an eye to historicizing a text or genre. Also pointedly harking back to the more conservative traditions of earlier centuries, a large number of manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible share a recognizable *mise-en-page* of double columns, running heads, and subdivision by penwork initials and paraps. Hudson notes with characteristic caution that the “manuscripts that survive vary in type and quality a good deal less

73. More general examples might include the distinctive style of St. Augustine’s, Canterbury, at the end of the eleventh century, or St. Alban’s in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See also Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 98, a book that has been clearly visually designed to recall the images, color schemes, and iconography of the Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Bible, MS 1. See C. M. Kauffman, *Romanesque Manuscripts, 1066–1190* (London: Harvey Miller, 1975).

74. See Malcolm B. Parkes and A. I. Doyle, “The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century,” in *Scribes, Scripts, and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation, and Dissemination of Medieval Texts*, by Malcolm B. Parkes (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 201–48; and Laura H. Loomis, “The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop of 1330–1340,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 57 (1942): 595–627. See also Linne Mooney and Lister Matheson, “The Beryn Scribe and His Texts: Evidence for Multiple-Copy Production of Manuscripts in Fifteenth-Century England,” *The Library* 4 (2003): 347–70; Kate Harris, “Patrons, Buyers, and Owners: The Evidence for Ownership and the Role of Book Owners in Book Production and the Book Trade,” in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375–1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 163–99; Alison Wiggins, “A Makeover Story: The Caius Manuscript Copy of *Guy of Warwick*,” *Studies in Philology* 104 (2007): 471–500; Kathleen L. Scott, “A Mid-Fifteenth-Century Illuminating Shop and Its Customers,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1968): 170–96; and *The Mirroure of the Worlde, MS Bodley 283 (England, c. 1470–1480)*, ed. Kathleen L. Scott (Oxford: Printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1980).

75. Vincent Gillespie, “Vernacular Books of Religion,” in Griffiths and Pearsall, *Book Production and Publishing in Britain*, 332.

than might be expected given the history of the text.”<sup>76</sup> Again, participation in a visual textual tradition enables the similar manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible to deploy something of the inherited authority of convention.

Although issues of authority function quite differently for poetic texts, duplicative copying is not unattested in manuscripts of vernacular poetry. In contrast to the extremely heterogeneous nature of the manuscripts of Langland’s *Piers Plowman* or Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, many of the manuscripts of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* closely resemble each other.<sup>77</sup> Pearsall remarks of these Gower manuscripts:

There is a type of manuscript . . . which is so frequently found among the surviving copies that it can almost be characterised as “standard” . . . copied during the first quarter of the fifteenth century . . . by a good professional London scribe . . . in double columns, with forty-six lines per column . . . [featuring] two miniatures and the decoration . . . organised according to a regular hierarchy with . . . decorated initials (champs) of different sizes, pen-flourished coloured initials, and decorated or undecorated paragraphs, used to mark out different elements.<sup>78</sup>

Such a “standardized” appearance of these manuscripts is, in part, connected to Gower’s conceit of presenting a Latin commentary linked to the vernacular text. That is, scribes had to employ some version of the more complex layout of text and gloss derived from the glossed Gospels and Bibles of the twelfth century. The more common forms of replicative copying were avail-

76. Anne Hudson, “Lollard Book Production,” in Griffiths and Pearsall, *Book Production and Publishing in Britain*, 131. See also Matti Peikola, “Aspects of *Mise-en-page* in Manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible,” in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. Graham D. Caie and Dennis Renevey (New York: Routledge, 2008), 28–67, especially 31–32. To some extent, the design of the Wycliffite Bible can likely be explained by the strong Oxford connections of the first generation of Wycliffite scholars. See Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Note, too, the more general tendency towards either extreme uniformity or distinct individuality manifested by university books, prompted by the distinctly different styles of both book production and consumption in the universities. See Graham Pollard, “The ‘pecia’ System in the Medieval Universities,” in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 145–61; and more generally, Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*.

77. On the two *Piers* manuscripts designed to be identical—London, BL, MS Additional 10574 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS 814—see Bryan P. Davis, “The Rationale for a Copy of a Text: Constructing the Exemplar for British Library Additional MS. 10574,” *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 11 (1997): 141–55.

78. Pearsall, “Manuscripts and Illustrations,” 80. See also Jean-Pascal Pouzet, “Southwark Gower: Augustinian Agencies in Gower’s Manuscripts and Texts—Some Prolegomena,” in *John Gower, Trilingual Poet: Language, Translation, and Tradition*, ed. Elisabeth Dutton with John Hines and R. F. Yeager (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 11–25.

able, but clearly discouraged in some fashion, and on the whole the scribes of the *Confessio* instead continued the tradition of duplicatively copying the poem.

It should be stressed that the *Confessio* performs the relationship between text and gloss. The Latin commentary's appearance either in the margins of manuscripts, or in red ink in the text columns, textually enacts a polyvocal dialogue that visually plays out on the page. The standardized layout of *Confessio* manuscripts is a rhetorical performance, a means to generate a particular reception visually antecedent to the reception of the text—to see it, before reading it, as an instance of text and gloss is to associate the poem with the discourses of authority deployed by the religious texts for which the layout was first designed.<sup>79</sup> Some scribes rejected the complex layout of the poem, eschewing duplicative copying in the strictest sense. Instead, they chose to move the Latin commentary from the margins into the columns of the text. In the process, other, hybrid texts were created.<sup>80</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 35 is a fragile manuscript on paper, dated to the first quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>81</sup> At the bottom of a column on f. 4<sup>v</sup>, the scribe of Ashmole 35 notes: “And also Iohn Gower whiche was maker / of þis boke made 7 deuysed it to be in maner / of a confessioun þat þis said Iohn Gower was confessid.”<sup>82</sup> The tripled emphasis on making and organizing, “maker,” “made,” and “deuysed,” stresses the form and structure not only of the poem (organized as a confession between the narrator Gower and his confessor Genius), but more notably of the book itself.<sup>83</sup> The scribe of Ashmole 35 blurs the distinction between the “boke” made by John Gower and

79. This visual rhetoric remains in place, regardless of the possible oral performance of the poem argued by Joyce Coleman, “Lay Readers and Hard Latin: How Gower May Have Intended the *Confessio Amantis* to Be Read,” *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 24 (2002): 209–35.

80. See Derek Pearsall, “Gower’s Latin in the *Confessio Amantis*,” in *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late-Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. Alistair Minnis (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 1989), 13–25; and Pearsall, “The Organisation of the Latin Apparatus in Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*: The Scribes and Their Problems,” in *The Medieval Book and a Modern Collector: Essays in Honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, ed. T. Matsuda, R. Linenthal, and J. Scahill (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer and Yushodo Press, 2004), 99–112. Pearsall concludes: “What I have found is that scribes of the *Confessio* mostly copy what is in front of them with care and accuracy and occasional ingenuity but no more effort of thought than is immediately necessary. Where the exemplars or the general instructions . . . are difficult to follow, scribes do their best to solve practical problems (sometimes of their own making) in the management of a complex layout” (112).

81. See Siân Echard, “Glossing Gower: In Latin, in English, and in absentia: The Case of Bodleian Ashmole 35,” in *Re-visioning Gower*, ed. R. F. Yeager (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 1998), 237–56.

82. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 35, f. 4<sup>vb</sup>.

83. *MED*, “devisen,” 4a, “to design or plan”; 5, “to form (sth.), fashion, shape, or construct; compose (a letter, poem).”

the poem, between the manuscript itself and its unique text. His doubling of Gower's name echoes the slippage between author and narrator. The scribe was himself likely responsible for translating the Latin apparatus into Middle English. Certain kinds of errors, such as declined Latin forms, are found in the Middle English text ("Tiresiam" for Tiresias), suggesting he was translating on the fly from an exemplar featuring the Latin apparatus.<sup>84</sup> Even while transforming Gower's poem into his own book, however, the Ashmole scribe retained the poem's recognizable lineage as a visual artifact.<sup>85</sup> The in-column Middle English apparatus in Ashmole 35 is not so very different from the in-column Latin apparatus found in other manuscripts, or the marginal Latin apparatus found in the most rigorously executed manuscripts of the *Confessio*. The dialogue between apparatus and poem is preserved in Ashmole 35, though its multilingual character is altered. The authority of the apparatus also functions differently, commenting as much upon itself as upon the text of the poem, rather than offering the illusion of a voice linguistically external to the text of the poem. It is Gower's *Confessio*, but in some ways it is a very different poem.

More generally, the duplication of both text and layout for manuscripts suggests something important about how books and the process of copying them were understood. Certain texts and even genres tend to appear in predictable, because practical, layouts—single columns for Middle English alliterative long line poetry, for example, or double columns for four or five stress Middle English couplets, or the brackets used to mark tail-rhyme stanzas, to give only a few examples. Texts successfully travel retaining these layouts, as "Sir Thopas," or the tail-rhyme verses found in Langtoft's Anglo-Norman *Chronicle*.<sup>86</sup> Such conventions are not unconsidered: it is essential to recognize scribes engaging critically with their exemplars as texts and visual models. Duplicative copying in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was no longer the reflex it was in the twelfth century for the glossed Psalter or books of the Bible. The heterogeneity of available texts and possible layouts makes it clear that the broad similarities in certain texts and genres at

84. There are a number of corrections to the unique Middle English text in Ashmole 35 that nominally suggest the scribe may have been copying from some form of intermediary papers (e.g., "the on the on," f. 24<sup>b</sup>, "ayenst þat þo þat," f. 37<sup>b</sup>), but it is also possible the eyeskip took place with reference to the Latin exemplar, not the Middle English text. Regarding the kinds of errors made in the process of making a translation, see P. M. Jones, "Sloane 76: A Translator's Holograph," in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. Linda Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace; London: Red Gull Press, 1990), 21–39.

85. Pearsall includes Ashmole 35 as part of the group of twenty-eight manuscripts (of forty-eight surviving) that share duplicatively copied features.

86. See Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2008).

the end of the Middle Ages are not accidental, and that diversity can indicate intent. The commercialization of the book trade by the early fifteenth century, in particular the shift from bespoke volumes to books created without a pre-agreed commission, contributed to the standardization of production. Nonetheless, it is suggestive that duplicative copying harks back to the more standardized twelfth-century model of books produced in monastic contexts, rather than the fourteenth-century bespoke vernacular codices that were antecedent chronologically, though not structurally.<sup>87</sup> The conservatism of duplicative copying at later dates can mark the deployment of a visual rhetoric of authority and tradition.

Duplicative copying can extend beyond the paratextual to script itself. Such modified script might be deployed as an archaizing script intended to deceive, as in forgeries.<sup>88</sup> Alternately, archaizing hands might be used to create text that aligned with or resembled existing text, as with the “supply leaves” employed to replace worn or lost folios from well-used books, particularly large and expensively decorated volumes.<sup>89</sup> Archaizing hands offer important insight into the imagination of book production in the Middle Ages. It is crucial to distinguish the intent to deceive from the attempt merely

87. Thus, Hanna’s important reminder, with regards to the Auchinleck manuscript, but applicable more broadly to mid-fourteenth-century book production: “At this date, the book must have been ‘bespoke.’” Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 76. Note, too, that monastic houses continued to produce books into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: A. I. Doyle, “Book Production by the Monastic Orders in England (c. 1375–1530): Assessing the Evidence,” in Brownrigg, *Medieval Book Production*, 1–20.

88. See M. B. Parkes, “Archaizing Hands in English Manuscripts,” in *Books and Collectors 1200–1700: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. James P. Carley and Colin G. C. Tite (London: The British Library, 1997), 101–41, and Parkes, *Their Hands*, 141. See also Alfred Hiatt, *The Making of Medieval Forgeries: False Documents in Fifteenth-Century England* (London: The British Library, 2004); and Michael Jones, “Memory, Invention, and the Breton State: The First Inventory of the Ducal Archives (1395) and the Beginnings of Montfort Historiography,” *Journal of Medieval History* 33 (2007): 275–96.

89. On Matthew Parker and sixteenth-century supply leaves, see R. I. Page, “Early Care and Conservation and the Problems They Produce,” in *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts 9: Proceedings of the Ninth International Seminar Held at the University of Copenhagen, 14th–15th April 2005*, ed. G. Jensen-Fellows (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 157–72. Page also notes: “For the incipit [of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173, the earliest manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*] the writer attempted an earlier script form, using the graph *wynn*” (163). For other early examples, note Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 163, in which early-twelfth-century supply leaves have been added to an early-eleventh-century copy of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See Richard Gameson, *The Manuscripts of Early Norman England (c. 1066–1130)* (Oxford: British Academy/Oxford University Press, 1999), 129; and London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius B.iv (the D version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) for which Neil Ker dates the supply leaves to 1070–80. See N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 254. See also Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 195–96, on early Anglo-Saxon supply leaves in Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. q. 2.

to preserve or imitate: many recopied charters and later copies of charters in cartularies that might or might not be “forgeries” are not visually deceptive, and do not attempt to duplicate the script of the exemplar.<sup>90</sup> Instances of archaizing hands and attempts to duplicate script evince an awareness of the temporal development of handwriting and its ability to represent the distant past. Moreover, they show that scribes could avail themselves of a wide range of stylistic choices in order to control interpretation.

Not all archaizing hands were deployed to produce supply leaves or to fabricate forgeries. On f. 1<sup>r</sup> of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F.4.32, the book better known as St. Dunstan’s Classbook, a late-fifteenth-century or early-sixteenth-century hand has added two lines prominently across the top of the folio, noting, “Pictura et scriptura huius pagine subtus / visa ; est de propria manu *sancti* dunstani [The picture and writing seen beneath on this page are in the hand of Saint Dunstan himself].” Written in a hand described by Parkes as “odd,” employing anachronistic features that mark the script as an attempt at archaizing, the lines ascribe both the picture and the text that follow as the work of Dunstan, an attribution modern scholarship has confirmed.<sup>91</sup> Typical of medieval and early modern readers of books (but abhorrent to modern readers), whoever added the two lines to this book did so without hesitation, centering the inscription on the page directly above the large drawing of Christ with Dunstan prostrate at his feet, an image possibly executed by Dunstan himself.<sup>92</sup> Despite being an addition, the carefully centered inscription creates a sense of visual affiliation and connects the attribution to the book’s antiquity. The archaizing scribe’s brazen addition echoes the authentically medieval text written over Dunstan’s worshipping body. The first-person inscription written above the figure of St. Dunstan at the bottom right of the folio becomes even more powerfully authentic after the archaizing hand has drawn attention to it as Saint Dunstan depicting himself as prostrate at Christ’s feet, a doubled act of humility.

It is the visible tension between intention and influence, between production and reception, that archaizing hands trouble in our study of manuscripts. They highlight the situatedness of script itself. That is, archaizing hands generate text meant to be read as if original or internal to a book, despite having

90. Thus, “it must be confessed that if the forgers of these two charters took pains to imitate the ancient handwriting, it was not so with all medieval forgers.” H. E. Salter, “Two Forged Charters of Henry II,” *English Historical Review* 34 (1919): 65. On cartularies, see Chapter 2.

91. Parkes, “Archaizing Hands,” 103. See also James P. Carley, “More Pre-Conquest Manuscripts from Glastonbury Abbey,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994): 265–82, who discusses the archaized inscription, and the scholarship arguing for Dunstan’s hand in the book.

92. The manuscript was digitized as part of the Early Manuscripts at Oxford project and is available at <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msauctf432>.



been added by someone external or subsequent to the initial processes of composition. There are, however, assumptions about originality that go into privileging this sequence that medieval practice does not support. Archaizing and stylized hands are not uncommon, and can be found in manuscripts surviving from throughout the Middle Ages. London, BL, MS Cotton Vitellius C.iii, bears marks of “the archaizing appearance of the script due to the effort of the copyist to reproduce a kind of ‘square’ minuscule while keeping the proportions of the later Anglo-Caroline.”<sup>93</sup> Still another archaizing hand can be found in the early-twelfth-century compilation known as the *Liber Landavensis*, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS 17110E. In the codex, the work of Hand C, a scribe responsible for text added to one folio, is likely dated a century after the production of the book itself.<sup>94</sup> A late-fifteenth- or early-sixteenth-century scribe added an archaized list of contents to London, BL, MS Harley 3020, a late-tenth- or early-eleventh-century codex connected to Glastonbury, while late-sixteenth-century hands added two texts, a supply leaf, and headings to the twelfth-century Durham, Durham University Library, MS Cosin V.II.6.<sup>95</sup> Archaizing hands did not necessarily follow centuries after the work of the scribes they emulated. For example, a single scribe wrote the majority of Oxford, All Souls College, MS 98. Two scribes went over the manuscript in order to revise and correct parts of the text. As they did so, they employed archaizing hands designed to resemble the script of the original scribe.<sup>96</sup> Not all archaizing hands are

93. Maria A. D’Aronco, “Gardens on Vellum: Plants and Herbs in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,” in *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden*, ed. Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2008), 101–27, 123. Note also that, in addition to the archaizing hand in MS Cotton Vitellius C.iii, the three manuscripts D’Aronco discusses exhibit features of duplicative copying; she notes: “It seems clear that the three copyists were reproducing an exemplar similar in layout” (122) with regard to London, BL, MSS Harley 585, Cotton Vitellius C.iii, and Hatton 76. See also Maria A. D’Aronco and Malcolm Cameron, *The Old English Illustrated Pharmacopoeia. British Library Cotton Vitellius C.iii* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1998), 23–24.

94. Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Press and National Library of Wales, 2000), who describes Hand C as “an archaizing hand whose lateness of date is most apparent from the well-developed ‘biting,’” and dates the manuscript to s. xiii<sup>1</sup> (143).

95. Carley, “More Pre-Conquest Manuscripts,” 270 n. 29. See also the catalogue of Durham University Library manuscripts available online, written and revised by A. I. Doyle and A. J. Piper: “Items 3 and 7, together with a supply-leaf in item 8 and headings to items 2 and 4(a), are the work of antiquaries, s. xvi<sup>2</sup>,” at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/theme/medmss/apvii6/>.

96. M. B. Parkes, “Patterns of Scribal Activity and Revisions of the Text in Early Copies of Works by John Gower,” in *New Science out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. Richard Beadle and A. J. Piper (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1995), 81–121, and pls. 12–19. Parkes notes that the “revisions of lines, phrases, or single words were entered over erasure by other scribes in different attempts to imitate the handwriting of Scribe 3,” here describing Plate 16, but see also Plate 17.

“outsiders” to the codices they modify. The visual rhetoric of replacement or affiliation might take place within a single manuscript, and indeed, might be so successful as to be impossible to determine.

Cambridge, Trinity College Cambridge, MS R.5.16, a manuscript of John of Glastonbury’s *Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, suggests what can be at stake in reading the work of archaizing hands. The text’s editor records a series of opinions by eminent paleographers on the date of the manuscript’s script. He quotes Michelle Brown noting that “the hand is a tricky one . . . and gives the impression of trying to be ye olde wrytyng” before describing the script as mid-fifteenth century with some features from the first half of the fourteenth century. He then quotes Parkes: “It has got to be early fifteenth century, although at first sight the script looks like s. xiii<sup>ex</sup>. . . . This may well be another example of . . . the influence of the script of an exemplar on that of the scribe making the copy.”<sup>97</sup> Scribal intentionality and receptivity are central to both paleographers’ arguments—the script is “trying to be” something, or it exerts influence on a scribe.<sup>98</sup> Once scribes are permitted intentionality, script itself can become a consciously-deployed aspect of the composition of manuscripts, rather than a transparent or neutral medium of transmission. Moreover, if scribes are aware of what “old writing” looks like, and how the historical moment of script can shape the arguments of the text, the dangers of forgery and deception come to the fore. H. E. Salter, in assessing two forged charters, worries: “We have been content hitherto to date manuscripts and charters by their handwriting, but now we are told that this is valueless.”<sup>99</sup> This is, of course, rather dramatic overstatement, but there is another point to be made. Scribes working not transparently but with intention confront and confound the history and genealogy of textual transmission. They assess the pastness of their exemplars, the present tense of the text in their hand, and the future reception of that text by an audience or another scribe. This can lead to Salter’s concern—forgery is an attempt to control the reception of a document, encoding an intent to

97. James Carley, “John of Glastonbury and Borrowings from the Vernacular,” in *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A. G. Rigg*, ed. Richard Firth Green and Linne Mooney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 55–73. Carley summarizes: “Parkes, in other words, believed that this was a later copy imitating a fourteenth-century exemplar” (65).

98. Parkes, *Their Hands*, notes: “Interpretations of both the message conveyed by a text itself, and of the image of the handwriting in which the text had been transmitted, must depend on the expectations and the range of experience brought to the process of decoding by a reader” (144).

99. Salter’s hyperbole is, of course, prefaced to a sound and sensible analysis of the two forgeries printed by Jenkinson and offers firm faith in the triumph of reason and careful paleographical analysis. Salter writes: “The prospect for the student is serious. The ground is cut away from beneath his feet” (“Two Forged Charters,” 65).

deceive an audience about the nature of a document and its origins. Accepting scribal intentionality can also lead to differently productive engagements with the texts and books of the past.

The final section of this chapter will turn to a scribe exploring the opportunities of the wide variety of transformations inherent to copying, and the historical imagination of copying itself. The scribe, likely a male recluse working in Gloucestershire in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, assembled Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2125, a book made up of more than thirty texts, primarily on devotional matters, almost all in Middle English. This devotional assemblage was likely for personal use rather than a public performance of textuality. As such, the page offered the scribe not only opportunities to curate the texts included in the manuscript, but to reshape individual texts to suit him. It is a “bespoke” book, to misuse the term slightly in order to make a larger point: it was made to the scribe’s own specifications, inasmuch as the anticipated (self-)reception of the manuscript circularly determined some of the choices made during its copying. Moreover, the scribe was particularly receptive to the influences of his exemplars. Copying for this scribe was an opportunity at once to duplicate exemplars, but also to explore different scripts, to replicate texts, and also to rewrite them. The manuscript demonstrates the scribe’s interest in copying as a space in which decisions about the nature of textual translation could be made.

Scribe C of Pepys 2125 has a distinctive hand due to his fairly consistent use of a back-leaning thorn: the vertical stroke of his thorn consistently “leans back” 45 degrees or more.<sup>100</sup> (See figure 2.) This distinctive feature nonetheless varies. The execution of Scribe C’s back-leaning thorn changes throughout the codex: the angle of the vertical stroke differs, the size of the letter shrinks and grows, and the letter moves up and down relative to the baseline.<sup>101</sup> Scribe C’s hand varies, but variation does not prevent the hand from clearly being the work of a single scribe. Scribe C’s distinctive thorn

100. See A. I. Doyle, “A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in English in the 14th, 15th, and Early 16th Centuries with Special Consideration of the Part of the Clergy Therein” (DPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 1953), 2: 129; and *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge*, vol. 5, *Manuscripts, pt. 1, Medieval*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick and Richard Beadle (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1992), xxv.

101. See Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2125. Scribe C’s stint begins on f. 40<sup>r</sup>, where the back-leaning thorn is quite prominent. Comparison can be drawn with f. 51<sup>r</sup>, where the script is larger and more spaciouly written, yet the proportionally larger thorn retains the tilt from the vertical. Similarly, the script has shifted by f. 65<sup>v</sup>, a folio on which the number of lines has increased and is generally more densely written, yet the distinctive thorns remain. On f. 103<sup>r</sup> the thorn lifts above the baseline in some places but not others, but all instances lean back. Even on f. 118<sup>r</sup>, which features an elaborate display around a central “i h r,” the scribe retains the back-leaning thorn.

In witness wherof holy Ghyt & holy doctours. ther be the two wyes cont  
pious that ledeth to the contrarions endes. that be the way of  
of vertues & of keepynge of goddes comamendmentz that ledeth to  
the blisse of heuene. the lastynge. And the way of vices & of  
synnes that ledeth to the endles peyne of helle. And as crist  
saith in the gospel. in the. this latter way of synne is hard and  
saye. & lykynge for a tyme that ledeth to damnacion. And manye  
beth sayth it that goth the way. Bute hard & streyt is the way  
of vertues that ledeth to heuene. & ferre sayth it goth the way. For  
cause that the way is so hard in the begynnyng. And fooler. & al onych  
bholders wynges spent. abyde nat the ende of vertue. And yf the fol  
liche way passeth the way & turne hem to the way of vices. that  
in the begynnyng is lusty. And for the bholders nat the ende is more  
bitter than gall. or wormod. & fore blyndlyche way hopey to helle. So  
the way of vertues wolke it by some to wylde. hard & chapp. in the  
begynnyng. If a man wil caste away colkayls & heptylls & fere  
fastliche entye the way. the longer the he walke the way. the better &  
the swetter he fyndeth it. And euere of the contrarions condicions is the  
way of vices. So the holds me certayn. & hange consideration of the lif  
of the moste synne. from the firste point to the laste. be it neide so lusty  
And hange consideration of a wayward Septuons man. & is in the most  
paynful. the lusty lif of the synne is in the moste paynful. than is the  
strait & the paynful lif of the virtuous lyncer. For to please the openhede  
to exche. in synne of lacherys. & is moste lusty of alle. If the take hope  
of the moste lusty lachery. in the begynnyng of his moste lusty  
longynge. to the laste endynge. What tyme he has in herte. to hys  
to colonge his lust from god & from man. to pryde & to poynte. & to  
take his swached body to please. a stynlyng creature. the dyde &  
he has of ostentatyn. & also to lease or to lene his lust. the gnyng &  
the gnallyng of the conscience. & fytter & better agens the gods stynge  
of god & of jeson. & fyller nony to speke to a synne. to swyme hem  
& to stye hem to lene his synne. And also the tyme the a synne has  
in his moste lust. For the more the is his lust. the more entresten the  
longynge after his lust. So the his longynge after lust. is a gret

Figure 2. Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2125, f. 125<sup>v</sup>

is a usefully distinctive feature. Except, of course, that anything distinctive can be copied. Scribe C was interested in scripts, and in the possibilities of varying his own hand. This is particularly visible in a short devotional tract conventionally titled “On virtues and vices” on ff. 125<sup>v</sup>–126<sup>r</sup> of Pepys 2125. In these folios, Scribe C is copying a text from a single exemplar, London, BL, MS Harley 2398.<sup>102</sup> This identification, first offered by A. I. Doyle, was made not on textual grounds (the presence or absence of a distinctive reading), as is more usually the case when exemplars are identified. Instead, Doyle identified Harley 2398 as the exemplar used by Scribe C based upon the fact that Harley 2398 itself features a scribe working with a distinctive hand.<sup>103</sup> The script in Harley 2398 is tidy but in some ways quite elaborate. One scholar describes the Harley 2398 script as written in a “slightly slanting hand . . . remarkable for its almost fastidious usage of exaggerated squiggles. . . . Also striking is the scribe’s habit of often ending [certain letters] with an otiose small hairstroke at the point of breaking.”<sup>104</sup> (See figure 3.) Turning back to Pepys 2125, Scribe C’s hand changes dramatically at the top of f. 125<sup>v</sup>. Allowing more space between lines, Scribe C’s text suddenly features decorative squiggles on ‘y,’ ‘h,’ and other letters. Scribe C is copying the most obvious features of the script of his exemplar, Harley 2398. The work of one distinctive scribe (back-leaning thorns) embraces the details of the hand of another distinctive scribe (squiggles), in a moment that neatly attests to Scribe C’s intentions to duplicate the script of his source text

Yet, even as Scribe C duplicates features of the hand of Harley 2398, he replicatively copies “On virtues and vices.”<sup>105</sup> Scribe C subjects the texts of

102. For a description of Harley 2398, see Rolf H. Bremmer, *The Fyve Wyttes* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), xvi–xvii; and Judith Jefferson, “An Edition of the Ten Commandments in BL Harley 2398 and the Related Version in Trinity College Dublin 245, York Minster XVII.L.12, and Harvard English 738 together with Discussion of Related Commentaries” (DPhil thesis, University of Bristol, 1995), xvi. “On Virtues and Vices” occupies MS Pepys 2125, ff. 125<sup>v</sup>–126<sup>r</sup> and was copied from Harley 2398, ff. 174<sup>r</sup>–175<sup>v</sup>. See *Catalogue of the Pepys Library*, 59; and Bremmer, *Fyve Wyttes*, xvi. The Easter sermon shared by the two manuscripts occurs on ff. 175<sup>v</sup>–185<sup>v</sup> of Harley 2398. On the potentially Lollard associations of the text, see, further, Hudson, *Premature Reformation*, 425 and 435; and Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 153 n. 64.

103. McKitterick and Beadle, the editors of the Pepys catalogue, credit A. I. Doyle with first pointing out the lines of duplicative copying in MS Pepys 2125 as copied from MS Harley 2398 (*Catalogue of the Pepys Library*, xxv). See also the most recent description of the manuscript in *Richard Rolle: Uncollected Prose and Verse with Related Northern Texts*, ed. Ralph Hanna, EETS OS 329 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xliv–xlviii.

104. Bremmer, *Fyve Wyttes*, xiii. Bremmer reproduces f. 106<sup>r</sup> of Harley 2398 on p. cvi; the pronounced squiggles on certain descenders and the hand’s overall appearance are quite distinctive.

105. See Richard Beadle’s Appendix B, “Facsimiles of Middle English Manuscripts,” in McCarran and Moffat, *A Guide to Editing Middle English*. Beadle notes: “The main scribe . . . seems



Harley 2398 to a number of transliterations, dialectal alterations, and other minor forms of translation. For example, the scribe of Harley 2398 almost invariably prefers to use the letter thorn instead of “th” throughout all texts of the manuscript.<sup>106</sup> In Harley 2398, the two-line incipit of “On virtues and vices” contains eleven thorns. The scribe of Pepys 2125, however, transliterates the text: instead of copying Harley 2398’s thorns, Scribe C uses “th” for all eleven instances (though he makes two struck-through errors in the second and fourth lines of the folio, where he has written “that beth þh the wey of vertues” and “And þ the wey of vyces”).<sup>107</sup> In transliterating the thorns of Harley 2398, Scribe C has the opportunity to execute eleven “th”s, and thus eleven of the distinctive squiggles that the scribe of Harley 2398 employs. Scribe C also substituted “y” for Harley 2398’s “i” in a number of places, offering still more opportunities to employ the elaborate squiggles of his exemplar’s script.<sup>108</sup> Scribe C may well, as Beadle claims, have altered his hand to “amuse himself,” but the amusement belies the care taken in duplicating features of the script, and in consciously reshaping his source text in order to include as many squiggles as possible. Beyond the changes to script, Scribe C makes the changes typical of scribal practice, including dialectal changes, adding words, capital letters, and punctuation not present in his source text in order to make his text more clear.

To consider such a moment in isolation is to note its oddness. Doing so, however, overlooks Scribe C’s general receptivity to the influence of his exemplars, ranging from elements of *mise-en-page*, to dialectal features, to the very letter forms he employs. Scribe C treats the page as a space in which a series of locally determined decisions about the nature of copying could be made. In copying Harley 2398, Scribe C duplicated the script of his exemplar while transliterating the text to afford more opportunities to write the quirks of that script. Elsewhere, he is more rigorous in adhering to the text, rather than the script, of his exemplar. Early in his work on Pepys 2125, Scribe C copies a short text on the active and contemplative life, a text drawn from Bridget of Sweden’s *Revelationes*.<sup>109</sup> In the sixteen lines of the text on

to have been so taken by the idiosyncrasy of a hand in the exemplar from which he was copying . . . that he amused himself by abandoning his usual style and imitating it for half a page” (319). Notice that the two texts are contiguous in Harley 2398 but separated by thirteen folios in Pepys 2125. According to Hanna’s collation of Pepys 2125, the two texts are in different booklets (Booklet 3, ff. 89–130; Booklet 4, ff. 131–45). *Uncollected Prose*, xlvi–xlvii.

106. Bremmer, *Fyve Wyttes*: “The þ is used almost exclusively as against th” (xiii).

107. MS Pepys 2125, f. 125<sup>v</sup>.

108. Thus, Pepys 2125, f. 125<sup>v</sup>, “cowardyse” and “hertyliche” for London, BL, MS Harley 2398 f. 174<sup>v</sup>, “cowardise & herteliche”; “y holde me” for “i holde me.” In at least one instance, the reverse is the case: “þe lif of þe moste synnere” for Harley 2398 “þe lyf of þe most synnere.”

109. Pepys 2125, ff. 55<sup>v</sup>–56<sup>v</sup>. For an edition of the text on active and contemplative life, see

f. 56<sup>v</sup>, Scribe C employs nineteen thorns and only two “th” forms (both for the proper name “Martha”). This suggests that he is working to replicate the thorns of his exemplar. The text immediately following, known as “The Clansing of Man’s Soul,” reverses this pattern.<sup>110</sup> To consider only the portion of “The Clansing” at the foot of f. 56<sup>v</sup>, those lines features “th” in all thirteen possible instances and no thorns.<sup>111</sup> At the end of “The Clansing,” Scribe C introduces his next text, the “myrroure of mankind,” with a two-line display heading extending across the folio, “here bygynneþ materes of zouþe 7 of age . And of vertues / 7 of vices . Wyþ her kyndely condicouns.”<sup>112</sup> As is readily apparent, Scribe C has returned to copying thorns instead of substituting “th.” (See figure 4.) More interestingly, “The myrroure of mankind” features a form of “e” different from the form employed in “Clansing” at the top of the folio.<sup>113</sup> The general appearance of the script at the foot of the folio is visibly dissimilar from that at the top. Scribe C’s rapidly shifting usage across these few folios shows him to be very responsive to the dialectal features of his exemplars. More significantly, however, we see Scribe C experimenting with varying his script. Harley 2398 is only one of many exemplars he used to create Pepys 2125. The shifting dialects and scripts show Scribe C making a series of decisions about copying individual texts. To emulate the script of an exemplar once might be amusing, but to do so more than once shows a scribe exploring the transformational horizons of copying.

Indeed, Scribe C read the texts that he was copying. The other text he copied from Harley 2398 is an Easter Sermon.<sup>114</sup> Harley 2398 records (or, at least performs) the sermon’s oral delivery, including phrases such as “were

Domenico Pezzini, “Un trattato sulla vita contemplativa e attiva dalle *Revelationes* (VI, 65) di Santa Birgida,” *Aevum* 68 (1994): 379–406.

110. The heading, “Here bygynneth a fourme of a general confession wyth / special synnes 3if a man fynde hym greuyd in eny of hem,” prefaces extracts from “The Clansing of Man’s Soul,” for which see P. S. Jolliffe, *A Check-List of Middle English Prose Writings of Spiritual Guidance* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), C.2, but noted by Hanna as extracted from E.14.

111. The trend holds for the entire text of “Clansing,” which features only a very few thorns, as against “th,” across ff. 56<sup>v</sup>–60<sup>v</sup>.

112. Pepys 2125, f. 60<sup>v</sup>. The verses are “The myrroure of mankind” (*New IMEV*, 1259).

113. Pepys 2125, f. 60<sup>v</sup>. The top 18 lines of the folio feature a back-leaning “e” that is essentially a circle with a line through it; the “e” of the bottom 14 lines of the folio is a more upright, three-stroke “e.”

114. Pepys 2125, ff. 139<sup>r</sup>–143<sup>r</sup>. As the editors of the Hull Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons ([http://www.hull.ac.uk/middle\\_english\\_sermons/](http://www.hull.ac.uk/middle_english_sermons/)) note, “With reference to the gospel f. 139<sup>v</sup> here reads ‘as it is ywrite’ whereas the corresponding passage in the Harley manuscript (f. 176<sup>v</sup>) reads ‘as it was red.’” Dialectally, note Pepys 2125 “þene” for Harley 2398 “þan,” “whene” for “whan,” “shal” for “schal,” “us” for “ous,” “down” for “doun,” “bute” for “bot,” “thei” for “þey,” “nat” for “not,” “shadde” for “schadde.”





yrad ryzt now byfore 3ow” and “þe gospel as it was red byfore 3ow.”<sup>115</sup> Scribe C rewrites those moments to instead point to their now-textualized origins, noting that his text will discuss “þe gospel as it is ywryte.”<sup>116</sup> Scribes were aware of the historical essence of texts and books: it *matters* to Scribe C that the orality of the Easter Sermon in Harley 2398 becomes instead the firmly textual in Pepys 2125. Pepys 2125 serves as a crucial reminder that copying is never a transparent act. Copying carries with it all the complexity of translation. Hands can be made to look like other hands, or made to be readily distinguishable, or something else along the spectrum from duplication to complete transformation.

Both Pepys 2125 and Harley 2398 are remarkably well localized: a still-visible strip between f. 144 and f. 145 of Pepys 2125 refers to “Payneswyk” in Gloucestershire. Harley 2398 presents dialectal evidence that suggests it should be localized to Gloucestershire. Harley 2398 also has firm sixteenth-century connections with Mitcheldean, about twenty miles away from Painswick in Gloucestershire.<sup>117</sup> Those twenty miles were clearly bridged at some point, when Scribe C had Harley 2398 in his hands and copied two texts from it. Yet, dialectal evidence becomes a little more troubling when considered alongside the full range of scribal transformations. Whereas identifying hands has always been something of a dark art as well as a science (recent arguments for and against attributing certain manuscripts to the Pynkhurst “school” attest to the ongoing difficulties of such work), dialect has long been

115. More fully, Harley 2398: “Cristene children þes wordes þat I haue ytake to preche of þey beþ ywryte in þe gospel 7 were yrad ryzt now byfore 3ow 7 beþ þus muche to see in englysche,” f. 176<sup>v</sup>; and “I wole first telle 3ow þe gospel as it was red byfore 3ow, after I wole expoune it to 3ow 7 opene it to 3ow. And þe þrydde tyme I wole telle 3ow at þis kynges feste of heuene wordes of grete confort to terme of 3oure lyfe. . . . This is þe gospel as it was red today byfore 3ow,” f. 176<sup>v</sup>. I am grateful to Emily Runde for her transcriptions of Harley 2398.

116. Compare Pepys 2125: “cristene childrene þes wordis þat ye haue y take to preche of beþ y write in þe gospel of þis day 7 beþ þus myche to seye on englyssh,” f. 139<sup>v</sup>. Also, “I wul firste telle yow þe gospel as it is ywryte 7 aftir y wul expowne it to yow 7 declare it to yow and þe þridde y wul telle yow at þis kynges feste (caret, above line: of heuene) wordis of comfort þat grete,” f. 139<sup>v</sup>.

117. See Hanna, *Uncollected Prose*, xlviii; *Catalogue of the Pepys Library*, 60–61; Bremmer, *Fyve Wittes*, xviii; and LALME, LP 7200. Bremmer notes of Harley 2398 that a note in the codex “suggests that the manuscript did not leave the area of origin until the mid 16th century” (xviii). This can likely be pushed still later, to at least the seventeenth century and perhaps the eighteenth century. The book entered the BL by way of its presentation by William Oldisworth to Sir Robert Harley in or before 1725. Alexander Baynham was heir of the Baynham family (originally the rather more Welsh “ap Eynon”), which was continuously connected to Mitcheldean from the mid-fourteenth century. Alexander Baynham married Elizabeth Oldisworth, daughter of Arnold Oldisworth, in 1612, and Harley 2398 presumably entered the Oldisworth family at some point after this union. See J. Maclean, “The History of the Manors of Dene Magna and Abenhall and Their Lords, also Fugitive Notes on the Manors of Parva Dene, Ruardyn, and Westbury,” *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 6 (1881): 123–209, esp. 135.

treated as a more reliable and stable indicator.<sup>118</sup> It is broadly agreed that scribes of Middle English texts engage in *litteratim* copying (reproducing the dialectal forms of their exemplar), or in some form of translative copying (transforming spellings and dialectal forms to their “own” dialect, whether conditioned by upbringing, professional training, a customer’s expectations, or some other prompt), or some mixture of *litteratim* and translative copying across a single text or across an entire manuscript.<sup>119</sup> The changes made by Scribe C in Pepys 2125 to the text of Harley 2398 suggest that dialectal and orthographic variation may be more difficult to assess on a different axis than other types of scribal alterations or interventions. Scribe C read his source texts, emulated the scripts of more than one exemplar, rewrote the contents of a sermon to update references to oral performance to reflect their newly textual origins, and slipped into and out of a number of dialects. The virtuosity of his scribal performance marks variation as the foundation of medieval manuscripts, and sameness an act of concerted intention.

All manuscripts differ, even those containing the same text. Medieval clergy were not unaware of the problems posed by variations in manuscripts of the Vulgate Bible. The development of the processes of textual scholarship extend back to Jerome, and forward to Stephen Langton and the creation of the Paris Bible.<sup>120</sup> The legend of the writing of the Septuagint is, in its broadest form, fairly well known: seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish elders from each of the twelve tribes translated the books of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, taking exactly seventy-two days to accomplish their task.<sup>121</sup> Within a few centuries of the initial development of this etiological account,

118. Thus Alan J. Fletcher, “The Criteria for Scribal Attribution: Dublin, Trinity College, MS 244, Some Early Copies of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, and the Canon of Adam Pynkhurst Manuscripts,” *Review of English Studies* 58 (2007): 597–632; and Simon Horobin, “The Criteria for Scribal Attribution: Dublin, Trinity College MS 244 Reconsidered,” *Review of English Studies* 60 (2009): 371–81. See also Albert Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and his engagement with M. R. James’s comments on palaeography as unteachable.

119. Typically classified, according to the *LALME* introduction, as three types of copying: *litteratim*, partial dialectal translation, and full dialectal translation into the scribe’s “own” dialect. As part of moving beyond purely philological concerns, I believe the second two cases can usefully be brought together under a single rubric, and reconceptualized as translative copying—that is, the scribe demonstrates willingness to alter the dialectal forms of his exemplar, whether carried out partially or fully. On the process of partial dialectal translation known as “working in,” see J. J. Smith, introduction to *The English of Chaucer and His Contemporaries, Essays by M. L. Samuels and J. J. Smith*, ed. J. J. Smith (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 1986), 3.

120. For a convenient summary, see R. Loewe, “The Medieval History of the Latin Vulgate,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 2*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 102–54. See also De Hamel, *Glossed Books*.

121. See Abraham Wasserstein and David Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

one prominent strand of the tradition rendered the translation a miraculous event, as Augustine reports in his *De Civitate Dei*:

It is reported that such wonderful and amazing, indeed divine, agreement was found in their words that, although they [the seventy-two translators] sat down to this task separately (for in this way did it please Ptolemy to test them), not in so much as one word with the same meaning or the same significance or in the order of the words did they differ from each other. But as though there were but one single translator, what they all translated was one single version, since of a truth there was a single spirit in all of them. And they had received such a wonderful gift of God, that the authority of those Scriptures was in this way commended not as human but, as they really were, divine.<sup>122</sup>

For the text of the Bible, of course, such miraculous agreement serves to authenticate the divine nature of the book. But this miracle is very precisely predicated upon the erasure of the labor of scribes: the seventy-two identical translations, produced separately, are miraculous for their genesis. They are doubly miraculous for not bearing the changes axiomatically introduced by scribes.

The perfectly identical text of the Septuagint was presented as a miracle. The vast majority of surviving medieval English books are confronted by a quandary precisely of their own making: the human scribal labor that created medieval books ensures the ubiquity of difference. What is not circumscribed by variation as an absolute, however, is the nature or degree of the changes that scribes might introduce. Granting medieval scribes agency and intentionality, and viewing the products of their hands as something more than the variously defective copies of a forever-lost archetype or Platonic ideal, medieval codices become very different artifacts, no longer only or primarily clues to what might have come before them. Much as the trope of incompetent scribes both condemns their faulty labor as worthless and implicitly pleads for skilled scribes to correct the work of their less able brethren, so too the miracle of identical text cuts both ways. The advent of printing made real Chaucer's speculative fantasy of a text neither miswritten nor mismetered. In the process, however, the page was no longer the primary

122. *De Civitate Dei*, XVIII, 42, from the translation of Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *The Legend*, 126. Note Jerome's earlier dismissal of the miraculous component of the story of the Septuagint: "I do not know who was the first lying author to construct the seventy cells at Alexandria, in which they were separated and yet all wrote the same words . . . it is one thing to be a prophet, another to be an interpreter" (quoted in Wasserstein and Wasserstein, 124–25).

site for different kinds of authorship—for scribes who acted as editors, revisers, translators, compilers, and authors. The danger posed by scribes was only rarely their incompetence: mechanical errors and errors of grammatical inanity can always be corrected, either physically by other scribes, or mentally by readers. The true threat of scribes was their competence, not only to provide textual corrections, but precisely their ability to make the “improvements” snidely condemned by modern editors. Turning away from the great canonical poetic texts of the late fourteenth century to the historiography of medieval England makes it possible to escape some of the strictures of the moral and aesthetic foundations that have long framed editing. Reading historiographical, devotional, and romance texts in the vernaculars, it becomes exponentially more difficult to identify, let alone articulate, the differences between an average author writing average rhyming couplets in average Middle English and a scribe improving upon the rhymes of his exemplar. Indeed, it is not clear the scribes of some of these texts were working from exemplars at all.

# A Authority, Quotation, and English Historiography

Copying is an act that can have consequences. It entails a series of complex choices about sources and audience, and enacts a variety of transformations. Copying can be rhetorical, and thus political—a moment of translation, that is, rather than transparent transposition. This chapter turns from the transformative practices of scribes to the comparable compositional practices of the writers of historiography. In particular, it considers history writing as a series of texts in part “copied” from still other texts. Tracing the broad development of history writing in England from its origins in Bede through the great Latin historiographers of the twelfth century and concluding with the thirteenth-century shift to Anglo-Norman and Middle English, this chapter will explore how the writers of history negotiated the cumulative implications of copying, adapting, and translating the texts of their predecessors. History writing became a predominantly intertextual phenomenon, a process entangled in both the increasingly textual nature of history itself and the historical contexts of history’s texts.

Insular historiography has a long history, but the primary focus here will be upon history writing’s engagement with itself—how history texts manifest their own textual foundations, and how they attempt to conceptualize and control the implications of their dense intertextuality. Quotation and textual reuse make up the essence of the historiography of medieval England. The politics of copying animate historiographical texts in particular, as textual sources are chosen and repurposed in new contexts. History writing relies

upon compilation and quotation, on the accretion of the past in past texts, for its composition. To write history is to translate linguistically, textually, and temporally. Yet, because it narrates an inaccessible past, history writing must also negotiate the complex boundaries between compilation and composition, between quotation and derivation, and between description and invention. Historiography at once lays claim to the authority derived from its textual antecedents while also standing as a distinct work, staging a contest between the inherent circularity of the self-authorizing text and the dense intertextuality of the historiographical tradition.

The source texts of historiography can be thought of as exemplars. That is, beyond providing the “facts” of historical events, they also model historiographical argument, the construction of authority, the structures supplied by narrative, and the intercession by historiography in the present-tense happenings of history. Two activities, textual reuse and methodological adaptation, are central to a particular model of English history writing common after the early thirteenth century. These texts, essentially a subgenre of history writing, deploy what will be called “derivative textuality.” Derivative texts translate or assemble the words of numerous source texts, typically without acknowledging their textual indebtedness.<sup>1</sup> These assembled texts are yoked in the service of a distinctive literary and historiographical agenda. As will be discussed at greater length below, derivative texts, unlike compilations or *florilegia*, are narratively continuous. Derivative textuality obscures the underlying *bricolage* and presents to the reader a largely seamless surface.

History writing is always engaged with the historical moment of its writing. Writing about the past puts pressure on how the present is understood, defined, and articulated. As a genre, history writing can be troubled by the pastness of the past. Michel de Certeau describes the confected break by noting: “Historical discourse . . . presupposes the rupture that changes a tradition into a past object.”<sup>2</sup> That rupture can be the revolution de Certeau imagines, but it can also be a more modest divide—the gaps between histories. The source texts of history bear authority, but they also confront historical limitations. Bede’s eighth-century *Historia Ecclesiastica* was foundational

1. The term is not intended to bear the pejorative implications “derivative” can sometimes carry, and should be thought of as methodologically descriptive (derivative textuality) as against a judgment of literary or textual originality. In stressing the constituent processes over the resulting objects, it hopefully avoids the pitfalls faced by the legal term as used in copyright law. There, the term “derivative work” is interpretatively problematic: derivative works enjoy copyright protection only when the emendations or alterations made to an original are “sufficient,” taken collectively, to constitute “an original work of authorship” (17 United States Code §101).

2. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. T. Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 45.

for the writers of history who followed, but offered only dim methodological precedent when it came to framing the Conquest, the Anarchy, or the Barons' War. All history writers must confront the finitude of their own narratives, even while positioning their interpretative frameworks as being less temporally constrained. De Certeau famously articulates the idea of poaching, the ways in which consumers can appropriate what they consume and deploy it in ways potentially at odds with its conception. He describes a group engaged in poaching: "They subverted . . . [rituals] not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system."<sup>3</sup> That is, poaching is a set of tactics framing an oppositional way of using an imposed system. I would contend that poaching need not be a wholly adversarial process, resulting in the redirection of texts and practices in unsanctioned or undesirable ways. Rather, it is possible to imagine unauthorized appropriation that is nonetheless largely licit, an unanticipated and previously unimaginable use of a text or practice that extends or updates the source's ideological ambitions or methodologies. Derivative texts are particularly well situated to engage in both oppositional and non-oppositional poaching, using the exact words of a source text to advance very different arguments. History writing more generally is an enterprise tactically engaged in rewriting its own past.<sup>4</sup>

The ways in which medieval culture understood and experienced the documentary and the textual changed radically from the eighth century to the fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup> The institutions of law and government both drove and responded to many of those changes. The two are iconically unified in Magna Carta, which made textually and physically manifest the cultural imagination of law and the responsibilities, liabilities, and limitations of the king. Magna Carta is not a very long document, occupying only a single side of a large sheet of parchment. Yet its textualized realization of law and government had implications for the writing of history. Magna Carta was always entangled with the writing of history: Articles 12 and 39 show some evidence that they were shaped by the language of Geoffrey's *Historia regum* by way of the text known as the *Leges Anglorum*.<sup>6</sup> It is difficult not to be swayed by

3. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xiii.

4. In the contest between originality and inheritance, de Certeau describes it as "an autonomy and a dependence whose proportions vary" (*Writing of History*, 46).

5. See M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993).

6. See Walter Ullmann, "On the Influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth in English History," in *Speculum Historiale: Geschichte im Spiegel von Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsdeutung*, ed. C. Bauer, L. Boehm, and M. Müller (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1965), 257–76.



present-day reverence for the document. For those clauses that would shape the world's conceptions of representative government and the rights of a people in the face of unjust rule, however, there are also clauses inextricable from the historical circumstances of its creation. For example, Articles 56, 57, and 58 of the 1215 charter pertain to the Welsh, and to the family of Llewellyn the Great, hardly the stuff of permanent inspiration or relevance.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Magna Carta was reissued throughout the thirteenth century as a piece of political theater, usually as an attempt to resolve tensions between the king and the barons. It seemed to offer liberties for all time—Article 1 asserts that John and his heirs will grant the liberties written below “in perpetuum.”<sup>8</sup> Yet each reissue, each assertion of the document's transhistorical nature, was in response to the political pressures of the moment. The reissues record the awesome power of a documentary covenant between a king and his subjects, yet they also record how much revision, alteration, and rewriting to “the” charter was necessary. Even as history writing became textualized, so too texts became more prominently anchored in their own history.

If there were many Magna Cartas, there were vast numbers of other charters—of property deeds, writs, and the similarly banal stuff of the legal workings of the medieval world. The very pastness of the texts that recorded history posed challenges to their use in the present. What had been a contest over textual evidence would become a matter of textual interpretation. Between 1425 and 1427, the Augustinian canon Thomas de Axbridge attempted to resolve a problem increasingly common in late medieval England: even as letters, charters, and property deeds dealing with the present proliferated, the documents of the distant past became less accessible. This was a twofold dilemma. Some documents had become less available because they were written not in Latin, but in a language that had fallen out of use, Old English. At the same time, the flood of late medieval document creation and the routinization of legal processes tended to overwhelm or overwrite the sparser documentary record of earlier eras. Thomas de Axbridge negotiated the problem of an inaccessible and unreadable past with a decisive moment of duplicative copying. Going beyond copying his exemplar's language, he duplicated the script of an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon charter, and did so in order to stake an authoritative claim in the present. He was

7. See J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The Statute Law (Repeals) Act of 1969 completed the process through which all but three clauses of Magna Carta were repealed. See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1969/52>.

8. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 450–51: “Concessimus eciam omnibus liberis hominibus regni nostri, pro nobis et heredibus nostris in perpetuum, omnes libertates subscriptas [We have also granted to all the free men of our realm for ourselves and our heirs for ever, all the liberties written below].”

assembling a cartulary for the Priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, putatively because the house, after enduring longstanding financial hardships, was selling various properties for which the rents had been reserved in perpetuity.<sup>9</sup> Even in the sophisticated legal world of fifteenth-century London, neither property nor the various written forms of its transfer existed outside of history. That is, even as the flood of a fully documentary culture was underway (well before the advent of printing in England), the relationship of documents to still other documents, rather than to some externality, became paramount. Thomas thus evinces an awareness that manuscripts were historical artifacts, carrying authenticity in the shape of the letters on the page as much as in their words. Writing some three hundred years after the foundation of his house and almost four hundred years after the document he was copying was first issued, Thomas de Axbridge not only copied a language he likely couldn't read, but deployed a script that had been current in the eleventh century.<sup>10</sup> His duplicative copying of an Anglo-Saxon charter neatly encapsulates the ways in which history writing situates itself rhetorically, textually, and authoritatively in relation to the present. Axbridge's cartulary, then, offers an instructive example from the fifteenth century of the ways in which insular history writing negotiates its own textual past.

The cartulary of Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate, survives in Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 215, a book written between 1425 and 1427 by Axbridge, and decorated by several hands.<sup>11</sup> Thomas de Axbridge was a canon at Holy Trinity, and acted as the house's "redditu-

9. For general background on the priory, which was extremely powerful though long financially challenged, see *A History of the County of London*, ed. William Page, vol. 1 (London: Victoria County History, 1909), 465–75. See also John Schofield and Richard Lea, *Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate, City of London: An Archaeological Reconstruction and History* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005).

10. See Jeremy Catto, "Written English: The Making of the Language, 1370–1400," *Past & Present* 179 (2003): 26, noting a twelfth-century manuscript of Ælfric's Old English *Homilies* that was inscribed "non appreciatum propter ydioma incognitum." See also Margaret Laing, "Anchor Texts and Literary Manuscripts in Early Middle English," in *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. Felicity Riddy (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 38, on duplicative copying in twelfth- and thirteenth-century cartularies: "It is not clear, therefore, why the Old English texts were so accurately transcribed, even to the extent of insular letter shapes frequently being imitated." Thus, for example, see the *Liber Albus*, now City of London, London Metropolitan Archives, Custumal 12, f. 60<sup>r</sup> (<http://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2010/research/guildhall/>). Written by a scribe implicated in the Guildhall circles copying Chaucer's and Langland's texts, the script shifts noticeably to accommodate copying an Anglo-Saxon charter. Although not duplicative, the hand's ductus, vertical orientation, and density all change as it situates Anglo-Saxon amid the Latin of the rest of the folio.

11. See Francis Wormald's introductory note to *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, ed. G. A. J. Hodgett (London: London Record Society, 1971). See also Kathleen L. Scott, *Dated & Datable English Manuscript Borders, c. 1395–1499* (London: British Library, 2002), 50–51.

arius [rent-collector],” thus giving him fairly obvious reasons to be both reliant upon the archival records of the priory and dissatisfied with how those records were preserved and organized.<sup>12</sup> Although Holy Trinity was in financial decline, Hunter 215 is a pointedly expensive production: a large book, it is sumptuously decorated throughout with illuminated and ornamental initials and much gold leaf.<sup>13</sup> Its performative richness works to visually offset the larger financial struggles of the house during the fifteenth century.<sup>14</sup> The oldest charter Thomas de Axbridge copied can be dated to 1042–44, during the reign of Edward the Confessor and significantly before Holy Trinity Priory’s foundation by Matilda, wife of Henry I, in 1107–8.<sup>15</sup> In Hunter 215, Axbridge supplements his copied documents with a basic narrative history of the house’s foundations.<sup>16</sup> The first seven folios of the manuscript are occupied by a genealogical narrative of Henry I and Matilda, including several confirmation charters of Henry I, interspersed with brief historiographical narrative and duplicated charters and letters, before concluding with a list of the eighteen priors of Holy Trinity (the last dying in 1420). Following these materials, Axbridge writes:

Iamque quia mundus unumquemque letatur decipere ac in tantum malum est progressus [et] antiquorum facta in tantum contradicendo despicit quod vix aliquis sine magna evidenciarum copia et ex antiquo verissime probatarum nova iustificatione quietum redditum nostrum solui libenter

12. See *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity*, Charter #525. See also David Walker, “The Organization of Material in Medieval Cartularies,” in *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major*, ed. D. A. Bullough and R. L. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 132–50.

13. See the somewhat dated description of the book in J. Young and P. H. Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in The University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1908), 159; and Scott’s description of the decorated borders.

14. Thus, in 1379 the priory had a prior, seventeen canons, and seven clerks; at the Dissolution, eighteen canons. Schofield and Lea note, perhaps somewhat naively: “The 15th century was evidently a time of lax and inefficient direction, crippling debts, and waste. . . . the ostensible reasons for its [the priory’s] surrender to the king in February 1532, its deterioration and debts, seem to be near the truth” (*Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate*, 17).

15. See Schofield and Lea, *Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate*, 13–14. The charter has attracted critical attention for its mention of the “cnihtengild” in Anglo-Saxon London. See Florence E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952), 231–35; and Christopher N. L. Brooke, *London, 800–1216: The Shaping of a City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 96–98.

16. See G. R. C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1958), in which these portions of Holy Trinity cartulary would be described as a “chronicle-cartulary” (xiii). See also G. R. C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain and Ireland*, rev. Claire Breay, Julian Harrison, and David M. Smith (London: British Library, 2010), xiv. See also Trevor Foulds, “Medieval Cartularies,” *Archives* 18 (1987): 3–33.

[nunc] permittat, idcirco, rentale istud ego Frater Thomas de Axebrigge vocatus filius Johannis de Cornubia huius ecclesie canonicus, sacerdos et professus, renovare dispono non secundum tempora priorum set iuxta antiquorum ordinem librorum cum nominibus in eis scriptis et eciam, si potero, tenementa exprimere et inter quorum tenementa modo consistunt ac etiam nomina in eis nunc habitantium ad meorum posterorum informationem utique meliorem.

[And now, because everyone delights in deception and the world has progressed to such great wickedness, and despises the deeds of our predecessors by contradicting them, such that scarcely anyone now willingly permits our rent to be paid without the production of a great abundance of evidence, and without a new justification most truly proved by old charters. Therefore, I, brother Thomas de Axebrigge, called the son of John of Cornwall, canon of this church and professed priest, undertake to renew this rental not following the tenure of the priors, but according to the order of ancient books with the names written in them. Also, if I can, I will describe the tenements and the abutments, and between whose tenements these tenements are presently situated, and the names of those now inhabiting them, for the better instruction of my successors .]<sup>17</sup>

It is not surprising to find Holy Trinity's rent-collector indignant about those who contest the deeds of his predecessors and demand the production of "magna evidenciarum copia et ex antiquo verissime probatarum." But the deliberately self-antiquating composition and organization of Hunter 215 suggest that the imperative to create a new cartulary for the house was more complex than Thomas Axbridge's frustrations with debatable or contested claims, or with the difficulties of fulfilling his role as rent-collector. The documents available to Axbridge were no longer sufficient for his purposes, not because there was anything inherently faulty with the documents, but because the terms of debate and standards of proof had shifted: Axbridge confronted a fifteenth-century London in which historiographical narratives, not property deeds, were contested. The problematically unstable lines between quotation and textual reuse, between copy and original, undermine Axbridge's conspicuously rhetorical desire to return to a less textually dense and interconnected world. His stress on the "order of ancient books" and also on posterity indicate his dilemma was not primarily a documentary

17. *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, 233–34. I am grateful to Andy Kelly for his suggested emendations to the Latin text of the cartulary, and his improvements to my translation.

issue, but rather a narrative issue. Documents might certainly become disorganized and threaten to be uncontrollable, but still less controllable are the stories they can be used to tell.

Cartularies need not be encyclopedic, designed to cover all aspects of a house's finances. There survive cartularies of rights, of privileges, of inventories, "special cartularies" and other types of collections assembled to address a specific purpose.<sup>18</sup> Hunter 215 is a cartulary devoted almost entirely to the priory's London property holdings and rents, and thus to the documentary attestation of its place and prestige in late medieval London. The founding of the priory was not in doubt in the fifteenth century, and the foundation grants and core donations of the priory, narrated in the first seven folios of the manuscript, were wholly secure. Yet at f. 149<sup>r</sup> something very distinctive takes place. (Refer to Plate 2.) Beginning with an elaborate initial in gold, blue, and pink, the folio features a full decorative border, including delicate vegetal sprays and gold balls in the inner margin. In the top three-quarters of the folio, Axbridge narrates a fanciful tale of how in the time of King Edgar (959–75), thirteen knights of a somewhat obscure group called the *cniht-engild* first established the boundaries of a donation later made to the priory. Although the donation was somewhat diminished in the reigns of Richard I and Edward I, Axbridge concludes:

predicti tamen milites aliam cartam non habebant omnibus diebus Edgari Etheldredi 7 Knuti ; usque ad tempus Sancti Edwardi . Tunc heredes eorum videntes regis sanctitatem ; eum supplicabant vt libertatem eorum confirmaret Qui graciose concedens ; eis cartam dedit in hec verba

However, the knights had no other charter in all the days of Edgar, Aethelred and Cnut, until the time of Saint Edward. Then their heirs, seeing the king's holiness, asked him to confirm their possession. Edward, graciously granting it, gave them the charter in these words.<sup>19</sup>

The bottom seven lines of the folio respond to this narrative. Embedded in a small scroll, written in red ink with a blue-ink capital "C," the label "Carta sancti Edwardi" introduces a four-line initial "E" written in gold.<sup>20</sup> In these

18. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies*, xii–xiii.

19. *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, 168. MS Hunter 215, f. 149<sup>r</sup>; translation mine.

20. Thus, Wormald observes: "The second artist of the painted pages, ff.149–50, worked in the same style . . . he introduces a crown into the initial E with which the copy of the writ of Edward the Confessor begins on f. 149 and also hangs a shield of the anachronistic arms of the Confessor on the lower border" (*Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, xxiii).

seven lines, Axbridge duplicatively copies an original Anglo-Saxon charter from Edward the Confessor, precisely that described in the Latin narrative at the top of the folio. Deploying a remarkably assured Anglo-Saxon miniscule hundreds of years after it had fallen out of use, Axbridge writes the charter with distinctive Anglo-Saxon letter forms, including insular f, g, and r, wynn and eth. The charter begins, “Eadward cyncg gret Ælfpard biscop 7 pulfgar minne port gerefa 7 ealle þa burhpare on Lundene freonlice [King Edward kindly greets Bishop Ælfweard and Wulfgar my portreeve and all the citizens in London].”<sup>21</sup> There is no evidence whether Axbridge could or could not understand the Old English of his exemplar, but he certainly recognized its antiquity, and the authority that antiquity implied.<sup>22</sup>

Both a historical document and a text deployed historiographically, this striking duplicatively-copied charter is embedded in the narrative of the cartulary. On the verso following the elaborately decorated charter, Axbridge narrates how in 1125, well after the founding of Holy Trinity Priory, the “descendants of the noble English knights . . . came to the chapter house and gave to the priory the land and the soke of the ‘Anglisshe cnihtegild.’ And to establish this they laid Edward the Confessor’s charter on the altar.”<sup>23</sup> At this moment, Axbridge’s cartulary becomes both self-referential and self-authorizing. The charter of Edward the Confessor, of course, is the duplicatively-copied Anglo-Saxon text the reader has encountered on the recto of the same folio. In Axbridge’s historiographical narrative, the charter ritually authenticates something distinct from what it actually records. The charter merely records the *cnihtengild*’s ownership of certain property. In its new textual situation, however, the ritual of the charter authenticates the claims of the narrative in which the charter is now embedded, specifically the transfer of that particular property to Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate. The narrated ritual makes a larger implicit argument about the sanctity of the Priory’s property and the rents due. The visual authenticity of the charter in Hunter 215 validates the textual claims of the cartulary’s narrative, and the improbable Anglo-Saxon miniscule script marks the claims as both old, and quasi-miraculously preserved—as the “antiquorum facta” Axbridge laments are contradicted without proof.

21. Printed (though regularized) in Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, no. 51, 234. Note that the editor of the cartulary indicates that Axbridge has omitted the “d” from “freon[d]lice.” Margaret Laing (personal communication, September 2010) suggests this is potentially an instance of what she and Roger Lass term “final coronal deletion,” and thus potentially original, and not an instance of miscopying. I am grateful to her for the suggestion.

22. I am grateful to Donka Minkova for discussing with me the evidence for the history of Old English in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

23. *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, 168, no. 871.

Axbridge's text reveals something important about how medieval historiography relies upon intertextuality. The duplicatively-copied charter becomes something new and original: the self-authenticating narrative "proves" its claims by narrating the story of the charter placed on the altar, circularly confirmed by the charter's duplicated existence on the same folio. By duplicatively copying the Anglo-Saxon, and embedding it in the cartulary's larger frame narrative as a kind of relic, Axbridge constructs a new meaning for the charter and for the implications of the cartulary as a whole. No longer simply a collection of historical documents useful for collecting the rent, the cartulary is a sophisticated historiographical narrative, caught up in the contest over textual reuse and the contested connections between the textual and the historical.

The story of MS Hunter 215 points to a simple but essential observation about medieval historiography and medieval written culture: the quotation mark did not exist in the Middle Ages.<sup>24</sup> This was not, of course, an impediment to there being medieval equivalents to those practices we now use quotation marks to indicate: marking reported speech, or more importantly for current purposes, the verbatim repetition of the words of others. Careful inscription of a distinction between speakers or texts is ubiquitous in medieval theological works. The complex *mises-en-page* developed throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to accommodate text, gloss, and the commentary tradition readily attest to the crucial importance of keeping texts separate yet carefully connected.<sup>25</sup> As Vincent of Beauvais stresses in his prologue to the *Speculum maius*, the accrued complexity of dense inter-

24. On punctuation in medieval manuscripts, see M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: Punctuation in the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

25. See Christopher de Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible and the Origins of the Paris Book-trade* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1984), 18: "As glossed books of the Bible had become more popular from the 1130s, the layout had gradually become more sophisticated. However—and this is a point which must be very clearly stressed—the biblical text always ran down the centre of the pages and formed the framework, as it were, around which the layout was constructed." The idea of quotation, of course, was long established, but existed within strict hierarchies of authority. See M. B. Parkes, "Layout and Presentation of the Text," in Morgan and Thomson, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 2: 70–71: "In most twelfth-century manuscripts quotations were distinguished from the rest of the text by punctuation. A quotation was treated as an independent *sententia* beginning with a *littera notabilior* after a separate sentence containing the verb of speaking. Sometimes scribes began a quotation on a new line with a prominent *littera notabilior* offset in the margin. An alternative method (which was restricted to indicating quotations from the Bible) was to insert the *diple* . . . in the margins alongside each line of text occupied by the quotation. A quotation was often assumed to be familiar to a reader, who would have recognized it from the drastic abbreviation of some of the words, or, in some cases, because it was accompanied by a citation of the source. . . . By the fourteenth century this [underlining in red] became the usual way of indicating quotations from authorities, accompanied by precise citations."

textual citation could lead to confusion if the citations were placed in the margins, rather than in the text itself.<sup>26</sup> The importance of maintaining a clear distinction between several annotations keyed to a primary text is readily obvious: given the necessarily relative nature of authority, it would hardly do to attribute a remark by Augustine on the scriptures to someone such as Gerald of Wales, or vice versa.

Derivative textuality, as deployed by the writers of history, works very differently from assembled texts of other genres, including the commentary tradition. Lacking the conventions of the modern textual apparatus, citation posed particular challenges for those works largely or wholly constituted by excerpts or quotations: compilations and *florilegia*, and my concern here, derivative texts. The rise of compilations has been well documented, but it is important to distinguish such texts from *florilegia*, on the one hand, and derivative texts on the other.<sup>27</sup> *Florilegia* are not narratively continuous: they assemble a large body of diverse quotations and excerpts intended primarily for nonlinear reading, as the Rouses note in their seminal study of one popular *florilegium*: “The *Manipulus* was written not to be read, but to be used—that is, to be searched.”<sup>28</sup> Compilations also assemble heterogeneous texts into a nominally singular text, and like *florilegia* are constructed for a purpose, most commonly to serve as aids for preaching or religious instruction.<sup>29</sup> Unlike *florilegia*, however, compilations are narratively continuous, and structure and situate the constituent parts within a visually and

26. See Alistair J. Minnis, “Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Role of the *Compiler*,” in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 101 (1979): 393: “quoniam . . . ex diversis auctoribus hoc opus contextum est, ut sciatur quid cuius est, singulorum dictis eorum nomina annotavi, ac ne facile quidem transpenderentur de locis propriis, nequaquam in margine, sicut sit in psalterio glosato et epistolis pauli vel in sententiis, sed inter lineas ipsas sicut in decretis, ea inserui.”

27. See Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 101–258; and Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 2nd ed. (London: Scolar Press, 1984). Medieval compilations include texts such as the *Speculum maius* of Vincent of Beauvais, the *De Proprietatibus rerum* of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, and Brunetto Latini’s *Trésor*.

28. Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia, and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), 3.

29. Regarding Vincent of Beauvais, see Serge Lusignan, *Préface au Speculum Maius de Vincent de Beauvais: Réfraction et Diffraction* (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin, 1979), 21: “Le *Speculum* est en fin de compte un incroyable florilège dont le plan de composition permet de compiler des textes sur tous les sujets.” See also Richard H. Rouse, “Florilegia and Latin Classical Authors in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Orléans,” *Viator* 10 (1979): 158: “Twelfth-century classical *florilegia* were thus both absorbed into thirteenth-century preachers’ tools, and themselves recast as preachers’ tools.”



textually linear whole.<sup>30</sup> Derivative texts were written to be read, not consulted. Derivative textuality brings together unacknowledged quotation and translation, frequently translated and transposed from multiple sources, into a narratively continuous and textually coherent whole. They superficially resemble compilations in reducing multiple sources to a single narrative, but they very precisely do not draw attention to their heterogeneous constituent texts, whether through citation or other means. Derivative texts combine constituent texts more complexly than do compilations, switching back and forth between multiple source texts over the course of even a few lines.<sup>31</sup>

These three types of texts show how very nuanced and active medieval citational practices could be across diverse types of texts. They also reveal the ways in which authors could choose *not* to acknowledge textual indebtedness. Textual authority could be commandeered or respected, writers could claim implicit authorship or genuflect towards the authorship of others, or claim the authority of compilation was distinct from that of its sources. Vincent of Beauvais pointedly designated his own contributions as those of an *actor*, one who writes, as against an *auctor*, a writer composing with authority.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Ranulf Higden used his initials to identify his additions to the *Polychronicon*'s constituent texts, as seen in his holograph manuscript, San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 132.<sup>33</sup> The importance of clearly delineated citations is clear for *florilegia* such as the *Manipulus florum*—its elaborate schema for alphabetically organized excerpts attests neatly to the imperative to distinguish between *actor* and *auctor*. Yet, the clear distinction between the two, between contributor and authority, is one that grows out of a very particular textual tradition. The appearance and importance of quotation changes in moving from *florilegia* to compilations, and ultimately to derivative texts.

30. See Neil Hathaway, "Compilatio: From Plagiarism to Compiling," *Viator* 20 (1989):19–44, and Bernard Guenée, "Lo storico e la compilazione nel XIII secolo," in *Aspetti della letteratura latina nel secolo XIII*, ed. C. Leonardi and G. Orlandi (Spoleto, 1992), 57–76.

31. Thus, Guenée's term "woven" texts. See Bernard Guenée, "L'historien et la compilation au xii<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Journal des savants* (1985): 119–35; and also Diana Greenway, "Authority, Convention, and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 18 (1996): 105–21.

32. See Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 26 and 157. See also Vincent Gillespie, "From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. A. J. Minnis and I. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2: 145–235; and Minnis, "Late-Medieval Discussions," 389–40.

33. See John Taylor, *English Historical Writing in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Nicholas Love, confronted by the threat of being condemned as a heretic, took great care to marginalize, literally, his voice, claiming to mark his contributions with a marginal "N." See Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Full Critical Edition*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005), 38.

The division between text and gloss so important to Vincent is less significant for the writers of history. In order to reconsider the ways in which agency and quotation function in compilations and derivative texts, it is necessary to revisit Bonaventure's well-known fourfold distinction of the "modus faciendi librum [means of making a book]." Bonaventure, in one of the most famous passages of medieval "literary theory," as it has been described, offers up various writerly behaviors as proper to the *scriptor* [scribe], *compilator* [compiler], *commentator* [commentator], and *auctor* [author]. This schema, while revealing, is problematic both in terms of what has pointedly been left out of the neat divisions of responsibility, as has been seen in the discussion of scribal behaviors in Chapter One, and also what is at stake in accepting these divisions.<sup>34</sup>

Bonaventure presents his schema as part of the answer to a rigidly structured Aristotelian prologue in which he asks, "Quae sit causa efficiens sive auctor huius libri. [What is the efficient cause or author of this book?]"<sup>35</sup> Bonaventure is framing an answer to whether Peter Lombard should be considered the author of the book that is about to follow, that is, the *Commentaries on the Four Books of Sentences*, where the *Sentences* are the work of the Lombard. Bonaventure concludes that Peter Lombard should be understood as the author of his own book despite its indebtedness to constituent texts, and indeed that the Lombard's compilation "does not detract from the authorship (*auctoritas*) of the Master, but rather confirms his authorship and commends his humility."<sup>36</sup> Bonaventure thus implicitly disavows responsibility for the text the reader is about to encounter. He then offers up his definitions of the different types of writers: *scriptor*, *compilator*, *commentator*, and *auctor*. It is essential to recognize that, in offering up the fourfold schema of scribe, compiler, commentator, and author, Bonaventure is talking about a very particular type of text: a learned Latin theological production, embedded in the long and cumulative tradition of theological commentaries—quite literally the work in front of the reader. The passage has been read as providing broad insight into medieval literary theory and author-

34. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 94.

35. The Latin text is taken from the Franciscan Archive and the Commentary Project at <http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/opera/bon01014.html>. The text is that of the Quaracchi Edition, *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae* (1882), vol. 1, 14–15. The translation is from *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100–c. 1375*, ed. A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott with David Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 228. On the Aristotelian prologue, see Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 94–95.

36. Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, 230, translating *Opera Omnia S. Bonaventurae*, vol. 1, 15: "Et quod sunt ibi multa dicta aliorum, hoc non tollit Magistro auctoritatem, sed potius eius auctoritatem confirmat et humilitatem commendat."

ship. Decoupled from Bonaventure's *Commentaries on the Four Books of Sentences*, the schema has become too broadly applied, and widely misused and misunderstood. Bonaventure's careful distinctions are very pointedly a self-referential description. At once deploying the modesty topos and offering up responsibility to God as first mover and the Lombard as the efficient cause, Bonaventure offers airtight logic in answer to his opening *quaestiones*, but he does not offer a general definition of medieval authorship or how it was understood.

Bonaventure's spectrum from scribe to author is skewed, and moreover quite different from modern understandings of authorship.<sup>37</sup> Bonaventure defines a medieval author as someone who has added his words to those of others, using the words of others "by way of confirmation."<sup>38</sup> That is, a Bonaventuran author is one who deploys quotations in order to argue, and thus in order to write at all. At no point in the schema does Bonaventure address anything resembling literary composition. His definitions are prescriptive rather than descriptive, recalling precisely Chaucer's injunctions to Adam Sciveyn, and carrying with them a similar underlying anxiety about unauthorized writings. Such concern makes perfect sense when dealing with the formulae of text and gloss in the commentary tradition, those texts Bonaventure is negotiating: adding nothing of your own is sound practice when the source text is Scripture and a comment the work of a sainted Church Father. Outside of this very specific discourse, however, Bonaventure's clear distinctions are less useful.

Few contemporary critics would contend that the choice of quotations and their arrangement is a non-transparent act, or that such choices are without interpretative consequences.<sup>39</sup> The compiler is positioned to generate meaning, and to manipulate authorities and authority, in ways consonant with Bonaventure's conception of an *auctor* as the primary shaper of an argument. The commentator who intersperses his own materials with those of

37. See J. A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work: Middle English Literature 1100–1500*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 31, noting of *auctores* that "perhaps Bonaventure had in mind the Latin theologians, with their constant citation of earlier authorities." Burrow, moreover, points out that the category of "translator" might be added, before turning to Bonaventure's conflation of composing and copying, the two interconnected facets of medieval writing, of making books.

38. Minnis and Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory*, 229.

39. The implications of textual reuse are given short shrift by Hathaway, who condemns Guenée and rejects somewhat derisively the idea that a compiler's work serves to "rejuvenat[e] . . . and recreat[e] . . . the material they had arranged anew." Hathaway, "Compilation," 21. See Minnis's important rejoinder, "Nolens Auctor sed Compiler Reputari: The Late-Medieval Discourse of Compilation," in *La méthode critique au Moyen Âge*, ed. M. Chazan and G. Dahan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 48–63.

others not only possesses the compiler's power to shape the trajectory of assembled texts, but also can explicitly provide interpretations that reimagine and redirect the import of those source texts. The creator of a derivative text combines the strategies of the compiler and commentator (and translator, for that matter). Derivative textuality can obscure or reveal sources and the connective textual tissue linking them, thereby controlling still another layer of meaning. For each of these forms of authorship, as with Axbridge's duplicative copying, the key contest is control over narrative—over how multiple texts are sutured together and how they are recontextualized.

The generically strategic nature of medieval quotation informs the ways in which commentating, compiling, and copying can all be understood as types of composition. The relationship between the old and the new, both textually and historically, is caught up in how one writer uses the words of another, and the claims that can be staked on them. It is, of course, difficult to establish oneself as an authority in any discipline, but in essence a community must have some set of shared standards or expectations as to what excellence or authority or correctness might be. Theological texts rely upon a clearly accepted and well-defined structure of what constitutes religious or moral authority that is lacking in the historiographical tradition.<sup>40</sup> The study of history was not part of the curriculum of medieval universities, nor was it more than a minor element of the education received at lower levels.<sup>41</sup> Little is known about how history was taught or learned, though some evidence survives about those who wrote and read history in medieval England.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, history writing is functionally positioned at the

40. This applies to classical texts, also, as medieval authors offered tortuously convoluted assertions of moral good in the medieval copies of classical pagan texts. Note Gillespie's observation on Vincent of Beauvais's distinction between *auctoritas*, *compilatio*, and *partium aggregatio*: "This is unproblematic in relation to . . . sources which have a clearly accepted authority. But the position is more complicated in regard to . . . texts of dubious and shifting moral authority, where Vincent's disavowal of responsibility is frankly disingenuous" ("From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450," 183).

41. See James A. Weisheipl, "Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts at Oxford in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 143–85; and Hastings Rashdall, *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), vol. 2, pt. 2. See also Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006). Although history was not taught in the schoolroom, current events were, and it can be a slippery slope from the one to the other; note Orme's observation: "News of the day . . . was grist to the mill of the classroom. Occasionally it was national news" (115).

42. Broadly, see the work of Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1996). See also Robert Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964); Robert Stein, *Reality Fictions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); and Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). On mnemonic histories, see the introduction to A. G. Rigg, *A Book of British Kings, 1200 B.C.–1399 A.D.: Edited from*

impossible moment between the past and the future. Historiography can be constructed as if it were a comprehensive recollection or recreation of the past, yet at the same time it can be transparently selective. History writing makes the otherwise inaccessible past accessible to the audience of its present, but in order to do so it requires an engagement, indeed a commitment, from its audience: they have to consent to the fiction of its transparency, and overlook some of the overt limitations of its selective scope. Coleridge was speaking of poetry and verisimilitude rather than historical truth when he wrote of “that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.”<sup>43</sup> Yet, Coleridge’s framing of the generically determined responsibilities of an audience is instructive. Historiography faces the much bigger challenge of requiring an audience’s belief in order to link text and world—a kind of political faith. While historiography requires belief from its audience, it also requires sources. To write about anything older than the recent past is to write about something, by definition, that the author cannot have experienced. Even those rare medieval chronicles that position themselves as eyewitness accounts of current events still rely upon prior histories to structure a sense of the historical, and all chronicles employ source texts as formal, aesthetic, or ideological models. Essentially, these factors combine to resemble something of an infinite regression of historiographical texts and authors asking an audience to believe them, excepting only a very few end-points—those few historians who serve as the anchors of history, whose authority was buttressed by repetition to the status of a performative invocation of belief.

For history writing in England, that *terminus a quo* was Bede. Both the text of the *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and its subsequent use and reuse by later writers of history make it perhaps the single most influential work of historiography in England throughout the entirety of the Middle Ages. Bede’s text spread swiftly, and remained relevant for an amazingly long time. It was re-narrativized by Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century, and, as late as the fifteenth century, it was still canonical for an anonymous scribe who encountered an inaccurate reference to the text of Bede’s history and corrected the number of the chapter being cited.<sup>44</sup> Bede himself was canonized within fifty years of his

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*British Library MSS Harley 3680, Cotton Claudius D.vii, and Harley 1808* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000), 3–4.

43. Samuel T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. J. Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 2: 6. See also Steven Justice’s riff on Paul Veyne’s classic essay, in “Did the Middle Ages Believe in Their Miracles?” *Representations* 103 (2008): 1–29.

44. London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 131, f. 63<sup>b</sup>: “þyse wordes of seint Bede y tok / þe fifte chaptire of þe secounde bok. / þorow þat chaptire al y wylt.” See the Introduction above.

death, and made a Doctor of the Church at the end of the nineteenth century. His *Historia Ecclesiastica* was effectively canonized through its repeated copying and reuse, particularly in the twelfth century, a textual canonization that ensured the work's ongoing influence through the fifteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Broadly considered, Bede's narrative (which commences with the first-century arrival of Julius Caesar to the island, and ends with a conveniently Catholic English population in 731) was the primary historiographical source for pre-Conquest England used by post-Conquest historians.<sup>46</sup> His importance to twelfth-century history writers is particularly clear. According to the editor of Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, approximately 25 percent of that text consists of quotations and borrowings from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>47</sup> Henry's contemporary William of Malmesbury did not manage to make it through the first sentence of his history without commenting upon his indebtedness to Bede: "Res Anglorum gestas Beda, uir maxime doctus et minime superbus, ab aduentu eorum in Britanniam usque ad suos dies plano et suauis sermone absoluit [The history of the English, from their arrival in Britain to his own time, has been told with straightforward charm by Bede, most learned and least proud of men]."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, it is striking that of the upwards of 160 surviving manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the vast majority of which were copied in England, over 30 percent of them were copied during the twelfth century.<sup>49</sup> The near ubiquity of historiographical reliance upon the *Historia Ecclesiastica* from the twelfth century onward makes clear the text's influence while frustrating its exact assessment. The

45. I am grateful to Andy Kelly for discussions about Bede's canonization and elevation to Doctor of the Church. Colgrave and Mynors note: "It is clear that a cult of Bede was established fairly early, at any rate by the ninth century" (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, xxii).

46. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, who observes, somewhat self-referentially: "For the use of *HE* by later English chroniclers see the index to the present volume under 'Bede'" (1: 17 n. 34); the index offers eleven entries for "used by." See also Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 1999).

47. Greenway notes that "roughly speaking, about 25% of the History came from Bede, around 40% derived from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*." Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), lxxxv. These numbers are complicated, however, as she is assessing materials reproduced "in quotation, summary, and translation," which means the historical "facts" of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* figure more prominently than the verbatim repetition of Bede's text and are thus likely overrepresented in these estimates.

48. See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, Rodney M. Thomson, and Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 1, I. Prologue, 14. Gransden notes of William of Malmesbury: "Appreciation by imitation is particularly apparent in William of Malmesbury's chronicles." Antonia Gransden, "Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England," in Gransden, *Legends, Traditions, and History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 10.

49. See Gransden, "Bede's Reputation," 1.

*Historia* is an extremely sophisticated work, and subsequent historiography both inherited and redirected the formal and ideological implications of the text.

Bede positioned his own text as authoritative history, and as the model for authoritative historiography. The *Historia Ecclesiastica*, was, of course, not able to quote itself, and thus instead uses a number of strategies to authorize its own narrative, to establish the trust and elicit the belief from its audience that historiographical texts require. In a well-known passage in the preface to his work, Bede notes:

non uno quolibet auctore sed fideli innumerorum testium, qui haec scire uel meminisse poterant, adsertione cognoui, exceptis his quae per me ipsum nosse poteram . . . partim ex eis quae de illo prius a fratribus ecclesiae Lindisfarnensis scripta repperi adsumsi, simpliciter fidem historiae quam legebam accommodans, partim uero ea quae certissima fidelium uirorum adtestatione per me ipse cognoscere potui, sollerter adicere curauit. Lectoremque suppliciter obsecro ut, siqua in his quae scripsimus aliter quam se ueritas habet posita reppererit, non hoc nobis inputet, qui, quod uera lex historiae est, simpliciter ea quae fama uulgante collegimus ad instructionem posteritatis litteris mandare studuimus.

[Apart from those matters of which I had personal knowledge, I have learned not from any one source but from the faithful testimony of innumerable witnesses, who either knew or remembered these things . . . I took partly from what I had previously found written about him [Saint Cuthbert] by the brethren of the church at Lindisfarne, accepting the story I read in simple faith; but in part I also made it my business to add with care what I was able to learn myself from the trustworthy testimony of reliable witnesses. So I humbly beg the reader, if he finds anything other than the truth set down in what I have written, not to impute it to me. For, in accordance with the principles of true history, I have simply sought to commit to writing what I have collected from common report, for the instruction of posterity.]<sup>50</sup>

50. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6. Translation from Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5. See also Roger Ray, "Bede's Vera Lex Historiae," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 1–21, where he argues Bede is imagining a higher historiographical truth that may contain "factual errors" while still claiming a privileged set of intentions to the truth.

I want to avoid the debates surrounding Bede's phrase "uera lex historiae," and instead make a very simple observation about this passage: it is precisely the plurality, and more importantly, the heterogeneity of Bede's sources—written, spoken, and eye-witness accounts—that construct the reliability of the historiographer's relationship to what it is he purports to capture, namely, history. Bede both performatively and privately assesses the utility and accuracy of his sources. It is their explicit plurality, "non uno quolibet auctore sed fideli innumerorum testium," and also their inaccessibility that enables him to position himself as singularly privileged to write history. Bede transforms the fragmented past of multiple narratives into a single, authenticated narrative.

The idea that there is a common, consensually agreed truth to history is powerful, and can serve to authenticate even the inexplicable and the miraculous. As Given-Wilson notes: "Miracles, in an age of faith, were *expected*: they made things more, not less, credible."<sup>51</sup> The category of the miraculous is, however, not without its difficulties: identifying something as God's direct intervention implies access to or knowledge of God's intentions. Claiming such access places the writer on theologically complicated grounds even in times without prominent heretical or heterodox discourses.<sup>52</sup> Miracles rely upon the state of their instigators; miracles are safely miracles only when performed by saints. However, canonization was itself a gradual and political process. The canonization process became more regularized from the late tenth century onwards, and it became increasingly common to use texts to argue for a candidate's sainthood. Although the papacy was involved throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it was not until the publication of the *Decretals* in 1234 that the right of canonization was formally reserved to the pope.<sup>53</sup> After formal canonization, the life of a saint, a *vita*, records the confirmed truth—the saint performed the miracles reported in the text. There is a troubling moment in this process, however. Before canonization, before hagiography is officially hagiographical, it is history writing—the story not of a saint or of miracles, but of a person and of wonders.

51. See Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (Hambleton and London: Hambledon Continuum, 2004), 33; and N. J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London: Routledge, 2006).

52. Justice imagines a pervasive skepticism as an essential part of the workings of faith: "Historiographical and hagiographical records, precisely by encoding miracle in narrative, open to inspection the constraints they work on themselves . . . they bare the devices of faith." "Did the Middle Ages Believe?" 15.

53. See Eric W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 57, noting that the first papal canonization with a surviving bull is that of Ulric of Augsburg in 993.



Canonization transforms the wondrous to the miraculous. The anonymous *Vita Aedwardi regis qui apud Westmonasterium requiescit* was written c. 1070, not long after Edward the Confessor's death in 1066, but well before Ailred of Rievaulx wrote the "official" post-canonization *vita* in 1163, a mere two years after Edward's canonization in 1161.<sup>54</sup> To the accounts found in his source texts, including the anonymous *Vita Aedwardi*, Ailred added at least four of what the text's editor hedgingly calls "legendary stories" and five miracles. The added miracles neatly capture the certainty of the post-canonization position from which Ailred was writing. To designate something a miracle is to interpret its significance for an audience.<sup>55</sup> If the wondrous and the supernatural are those events which are inexplicable, miracles are those events which are both inexplicable and yet emphatically meaningful when situated in a Catholic ontology. The significance of miracles is always already available to an audience as a testimony to God's specific intervention on earth, with implications that stretch into the past and future of both the saint involved, and also the text narrating the miracles. That is, miracles are interpreted texts. To identify something as miraculous is to retroactively validate the text that narrates the merely wondrous.

Bede employs various rhetorical strategies to authenticate the many miracles in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. He peppers his text with phrases such as "we have heard our elders tell" and "it is well known."<sup>56</sup> Bede places himself proximate to the stories being told, suggesting his personal knowledge of the parties involved is sufficient to answer his audience's doubt: "Superest adhuc frater quidam senior monasterii nostri, qui narrare solet dixisse sibi quen-

54. *Vita Aedwardi Regis qui apud Westmonasterium requiescit*, ed. Frank Barlow (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), xxxiii–iv: "Osbert inserts in his narrative five Westminster miracles pertaining to Edward's lifetime, and adds at the end five miracles . . . all ten are unknown to the Anonymous and William of Malmesbury." Barlow also notes that "Ailred inserted four legendary stories" (xxxvi), referring to the stories of Edward and the thief, Harold and Tostig fighting, the legend of Godwin's bad end, and Edward and the ring recovered from St John the Evangelist. See also Barlow's observation that "Ailred . . . added five twelfth-century miracles" (xxxvi).

55. See Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), who offers Aquinas's definition of a miracle as "wonderful in itself." See also André Vauchez, *Saints, prophètes et visionnaires: Le pouvoir surnaturel au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999).

56. "Et multa . . . miracula narrantur . . . quae a maioribus audiuimus [And many . . . miracles are related . . . which we have heard our elders tell]"; "ubi merita illius multis saepe constat Deo operante claruisse uirtutibus [It is well known that through the mediation of God, many miracles have been performed there to show his merits]"; "Quae mihi cuncta sic esse facta reuerentissimus meus compresbyter Edgisl referebat, qui tunc in illo monasterio degebat [It was my revered fellow priest Eadgisl, who then lived in the monastery, who told me of all these happenings]." Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.9, 242; III.19, 276; IV.25, 426; trans. 124, 143, 221.

dum multum ueracem ac religiosum hominem . . . illasque uisiones ex ipsius ore audierit [An aged brother is still living in our monastery who is wont to relate that a most truthful and pious man told him that he had seen . . . and had heard these visions from his own mouth].<sup>57</sup> The *Historia* has been read as “national hagiography” or the “*vita* of a nation.”<sup>58</sup> The miracles of the text, then, not only attest to the saintliness of those who enacted them, but confirm the sanctity of the island and its people, and more importantly, of the text itself. Writing, as all historians do, after the event, Bede frames the future of his narrative as if it were uncertain in the same ways that the future of history is. That is, beyond the sanctification of England itself, Bede, like Ailred of Rievaulx employing the c. 1070 life of Edward the Confessor to write the saint’s official *vita*, deploys his sources with the assumed certainty that comes from writing after the merely wondrous has been confirmed as the miraculous. Bede canonizes the English people as the rightful holders of political power over the island. What is crucial here, however, is the way that Bede structures the conversion of the English and the conquest of the British as a textual phenomenon. The Saxon conquest is a textually performed and textually fulfilled miracle that transforms Bede’s *Historia* into political hagiography. This is not merely the well-known model of providential history as explored by Robert Hanning.<sup>59</sup> Instead, Bede generates a kind of textual providentiality in order to create political faith. That is, he implies that the future of his narrative is as unknowable as the historical future. When the text realizes narratively inevitable events, they become miraculous: Bede wields the conventions of typological prefiguration within the frame of his own text.<sup>60</sup> In narrating the *Historia* as a self-fulfilling miracle, Bede locates the authority for historiographical canonization in the text itself. This is textual providentiality—the miraculous textualization of history. Bede’s *Historia* creates its own *auctoritas*, and subsequent texts will necessarily engage, textually, with the implications of this shift.

It is into this methodological and textual framework that Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury, and Geoffrey of Monmouth step some four hundred years later. Post-Conquest historiographers were at once reli-

57. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.19, 274; trans. 142.

58. See Charles W. Jones, *Saints’ Lives and Chronicles in Early England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), quoted in Hanning, *Vision of History*, 71. The second phrase is that of Jennifer Miller. This section is deeply indebted to her teaching and work, including an early manuscript of her book, *Lazamon’s Brut and English Historiography*.

59. That is, the “model . . . of British history in terms of sin and punishment” (Hanning, *Vision of History*, 56).

60. See Hanning, *Vision of History*, 81, on Eusebius’s providential framing, and 55–56, 61, more generally on Bede.

ant upon Bede's model of history (miraculously self-confirming through careful narrativization), yet forced to negotiate a major rupture in Bede's sanctification of the English. The Norman Conquest would seem to compromise Bede's construction of the English as a chosen people. Here, the two models of poaching—the traditional form of oppositional poaching, but also a non-oppositional reconfiguring—come to the fore. Centuries had passed between Bede's text and the work of his historiographical heirs, Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury. History writing is always itself historical, and the temporal gap enabled a sympathetic reconceptualization of Bede's *Historia*. Writing in the twelfth century, and thus no longer caught up in the historical and political imperatives of Bede's *Historia* (the canonization of the Saxons, the conquest of the Britons), Henry and William were free to redirect the implications of Bede's text to their own ends. It is precisely by reusing and extending Bede's history and his historiographical model that Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury effectively created a tradition of English history writing.

As was the case with scribes "copying," a more nuanced language is required to discuss derivation, borrowing, and quotation for medieval historiography. The terminological challenge becomes quite clear in considering the relationship between the *Historia Anglorum* and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. The textual transformations that produce difference also record textual connectedness. Much has been made of the derivation of the English word "text" from Latin "textus," and the image of textile weaving used to describe and model the production of compilations.<sup>61</sup> The editor of the *Historia Anglorum* estimates (although her method poses a number of problems) that approximately 25 percent of Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* derives from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Greenway observes that "only eight of Bede's 140 chapters are not used. . . . In all [Henry] . . . quotes about twenty-five chapters in full and another twenty-five are used in substantial verbatim extracts."<sup>62</sup> Direct quotation is, of course, the most readily identifiable variety of medieval quotation, even though it may still diverge from modern standards of verbatim replication. Medieval rhetorical practices such as abbreviation, amplification, embellishment, and translation (in the sense of paraphrase) all mark intertextual connectedness while also obscuring that connection. Even as copying exhibits variation, so too do the transformations of textual extraction, reconfiguration, and reuse. In her

61. See Greenway, *Historia Anglorum*, lxxxv. See also Bernard Guenée, "L'historien par les mots," in *Politique et histoire au Moyen Âge: Recueil d'articles sur l'histoire politique et l'historiographie médiévale (1956–1981)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1981), 221–37.

62. See Greenway, "Authority, Convention, and Observation," 107.

edition, Greenway italicizes all the words she believes are “quoted” from Bede. Her practice renders Henry’s indebtedness visually striking—seemingly whole pages of Latin swim in and out of italics.<sup>63</sup> Closer examination, though, undermines the certainty implied by the visual rhetoric of the edition. Is the appearance of a single word or phrase in both texts sufficient to identify the later usage as quotation? What is the threshold for identifying moments of significant transfer between two texts? What of translated or otherwise transformed instances? As is the case with scribal transformations, the rewriting of history contains a spectrum of practices.

The openings of Bede’s and Henry’s histories are a case in point. Bede famously begins his work “Brittania Oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit . . . opima frugibus atque arboribus insula [Britain, once called Albion, is an island of the ocean . . . rich in crops and in trees].”<sup>64</sup> Henry begins his *Historia Anglorum*, “*Britannia* igitur beatissima est *insularum*, *fecunda frugibus et arboribus* [Britain, then, is the most blessed of islands, rich in crops and trees].”<sup>65</sup> Although Henry has elided four sentences (which appear later, in the second chapter of the first book of the *Historia Anglorum*), note the only two words not derived from Bede, “igitur beatissima,” that Henry has intruded in the opening line of his history. “Beatissima” here clearly means ‘blessed,’ rather than in classical Latin ‘happy’ or ‘rich’; “igitur” appears in either its most common sense as expressing inference or result—‘therefore,’ essentially, or as a conjunction used to resume after a digression, ‘so’ or ‘then.’<sup>66</sup> Britain is no longer situated as it is in Bede’s pointedly geographical and geopolitical introduction: an island in the sea opposite Germany and Gaul, measuring 800 miles by 200 miles. Instead, in Henry’s text, Britain is a blessed island. Henry thus makes an explicitly theological assertion to begin the *Historia Anglorum*. The third word of the text deploys and extends the model of miraculous English sanctity that it inherits, reproduces, and translates from the end, not the beginning, of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

Bede’s *Historia* ends with its claims for English sanctification, but it is a hard-won narrative victory, not its starting point. Bede concludes the *Historia Ecclesiastica* with a reworking of the “swords beaten into ploughshares” image of Isaiah by claiming that:

63. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, I.i, n. 1 (p. 10): “All the italicized words in this chapter are quoted from *HE* i.I.”

64. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I.i, 14–15.

65. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, I.i, 11–12. Italics are those of Greenway’s edition.

66. See the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London: British Academy and Oxford University Press, 1997).

plures in gente Nordanhymbrorum . . . se suosque liberos depositis armis satagunt magis, accepta tonsura, monasterialibus adscribere uotis quam bellicis exercere studiis. Quae res quem sit habitura finem, posterior aetas uidebit.

[Many of the Northumbrian race . . . have laid aside their weapons and taken the tonsure, preferring that they and their children should take monastic vows rather than train themselves in the art of war. What the result will be, a later generation will discover.]<sup>67</sup>

Bede's somewhat improbable view of a bright and peaceful future and near-universal sanctification for the English population of the island is a miraculous ending to a text that narrates much strife. However, by placing Britain's blessedness into the future, Bede makes his history a call to peace and holiness for his readers—they are the ones called upon to address the rifts between the saved and the not-saved, the Saxons, British, Picts, and Scots, those who celebrate Easter on the correct date and those who do not. By contrast, Henry's *Historia Anglorum* sanctifies the island itself in two words before describing its inhabitants, unconcerned with the delicate differentiations of Bede's divided nation. It is a trivial but crucial observation that mid-twelfth century, post-Conquest England was a vastly different place than Bede's eighth century world. In sum, the situation recalls Borges's short story, "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote," in which a fictional twentieth-century Frenchman radically rewrites Cervantes's *Don Quixote* by not changing a single word. Context has an enormous role in shaping meaning, and quotation recontextualizes in fundamental ways.

The *Historia Anglorum* poaches Bede's text non-oppositionally. Henry dramatizes his indebtedness to Bede's text, both its narrative (the "stuff" of history that Greenway includes in her calculations) and its rhetorical structures. Book IV of the *Historia Anglorum* negotiates the transition from one primary source, Bede, to the next, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Henry comments of his own methods:

Hucusque auctoritatem uenerabilis Bede presbiteri in hac nostra historia contexenda secuti sumus, et maxime in his omnibus que de rebus ecclesiasticis dicta sunt; in aliis etiam semper quantumcumque potuimus. Hinc igitur que in scriptis ueterum diligenti scrutinio collectis inuenire potuimus, ad instructionem posteritatis litteris mandare studuimus. Namque sicut in

67. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.23, 560–61.

prologo historie Anglorum doctissimus Beda testatur, uera lex historie est simpliciter id quod fama uulgante colligitur, scribendo posteris notificare.

[In compiling our history, I have followed the authority of the venerable Bede down to this point, especially in everything said on ecclesiastical affairs, and in other matters as much as I could. From this point, I have taken care to commit to writing, for the instruction of succeeding generations, what I can discover by diligent study of the collected writings of the ancients. For as the learned Bede attests in the prologue to his *Ecclesiastical History*, the true law of history is simply to make known to posterity in writing what is to be collected from common report.]<sup>68</sup>

Henry of Huntingdon's emphasis upon "vera lex historie" and "fama uulgante" precisely recapitulates Bede's emphasis on heterogeneous sources. Bede, however, did so as part of establishing his own text into an authoritative source text for future historiography. For the *Historia Anglorum*, quotation itself is the means by which historiography is authorized. Henry is emphatically moving beyond the role of either *compilator* or *auctor* as framed in Vincent of Beauvais's fourfold schema of authority.<sup>69</sup> His history poaches from its sources, playing with the consequences of quotation. It "quotes" not just language but historiographical methodology, and uses verbatim repetition to turn words against the arguments of their original context. Whereas heterogeneity had served to authorize narrative, now textualization was its own authorization.

The turn to a textual, rather than oral, history recurs as the *Historia Anglorum* moves not from one source text to another, but from one historical moment to another—from Saxon to Norman history. There, Henry returns to Bede's self-authorizing preface and the idea of quotation:

Hactenus de his, que uel in libris ueterum legendo repperimus, uel fama uulgante percepimus, tractatum est. Nunc autem de his, que uel ipsi uidi-mus, uel ab his qui uiderant audiui-mus, pertractandum est. Declaratum quidem constat quomodo Dominus salutem et honorem genti Anglorum pro meritis abstulerit, et iam populum non esse iusserit. Patebit amodo quomodo et ipsos Normannos uindices quidem suos uariis cladibus afficere inceperit.

68. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, IV.14, 234–35.

69. This is despite Henry's self-description as a compiler, a useful fiction deployed in the Bede-derived opening section of the *Historia Anglorum*.

[Down to this point the matters discussed have been those that I have either discovered from reading the books of the ancients or learned from common report. Now, however, the matters to be studied are those that I have either seen for myself or heard about from those who did see them. It has already been made very clear how the Lord deservedly took away from the English race their safety and honour, and commanded that they should no longer exist as a people. From this point it will be shown how He began to afflict the Normans themselves, His own avengers, with various disasters.]<sup>70</sup>

The verbal indebtedness to Bede's preface to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* is clear.<sup>71</sup> But, it should be understood as a methodological quotation of Bede as much as a linguistic one—Bede's oral sources have become "libris uterum." The shared language of the historiographical method does not preclude the *Historia Anglorum's* methodological innovation: Henry's models of the cyclicity of recurrent history, the five plagues of ethnic and political conquest inflicted upon the island (which he uses to frame the Norman Conquest and the English loss of sovereignty), and his canonization of Bede's *Historia* and the conscious articulation of an English historiographical tradition are all original inventions with lasting consequences for the corpus of English history writing. Henry of Huntingdon's insertion of "beatissima" into the first sentence of his text fundamentally reshapes Bede's text, yet extrapolates a Bedan trajectory. Quotation both preserves and transforms, and Bede's rhetorical model of history writing is here translated in the service of an agenda that (positively) poaches its implications, while precluding its no-longer relevant political agenda or limitations.

There were other ways to negotiate Bede's textual authority, however. Geoffrey of Monmouth offers an unparalleled example of oppositional poaching. Geoffrey's *Historia regum Britanniae* narrates the well-known stories of Brutus, Arthur, and the Saxon/British conflict.<sup>72</sup> Written in the second or third decade of the twelfth century, Geoffrey's *Historia regum* almost immediately became the *de facto* beginning of insular history, pre-pended to Bede's narrative of Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>73</sup> Geoffrey both ges-

70. Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, VII.1, 412–13.

71. It should be noted that Greenway does not italicize "fama uulgante" or other direct quotations in the second passage quoted.

72. The recent publication of Michael Reeve's critical edition of the text is particularly welcome. See Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of De gestis Britonum (Historia regum Britanniae)*, ed. Michael D. Reeve and trans. Neil Wright (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2007).

73. The two narratives first jointly appear in Alfred of Beverly's history. They occur together

tures at Bede's authority, by leading up to his narrative, and completely sidelines him. In doing so, Geoffrey divides British history into three new parts: before Bede, Bede, and after Bede. Safely compartmentalized, Bede could be controlled.

The *Historia regum* accomplishes its radical re-narration of the history of the island, and of the terms of English history writing itself, through a series of devices, not least of which is its aggressive interpolation into the textual and temporal space left at the beginning of Bede's narrative, which begins with Roman history and the arrival of Julius Caesar. Contrast with Geoffrey's project the comments of William of Malmesbury, who states in his prologue, "But he [Eadmer] thus omits two hundred and twenty-three years after Bede which he thought unworthy of remark. . . . It was therefore my design . . . to mend the broken chain of our history," or those of Henry of Huntingdon, who in the prologue addressed to Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, notes, "On your advice I have followed the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* where I could . . . and I have described past events down to the time of our own knowledge and observation."<sup>74</sup> Instead of seeking to continue the work of Bede, Geoffrey wrote the prehistory of the island, creating a text that, in effect, constructed Bede as his continuator.<sup>75</sup> Geoffrey's is a remarkably sophisticated move, and because his narrative barely overlaps with the chronological scope of Bede's text it avoids all but a few instances of outright contradiction. Moreover, by fundamentally recontextualizing Bede's text in offering up the fabulous history of Brutus and the British as the beginning of insular history, Geoffrey positions his text to shape interpretations of Bede's *Historia*, and indeed, to reshape the tradition of insular history writing already born of Bede's text. Like an "improving scribe" muddling a genealogy of texts, or the scribe of MS Ashmole 35 translating

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in part in William of Newburgh's excoriation of Geoffrey's text and Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum*, added in a late revision of the *Historia Anglorum*. See *Aluredi Beverlacensis annales, sive, Historia de gestis regum Britanniae, Libris ix*, ed. Thomas Hearne (Oxford, 1716); and William of Newburgh, *History of English Affairs*, ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh and M. J. Kennedy (Warminster, UK: Aris, 1988).

74. *Gesta Regum*, I. Prologue, 14: "Ita pretermisissis a tempore Bedae ducentis et uiginti tribus annis, quos iste nulla memoria dignatus est, absque litterarum patrocinio claudicat cursus temporum in medio. Vnde michi cum propter patriae caritatem, tum propter adhortantium auctoritatem uoluntati fuit interruptam temporum seriem sarcire et exarata barbarice Romano sale condire"; *Historia Anglorum*, 7.

75. In the fourteenth century, Geoffrey was subjected to his own preemptively interpolative strategy when Anglo-Norman authors inserted Albina and her thirty sisters into the temporal gap left undefined in Bede's opening sentence, "Britain, once called Albion," generating a narrative that came neatly before the text of the *Historia regum* as Geoffrey's comes before Bede's. See my article "Genealogy Rewritten: Inheriting the Legendary in Insular Historiography," in *Broken Lines*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Edward D. Kennedy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 123–41.



Gower's Latin apparatus into Middle English, Geoffrey transformed Bede's exemplarity even while copying from him.

Geoffrey begins his *Historia regum* with a remarkable series of claims for his project that warrant close attention. In the prologue, Geoffrey states, "I was surprised that, among the references to [the kings of Britain] . . . in the fine works of Gildas and Bede, I had found nothing concerning the kings who lived here before Christ's Incarnation, and nothing about Arthur and the many others who succeeded after it."<sup>76</sup> Geoffrey's mock surprise, of course, is a rhetorical strategy, a fiction designed to frame the rest of his fictions. The "liber vetustissimus" that Geoffrey claims to have employed as his primary source has been the occasion for much spilled ink.<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, it is fruitless to debate whether the "very old book in the British tongue" did or did not exist. As Lydgate will do centuries later, Geoffrey deploys the authenticating device both as an issue of linguistic access, and very specifically as a book, as a physical object. Geoffrey of Monmouth returns to the *liber vetustissimus* at the end of the *Historia regum*, explicitly designating his successors in the tradition of insular historiography. In doing so, he silently subordinates Bede to the role of a continuator, and moreover one who had already been overwritten. Geoffrey ends his text in the present tense of the twelfth century milieu of the writers of history:

Reges autem eorum qui ab illo tempore in Gualii successerunt Karadoco Lancarbanensi contemporaneo meo in materia scribendi permitto, reges uero Saxonum Willelmo Malmesberiensis et Henrico Huntendonensi, quos de regibus Britonum tacere iubeo, cum non habeant librum illum Britannici sermonis quem Walterus Oxenefordensis archidiaconus ex Britannia aduexit, quem de historia eorum ueraciter editum in honore praedictorum principum hoc modo in Latinum sermonem transferre curauit.

76. *Historia regum*, 4–5: "Cum mecum multa et de multis saepius animo reuoluens in hystoriam regum Britanniae inciderem, in mirum contuli quod infra mentionem quam de eis Gildas et Beda luculento tractatu fecerant nichil de regibus qui ante incarnationem Christi inhabitauerant, nichil etiam de Arturo ceterisque compluribus qui post incarnationem successerunt reperissem."

77. See, for example, Ian Short, "Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 323–43; Francis Ingledew, "The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 665–704; and Geoffrey Ashe, "A Certain Very Ancient Book: Traces of an Arthurian Source in Geoffrey of Monmouth's History," *Speculum* 56 (1981): 301–23. See also Siân Echard, *Arthurian Narrative in the Latin Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34.

[The Welsh kings who succeed one another from then on I leave as subject-matter to my contemporary, Caradoc of Llancarfan, and the Saxon kings to William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon; however, I forbid them to write about the kings of the Britons since they do not possess the book in British which Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, brought from . . . [Wales], and whose truthful account of their history I have here been at pains in honour of those British rulers to translate into Latin.]<sup>78</sup>

When Geoffrey wrote this passage in the 1130s, Henry of Huntingdon had already completed the first version of his *Historia Anglorum* in 1129 and William of Malmesbury had completed his *Gesta Regum* by c. 1120. His sly injunction to the two not to write the British history they emphatically had already not written works doubly. It authorizes their histories with regards to English, Bedan history both before and after the Conquest, but it simultaneously limits that authorization to Bedan history. It thereby excludes from their authorized texts Galfridian British history, fixing the texts of his contemporaries as unfit to address that which they never addressed. The *Historia* generates an implicit but exclusive textualized space for his own text.

Geoffrey creates a rhetoric of intertextual necessity, coupled with a rhetoric of authorized speech, though one predicated upon an inaccessible text. Bede's heterogeneous and plural sources have become, in Geoffrey's *Historia regum*, a single ancient British book, itself inaccessible to others. The *Historia regum* thus challenges Bede's model of history crafted from eyewitnesses, oral sources, and personal memory, and also the self-authorization of textual providentiality, the methods adopted and adapted by both Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury. Such ephemeral texts cannot, of course, be consulted or verified by subsequent writers of history, and thus bear problematic authority in a documentary culture, and pointedly, in a textual tradition predicated upon quotation. In the model advanced in Geoffrey's *Historia regum*, what had been the constituent voices of Bede's "vera lex historiae" now function as effectively meaningless place-holders for establishing authority, identifiable as mere rhetorical strategies. That is, Geoffrey outs Bede's rhetoricity. In revealing the construction of authority as a trope, Geoffrey turns Bede's process of historiographical authentication back

78. *Historia regum*, 280–81. The contested nature of the political implications of this passage are neatly revealed in the choices made by various translators. Faletra renders parts of this passage as "book in the British tongue" and "from Wales"; Thorpe uses "book in the British language" and "from Wales"; Wright, on the other hand, offers up "from Brittany." See Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, ed. and trans. Michael A. Faletra (Buffalo: Broadview, 2008).

against Bede's text, and also against Bede's successors in Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury. Geoffrey implicitly argues that only textual authority can be transferred, and the absence of the always inaccessible, and indeed linguistically unreadable, *liber vetustissimus*, renders the only authorized text available to any reader or subsequent historiographer to be precisely Geoffrey's own *Historia regum*. He smoothly defines, and also corners, a thoroughly textualized historiographical market. To speak of British history is to quote the *Historia regum*.

At stake in this contest over textual authority and the narrative of the history of the island is the justification of political power.<sup>79</sup> This is hardly surprising: history writing is emphatically about shaping the present and future by constructing an accessible past, an attempt to articulate a teleology leading to an inevitable present. In continuing Bede, both Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury work to shift Bede's self-fulfilling textual miracle of English sovereignty to a providential model legitimizing the Norman Conquest of the English. Henry of Huntingdon's "five plagues"—the conquests of the island by the Romans, Scots, English, Danes, and finally the Normans—links collective ethnic sin with conquest, a thread integral to insular history writing from Gildas and Bede forward. However, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum* has long resisted easy interpretation. Some scholars such as John Gillingham argue the text emphatically favors the British, and thus by extension the twelfth-century insurgent Welsh.<sup>80</sup> Other critics disagree, such as Michael Faletta in his recent translation of Geoffrey's text, who notes: "Despite Geoffrey's notorious ambiguity, and despite his apparent admiration for the ancient Britons . . . his *History* . . . would surely have found a warmer welcome among the Norman masters of Britain than among any of their conquered subjects."<sup>81</sup> Geoffrey's political agenda is difficult to fix precisely because his methodological agenda is so ambitious.

Geoffrey's text, for all its seemingly contradictory nationalisms, is after the larger stakes of how history writing itself can be conducted. Geoffrey rewrites the Bedan model of insular historiography. The *Historia regum* short-circuits the Bedan model of history, rejecting a simple connection between political power and divine approbation. By design, Geoffrey's British history comes before Bede's English history, and in doing so poaches

79. See R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

80. See John Gillingham, "The Context and Purposes of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*," in *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity, and Political Values* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2000), 19–40.

81. Faletta, *History of the Kings*, 29.

Bede's own teleology of English sovereignty, redirecting it as instead pointedly unknowable—an argument that if history can be written, it's not yet over. If Bedan history constructs the British as punished for dissenting from Catholic orthodoxy by the loss of political power, Galfridian history decouples the two. Therein, I believe, lies the essence of Geoffrey's political argument. Geoffrey's text insists upon the viability of British chosenness, regardless of the state of the Welsh in the twelfth-century—geographically marginalized but insurgent, for the Welsh the future may not be bright; it is nonetheless still the future. Fundamentally, the Bedan and Galfridian historiographical models are incompatible, though, by design, the narratives of their histories can be meshed fairly neatly. The political implications of the *Historia regum's* deflection of a particularly English tradition of insular history writing are emphatically not ambiguous. Geoffrey of Monmouth's methodological innovation is as fantastical as the kings who populate his text. Rather perversely, Geoffrey's almost entirely fictitious history demands his successors employ a new kind of textual accountability, while simultaneously putting itself forward as the only text available to authenticate British history through quotation. The most elegant aspect of Geoffrey's historiographical coup is how almost perfectly irrefutable his interpolative history is. Critics could quote the *Historia regum*, and they could quote Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but at the textual level, neither can offer comment on or insight to the other.

Deprived of quotation, the critics of Geoffrey's text were reduced to vehement—though not necessarily effectual—protests. Although Geoffrey's narrative was easy to reject, it was difficult to refute. William of Newburgh's attacks on Geoffrey and his *Historia regum* are probably the best known. William's lengthy diatribe serves as the prologue to his entire work. It is largely made up of a fierce excoriation of Geoffrey's *Historia regum* as “a laughable web of fiction” written by a man with “an uncontrolled passion for lying” to “feed the curiosity of those less wise.”<sup>82</sup> The web of fictions, however, doesn't interrupt the “unbroken chain of history,” a phrase that should be familiar from William of Malmesbury's Bedan prologue. The futility of disagreeing might best be captured by the tableau Gerald of Wales provides to discredit the *Historia regum*. Gerald retells the story of a certain Welsh soothsayer, Meilyr, who in the twelfth century lived not far from Caerleon before going mad. Meilyr spoke to unclean spirits, and used them to confirm his prophecies. Nonetheless, the spirits were a torment to him:

82. William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum*, 28–35: “ridicula de eisdem figmenta contexens” (28); “sive effrenata mentiendi libidine” (32); “ad pascendam minus prudentium curiositatem homo ille scribendo vulgavit” (34).

Quoties autem falsum coram ipso ab aliquo dicebatur, id statim agnoscebat: videbat enim super linguam mentientis daemonem quasi salientem et exultantem, Librum quoque mendosum, et vel falso scriptum, vel falsum etiam in se continentem inspiciens, statim, licet illiteratus omnino fuisset, ad locum mendacii digitum ponebat. . . . Contigit aliquando, spiritibus immundis nimis eidem insultantibus, ut Evangelium Johannis ejus in gremio poneretur: qui statim tanquam aves evolantes, omnes penitus evanuerunt. Quo sublato postmodum, et Historia Britonum a Galfrido Arthuro tractata, experiendi causa, loco ejusdem subrogata, non solum corpori ipsius toti, sed etiam libro superposito, longe solito crebrius et taediosius insederunt.

[Whenever anyone told a lie in his presence, Meilyr was immediately aware of it, for he saw a demon dancing and exulting on the liar's tongue. Although he was completely illiterate, if he looked at a book which was incorrect, which contained some false statement, or which aimed at deceiving the reader, he immediately put his finger on the offending passage. . . . When he was harassed beyond endurance by these unclean spirits, Saint John's Gospel was placed on his lap, and then they all vanished immediately, flying away like so many birds. If the Gospel were afterwards removed and the *History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth put there in its place, just to see what would happen, the demons would alight all over his body, and on the book, too, staying there longer than usual and being even more demanding.]<sup>83</sup>

Gerald's vision of unclean spirits crawling all over the *Historia regum* offers a vivid image and a vehement rejection of Geoffrey's historiographical narrative.<sup>84</sup> But Gerald's neat encapsulation of the *Historia regum* as a volume filled with lies requires a return to the discounted Bedan model: only a quasi-miraculous view of Meilyr, the partially insane Welsh soothsayer, can support the repudiation of the *Historia regum*. Gerald goes to great narrative lengths to authenticate Meilyr's prophetic tendencies, and employs precisely Bede's methods for doing so—he places Meilyr “in our days” and locates his return to mental health at St David's, where Gerald himself had longstand-

83. Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. J. F. Dimock, vol. 6 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1868), 58; Gerald of Wales, *The Journey through Wales and The Description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Books, 1978), 117–18. Thorpe notes: “Gerald rarely misses a chance of a gibe at Geoffrey of Monmouth” (118n).

84. See David Rollo, *Historical Fabrication, Ethnic Fable, and French Romance in the Twelfth Century* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1998), 278.

ing connections.<sup>85</sup> Following the demonic infestation of the *Historia regum*, Gerald relates a scandal, “notorious and, indeed, well known to everyone in Wales,” which struck Enoch, Abbot of Strata Marcella, a Cistercian abbey founded in 1170.<sup>86</sup> Meilyr predicts Enoch’s scandalous downfall, and Gerald uses Bede’s textual providentiality to generate a self-authenticating text, deploying the miraculous (or, more accurately, the wondrous) in the service of a larger argument about the untrustworthiness of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s text. Returning to an already discredited Bedan authority of literal eyewitness, of the observed miraculous, signals its own futility in a culture where Geoffrey’s text and the *Brut* tradition it spawned had already attained the status of a discourse.

In sum, the proliferating historiographies of the twelfth century transformed the nature of history writing. Within the tradition of learned (though not necessarily Latin) historiography, if it could not be quoted, it was very difficult to contest. Like the boy-child Merlin, recognized because he had no father, Geoffrey’s text might have Bede’s history as its historiographical mother, but its father is the inaccessible ancient British book. The historiographical tradition after the *Historia regum* becomes a comment on an always absent text. It is precisely the contradictory and transformative acts of poaching, both oppositional and non-oppositional, that gives twelfth-century historiography such productive urgency in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury can also be understood as scribes, copying and transforming Bede’s text as a carefully authorized exemplar. Geoffrey’s work, in this model, was written without an exemplar, except inasmuch as Bede’s text dictated what Geoffrey was not writing about. The authors of history writing and its scribes were engaged in strikingly similar cycles of textual inheritance and invention, set amidst contests over authorization and dissension.

Geoffrey’s rhetoric of textual inaccessibility would not survive the legacy of Magna Carta. As politics and law became a matter of documentary and textual record, silence was more difficult to marshal as evidence. It is the continuity of the tradition of insular history writing, and its constantly renewed reliance upon its textual precursors, that explains why concerns over the ethnic divisions of the island, the Conquest, and conquest more generally appear so prominently in later history writing. The crises of the twelfth century were not the crises of the second half of the thirteenth century, but historiography’s iterative composition skews what we perceive as

85. Gerald of Wales, *Journey through Wales*, 116. See also Michael Richter, *Giraldus Cambrensis: The Growth of the Welsh Nation* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1972).

86. Gerald of Wales, *Journey through Wales*, 118.

its emphases. The gap from 1066 to 1300 is, roughly, the gap we as twenty-first century critics face between our own time and the American Revolution. Whatever our opinions about the American Revolution may be, and however dearly held, they are not in themselves pressing. The constructed urgency of thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century expressions about the Norman Conquest should be suspect, then, as historiographical reflex rather than authentic cultural insight.<sup>87</sup> Bede's descriptions of the contests between Saxons and British resonated differently with the insurgent Welsh of the middle of the twelfth century than they did after Edward I's conquest of Wales in 1284. Gerald of Wales's scandalized description of the historiographical heresy of Geoffrey's text would become a dated reaction to a narrative that had become part of the historiographical mainstream. The Bedan and the Galfridian narratives of insular history were sutured together to form a continuous narrative of the history of the island. The joining of the two was not always smooth, but it was sufficient for history writers to write history. The Norman Conquest provoked a literature of contested ethnic identity and crisis, and clearly incited passions long after the event.<sup>88</sup> This is not to say that later thirteenth-century history writing did not still reflect something of the ethnic and political contests of previous centuries. Primarily, however, English politics and thus English history were driven and riven not by conquest but by internal and civil crises. The historiography of the period reflects that shift.

In the century and a half following Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum*, history is written in Anglo-Norman and Middle English. Anglo-Norman historiography first appears roughly contemporary with Geoffrey, in the works of Gaimar, Wace, and Jordan Fantosme.<sup>89</sup> Such projects were initially translations, in the broadest possible sense: Gaimar translated portions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* into Anglo-Norman, whereas Wace translated Geoffrey's *Historia regum*. Anglo-Norman continued to be used for both eyewitness historiography and prose narratives of greater scope, culminating in the composition and circulation of the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut* by the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>90</sup> History writing in Latin did not cease,

87. See Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and Sarah Mitchell, "Kings, Constitution, and Crisis: 'Robert of Gloucester' and the Anglo-Saxon Remedy," in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 39–56.

88. See Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

89. See Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 138–40.

90. Marvin dates the so-called Oldest Version of the Anglo-Norman *Brut* to c. 1300. See

however, and many local chronicles, particularly those attached to religious houses, were copied, updated, and composed. “Updated” is the activity at the heart of all history writing, and the work of Matthew Paris (d. 1259) serves as an important reminder of how original derivative texts can be. Writing in both Latin (such as his *Chronica majora*) and Anglo-Norman (including his lives of Saints Edward the Confessor, Edmund, and Thomas Becket), Matthew was deeply embedded in history as a textualized phenomenon. This can be seen in the documents he copied in the *Liber Additamentorum*, designed to supplement his *Chronica majora*, and also in the elaborate visual icons designed to make his readable narrative also useful.<sup>91</sup> Matthew wrote with an awareness that his texts existed as books. The beautiful drawings and illuminations that accompany both his Latin and Anglo-Norman works show his historiographical texts as richly imagined codices, performing the intertextuality of text and image on the manuscript page.<sup>92</sup> In Middle English, Lazamon, writing in Arley Kings sometime in the thirteenth century, begins his *Brut* with a lasting image of intertextuality: he sets several books before him, looking out at them, “He nom þa Englisca boc; þa makede Seint Beda. / An-oþer he nom on Latin; þe makede Seinte Albin. . . . / Boc he nom þe þridde; leide þer amidden. þa makede a Frenchis clerc; / Wace was ihoten.”<sup>93</sup> Lazamon was translating Wace’s Anglo-Norman translation of Geoffrey’s Latin text, and he performs the emphatic bookishness of his project in the prologue. It points to the deep intertextuality of vernacular history writing, an intertextuality that was the dominant mode of history writing in England in the thirteenth century.

Magna Carta was first issued, of course, in 1215, but it was the bundling of versions of Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest, which would become known as “The Charters,” that did in the thirteenth century the symbolic work that Magna Carta alone would do in later centuries. The Char-

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Julia Marvin, *The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 40–47.

91. See Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

92. See Katharine Breen, “Returning Home from Jerusalem: Matthew Paris’s First Map of Britain in Its Manuscript Context,” *Representations* 89 (2005): 59–93. Beyond the better-known itineraries and maps that begin the manuscript, London, BL, MS Royal 14.c.vii features a sophisticated system of arms and icons deployed in the margins to indicate significant historical moments.

93. See the MS Cotton Caligula A.ix text of *Lazamon’s Brut*, ed. G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie, EETS OS 250, 277 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963, 1978), 16–17, 19–21. See Neil Cartlidge, “Imagining X: A Lost Early Vernacular Miscellany,” in *Imagining the Book*, ed. Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 31–44; and Christopher Cannon, *The Grounds of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).



ters were reissued repeatedly throughout the thirteenth century in times of political contest: in one form or another; Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest were reissued in 1216, 1217, 1225, 1237, 1297, and 1298.<sup>94</sup> At various times throughout the century, it was mandated that the charters were to be read aloud several times a year. At other times, it was required that a copy of Magna Carta be publicly visible in cathedrals and other major ecclesiastical houses, and provisions were made for making new copies.<sup>95</sup> Magna Carta stands as the symbolic anchor of what could be termed the country's legal imagination. In that capacity, it was (and remains) an oddly stable symbol, an always available and shared point of reference, even though what it was held to symbolize (and to contain) has changed. It was thus battles for the text's cultural resonances, rather than the text itself, that were often at the forefront of the conflicts (and resolutions) between barons and the king.<sup>96</sup>

Derivative textuality and the textualization of the legal and historical imagination come together in the late-thirteenth-century Middle English *Chronicle* attributed to Robert of Gloucester. It is a strange text, surviving in some fifteen manuscripts in at least two major recensions.<sup>97</sup> The *Chronicle*

94. See Anthony Musson, *Medieval Law in Context: The Growth of Legal Consciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasants' Revolt* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

95. See Musson, *Medieval Law in Context*, 227. See also James A. Doig, "Political Propaganda and Royal Proclamations in Late Medieval England," *Historical Research* 71 (1998): 253–80; R. L. Poole, "The Publication of Great Charters by the English Kings," *English Historical Review* 28 (1913): 444–53; J. R. Maddicott, "Magna Carta and the Local Community, 1215–1259," *Past & Present* 102 (1984): 25–65; and I. W. Rowlands, "The Text and Distribution of the Writ for the Publication of Magna Carta, 1215," *English Historical Review* 124 (2009): 1422–31.

96. See Harry Rothwell, "The Confirmation of the Charters, 1297," *English Historical Review* 60 (1945): 16–35 and 177–91; J. H. Denton, "The Crisis of 1297 from the Evesham Chronicle," *English Historical Review* 93 (1978): 560–79; J. R. Maddicott, "Edward I and the Lessons of Baronial Reform: Local Government, 1258–80," in *Thirteenth-Century England*, vol. 1, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 1986), 1–30; *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297–8 in England*, ed. Michael Prestwich, Camden Fourth Series, 24 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980); and *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–67*, ed. R. F. Treharne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

97. Largely neglected by critics; see most recently Lauryn S. Mayer, *Worlds Made Flesh: Reading Medieval Manuscript Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and my DPhil thesis, "Once Called Albion: The Composition and Transmission of History Writing in England, 1280–1350." Note the discovery of an additional manuscript of the *Chronicle*, in John Stow's hand, in London, City of London, Guildhall Library, MS 34125, described in A. S. G. Edwards and Alexandra Gillespie, "A Manuscript of Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* Copied by John Stow," *Notes & Queries* 50 (2003): 384–85. Oliver Pickering argues on stylistic grounds that "Robert of Gloucester" and the earliest reviser of the *South English Legendary* were one and the same person. Although there is much that is valuable in his work on the texts, I do not find his stylistic arguments persuasive. See Oliver Pickering, "The Outspoken *South English Legendary* Poet," in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission*, ed. Alistair J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 21–37; and Pickering, "South English *Legendary* Style in Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*," *Medium Ævum* 70 (2001): 1–18.

revels in its derivative textuality: it weaves together translations and textual transpositions from a large number of historiographical sources. The texts translated and adapted include Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum*, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum*, Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, and also Laȝamon's *Brut*.<sup>98</sup> Before the body of the *Chronicle*'s dense performance of derivative textuality, however, is the peculiar beginning of the *Chronicle*. At first glance the opening resembles the traditional beginning of insular historiography, such as Geoffrey's "Britannia insularum optima" or Henry of Huntingdon's "Britannia igitur beatissima est insularum, fecunda frugibus et arboribus." Read more closely, however, the *Chronicle* offers a very different view of the world, and the island's place in it:

Engelond his a wel god lond, ich wene ech londe best.  
 Iset in þe on ende of þe worlde as al in þe west,  
 Þe see geþ him al aboute he stond as in an yle.  
 Of fon hii dorre þe lasse doute, bote hit be þorȝ gyle  
 Of folc of þe sulue lond, as me haþ iseye ȝwile.<sup>99</sup>

The echo of its historiographical predecessors, including Bede, are immediately recognizable. Yet, the last two lines mark the fundamental changes in the writing of history that have taken place by the end of the thirteenth century. The *Chronicle* declares itself not in terms of the waves of conquest that had defined the ages of Britain, nor in the us-versus-them, Christian-versus-pagan calculus of providential history. Instead, the *Chronicle* undertakes to write a history in which foes are no longer those external to the island, but rather the current inhabitants themselves.

The *Chronicle* records the history of civil discord, not conquest, and it does so through an insistence upon the textual foundations of historiography. The "folc of the sulue lond" who haunt the opening lines of the *Chronicle* are not those who trouble Bede, Geoffrey of Monmouth, or the prose *Brut*. It is neither the Welsh nor the Scottish who threaten the current political moment of the *Chronicle*. Although the Welsh formed the crux of much of the twelfth century historiographical contest, after the Edward-

98. The text's editor for the Rolls Series, W. A. Wright, also claims other sources (with varying degrees of supporting evidence), including John of Worcester, Ralph Diceto, Roger Wendover, Ailred of Rievaulx, Eadmer, Roger Hoveden, Matthew Paris, "John of Brompton," and four annals, those of Dunstable, Tewkesbury, Waverley, and Winchester. See *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, ed. W. A. Wright, 2 vols., Rolls Series (London, 1887); and Anne Hudson, "An Edition of Part of the Chronicle attributed to Robert of Gloucester with a Study of the Original Language of the Poem," 2 vols. (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1963).

99. Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 1–5.

ian conquest of Wales in 1284 they were a less pressing issue to English writers.<sup>100</sup> The Scottish would become the great preoccupation of England and its historians from the last decade of the thirteenth century until the middle of the fourteenth century. Despite this, the Scottish are strangely, almost bizarrely, absent from the *Chronicle*.<sup>101</sup> It is the internal turbulences of the later thirteenth century, the domestic crises of the Barons' War, and the larger issues associated with the contest between crown and barons that are the foundational anxieties and the agenda of the *Chronicle*.<sup>102</sup> Amidst the complexities of political strife, the *Chronicle* is not a particularly radical text. It is broadly concerned with the idea of good governance, with the ways in which legal discourse functions, and with the promulgation of good laws as the means of bettering the country. It is the second two concerns, in particular, that shape how it deploys derivative textuality, translating and assembling not only a variety of historiographical source texts, but also the text of laws and statutes. The *Chronicle's* interest in internal reform resonates very particularly with the crises and contests in the second half of the thirteenth century, particularly those of 1297–8. The *Chronicle* offers, for the first time in Middle English historiography, a politically motivated agenda largely dissociated from the divisions of race and the Conquest. The “gyle” feared is the challenge to a self-determining English polity, which will be

100. This is not to suggest that Welsh insurgency did not continue after the Edwardian conquest, merely that future rebellions were largely less successful in posing a symbolic threat sufficient to trouble the writers of history.

101. This is in contrast to the roughly contemporary chronicles of Robert Mannyng and Piers Langtoft, which vociferously assert English superiority, and indeed sovereignty, over Scotland. Recent critics such as Turville-Petre and Mitchell have stressed the moments of racial or ethnic advocacy or condemnation as central to the *Chronicle's* concerns. I believe this reflects an impulse to align vernacularity with nascent English identity, a critical move that has faded as early Middle English has been more richly contextualized alongside Latin and Anglo-Norman literatures. As discussed above, as a derivative text the *Chronicle* inherits, though redirects, the emphases of its source texts. For example, one oft-cited example seems at first to be a stark statement of ethnic resentment, but is in fact largely a translation of Henry of Huntingdon's paradigmatic five plagues, “Mvche aþ þe sorwe ibe ofte in engelonde / As 3e mowe her & er ihure & vnderstonde / Of moni bataile þat aþ ibe & þat men þat lond nome / Verst as 3e abbeþ ihurd þe emperours of rome / Suþþe Saxons & englisse mid batayles stronge / & suþþe hii of denemarch þat hulde it al so longe / Atte laste hii of normandie þat maisters beþ 3ut here / Wonne hit & holdeþ 3ut icholle telle in wuch manere” (*Chronicle*, 7324–31). Compare *Historia Anglorum*, i.4, 14.

102. It has long proven difficult to date the *Chronicle* precisely, particularly given the uncertain relationship of its constituent parts and its complex manuscript tradition. The so-called longer continuation, which extends to 1270, contains a reference to Saint Louis, “þulke gode lowis is nou seint & ileid in srrine” (Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 10, 943), which has generally been used to date the longer continuation as after Louis's canonization in 1297. Tentatively, I would suggest the longer continuation of the *Chronicle* was written in the last years of the thirteenth century.

traced briefly in the *Chronicle's* anxious return to the documents and texts of the country's political and legal history—a concern that reflects Geoffrey's textualized historiography in the century after Magna Carta.

The *Chronicle* includes a remarkably detailed account of the Constitutions of Clarendon, the 1164 document aimed at limiting the power of the clergy that had occasioned much of the rift between Henry II and Thomas Becket.<sup>103</sup> As part of the larger project of intertextuality in history writing after Magna Carta, the *Chronicle* makes explicit a connection between the Constitutions of Clarendon and Magna Carta:

& he [Henry II] vndude þe luþer lawes & grauntede alle þe gode  
 þat sein tomas esste, as hii vnderstode,  
 Of forest & of oþer þing, þat is elderne nome amis.  
 He vndude & þer to is chartre made, iwis.  
 Ac after is daye iholde feblithe it was  
 Of king Ion & of oþere, & napeles þer nas  
 Non of hom þat some time Mid wille þei it nere  
 Ne grauntede & confermede it þei it lute wurþ were.  
 Vor mani is þe gode bodi þat aslawe is þeruore.  
 To betere ende god it bringe þat vor vs was ibore.<sup>104</sup>

This passage captures the recurrent contest between the barons and the king over the limits of royal power, connecting the “undoing” of laws and the role of the charter in preventing those moments. The performative cycle of reissuing and confirming the charters was undermined by the consistent reassertion of royal rights and privileges in defiance of some part of the accreted laws and assizes. That such reassurances were needed with worrying frequency weighs heavily on the *Chronicle*—the charters may be regranted and reconfirmed, but they seem to be held but lightly.<sup>105</sup> The textuality that Magna Carta had promised was no longer entirely effective.

The increasing emphasis on the textual bases of the law began to point to the insufficiency of text in and of itself. Even as the Charters were reissued, it became clear the grievances that led to their reissue were not necessarily solved through their confirmation. That is, there was a growing abstraction

103. See Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 9655–9726.

104. See Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 9808–17.

105. See *Select Charters: Earliest Times to Edward I*, ed. W. Stubbs, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 163–67 (Constitutions of Clarendon); 170–73 (Assize of Clarendon); 186–88 (Assize of the Forest). See also J. C. Holt, “The Assizes of Henry II: The Texts,” in *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major*, ed. D. A. Bullough and R. L. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 85–106; and Holt, *Magna Carta*, chap. 11.

of the “rights” that were understood as derived from the text of the charters that began to trump the textuality of the document themselves. The charters, originally designed to limit royal power, were no solution if they were not useful in practice, rather than deployed symbolically. The *Chronicle* refers twice more to Magna Carta as it narrates Henry III’s reign, once in describing the 1225 reissue and once in relation to the 1258 Provisions of Oxford.<sup>106</sup> The author of the *Chronicle* was clearly dissatisfied with the effectiveness of reissuing of Magna Carta as a way to redress substantive political ills. He complains: “& to graunti gode lawes & þe olde chartre al so / Þat so ofte was igranted er & so ofte vndo / Her of was þe chartre imad & aceled vaste þere.”<sup>107</sup> Where the documents’ iconic power had once been sufficient, their status was now devalued—the charters had been too often issued, and too often undone.<sup>108</sup>

The despair of the *Chronicle* resonates quite precisely with the Baronial crisis of 1297–8, suggesting the longer recension was written in response to those events. In 1297, the intersecting and cumulative complaints of the clergy, the general populace, and the nobility threatened civil war in a scenario all too reminiscent of Simon de Montfort and the Barons’ War some forty years earlier.<sup>109</sup> At the heart of the issue in 1297–8 was taxation, both of the clergy and the country more generally, accompanied by contests over political theories of royal “emergency powers” and “government by consent.”<sup>110</sup> Key to the resolution of the crisis (beyond the conveniently unifying patriotic response occasioned by the defeat of the English by the Scottish at Stirling Bridge in 1297) was the demand by the Barons for “securities for the observance of the Charters—the chief guarantee of their law,

106. See Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 10, 700–703: “Vor þe gode olde lawes of wan we abeþ ispeke / He confermede vaste þo þat me ne ssolde it breke / & made þer of chartres on ich vnderstonde / Of þe forest & anoþer of franchise of þe londe.”

107. Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 11, 018–20. The text is describing the beginnings of the Barons’ War.

108. See J. G. Edwards, “Confirmatio Cartarum and Baronial Grievances in 1297,” *English Historical Review* 58 (1943): 147–71. Many of the issues, particularly that of tallages, would become issues again in the reign of Edward II.

109. See J. R. Maddicott, “‘1258’ and ‘1297’: Some Comparisons and Contrasts,” *Thirteenth-Century England*, vol. 9, ed. M. Prestwich, R. Britnell, and R. Frame (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2003), 1–14. Note that Edward I successfully appealed to Pope Clement V in 1305 to be released of his oath confirming the charters.

110. See Prestwich, *Documents*, 27. The papal bull *Clericis laicos*, issued in 1296 by Pope Boniface VIII, essentially stipulated that ecclesiastics were not to pay secular taxes, and were empowered to excommunicate those who attempted to collect such. The Barons were entangled in Edward I’s wartime needs, both to sustain the ongoing Scottish expenses and to raise funds for the invasion of Flanders. He attempted to employ or levy variously innovative taxes, for which the customary (and hitherto largely symbolic) “consent” had not been granted.

customs, and liberties—which Magna Carta of 1225 did not contain.”<sup>111</sup> This innovation, moving beyond the (now merely) documentary to “securities for the observance” marks the 1298 reissue of Magna Carta as something different from the previous recirculations of the charters. Edward I managed to avoid the civil wars that had taken place in his father’s reign, but the textual foundations of English politics had changed.

In 1298, the price of peace meant that the charters had to be enacted, not merely quoted: they were to be regularly recited and “secured.” The document itself no longer signified a return to the good laws of the past, but marked only part of the ongoing process of political negotiation. Where the texts had been performative, now they merely symbolized what they had previously enacted. This crucial shift reflects the changes undergone by historiography across this period. Geoffrey preemptively poached the teleological narrative of Bede’s English history by resituating authority as a textual phenomenon. The *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, in its dense assemblage from numerous sources, makes clear how textual authority had become the cornerstone of the historiographical process. At the same time, however, the *Chronicle* confronts the ways in which the textual and the documentary were no longer unproblematically coextensive with some innate authority. That is, the textual and the intertextual had been rendered as much a rhetoric as had eyewitness accounts in Bede’s *Historia*. Copying and textual translation were now a productive but contested transformation, the site in which the documentary could be interpreted to regain its former power, and escape the devalued status of the charters issued too frequently to too little effect. Medieval English society and insular historiography may have shifted from memory to written record, but those records were material and textual. The written record no longer simply recorded what had transpired or had been exchanged, but was now inextricably complicit in the exercise of power by political actors, whether kings, barons, or the writers of history.

111. Rothwell, “Confirmation,” 180.

## History's Scribes— The Harley Scribe

Chapters 3 and 4 will turn to some of the least-read texts in two of the best-known books written by two of the best-known scribes of early fourteenth century England: the Harley Scribe, responsible for copying three manuscripts including London, BL, MS Harley 2253, and Scribe 1 of the Auchinleck manuscript.<sup>1</sup> Bringing together the focus in Chapter 1 on the diverse labors of scribes and Chapter 2's reimagining of the textual tradition of insular historiography, the next two chapters will examine the very different instantiations of a short Middle English historiographical text, the *Short Chronicle*, as written by the Harley Scribe and Auchinleck's Scribe 1. The Harley Scribe, active between 1314 and 1349 in Ludlow or its immediate environs, is well known for the large corpus of evidence that survives in his hand: three manuscripts and over forty dated charters.<sup>2</sup> Conclusive identification of the Harley Scribe remains, so far, out of reach. Nonetheless,

1. The critical literature on both manuscripts is vast. Specific references will be offered as necessary. Most generally, see *Facsimile of British Museum, MS Harley 2253*, ed. N. R. Ker, EETS OS 255 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). See also the bibliography available in the online catalogue entry for the manuscript, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7704&CollID=8&NStart=2253>.

2. The charters are described and reproduced in the seminal article of Carter Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: TEAMS, 2000), 21–110. The forty-one deeds unearthed by Revard concern various properties, privileges, and grants largely in and around Ludlow.

enough is known of *when* he was writing to situate his work very specifically in the political, ecclesiastical, historical, and cultural contexts of the Welsh Marches in the early fourteenth century. Much of this chapter, then, will trace the influences of national and local history upon history writing, and also upon the other texts written by the Harley Scribe. I will argue that the Harley Scribe composed a number of the texts in London, BL, MS Royal 12.c.xii, a manuscript much less studied than the better-known Harley 2253.<sup>3</sup> Moving beyond the meaning created through textual selection or organization, the chapter will expose the politics that shaped the Harley Scribe's work as a scribal author of historiography, and his responses to the regional affiliations behind his adaptation of a liturgical piece and his work on an Anglo-Norman romance.

The medieval scribe was positioned in ways that many medieval authors were not. Scribes directly controlled the presentation of text and shaped the rich complexities of a text's *mise-en-page* and its situation in a codex.<sup>4</sup> Despite the ongoing tension perceived between the roles of author and scribe, there remain deep uncertainties about what activities in fact constitute the scribal.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies of the lyrics found in Harley 2253 all presume the Harley Scribe, acting as the "organizer" of the Harley Lyrics, read the lyrics before copying them. That is, in order to have organized the lyrics, he must have read them first. Moreover, some critics perceive quite sophisticated principles at work in the arrangement of the lyrics, whether sequences of antithetical texts or other "sustained organizing principle[s]."<sup>6</sup> If the Harley Scribe is indeed responsible for the verbal resonances and

3. Royal 12.c.xii is in turn better studied than the third book in the Harley Scribe's hand, MS Harley 273, which contains works mostly in Anglo-Norman.

4. Exceptions might include Pearsall's arguments about Gower's control over his manuscripts. See also Jeremy Griffiths, "Book Production Terms in Nicholas Munshull's *Nominale*," in *Art into Life: Collected Papers from the Kresge Art Museum Medieval Symposia*, ed. C. G. Fisher and K. L. Scott (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995), who suggests: "Aspects of page design might become established through a series of largely mechanical decisions made by scribes and illuminators" (49).

5. See Daniel Birkholz, "Harley Lyrics and Hereford Clerics: The Implications of Mobility, c. 1300–1351," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 31 (2009): 175–230. Birkholz argues to separate the Harley Scribe from the compiler/arranger of the Harley Lyrics, a move I argue against here, but not one necessarily conceptually at odds with the larger case for scribal authorship. See, too, Susanna Fein, "Compilation and Purpose in MS Harley 2253," in *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Wendy Scase (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 67–94. Fein warns against "when scribal agency becomes confused with authorship" (93). The issue is more properly understood as how we accord texts originality, rather than as a spectrum of author function opposed to scribal practices.

6. See Theo Stemmler, "Miscellany or Anthology? The Structure of Medieval Manuscripts: MS Harley 2253, For Example," in Fein, *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, 111–22.



aesthetic and political arrangements that have been read into the groupings of texts, he must have read his source texts very carefully, with an eye to copying them and assembling them in very particular ways.<sup>7</sup> At the same time that a loose consensus has granted the Harley Scribe the interpretative sophistication to read, analyze, and group the lyrics, other scholars have argued to separate the Harley Scribe from the work of conceiving, collecting, identifying, and acquiring the necessary texts to create the manuscript. Birkholz puts forth the idea that “the distinction between medieval author-functions has collapsed” and suggests instead that a new understanding of the manuscript can be gained if we “redivide ‘scribe’ from ‘compiler.’”<sup>8</sup> Birkholz’s point is an important one for nuancing scribal practices more generally, as is his exploration of plural patronage, complexly multiple audiences, and collective responsibility for acquiring the texts constitutive of the Harley Lyrics. He offers a sophisticated and compelling revision of conventional understandings of the processes underlying manuscript creation. At the same time, however, that he foregrounds the possible *milieux* in which a single book might be read and from which its texts might be assembled, he reduces the work of the Harley Scribe to something largely mechanical. That is, although the Harley Scribe manages the “layout, arrangement, and selection of received texts,” he very pointedly does not have the social, intellectual, aesthetic, and geographical mobility that everyone else involved with the forming codex does.<sup>9</sup> Birkholz’s Harley Scribe is a largely static and dull figure, surrounded by excitingly mobile contributors who identify, locate, and transmit lyrical texts to Ludlow. After the texts pass through the mechanical hands of the Harley Scribe, they are then received by sophisticated audiences across diverse social registers and geographies. Despite the important reimaginations of the richness of regional manuscript cultures, excluding the Harley Scribe from the intellectual discourses of Harley 2253

7. See Carter Revard, “Oppositional Thematics and Metanarrative in MS Harley 2253, Quires 1–6,” in Scase, *Essays in Manuscript Geography*, 95–112. Revard perceives a “sic et non” structure in the quires. In the same volume, Fein notes: “Middle English scholars seem now to have reached rough consensus that the Harley scribe’s compilation (on fols 49–140) is unusually deliberative in its selections and organization” (“Compilation and Purpose,” 69).

8. Birkholz observes: “Almost uniformly nowadays, scholars posit a Harley ‘scribe/compiler,’” (“Harley Lyrics,” 198). He instead argues for the Harley scribe’s nonmobility which thus “limit[s] his personal inability to procure texts” (199). Evidence that the Harley Scribe worked in Ludlow over the course of his lifetime is emphatically not evidence that the Harley Scribe did not travel. London is roughly 150 miles from Ludlow, and such a trip might take anywhere from four to eleven days to make. See C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval Britain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 187, who notes that Eleanor de Montfort’s household averaged 26 miles per day in 1265.

9. Birkholz, “Harley Lyrics,” 199.

yet again deauthorizes and precludes a scribe from engaging in more substantive intellectual labor.

There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the Harley Scribe is the author of the Harley Lyrics. Yet there is a gulf that seems to divide the critical expectations for Middle English lyrics and Anglo-Norman texts copied by the same hand.<sup>10</sup> Although Anglo-Norman literature is finally being more consistently read alongside Middle English texts, texts in Royal 12.c.xii such as *Fouke le Fitz Waryn* have been long described as authored or translated by the Harley Scribe.<sup>11</sup> Even while extensive dialectal work on the Middle English lyrics in Harley 2253 has been used to argue for ever-increasingly complex layers of manuscript transmission, critics have suggested the Harley Scribe's responsibility for composing the Anglo-Norman Bible stories in the same manuscript.<sup>12</sup> The Harley Lyrics have received markedly less attention in the last academic generation.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, they have given rise to an understanding of Harley 2253 as primarily a literary, specifically lyrical manuscript. The astonishing richness of the Harley Lyrics has overshadowed, to some degree, the ways in which Harley 2253 is just another early-fourteenth-century manuscript, unremarkable precisely for its heterogeneity. The Harley Lyrics are monuments to a certain type of literary performance. Despite their resistance to more historicized readings, they nonetheless pose questions of specifically literary authorship. Royal 12.c.xii, however, has received much less critical attention than Harley 2253. Moving away from the overtly literary nature of the Harley Lyrics, the body of the Harley Scribe's work largely consists of very different types of texts—devotional and liturgical texts, romances and histories. Such texts exert different pressures on authorship, and thus offer different expectations for the talent, vision, and aesthetic mastery of an author. In that space, a different connection between scribe and text can be seen.

10. For one exception, see Jason O'Rourke, "MS BL Royal 12.c.xii and the Problems of Patronage," *Journal of the Early Book Society* 3 (2000): 216–26.

11. See *Fouke Le Fitz Waryn*, ed. E. J. Hathaway, P. T. Ricketts, C. A. Robson, and A. D. Wilshere, ANTS 26–28 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), xxxvii: "It is highly likely that he inherited, or had easy access to, the manuscript of the couplet romance, and that he was himself the author of the prose *remaniement* which he copied."

12. See Frances McSparran, "The Language of the English Poems," in Fein, *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, 391–426; and A. D. Wilshere, "The Anglo-Norman Bible Stories in MS Harley 2253," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 24 (1988): 78–89, who concludes: "The scribe-compiler of the Royal and Harley manuscripts was also the author of both the prose version of *FFW* [*Fouke le Fitz Waryn*] and the Bible stories" (87). The conclusion is endorsed, though refined, by John J. Thompson, "'Frankis rimes here I red, / Communlik in ilk[a] sted . . .': The French Bible Stories in Harley 2253," in Fein, *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, 271–88.

13. Birkholz persuasively argues that the interests of New Historicism, replacing those of the New Criticism, have diminished the lyrics' prominence.

Before turning away from lyrics entirely, however, there is a case to be made about the productive plurality of variation. The intertextuality generated by textual simultaneity will be an important concept for “copies” of texts such as the *Short Chronicle*, discussed at length below. In Harley 2253, two versions of “Litel Wot Hit Any Mon” coexist on f. 128<sup>r</sup>. The first, religious version (“The Way of Christ’s Love”) reminds the reader in its final stanza that Christ: “For loue of vs his wonges waxeþ þunne / his herte blod he zef for al mon kinne.”<sup>14</sup> On the same folio, a mere seven lines below this blandly pious image, is the second, rather more secular version of the text (“The Way of Woman’s Love”). There, the poem’s frustrated lover takes up the rhymes of the religious version to rather more suggestive effect: “Y wolde nemne hyre to day ; ant y dorste hire munne / heo is þat feireste may ; of vch ende of hire kunne / bote heo me loue of me heo haues sunne.”<sup>15</sup> Presumably the reading audience did not change from the top to the foot of the folio. The pointed juxtaposition and simultaneity of such lyrics could be part of their pleasure. As Firth Green notes: “The unusual practice of the Harley manuscript [in presenting both verses on the same folio] suggests that the English compiler was particularly eager to draw attention to the fashionable parallelism between the two pieces.”<sup>16</sup> The Harley Lyrics are often imagined as discrete phenomena. Yet, here Harley 2253 performs, even revels in, textual plurality on the medieval page. The simultaneous texts do not require an audience to choose between pious verses and the more suggestive love poem.

The two lyrics above are examples of a particular type of text in which substitution and variation play a central role, *contrafacta*, defined by *The Oxford Companion to Music* as: “A vocal piece in which the original text is replaced by a new one. . . . Contrafacta make up a significant portion of the surviving repertoires of 12th- and 13th-century Western monophonic secular song.”<sup>17</sup> Despite the comforting tone of this seemingly decisive definition, “original text” is a deeply problematic claim for anything that survives to us from the Middle Ages, particularly given the lyrical and musical flexibility

14. MS Harley 2253, f. 128<sup>r</sup>. I am deeply grateful to the staff of the British Library for facilitating access to the manuscript. See *New IMEV*, 1922.

15. MS Harley 2253, f. 128<sup>r</sup>. See *New IMEV*, 1921.

16. Richard Firth Green, “The Two ‘Litel Wot Hit Any Mon’ Lyrics in Harley 2253,” *Mediaeval Studies* 51 (1989): 310–11.

17. Alex Lingas, “contrafactum,” in *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Alison Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Oxford Reference Online. The definition also notes that “the motet and other genres of medieval polyphony also include many adaptations of sacred compositions to secular texts and vice versa,” suggesting neither the direction of adaptation (sacred to secular or vice versa), nor the language of the song, nor its monophonic or polyphonic compositional status necessarily delimits the genre.

that *contrafacta* demonstrate.<sup>18</sup> Hypothetically, given two perfectly metrical (or identically imperfect) texts that “fit” with the music, it is difficult to imagine conclusive evidence that might permit us to decide which of the two hypothetical texts might be the “original” text (particularly given the tendency of lyrics to be ahistorical).<sup>19</sup> Such interchangeability is part of contemporary musical practice, as well, which suggests an enormous number of texts for which authorship or originality are understood in very different ways, including mash-ups and remixes, and also less technologically inflected and less contemporary genres, such as traditional arrangements.<sup>20</sup> Medieval *contrafacta* can be textually innocuous, or aggressively appropriative.<sup>21</sup> That is, whether *contrafacta* are religious texts written to displace supposedly sinful lay texts, or obscene texts designed to overlay existing devotional and religious lyrics, they operate in a spectrum of textual substitution, juxtaposition, and exchange. Rendered interchangeable, they can be understood both on their own and collectively.<sup>22</sup>

Another set of *contrafacta* by the Harley Scribe begins his work in Royal 12.c.xii. The text known as the Office of Saint Thomas of Lancaster is the first text of the book.<sup>23</sup> Offering a set of services for the daily cycle of prayer, the seven-part Office is a *contrafacta* for at least four (and probably five) of its parts.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, music can be recovered for the four parts of the Office, and strongly suggested for a fifth part. Because the textual alterations are semantically substantive (but metrically minimal), the Lancaster Office can both cue the reader to the presence of a known source text standing

18. See Bella Millet's wonderful online resource on *contrafacta* and what she terms “paired lyrics” at <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~wpwt/notes/contraf.htm>.

19. I am grateful to the stimulating talk given by Ardis Butterfield and Helen Deeming, “Worldes blis: Editing the Words and the Music of an Early English Song,” at the Early English Text Society Conference held in Oxford in May 2010. See also W. Obst, “Svmer Is Icumen in’: A Contrafactum?” *Music & Letters* 64 (1983): 151–61; and Green, “Two Lyrics in Harley 2253,” 304–12.

20. Thus, the parodic and intertextual song by the band Half Man Half Biscuit, the 2005 “We Built This Village on a Trad. Arr. Tune,” from the album *Achtung Bono*.

21. See Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially pt. 2, on *contrafacta* and “refrain-citation.” Butterfield notes: “*Contrafacta* composition has much in common with refrain-citation: the substitution and juxtaposition of old texts and new tunes, or of new texts and old tunes is endemic to both” (104).

22. For example, the patriotic song known to Americans as “My Country, ’Tis of Thee,” set to the tune of “God Save the King/Queen,” neatly captures the politically contentious adaptations that *contrafacta* may make.

23. Printed in *Thomas Wright's Political Songs from the Reign of John to That of Edward II*, ed. Peter Coss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 268–72.

24. See Christopher Page, “The Rhymed Office for St. Thomas of Lancaster: Poetry, Politics, and Liturgy in Fourteenth-Century England,” in *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Studies on Texts and Performance* (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1997), XIV.

behind the current text, and also allow for the Office's performance as its own unique occasion. The kind of sophisticated polyvalent textuality common to *contrafacta* seen in the two versions of "Litel Wot Hit Any Mon" in Harley 2253 also operates in Royal 12.c.xii. Note, however, that the texts that stand connected to the Office are all religious texts, and do not cross divides of genre. The Office is a *contrafacta* of a hymn celebrating Christ's battle with the devil, and of an antiphon and a *prosa* for Saint Nicholas. It is also linked to a sequence on the miracles of Saint Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, and lastly to another sequence that survives in three versions—for Saint Thomas Cantilupe, for Saint Ethelbert of Hereford, and for the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the Office, Thomas of Lancaster is not a saint. He was the earl of Lancaster, and one of the most powerful magnates in England before his quasi-judicial execution in 1322. The opening words of the entire manuscript, the lines that greet the reader upon first opening Royal 12.c.xii, are "Gaude thoma ducum decus lucerna lancastrie qui per necem imitaris Thomam Cantuarie [Rejoice, Thomas, the glory of leaders, the light of Lancaster, you who imitates through death Thomas of Canterbury]."<sup>26</sup> In order to make sense of Royal 12.c.xii, it is necessary to make sense of Thomas of Lancaster's history and the complex roles he played in English politics during the reign of Edward II. It is also essential not to separate Thomas's political history and the later politically charged contests over his canonization. The geographic spread of his cult offers evidence for Thomas's importance to Ludlow and adjacent areas, including Hereford, not only as the leader of the Baronial opposition to Edward II and the Despensers, but as a locally venerated saint. Much like the famously troublesome Thomas Becket, Thomas of Lancaster's legacy was not only as a challenger to royal power. When Chaucer's pilgrims set off for Canterbury, a fourteenth-century audience was not likely to suspect them first and foremost of sedition.<sup>27</sup> Yet, political understandings of Thomas of Lancaster have tended to overshadow other aspects of his importance in fourteenth-century England. This is not to say that

25. Page, "The Rhymed Office," 136–38. Note that Page identifies these as source texts, which while clearly the case for the *contrafacta* of Fortunatus's Easter hymn, "Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis," is potentially more complicated with the sequences for Cantilupe, as they only survive in a fifteenth-century gradual, BL, MS Harley 3965, and thus postdate Royal 12.c.xii.

26. MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 1<sup>r</sup>; translation mine.

27. As against the hostility to Becket encouraged by Henry VIII, leading to the dismantling of his shrine and his name being scratched out of books, such as the erasure of the Feast of Saint Thomas from the calendar in the Queen Mary Psalter, London, BL, MS Royal 2.b.vii, f. 83<sup>r</sup>, a book closely contemporary (c. 1310–20) with the work of the Harley Scribe. See <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6467&CollID=16&NStart=20207>.

Thomas of Lancaster's political activities were not connected to his popular worship, but that they can be read, like Harley 2253's *contrafacta*, simultaneously rather than oppositionally. The texts of Royal 12.c.xii celebrate Thomas as a saint, and also advocate for political reform in broad, conventional, non-revolutionary ways. The following sections will trace Thomas of Lancaster's political history and the politics of his contested canonization in order to argue for a regional, rather than a political, understanding of the interventions the Harley Scribe makes in Royal 12.c.xii.

The *contrafacta* that begins Royal 12.c.xii links Thomas of Lancaster to two other Saint Thomases, Becket and Cantilupe, through the simple echoes of their shared first name, in a direct comparison of the opening lines of the Office, and also in the Office's reworking of two sequences originally composed for Cantilupe (d. 1282). The Office for Thomas adapts a triumphal hymn by the sixth-century Italian poet and composer Fortunatus, "pange linguam," thus adding to the broad comparisons attesting to Thomas of Lancaster's sanctity a link between Thomas and Christ.<sup>28</sup> Like Christ, Thomas becomes a victor on the third day, "agonista fit inuictus statim die tertia / dire neci est addictus, ob quod luget Anglia [On the third day he is suddenly made an unconquered champion, he is delivered to dire death, on account of which England mourns]."<sup>29</sup> In Royal 12.c.xii, Thomas of Lancaster is explicitly situated as a political martyr, "cuius capud conculcatur pacem ob ecclesie / atque tuum detruncatur / causa pacis anglie. . . . Copiose caritatis Thoma pugil strenue / qui pro lege libertatis decertasti anglie [whose head was broken on account of the peace of the Church, and thine is cut off for the cause of the peace of England . . . . O Thomas, strenuous champion of plentiful charity, who didst combat for the law of England's liberty]."<sup>30</sup> Yet, as seen in Chapter 2, appeals to "lege libertatis" and the charters can be formulaic, an expression of moderate hopes for reform rather than political radicalism.

Rather than opposing the sacred and the sinful, the devout and the romantic, the Office for Thomas of Lancaster in Royal 12.c.xii sees the Harley Scribe working in the midst of the intertwined discourses of politics and political sanctity in the Marches at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The Office should be read as a regional text, participating in and contributing to the local spiritual economy of the Marches—it reflects devotional prac-

28. Fortunatus's hymns seem to have been popular starting points for *contrafacta*. Another well-known hymn of his, "Vexilla regis prodeunt," was adapted to celebrate Piers Gaveston's execution in a version surviving in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.9.38. The manuscript is available online with relevant bibliography: <http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/images/index.php?ms=O.9.38&page=139>.

29. MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 1<sup>r</sup>; translation from *Political Songs*, 270.

30. MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 1<sup>r</sup>; translation from *Political Songs*, 272.

tices specific to Ludlow and nearby Hereford. The presence of the *contrafacta* for Thomas at the beginning of the entire codex is significant. Royal 12.c.xii was written at different times in the Harley Scribe's career: the script of the texts range in date from c. 1316–1340.<sup>31</sup> The codex itself suggests booklet-based assembly, and the manuscript can be divided into eight booklets, of which those *not* written by the Harley Scribe seem to be the core around which other materials were assembled.<sup>32</sup> What is now the first booklet of the codex, containing the Office for Lancaster, was necessarily written after Thomas's execution 1322. Revard's paleographical comparison of the scripts of Royal 12.c.xii to the dated charters in the Harley Scribe's hand suggests the Office was likely written sometime between 1321–27. A prophecy on f. 6<sup>r</sup> adds slight evidence for the middle or end of that range.<sup>33</sup>

Royal 12.c.xii was not bound at random. Although the Office for Thomas of Lancaster begins the codex, it must have been bound there 15–18 years after it was written. That is, the Office, written between 1322–27, would not have been bound in its present position until after the latest texts in the book had been written. Other items in the codex can be dated on internal evidence to 1338, and the Harley Scribe seems to have worked on the codex as late as c.1340.<sup>34</sup> The Office celebrates Thomas's political opposition to Edward II, but it also emphasizes his holiness, employing musical sequences not found outside of Hereford to celebrate his virtue. Royal 12.c.xii is a regional book that transforms Thomas into a local saint, translated not physically but textually.

The reputation of Thomas of Lancaster in 1322 was very different by 1340, when the Office was bound at the front of the codex. The implications of advocating for his canonization had changed over the intervening decades—his legacy had been appropriated and reappropriated by the crown and the opposition to the crown. The following sections will trace the history of Thomas of Lancaster and his reputation in order to argue for the Harley Scribe as the composer of the Office, work that might have been politically motivated in its inception, but was an expression of regional spirituality by the end of the period under consideration. A close consideration

31. See Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," 58. See also *Fouke*, xlv–liii.

32. See Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," 60n; and *Fouke*, xlv–xlvii.

33. See Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," 60n. The prophecy on f. 6<sup>r</sup>, originally dated 1325 but altered to 1326, has been used as evidence that the booklet was not completed before that date. However, the prophecy, reading "Anno mille C. ter / x bis quinto [superlinear 'sexto'] dabit ether / vina bladum fructus, fiet pro principe luctus, / vna columpna cadet populo quia cismata tradet," need not have been written after that date, rather than before, given the future tense of the main verb "dabit," and the unreliability of dates in prophecies more generally.

34. See Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," 60, citing Ker, *Facsimile*, xxi.

of Thomas's role in the history of Edward II's reign, his attempts to avail himself of symbolic similarities with the earlier rebel, Simon de Montfort, and the royal attempts to appropriate Thomas as a symbol of royal power rather than baronial opposition will be set against easy generalizations. Thomas of Lancaster, the second earl of Lancaster, second earl of Leicester, and earl of Lincoln, was executed at Pontefract in 1322 after a show trial by seven judges favorable both to Edward II and to the then-exiled Despensers.<sup>35</sup> The Earl was charged with crimes dating back almost ten years, ranging from plundering jewels and horses, to coming armed to parliament, to negotiating with the Scots. He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and beheaded for his crimes, though he was spared the first two punishments because of his royal blood.<sup>36</sup> As is often the case in the pointed performance of public execution, Thomas's crimes were only notionally connected to the reasons for his execution. Moreover, his execution by the royalist judges was staged to closely mimic the execution of Edward II's favorite, Gaveston, some ten years earlier.<sup>37</sup> Thomas was, in very literal senses as well as more broadly suggestive ways, the inheritor of much that was forfeited by the "disinherited" of the Barons' Wars in the 1260s.<sup>38</sup> His father Edmund, the son of Henry III, had received Simon de Montfort's forfeited earldom of Leicester, and the castles and lands (though not the title) forfeited by the earl of Derby, de Montfort's companion Robert de Ferrers.<sup>39</sup> In 1267, Edmund received what

35. This section draws on the invaluable accounts of J. R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307–22: A Study in the Reign of Edward II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); Roy M. Haines, *King Edward II: Edward of Caernarfon; His Life, His Reign, and Its Aftermath, 1284–1330* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003); and A. R. Echerd, "Canonization and Politics in Late Medieval England: The Cult of Thomas of Lancaster" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1983).

36. The standard account remains Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*. See also James Robinson, "Pilgrimage and Protest: Badges at the British Museum Relating to Thomas of Lancaster and Isabella, Queen of Edward II," in *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer*, ed. Sarah Blick (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), 170–81; J. T. McQuillen, "Who Was St. Thomas of Lancaster? New Manuscript Evidence," in *Fourteenth-Century England*, vol. 4, ed. J. S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 1–25; D. Pirovansky, "Bloody Miracles of a Political Martyr: The Case of Thomas Earl of Lancaster," *Studies in Church History* 41 (2005): 228–38.

37. See my article "Dismembered Borders and Treasonous Bodies in Anglo-Norman Historiography," in *Commemorating Violence: The Writing of History in the Francophone Middle Ages*, ed. N. Guynn and Z. Stahuljak (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, forthcoming).

38. The complaints of the "disinherited" were supposed to be resolved by the Dictum of Kenilworth, although hostilities between Henry III and later Edward I, and those disenfranchised after the Battle of Evesham, continued for generations. See also C. Valente, "Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, and the Utility of Sanctity in Thirteenth-Century England," *Journal of Medieval History* 21 (1995): 27–49.

39. The earldom of Derby should have returned to Robert de Ferrers following the Dictum of Kenilworth, but various legal maneuverings prevented this. See C. H. Knowles, "The Resettle-



was essentially the entire county of Lancaster, a grant that formed the core of the dynastic inheritance that would play such a major role in English politics over the next several centuries. Thomas of Lancaster's holdings were thus primarily in the North and the Midlands, but through his wife, Alice, he also held significant lands in North Wales and areas much closer to the Marches milieu of the Harley Scribe.<sup>40</sup>

Thomas of Lancaster directly benefitted from Simon de Montfort's execution and the wages of political insurgency. Despite what might have been a fairly strong argument against emulation, at times Thomas seems to have consciously modeled himself upon Simon de Montfort. Thomas struggled with Edward II over local, national, and foreign policy throughout Edward's reign. It is important to see his opposition not as a singular program, nor as one driven by an unchanging or wholly consistent ideological vision. From 1315–18, Lancaster's opposition to Edward II centered upon the king's adherence to the Ordinances, the 1311 collection of 41 grievances-turned-injunctions that had been forced upon Edward II by the Ordainers (the chief of the Ordainers was Thomas's father-in-law, Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln). The Ordinances, primarily designed to push the much-hated Piers Gaveston firmly out of the king's retinue, also addressed a wide variety of complaints, including the deeply troubling growth of prises (essentially the arbitrary seizure of goods in the king's name). Prises were so unpopular throughout the kingdom that the very wording of the Ordinances expressed anxiety that their abuse might provoke popular revolt, suggesting the country was "upon the point of rising on account of oppressions, prises and destructions."<sup>41</sup> The Ordinances had in part mirrored the Provisions of Oxford forced upon Henry III by Simon de Montfort in 1258. As Maddicott notes: "We are deal-

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ment of England after the Barons' War, 1264–7," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., vol. 32 (1982): 25–41.

40. One curious connection is to be found in Harley 273, the third book by the Harley Scribe. There, he copies a text by Robert Grosseteste, *Les Reules Seynt Roberd*, a text originally composed for the Countess of Lincoln (Margaret de Lacy, d. 1266), whose grandson was Henry de Lacy, third earl of Lincoln (d. 1311). Henry's daughter Alice would marry Thomas of Lancaster, and thus be *suo jure* Countess of Lincoln, and Countess of Lancaster and Leicester. Alice held the great lordship of Denbigh until threatened by the Despensers following Thomas's death in 1322. *Les Reules* also appear in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 24, which contains the unique copy of "La pleinte par entre mis sire Henry de Lacy e sire Wauter de Bybelesworth pur la croisierie en la terre seint," a humorous debate poem between de Lacy and Bibbesworth. See Ruth Dean, with Maureen Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts*, ANTS Occasional Publications 3 (London: Nuffield Press, 1999), 84 and 215. Henry de Lacy commissioned the so-called *Petit Brut* that survives in MS Harley 902 (incorrectly identified in the ODNB as Harley 907).

41. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 107, quoting *Statutes of the Realm*, i.157, 159. The Ordinances were not revoked until after Thomas of Lancaster's execution, in the 1322 Statute of York.

ing with men who knew their history and were rooted in it . . . it was not surprising that Lancaster should view himself as another Montfort. The parallels were too obvious to be disregarded.”<sup>42</sup>

In the early 1320s, Lancaster’s opposition shifted from upholding the Ordinances, particularly those that had been articulated with regards to Gaveston and the limitations of royal power, to a position catalyzed by the Despensers’ influence over the king. In 1321, as in the 1260s, a collection of barons set themselves in military opposition to the king. Politics are always local as well as national, and the problems of the Marches were transformed into a contest waged throughout the country. The baronial party included the Earl of Hereford and a number of lords from the Welsh Marches, all of whom were particularly threatened by the Despensers’ challenges to the long-held traditions of inheritance in the Marches.<sup>43</sup> Lancaster assumed the leadership of the revolt by May 1321. Whereas more broadly political concerns had anchored Thomas’s earlier opposition, in 1321 Thomas was likely driven in part by the Despensers’ rise to power and their problematic influence over Edward II. His condemnation in 1321 focused on the “evil counsellors” surrounding the king.<sup>44</sup> Like the earlier revolt of Simon de Montfort, the Earl’s opposition failed. He was largely abandoned by his supporters before being captured at the battle of Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire. Thomas was beheaded on 22 March 1322, and interred in the Cluniac Priory of Pontefract.

Thomas followed the pattern set by de Montfort in death as in his life: a devotional cult promptly grew around Thomas’s remains in Pontefract. In order to make sense of why the Harley Scribe, working 150 miles away from Pontefract in Ludlow, wrote the Office in Royal 12.c.xii, it is important to trace the cult’s early popularity, particularly outside of the North. A number of miracles were quickly associated with his tomb, recalling those at Simon de Montfort’s place of death at Evesham sixty years earlier.<sup>45</sup> Unlike Simon de Montfort’s cult, however, Thomas’s seems to have spread widely and quickly. Pilgrim badges, illuminated manuscripts, and wall paintings honoring the Earl all survive—the very heterogeneity of the evidence suggests something of the strength of the cult’s support. For a man who was not a saint, he occasioned significant quantities of devotional material in

42. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 321.

43. See J. C. Davies, “The Despenser War in Glamorgan,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3rd ser., vol. 9 (1915): 21–64.

44. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 259.

45. See *The Chronicle of William de Rishanger, of the Barons’ War: The Miracles of Simon de Montfort*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell, Camden Society (London, 1840).

his honor.<sup>46</sup> In addition to the Office in Royal 12.c.xii, there are three Suffrage prayers (prayers pleading for the intercession of a saint) addressed to Lancaster, surviving in Baltimore, Walters Art Museum MS W.105, Cambridge, Clare College, MS 6, and Dallas, Bridwell Library, MS 13.<sup>47</sup> A series of stylistically distinct images accompany the Suffrage prayer in the recently described Bridwell MS 13, the “Sellers Hours,” suggesting the cult had crossed the Channel quickly, as it was produced in St Omer c. 1325.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the illuminations in Bridwell MS 13, Thomas is also visually depicted in the well-known and gloriously decorated Luttrell Psalter (London, BL, MS Additional 42130) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 321, both books from Lincolnshire. A wall-painting, unintentionally preserved through Reformation-era whitewashing, survives in the church of St Peter ad Vincula, in South Newington, Oxfordshire. The painting draws on the same political resonances between Thomas Becket and Thomas Lancaster that are found in the Royal 12.c.xii Office, and depicts the executions of both Saint Thomas Becket and Thomas of Lancaster. The wall paintings were probably composed c. 1326.<sup>49</sup> Lastly, two pilgrimage objects connected to Lancaster’s cult are housed at the British Museum. One is a more conventional pilgrim badge and the other is a larger (165 x 127mm) devotional plaque honoring Lancaster and depicting his *vita*. In 2008, still another object was uncovered at an archaeological dig at Riverbank House and is now housed in the Museum of London.<sup>50</sup> From Pontefract, to Ludlow, to Oxford, to London, to St Omer, in humble lead pilgrim badges and simple

46. See J. Edwards, “The Cult of ‘St.’ Thomas of Lancaster and Its Iconography,” *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 64 (1992): 103–22.

47. See M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in the Library of Clare College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), who notes: “Suffrages to Thomas of Lancaster . . . scribbled in cent. xiv, xv” (11); Echerd, “Canonization and Politics,” 188–91.

48. McQuillen, “Who Was St. Thomas?” 2. The localization is partly an art historical conclusion, based on comparisons with the illuminations in New York, The Morgan Library, Morgan MS M. 754 and London, BL, MS Additional 36685, the two parts of a single Book of Hours. McQuillen notes of Bridwell MS 13: “The manuscript’s production in a French workshop . . . offers important evidence that the cult was more widespread than previously assumed” (12).

49. McQuillen, “Who Was St. Thomas?” 17.

50. See H. Tait, “Pilgrim Signs and Thomas, Earl of Lancaster,” *British Museum Quarterly* 20 (1955–56): 39–47; and Robinson, “Pilgrimage and Protest,” 179–80. See also the brief article by Geoff Egan, “A Newly Discovered Panel from the Cult of Thomas of Lancaster,” *Newsletter of the Guild of Arts Scholars, Dealers, and Collectors* (Winter 2008/9). The website of the Museum of London notes the find took place at Riverbank, Upper Thames House, and describes the comparable British Museum plaque as “of markedly poorer style” (<http://www.molas.org.uk/pages/siteSummariesDetails.asp?year=summaries2008&siteid=>). The Museum of London describes the object as having “commentary in slightly garbled French.” I regret that I have not yet had the opportunity to examine either plaque.

verses to illuminated books of hours, from wall paintings to elaborate musical prayer cycles, Thomas of Lancaster was worshipped and celebrated as a saint.

As seen in Chapter 2, relics are an essential part of authorizing sainthood, and require narratives to situate those objects as sanctified. Through the work of writers and artists such as the Harley Scribe, the cult of Thomas of Lancaster spread throughout England within months of his death, and continued to grow throughout the 1320s and 1330s before waning, though not disappearing. The cult underwent something of a revival at the beginning of the fifteenth century as part of Lancastrian propaganda. Although his relics do not seem to have been widely spread (or, perhaps more accurately, were not always well recorded), Lancaster's hat survived at Pontefract until the Dissolution, where it was held to be an efficient cure against headaches. His belt, also at Pontefract, was thought to be effective for women during labor.<sup>51</sup> Durham Cathedral held a rosary that was purportedly his.<sup>52</sup> Closer to the Harley Scribe is a note added to a cartulary from St Guthlac's Priory (a dependent priory of Gloucester Cathedral, the Priory is situated in Hereford), now Oxford, Balliol College MS 271. The note, probably dated to 1328, records receipt by the priory of 8s.4d. from "offerings of visitors at the image of Thomas of Lancaster in St. Peter's church, Hereford."<sup>53</sup> The sums are small compared to those generated for Hereford by the 1320 canonization of Thomas Cantilupe. As they had likely fallen off in the years since Thomas of Lancaster's death, however, they suggest there remained devotional interest in Thomas.<sup>54</sup> More broadly, the presence of at least a mildly flourishing cult of Thomas of Lancaster as late as 1328 is significant. The Harley Scribe wrote local texts in local books—Harley 2253 includes three saints' lives in his hand, those of Saints Ethelbert (jointly, the patron saint of Hereford

51. See Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 329. See also the account of the chapel's foundation in 1361 after blood flowed from the Pontefract tomb in 1359, *Victoria County History of York*, vol. 3: "His body was interred in 1322 in the priory church near the high altar. Many miracles were said to have been wrought at his shrine, and a chantry chapel was afterwards founded to the memory of 'Saint' Thomas. . . . This chapel was built c. 1361 on the top of the hill where the execution took place. In 1359 blood was said to have been seen flowing from the tomb of the martyred earl, his belt was reported to give assistance to women in child-bearing, and his hat to cure pains in the head." <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=36255#n30>.

52. See R. Stanton, *A Menology of England and Wales* (London, 1892), 752. Stanton also records a fifteenth-century orphrey (an embroidered chasuble) depicting Thomas, discovered in the crypt of St. Elphin's Church, Warrington (Cheshire) in 1824. See H. S. Cuming, "On an Effigy of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 35 (1879): 385–87.

53. See R. A. B. Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College, Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 287–88. See also Echerd, "Canonization and Politics," 217–18.

54. See R. Swanson and D. Lepine, "The Later Middle Ages, 1268–1535," in *Hereford Cathedral: A History*, ed. G. Aylmer and J. Tiller (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), 48–86.

Cathedral), Efrid of Leominster, and Wistan of Wistanstow. Leominster is roughly eleven miles south of Ludlow, and Wistanstow about ten miles to the northwest. The note in the cartulary from St Guthlac's priory attests to Thomas of Lancaster having joined the other three Herefordshire saints as local.

Other local shrines to Thomas of Lancaster were implicated in the politics of the country. There seem to have been several instances where offerings were left at informal or impromptu shrines in honor of Thomas. One such shrine neatly captures the extent, and limits, of Thomas's popular veneration. Thomas himself had donated a "wooden tablet" to St. Paul's Cathedral in 1311, to celebrate the Ordinances. After Thomas's execution, St Paul's became a locus of devotion, and at some point a statue of Lancaster was placed near the plaque. The statue and plaque became popular objects of devotion, and a number of miracles were claimed as having occurred near the plaque by the "saint." Thomas of Lancaster's legacy was still, in 1323, primarily political. Edward II wrote to the bishop of London in June 1323, harshly condemning those "foolish pilgrims, without authorization from the Roman Church, [who] venerate and worship this tablet as though it were a holy thing and believe that it works miracles . . . in disgrace to the whole church."<sup>55</sup> Edward II's opposition to the cult and his sense of the challenges the cult posed to his authority (here couched as a challenge to papal authority) is an obvious response to a dead-and-buried political opponent. Yet, as the cult became more widely distributed and the years passed from Thomas's execution, his quasi-sanctification ceased to signify solely, or even primarily, a politics of opposition. His relics were good against headaches and pain in childbirth, neither of which would concern Edward II. By the end of Edward II's reign, Thomas was not merely a symbol of opposition to the king or the Ordinances.

The political implications of the Harley Scribe writing the Office a few years after Thomas's death, therefore, are not as clear-cut as they might seem. It is important to resist an oversimplification of the politics of the era into a binary of "royal" and "baronial." As the frequent reissues of Magna Carta first symbolized rather more than they stated, and then symbolized rather less than they had done originally, so too the valences of Thomas's reputation: his cult was used to advocate not a formal program of opposition to the crown,

55. See Echerd, "Canonization and Politics," 72–75, translating *Foedera*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 525–26. The "tablet[s]" thereby described may well resemble those still preserved at York Minster. See J. Purvis, "The Tables of the York Vicars Choral," *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 41 (1967): 741–48. Photographs of the tablets are also available in Purvis's papers, held by Leeds University Library.

but rather a more general and generalized case for “good governance” and reasonable rule. Indeed, the decoupling of Thomas of Lancaster’s popular cult from any particular political program is seen most clearly in the attempts made to deploy his reputation by Edward II’s successors. By 1327, Isabella and Mortimer had captured Edward II. The pair made a number of efforts to increase their support among those who had fallen out with Edward II. As one means to solidify and legitimate their own seizure of power, they petitioned the pope for Thomas of Lancaster’s canonization, once in 1327 and again in 1330.<sup>56</sup> The first letter to the pope was written a mere two days after Edward III’s coronation, suggesting something of the perceived urgency, and utility, of the project.<sup>57</sup> The second set of letters was sent in Edward III’s name in March 1330, shortly before Isabella and Mortimer lost power.<sup>58</sup> Embracing the popular cult of a former opponent was a shift from past practices—Henry III had moved to suppress the cult and the miracles of Simon de Montfort, and Edward II had attempted to suppress the growth of Lancaster’s cult in Pontefract and in London. Isabella and Mortimer, seeing an opportunity to align themselves with both popular devotional sentiment and a mild sense of political opposition, found publicly supporting Thomas of Lancaster’s prospective canonization to be politically useful. The implications of the Office had changed significantly between its composition in the early 1320s, and its being bound to open Royal 12.c.xii before 1340.

Lancaster’s cult cannot be reduced to any particular political program.<sup>59</sup> Once Thomas’s popularity was available for appropriation, it became convenient symbolic currency. Lifting a page from his mother’s playbook, Edward III also petitioned the pope for Lancaster’s canonization shortly after claiming power in April 1331. Edward III’s tactics suggest that Lancaster had already become a politically potent but also a safely redeployable symbol of “good counsel” and “good rule.” Between 1325 and 1327, the period during

56. See John M. Theilmann, “Political Canonization and Political Symbolism in Medieval England,” *Journal of British Studies* 29 (1990): 241–66, noting Isabella and Mortimer’s requests to the pope for canonization in February 1327 and March 1330, and a third request by Edward III in April 1331: “Parliament, too, petitioned for the canonization of Lancaster and another opponent of Edward II, Robert Winchelsey, the late archbishop of Canterbury, in 1327” (251).

57. See Echerd, “Canonization and Politics,” 114–15.

58. See Echerd, “Canonization and Politics,” where he notes the letter emphasizes “the impressive number of miracles being worked at his tomb and the great throngs of pilgrims which flocked to Pontefract as a result” (138). The focus on Lancaster’s cult as a religious rather than a political program is notable.

59. See Echerd, “Canonization and Politics,” who observes: “It is not surprising that a third drive to secure Thomas of Lancaster’s canonization was mounted . . . within a few months after Mortimer’s fall. . . . Just as in the letter of 1330, there is nothing said about Lancaster’s political career, and again the stress is on Thomas as a miracle-worker rather than as a defender of the English constitution” (149).

which the Royal 12.c.xii Office was written, and the assembly of the entire codex, a process completed as late as 1340, English politics were—unsurprisingly—complicated. While the details may have changed radically (pre- and post-Isabella and Mortimer, for example), the political contests over the nature and processes of power, and the extent and limits of royal power, were not dissimilar throughout the Middle Ages. Many critics have attempted to connect the Office for Thomas of Lancaster with the political sympathies of the Harley Scribe or his employers, as if such affiliations were unchanging.<sup>60</sup> More significant for the Harley Scribe is understanding the ways in which the Office participates in the traditions of Ludlow, Herefordshire, and the Marches more generally. The Office celebrates a local saint, and calls for good governance, good counsel, and integrity as important to England's laws and politics.

Royal 12.c.xii is a local book, embedded in the spiritual and financial economies of the region, and engaged in the history of that region over several decades.<sup>61</sup> The Harley Scribe's work on the texts of Royal 12.c.xii is best understood when read in those contexts. And it is in writing the history of the region that we see the Harley Scribe as the scribal author of another text in Royal 12.c.xii, the *Short Chronicle*, a short historiographical text in Middle English. The Harley Scribe remodeled and reimagined his source text(s) in ways deeply connected to the local and regional concerns manifested in the Office. The following section will interrogate the unique version of the *Short Chronicle* preserved in Royal 12.c.xii as an example of scribal authorship. It will consider first the challenges to conventional editorial theory posed by mutable and mobile texts such as the *Short Chronicle*, and then argue for vernacular historiography as a particular locus of scribal authorship. In doing so, it will also challenge the generic boundaries between history writing and romance, between list-making and literature, and between scribes and authors.

Thomas of Lancaster's death recalled Simon de Montfort's, but it also recalled that of Edward II's favorite Piers Gaveston in 1312. The polysemy should remind us of the dangers of reading history as anything but literature. It is in this fluid historiographical, visual, cultural, and political context that the *Short Chronicle* in Royal 12.c.xii exists, both at the time of its writing,

60. The long period of time during which the book was written and assembled should militate against attempts to place the Harley Scribe in a household or retinue solely on the basis of their support for Thomas of Lancaster's political agenda.

61. Page, "The Rhymed Office," states: "The evidence points strongly to the diocese of Hereford. The three sequences beginning *Summi regis in honore* do not appear, as far as I am aware, outside of books conforming to the use of Hereford" (138).

c.1316–17, and when it was incorporated into the codex before 1340. For a short Middle English text, the *Short Chronicle* poses complicated textual issues, resisting many of the editorial assumptions considered in Chapter 1. Its complexities provide significant insight to how scribes engaged with their textual models, and offers evidence for nonreplicative forms of copying, including, ultimately, authorship. An initial difficulty stems from talking about “the” *Short Chronicle* at all—the different versions, such as they are, are clearly connected, yet also clearly distinct. The text is recognizably history writing, though such a generic classification says little about the text’s relationship to the historical: Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum* seems to delight in being utterly un-historical history writing. The wide variation among the different texts of the *Short Chronicle* does not preclude their identification as historiography, inasmuch as they include miracles, wonders, and other elements of saints’ lives, rudderless boats and giants and the stuff of romance, and other narrative conventions of other genres of medieval texts. The poem narrates the history of the island of Britain, divided into the three conventional periods of *translatio imperii* as constructed by insular historiography: legendary British history (Galfridian), Anglo-Saxon history (derived from Bede and his twelfth-century successors, particularly Henry of Huntingdon), and post-Conquest history. The *Short Chronicle* offers short descriptions of kings in a relentlessly seamless sequence. Sometimes, the narrative is so spare as to provide only a king’s name, the length of his reign, and where he is buried. At times, however, the bare narrative becomes richer and more complex. For lack of a better term, narrative “episodes” of varying length offer anecdotes of historiographical, hagiographical, geographical, and simply general interest.

The differences between the versions of the *Short Chronicle*, particularly those amongst narrative episodes, both create and frustrate a sense of there being “a” text shared by all surviving manuscripts. The *Short Chronicle* is, in fact, a set of distinct and yet interrelated texts. The texts were written between 1280 and the middle of the fifteenth century, and the variations between texts challenge some key assumptions made both in the critical editorial project, and also resist attempts to distinguish the scribal from the authorial. Setting aside the unique version in Royal 12.c.xii for the moment, the *Short Chronicle* as a group of interrelated texts survives in five manuscripts and three fragments.<sup>62</sup> In addition to Royal 12.c.xii and MS Advocates

62. Note that David Burnley and Alison Wiggins make two errors in the notes to the *Short Chronicle* in the Auchinleck facsimile available online ([http://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/heads/smc\\_head.html](http://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/heads/smc_head.html)). They incorrectly conflate London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.xi with London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, which contains L33amon’s *Brut*, but not a fragment of the *Short Chron-*



19.2.1 (the Auchinleck manuscript), “complete” texts of the *Short Chronicle* (those that do not present any evident loss) survive in London, BL, MS Additional 19677, and CUL, MSS Dd.xiv.2 and Ff.v.48. Fragmentary versions survive in Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poet. 145, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.xi, and the recently discovered Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, MS M199.<sup>63</sup> In date, they range from the earliest fragment, a strip bound into a manuscript of the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester in Cotton Caligula A.xi, dated by Ralph Hanna to c. 1280, to the recently discovered fragment BPH M199, a late-sixteenth- or early-seventeenth-century copy.<sup>64</sup> Royal 12.c.xii and the Auchinleck copy of the *Short Chronicle* date to the first

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*icle*. They also list an additional manuscript of the *Short Chronicle*: “olim Phillipps (Sotheby Sale Cat., June 29, 1936, Lot 105). Present owner unknown.” In fact, the Phillipps manuscript sold at Sotheby’s is a roll and described as a “Chronicle of the Kings of England . . . in old English rhyming verse, with a medallion portrait of each King, and a genealogical tree.” *Catalogue of a Further Portion of the Classical, Historical, Topographical, Genealogical, and Other Manuscripts and Autograph Letters of the Late Sir Thomas Phillipps* (29 and 30 June 1936), 20. This is very unlikely to have been a copy of the *Short Chronicle*, and instead is most probably a copy of the “Verses on the Kings of England,” on which see Chapter 4 below. I am grateful to Emily Runde for her assistance with this matter.

63. See *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ed. Ewald Zettl, EETS OS 196 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935); *The Abridged English Metrical Brut*, ed. U. O’Farrell-Tate; and Peter Grund, “A Previously Unrecorded Fragment of the Middle English Short Metrical Chronicle in Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica M199,” *English Studies* 87 (2006): 277–93. Line numbers will be cited by specifying manuscript by sigil (as employed by Zettl, plus M, to designate the BPH fragment) and line number. Royal 12.c.xii will be quoted from my transcriptions of the manuscript, or from the edition by O’Farrell-Tate, and cited accordingly. The BPH fragment will be quoted using Grund’s line numbers. All other quotations will employ Zettl’s line numbers but include a manuscript sigil to indicate which text of the *Short Chronicle* is being quoted.

64. See Ralph Hanna, “Reconsidering the Auchinleck Manuscript,” in *New Directions in Later Medieval Manuscript Studies: Essays from the 1998 Harvard Conference*, ed. Derek Pearsall (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), 91–102; and Grund, “Previously Unrecorded Fragment,” 278. It is striking that the strip in MS Cotton Caligula A.xi and the text in MS BPH M199 begin at precisely the same place. Both describe the making of the hot baths at Bath by the British king Bladud. The Cotton Caligula A.xi fragment, forty-seven lines in a single column, begins at line B.151 (“After þe kyng Lud / Regned his sone Bladud”) and is bound before a very similar passage describing the origins of the baths in the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester. The BPH MS199 fragment also begins at B.151 but is almost twice as long as the Caligula fragment. According to Grund’s collation of the fragment, “it does not share any unique readings with . . . C [Caligula]” (285) and “cannot derive from any one of the extant manuscripts exclusively” (288). The interest expressed by BPH M199 likely reflects the alchemical conceits of the text, a concern of the BPH manuscript more generally. An interest in the alchemical may well also explain why the Cotton Caligula fragment was separated from what one presumes to have been a complete text (written in 1280 in a formal book hand, the fragment was unlikely to have been an excerpt). MS Cotton Caligula A.xi is a volume bound by Robert Cotton, and the second part of the codex, a later text of *Piers Plowman*, is not connected to the *Chronicle* in the first part of the volume. It is possible the strip was bound in when the two parts of the manuscript were brought together in Cotton’s collection. There are notes in the hand of John Stow (d. 1605) on f.164’.

half of the fourteenth century, while the two CUL manuscripts can be dated to the middle of the fifteenth century.

Because of the text's brevity, the imagined audience for the *Short Chronicle* has most typically been an ignorant one. What little attention has been paid to the text has speculated about the purpose and audience of the text, without fully considering the surviving paleographical and codicological evidence of the text's first readers: the scribes who wrote it. Both Cambridge manuscripts can be dated and localized quite specifically, and those localizations offer previously unconsidered evidence for the poem's reception. CUL MS Ff.v.48 was written by Gilbert Pilkington, who was ordained as a subdeacon, deacon, and a secular priest in the diocese of Lichfield between 1463 and 1465.<sup>65</sup> CUL MS Dd.xiv.2 was written by a wealthy Oxford brewer, Nicholas Bishop.<sup>66</sup> In a colophon to the codex in his hand, Bishop dates the book to 1432.<sup>67</sup> The lives and work of these two men argue against the suggestions of previous critics that the text's purpose was "to interest, and so to inform, the unlearned."<sup>68</sup> More charitably, this ignorance has been constructed as a function of an audience's youth or more general lack of education. Understanding the text as primarily pedagogical, however, insidiously constructs the text as too simplistic for learned adults. Such assessments devalue Middle English at the beginning of the fourteenth century, implying it was not a viable vernacular in which sophisticated literary and intellectual composition might take place.<sup>69</sup> For example the *Short Chronicle* fragments

65. See Thomas Ohlgren, *Robin Hood: The Early Poems, 1465–1560* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 36–40.

66. See Sanford Meech, "Nicholas Bishop, an Exemplar of the Oxford Dialect of the Fifteenth Century," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 49 (1934): 443–59. Meech transcribes the colophon and two Middle English texts in the manuscript that concern lawsuits Bishop was pursuing, one of which was a property dispute in Oxford. The two texts transcribed by Meech feature in the *MED* but do not appear in *LALME*. Note that transcriptions of some of the Middle English appear in Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 44–47. On the family, see William Page, *Victoria County History of Oxfordshire* (London, 1908), 2: 260; and H. E. Salter, *Survey of Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, vols. 14 and 20 1960, 1969), 14: 22–26 and 20: 144–45. The identification first appears in the *Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856), 1: 520–22.

67. Bishop notes on f. 329<sup>r</sup> that "istud librum primitus fuit ffnitum. per Nicholaum Bysshop de Oxon filium & heredem Bartholomei Bysshopp" (Meech, "Nicholas Bishop," 443).

68. Quoted in O'Farrell-Tate, *Abridged Brut*, 12. See also Zettl, *Short Chronicle*, cxxx.

69. See Revard, "Scribe and Provenance"; and A. G. Rigg, *A Book of British Kings, 1200 B.C.–1399 A.D.: Edited from British Library MSS Harley 3680, Cotton Claudius D.vii, and Harley 1808* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000), a text the editor considers to be mnemonic verses and versified redactions of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history, seen primarily as a "pedagogical tool" (3), although interestingly accompanied by prose commentaries, suggesting a higher order of pedagogy than one might first presume.

in Rawlinson Poet. 145 are accompanied by Latin annotations, which argue against the text as by or for the unlearned. More recent critical opinion has shifted from Turville-Petre's description of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* as a "wretched little work."<sup>70</sup> For example, the editor of the Royal 12.c.xii text suggests that the *Short Chronicle* "be considered on its own terms, instead of being examined in terms of expectations of 'romance' writing and 'historical' writing."<sup>71</sup> What those terms might be is not entirely clear. This is not to say the *Short Chronicle* is great poetry, nor that it is fundamentally innovative as history writing. But it was interesting enough to occupy the time and work of at least seven medieval scribes. It is an unconsidered critical reflex to dismiss those seven scribes as primarily desiring to entertain themselves, and thus to imply all seven were ignorant of literary merit, historiographical convention, or history itself.

Gilbert Pilkington, the scribe and owner of CUL MS Ff.v.48, copied a wide variety of texts in the book, including Mirk's *Instructions for the Parish Priest*, the *Northern Passion*, a number of other Middle English items in prose and verse, and two short Latin texts (one a charm, and the other a vatic text).<sup>72</sup> Pilkington may not have been university-educated—there is no record of him at either Oxford or Cambridge—but neither his ecclesiastical background nor his collection suggest someone who would struggle to remember the sequence of post-Conquest kings. Given his vigorous and highly textualized engagement with devotional texts, and his training as a secular priest, Pilkington was not someone who might merely have found the *Short Chronicle* a pleasing rhyme to help commit history to memory. He may have mediated such a function for others, of course, but pedagogy cannot have been the text's only purpose.

Nicholas Bishop, the Oxford brewer, was also quite sophisticated in his tastes. The book in his hand, CUL MS Dd.xiv.2, contains only two Middle English pieces, both of which recount his legal struggles with Oseney Abbey. The other materials in his hand include extensive copying from a now-lost version of the cartulary of Eynsham Abbey and a number of other Latin texts related to Oseney and Oxford.<sup>73</sup> Bishop's book engages with the fundamen-

70. Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 109.

71. O'Farrell-Tate, *Abridged Brut*, 13. Disappointingly, after her analysis of the text, in her conclusion she returns to the position shared by Wells and Zettel, and notes of the *Short Chronicle*: "[It] seems likely, its function was to provide a history of England that was short enough to be memorised, but also interesting enough to be entertaining" (35). See also Stanley's rather withering assessment of the *Short Chronicle* in his review of O'Farrell-Tate's edition, where he describes the text as "educational pap." Eric G. Stanley, *Notes & Queries* 50 (2003): 229–31.

72. See Ohlgren, *Robin Hood*, 39–40.

73. See *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham*, ed. H. E. Salter (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

tally historicized and textualized nature of English law, particularly property law and its historical and documentary requirements.<sup>74</sup> Not only did Bishop find the *Short Chronicle* of interest while copying records to address the various legal issues he confronted, but he added to the text. Bishop extended the *Short Chronicle* in verse up to the reign of Henry VI, and then in rather fragmentary prose to c. 1431. Again, the *Short Chronicle* may be neither exquisite poetry nor wholly accurate history, but to dismiss it as a rhyme for children or the ignorant is to ignore the evidence that survives. The Harley Scribe single-handedly preserved an important collection of Middle English verse of emphatically high literary quality. He found it worth his time to copy the *Short Chronicle*, and, as I will argue below, to rewrite and to write parts of it. The *Short Chronicle* may have been used to instruct parishioners or young members of a wealthy household, but it also may have been used to help construct a historical narrative as part of Bishop's lawsuits and legal claims. Regardless, the poem is not wholly devoid of subtlety, substance, or sophistication.

There is something innate to the poem that poses fundamental challenges to the rigorous expectations of traditional editorial practices. Editing privileges either the manuscript or the author. In the latter scenario, editors seek to reconstruct the text of the earliest archetype for all surviving versions, a single text standing behind all surviving instances. As seen in Chapter 1, many of the assumptions of stemmatic editing rely upon unreliable expectations for medieval texts—scribes did not always attempt to copy their exemplars. The *Short Chronicle* demonstrates a series of scribal activities that are quite clearly not copying, but also not simply (or simplistically) “authorship.” The poem was described by the original *Manual of Writings in Middle English* as “in five recensions in five MSS.”<sup>75</sup> The one-to-one correspondence of manuscripts to versions points to some of the difficulties posed by a work that varies from 900 lines to almost 2400 lines, and ends with prayers for two, and possibly three, different kings of England. The text, however it is described, raises complicated questions about composition, circulation, and

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1907), xxxviii: “He [Bishop] borrowed the cartulary of Eynsham to study its charters about Oxford, and has left us transcripts of Nos. 125, 255, and 256, but it is clear that he did not use our volume.”

74. See Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), chap. 2.

75. See J. E. Wells, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1400* (New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1926): 198; and E. D. Kennedy, *Chronicles and Other Historical Writing*, vol. 8 of *A Manual of Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500*, ed. A. E. Hartung (Hamden, CT: Archon Books for the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1989), which describes the text as “five manuscripts that represent approximately complete redactions” (2622).

medieval authorship. Particularly because the poem has hitherto been little valued as either history writing or poetry, those questions prove more amenable to less conventional answers.

The terms “copy” and “manuscript” were shown in Chapter 1 to be insufficiently nuanced to take in the varieties of medieval practice. So, too, the traditional terminology of textual scholarship is less useful when applied to texts such as the *Short Chronicle*. “Version,” “recension,” and “redaction” all suggest that there is some original text, singular and knowable, that stands behind all other texts. Moreover, however complex the chains of descent imagined may be, the terms imply a single source from which all other instances derive. As Elizabeth Bryan has noted, there are further difficulties of vocabulary when comparing the “same” text found in different manuscripts. Stating that a text has or does not have a passage relies upon a logic of absolutes. There can be an unconscious narrativization from “has” and “doesn’t have” to presence and absence, and from there to “added” or “lost.” The language of supplement and decrement still presupposes a single and fixed textual archetype. In discussing texts both distinct and connected, the critic teeters at the moralizing edge of the traditional language of manuscript studies and textual criticism, and its “good” readings and “bad” manuscripts. Bryan articulates her own critical dilemma to find a terminology that could address the very different—but clearly connected—texts preserved in the two manuscripts of Lazamon’s *Brut*:

Instead of saying “The Otho C.xiii manuscript *omits* a line contained in Caligula A.ix” or “Otho *substitutes* a word with French etymology for a word with English etymology”—which would imply that Otho was directly derivative from Caligula, and it is not—I substituted phrases like “Otho *does not contain* a line that Caligula *does contain*.”<sup>76</sup>

The language surrounding scribal error and accuracy presumes static and singular exemplars, and a scribe engaged in replicative or duplicative copying. This narrative of textual transmission, which entails linear temporal progression and geographic distribution, fits poorly with vernacular historiography. Texts exist in multiple manuscripts that are not simply derived from one another, or from a single, stable antecedent.

76. See Elizabeth Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture: The Otho Layamon* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), xii. See also Lauryn Mayer, *Worlds Made Flesh: Reading Medieval Manuscript Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), who offers a different vocabulary to discuss the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, which she refers to (confusingly) as the *Metrical Chronicle*.

Observing that the *Short Chronicle* written by the Harley Scribe in Royal 12.c.xii does not contain text that another manuscript of the *Short Chronicle* does contain, while free of unintended narrativization, does not necessarily allow for explanation past that simple description. That is, on the face of it, the text absent from Royal 12.c.xii and present in another manuscript may indicate that the Harley Scribe has “omitted” some text, whether through mechanical error or through more considered scribal intervention. Alternately, his exemplar might not have possessed the text. In that scenario, textual omission becomes instead the Harley Scribe engaging in accurate replicative copying. The mechanical reproduction of an exemplar by medieval scribes cannot be assumed as axiomatic. Even the narrative suggested by “generations” of texts, copied and read and recopied by medieval scribes, may reflect the temporalizing narrative logic of biological reproduction that we impose upon manuscripts. Some manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle* are quite clearly unique versions. Whatever the connections between these versions, they are not explained by straightforward models of textual transmission. At the same time, other manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle* contain texts more similar than different. All manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle* contain at least some text in common.<sup>77</sup> Inasmuch as they are *sui generis* medieval artifacts, all manuscripts contain different texts. But, for the *Short Chronicle*, it is disingenuous to note their differences without acknowledging that the manuscripts also preserve connected texts. Particularly for two textually close manuscripts (CUL MS Dd.xiv.2 and BL MS Additional 19677), it seems fairly evident that they are both textually descended from some type of “original” archetype in a more traditional model of textual transmission. At the same time, the work of the Harley Scribe in Royal 12.c.xii and Scribe 1 of the Auchinleck manuscript suggest textual transmission in ways that are anything but traditional.

Chapter 2 argued for the ways in which historiographical literature was particularly susceptible to rewriting and redirection within the broad contours of a textual tradition. The *Short Chronicle*, for all the difficulties it poses to critics who reject it as either literature or history, is nonetheless instantly recognizable as insular historiography. Though its specific textual perfor-

77. Thus Zettl's sense that the “original version . . . cannot have had more than about 900 lines of metre at the most” (*Short Chronicle*, cxxix). In his review of Zettl's edition, Ekwall discerns a still smaller core, in which the pre-Conquest entries resembled the post-Conquest entries for brevity, “The whole chronicle will have filled about 250 lines, that is some six lines to each of the 40 or so kings enumerated.” E. Ekwall, *English Studies* 19 (1937): 220. Note the imperative by both scholars to find the “original” text. Addressing the text's initial extent rather than length, Hanna suggests that, given his redating of the fragment in Cotton Caligula A.xi, the “original” may have extended only to the reign of Henry III. See also O'Farrell-Tate, *Abridged Brut*, 18.

mance of genre may be uncomfortably vague, its participation in the discourses of history writing in England at the close of the thirteenth century is not at all uncertain. After the great Latin historiographical texts of the twelfth century, in particular Geoffrey of Monmouth, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Malmesbury, much history writing was composed in the vernaculars in the course of the thirteenth century, particularly by the end of the century. Shorter texts proliferated in the place of longer texts. Increasingly, texts such as the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut* and *Li Rei de Engleterre* appeared in numerous manuscripts, evidence of their rapid circulation and quickly accrued popularity.<sup>78</sup> The *Short Chronicle* is part of the larger shift to a more heterogeneous corpus of history writing in the second half of the thirteenth century.

Many medieval texts exhibit varying degrees of textual mobility in unproblematic fashion. Lyrics, in particular, are often found to be copied and recopied with additional verses or altered lines, something neatly captured in the four lines of “Earth upon earth” the Harley Scribe copied in Harley 2253. This lyric survives in at least three versions in almost forty manuscripts, ranging from only a few lines to over eighty lines.<sup>79</sup> In their brevity they resist many of the processes of conventional editing, but their brevity also makes it possible simply to print multiple versions alongside each other, and be done with the matter. The *Short Chronicle*, at over 900 lines, is long enough to be edited, as witnessed by the many attempts to do so in the past one hundred years. At the same time, however, there is clearly something unsatisfying, because unsuccessful, in those repeated attempts. Indeed, those aspects of the *Short Chronicle* that resist editing are those that enabled medieval scribes (including the Harley Scribe) to recognize the text as modular and flexible, as amenable to excerpting and to more interventionist engagement, including correction, emendation, and substantive rewriting. That is, the *Short Chronicle* was not subject to, but rather was an occasion for composition, and editorial practices predicated upon “copying” cannot accommodate its textual mobility.

A sense of the textual variation of the *Short Chronicle* can be seen in comparison with the Anglo-Norman text *Li Rei de Engleterre* (hereafter *Li Rei*), a short prose history that extends in its most common form from the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon king Ecgberht to Henry III. One section of *Li Rei* likely derives from the *Gesta regum* of William of Malmesbury: a list of the shires of

78. See Sharon K. Goetz, “Textual Portability and Its Uses in England, ca. 1250–1330” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006), chap. 3. I am grateful to Sharon Goetz for discussions about her work, as well as on textual mobility and English historiography.

79. See Harley 2253, f. 59<sup>v</sup>. See also *New IMEV*, 703, 704, 705, 3939, 3940, and 3985.

England, often accompanied by a list of the bishoprics of the island. Versions of this list survive in roughly comparable forms in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English histories. This list, a section of longer (though often still quite short) histories, is itself sometimes found on its own.<sup>80</sup> Its separate circulation is instructive, attesting to the episode's textual mobility and its resistance to conventional editing.<sup>81</sup> As the following quotations demonstrate, it can be extremely difficult to formulate a decisive description of the connections between the Anglo-Norman prose "Shiring" found in London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix:

Iadis en cel tens as engleis suleit engleterre estre en cinc parties. E a .v. reis. . . . Li reis de Mercheneriche; si aueit Gloucestrescire. Wyrecestrescire. Warewikescire. Cestrescire. Dorbiscire. Staffordscire. Scropscire. herefordscire. Oxenefordscire. Bukinghamscire. heortfordscire. huntindone. demi bedeforscire.<sup>82</sup>

and the *Short Chronicle* account found with some variation in most of its manuscripts:

Supþe anon sone & swiþe  
Was Engelond idelyd afyue  
To fyue kynges treuwelich . . .  
þe kyng þat was of Merkene riche  
Nas þer non to hym iliche  
He hadde Gloucestreschire Pynnocschire  
Wircestreschire Warwicschire  
Staffordschire Derbischire  
Chestreschire Schropschire  
Al þe March Herefordschire  
Oxinfordschire Hontyngdoneschire  
Hertfordschire Bokynhamschire.<sup>83</sup>

Whether in Anglo-Norman prose or Middle English verse, a list of the counties and bishoprics of England needs no singular textual antecedent. Moreover, the list does not require specialized, local historical knowledge to

80. Goetz entitles the textual unit "Shiring" in "Textual Portability," 38–40.

81. See Goetz, "Textual Portability," 40–41.

82. Transcription by Goetz, "Textual Portability," 210–11, from Cotton Caligula A.ix, f. 229<sup>a-b</sup>.

83. *Short Chronicle*, B.321–23, B.351–59.



recreate or to modify. Such moments pose a particular difficulty for the textual critic: the list-making in which both texts engage is evidence neither for textual replication or traditional copying, nor for scribal innovation or composition. This is not to say that such lists are inconsequential; the imposition of political and ecclesiastical frameworks upon the geography of the island accomplished by the Shiring is an enormously important moment in English history writing. Taken in isolation, however, the function the list performs as part of larger texts is lost. Within the shared textual vocabulary of the insular historiographical tradition, the implications and accomplishments of any particular textual moment are less visible when extracted and situated alongside comparable textual moments. Their multiplicity and existence across several texts can dilute their perceived importance.

It is all too easy to skim over lists of counties and bishoprics in Middle English. In the passage quoted above, all manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle* except for Royal 12.c.xii assign a number of counties to the King of the March/Mercia, including the slightly less well-known county of “Pynnocschire.”<sup>84</sup> Zettl unhelpfully glosses this in his index as “Pinnok and district, in Gloucestershire,” without adding further comment as to why it might be in a list of counties ruled by the King of the March/Mercia.<sup>85</sup> Although rhyming on “-shire” can hardly have posed serious difficulty to anyone living in England, let alone a scribe, Pinnockshire’s improbable appearance in four manuscripts suggests that its appearance may well have occurred in the common core of shared materials that constitute the *Short Chronicle*. That is, the place name was likely a feature of the earliest text upon which subsequent alteration, revision, and expansion took place.<sup>86</sup> Although this may describe when it

84. The “Shiring” employs a variant of Henry of Huntingdon’s Heptarchy, dividing the island amongst the kings of Kent, Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria. There seems to be some slippage between “Merce,” indicating Anglo-Saxon Mercia, and “march(e),” meaning Anglo-Saxon Mercia, or the Welsh Marches. See *MED* “Merce” and “march(e),” and note the conflation in the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester: “þe kyng of þe march þulke time hadde wel þe beste / Muchedel of engelond þe on half al bi weste / Wircestressire & warewik & also of gloucestre [and Worcestershire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire] . . . *Al þis was zwile icluped þe march of walis*” (Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 91–93, 110; emphasis mine). The potential polysemy continued upon Roger Mortimer’s creation as the first Earl of March in 1328.

85. *Short Chronicle*, 161. In the glossary, he does record that MSS BFD read “Pynnocschire” and MS A “Pinokschire.”

86. Interestingly, Pinnockshire also appears in the Anglo-Norman text found in CUL MS Gg.i.1, a text long recognized as closely connected to the *Short Chronicle*, although subject to much debate as to which direction the connection points. The text is prose, and thus Pinnockshire appears in a nonrhyming location, but again, this is insufficient evidence to demonstrate

entered the textual tradition, it does not explain its presence amongst the other, legitimate counties of Mercia or the Marches. The following section will argue to localize the composition of the earliest version of the *Short Chronicle* to Pinnockshire or very nearby, situate it in a regional tradition of vernacular history writing in the Marches in the second half of the thirteenth century, and describe the Harley Scribe's response to a local text as that of a writer of local history.

Pinnockshire is not on modern maps, but “was in Temple Guiting and Didbrook,” about ten miles south of Evesham, the site of Simon de Montfort's defeat.<sup>87</sup> First found in the Great Domesday Book as “pignocsire,” Pinnockshire was a modest place, a fee-farm granted (for an annual rent) by Henry III to the Cistercian Abbey of Hailes in 1253, and held by Hailes until the Dissolution.<sup>88</sup> The living there was clearly never a particular prize. By the beginning of the fifteenth century it was proving very difficult to fill, as the Papal Registers for 1406 indicate:

Mandate to collate and assign to John Stanlake, Cistercian monk of Hayles in the said diocese, if found fit in Latin, the parish church, value not exceeding 3½ marks, of Pynnokschyre in the same diocese, which has been wont to be served by secular clerks . . . in consequence of the rarity of secu-

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direction of textual transfer: “La Rei de la Marche de Galys ni auoit nul son pere. Il auoit le Counte de Gloucestre. Le Counte de Pinnoc” (Zettl, *Short Chronicle*, 98, 234–36). Most recently, O'Farrell-Tate argues that the Anglo-Norman text was likely the source for the Middle English text, thus repeating Dominica Legge's arguments, and in opposition to Turville-Petre's assessment. CUL Gg.i.1 is dated 1330–40, making it closely contemporary with the *Short Chronicle* texts in Royal 12.c.xii and the Auchinleck manuscript, though it is a very different book in nature and execution.

87. See David Carpenter, “The Career of Godfrey of Crowcombe: Household Knight of King John and Steward of King Henry III,” in *War, Government, and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c. 1150–1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Anne Kettle, and Len Scales (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 26–54, especially 30 n. 26. A document from 1721, held in the Gloucestershire Archives, records several variant forms for Pinnockshire: “Pynnock als Pynnock Skearne als Pynnock Sheire [Pinnock], co. Glos.” See the Sudeley Manuscripts, Gloucestershire Archives, D2153/52 and 53, accessible online at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=040-d2153&cid=2-2-3-17#2-2-3-17>. MED offers up four definitions for “pinnok,” including a small bird, a bundle of cloth, and a place or personal name.

88. “Pignocsire” is mentioned on f. 170<sup>v</sup> of Great Domesday. See also Carpenter, “The Career of Godfrey,” 54 n. 166. Hailes was still paying the rent to the crown in 1378: “To the abbot and monks of Hayles. Writ *de intendendo*, directing them of the fee farm of Pynnokshire which they were bound to render to the late king at the exchequer to pay to William Archebaud the late king's esquire 161. 16s. 10½d. a year for life, according to letters patent of 18 December 47 Edward III, which the king has confirmed.” “Close Rolls, Richard II: February 1378,” *Calendar of Close Rolls, Richard II: 1377–1381*, ed. H. C. Maxwell Lyte (London, 1914), 46–58. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=106797>.

lar priests in those parts, and of the fact that on account of the smallness of the stipend no fit secular priest was to be found willing to be instituted.<sup>89</sup>

Complaints about Pinnockshire stretch back at least to January 1313. William de Boreford, “clerk,” took the position at the church of Pinnockshire, and was rather unimpressed with his new living. The archdeacon of Gloucester was ordered to investigate the living, as “the new Vicar complained of the numerous defects in the chancel, and that the books, ornaments, houses and manse remained unamended by default of the late vicar.”<sup>90</sup> Pinnockshire, with its small fee-farm, parish church, and perpetually underfunded living for a secular clerk, is a deeply odd inclusion to the *Short Chronicle*’s list of the counties of the March.

A few miles away, the Cistercian Abbey of Hailes, on the other hand, was nothing like the modest living it managed at Pinnockshire. Founded in 1246 by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, Hailes held a relic of Christ’s blood (certified by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who would later become Pope Urban IV), and swiftly became “one of the principal pilgrimage centres in the West of England.”<sup>91</sup> It was also a center in the Marches where quite a bit of history writing was taking place. A number of manuscripts closely associated with Hailes survive, and of particular interest is London, BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra D.iii, an early-fourteenth-century codex containing a number of historiographical texts, including an Anglo-Norman prose *Brut*, a version of the so-called *Vera Historia de Morte Arthuri*, and a *Chronicon* and *Annales* of Hailes Abbey. Also surviving is MS Harley 3725, a fifteenth-century codex which preserves a number of texts associated with Hailes.<sup>92</sup> As Lapidge notes

89. Quoted from “*Lateran Regesta 125: 1405–1406*,” *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, 1404–1415* (London, 1904), 74–83. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=104199>.

90. See *Register of the Diocese of Worcester during the Vacancy of the See, Usually Called “Registrum sede vacante,”* ed. J. W. W. Bund (Oxford: Worcestershire Historical Society, 1897), 3: lxxxvi and 150.

91. Nicholas Vincent, *Holy Blood: King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 137–41. It is unknown whether the Franciscan author, Thomas of Hales, was from Hailes or Hales Owen, in Shropshire; his “love rune” preserved in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 was intriguingly implicated in the politics of Simon de Montfort’s fall in a talk by Jennifer Miller at the 2009 Music and the Technology of the Written Text conference held at UCLA.

92. See Margaret Blount, “A Critical Edition of the Annals of Hailes (MS Cotton Cleopatra D iii, ff. 33–59)” with an Examination of Their Sources” (MA thesis, Manchester University, 1974); Marcia Maxwell, “The Anglo-Norman Prose ‘Brut’: An Edition of British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra D.III” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1995); Neil R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd ed. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964), 94–95; and Michael Lapidge, “The *Vera Historia de Morte Arthuri*: A New Edition,” in *Glastonbury*

of Cotton Cleopatra D.iii: “This manuscript provides evidence of some brisk historical activity at Hailes at the very end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries.”<sup>93</sup> Even before the late thirteenth century, however, and probably close to its foundation, Hailes had a textual influence upon other local institutions, including another Cistercian house in North Wales, Aberconwy.<sup>94</sup> The documentary tradition carried on until the fifteenth century, when the register and chronicle of Aberconwy were likely assembled at Hailes towards the end of the century.<sup>95</sup> Intriguingly, the Abbey also demonstrated a profound interest in the blurry intersection between history writing and romance: the floor of the Abbey was laid with tiles containing pictorial roundels depicting scenes from the Anglo-Norman romance *Tristan*.<sup>96</sup> Hailes Abbey was a prominent local center for historiographical compilation and composition, and the floors themselves record the Abbey’s enthusiasm for romance texts.

It seems likely that the inclusion of “Pynnocschire” was connected to the composition of the *Short Chronicle*. Speculatively, I would suggest that the *Short Chronicle* was written in the five miles around Pinnockshire, an area which includes the Benedictine Winchcombe Abbey, and the more likely candidate, Hailes Abbey. “Pynnocschire” appears in four of the five manuscripts that contain this passage, and also in the closely related Anglo-Norman text in CUL MS Gg.i.1, indicating it is common to some shared textual antecedent of the *Short Chronicle*. The oldest witness to the *Short Chronicle*, the c. 1280 fragment preserved in Cotton Caligula A.xi, manifests dialectal forms associated with northern Gloucestershire or southern Worcester-

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*Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James Carley (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 115–41.

93. Lapidge, “*Vera Historia*,” 121, who goes on to state: “This activity then peters out and finally ceases after 1314.” In light of Stephenson’s evidence, below, it seems more likely history writing continued until the fifteenth century.

94. See David Stephenson, *The Aberconwy Chronicle* (Cambridge: Hughes Hall and Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, University of Cambridge, 2002). Stephenson concludes of the *Aberconwy Chronicle*: “The Aberconwy-text seems, on this view, to have been assembled in large part from texts in or brought to the library at Hailes—including the chronicle in MS Cotton Cleopatra D.III (produced in Hailes Abbey itself), works of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Giraldus Cambrensis, and chronicles from Tewkesbury and Worcester, as well as material collected from or relating to other Welsh Cistercian houses, Strata Florida, Strata Marcella, and possibly Cwm-hir” (16–17).

95. Stephenson, *Aberconwy Chronicle*, 17.

96. See R. S. Loomis, *Illustrations of Medieval Romance on Tiles from Chertsey Abbey* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1916); and Tony Hunt, “The Tristan Illustrations in MS London, BL Add. 11619,” in *Rewards and Punishments in the Arthurian Romances and Lyric Poetry of Mediaeval France*, ed. P. V. Davies and A. J. Kennedy (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1987), 45–60, esp. 56 n. 40. The better-known tiles at Chertsey Abbey are dated to c. 1270.

shire.<sup>97</sup> Hailes and Pinnockshire lie precisely in the northern Gloucestershire region dialectally suggested by the Cotton Caligula A.xi fragment. The strong tradition of history writing and demonstrable interest in vernacular romance at Hailes Abbey included the production of Latin chronicles and annals, and Anglo-Norman historiography and romance texts such as the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut*, and *Des Grantz Geanz*. Moreover, the connection between the earliest *Short Chronicle* and a very small geographic area is further strengthened by the appearance in the *Short Chronicle* of material relating to Saint Kenelm, whose relics are at Winchcombe, a mere three miles from Hailes and six miles from Pinnockshire.<sup>98</sup> Other reasons may account for the presence of this obscure hamlet in an otherwise utterly conventional list of the counties of England.<sup>99</sup> But the powerful confluence of Hailes as a regional center producing and circulating historiography and romance and the closely aligned interests manifested by the *Short Chronicle* argue for its origin in this regional literary culture, in Pinnockshire itself, or in Hailes.

Moving past the text's origins, the basic structure of the *Short Chronicle* can render the appearance of lists such as the Shiring indistinguishable, at first glance, from the rest of the text. Without knowing that the Shiring is a convention found in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English historiographies that all predate the *Short Chronicle*, an audience need not recognize the Shiring as a coherent and separable textual unit. The *Short Chronicle*

97. Hanna, "Reconsidering the Auchinleck Manuscript," 100. The "Pynnocshire" item in the list of counties must have entered the textual tradition no later than the Auchinleck manuscript, copied in the 1330s, or the similarly dated Anglo-Norman version in CUL MS Gg.i.1.

98. The Kenelm material in the *Short Chronicle* (B.395–402) draws on the larger tradition of Kenelm's *vita* in Latin and in Middle English, as found in the *South English Legendary* and the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester. The Harley Scribe does not include the Kenelm legend, perhaps because Kenelm is incorrectly described as having been killed in battle along with Edright: "Seynt Fromund & Kenelm bo / In batail were islawe þo" (B.395–96). See my article "When Variants Aren't: Authors as Scribes in Some English Manuscripts," in *Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Anne Hudson and Vincent Gillespie (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

99. Interestingly, "Pynnokshire" survives in much later descriptions of the counties of England, including one published by Hearne from Leland's *Itinerary*, and in another version in Halliwell's *Reliquiae Antiquae*. Hearne's text from Leland reads: "Pynnokshire is not to prayse; / A man may go it in to dayes," printed in *Lean's Collectanea* (Bristol, 1902), 1: 231, and also 177. The verses are also reprinted in *Bye-Gones, Relating to Wales and the Border Counties*, June 1882, 85, in response to a much later version of the text printed in the publication May 1882, 61. The Halliwell piece, printed "from a different MS" under the title "Here suth the propertees of the shyres of Engelond," prints the couplet identically. I regret that I have not been able to locate the manuscript, for which see Thomas Hearne, ed., *The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary*, 2nd ed., 9 vols (London, 1744–55). Hearne identifies only as "codice MS. membraneo penes Antiquitatum nostrarum egregium cultorem atque conservatorem Thomam Rawlinsonvm, Arm. Medii Templi Londini Socium" (Hearne, *Itinerary*, 5: xxvi).

is both a linear temporal narrative (a list of kings), and an episodic narrative—for a small subset of those kings, brief anecdotes are related. There is a certain amount of bland recitation that goes into the structure supplied by the temporal narrative. The text seems to find only so many ways to vary its stock phrases such as “After þilke kyng . . . / Reignede his sone” and “He reignede þrettene 3er / To Wynchestre me him ber.”<sup>100</sup> It is largely in the text’s “additions” (for such they can feel to the reader, although it is important to stress this is not a structural argument) to the short descriptions of the lives of kings that moments of narrative interest and more substantive detail appear.<sup>101</sup> Part of the frustration many modern critics express with the text is perhaps prompted by the comparatively greater narrative detail the text supplies for British and Anglo-Saxon kings, rather than for the post-Conquest England of the text’s creation. In the Royal 12.c.xii *Short Chronicle*, Brutus’s son Loctrinus receives 16 lines of narrative (R.123–39), and the Anglo-Saxon king Edmund receives 24 lines of description (R.656–80), whereas the reigns of Richard I and John receive only 9 lines each, that of Henry III 14 lines, and Edward I 10 lines. It is tempting, however, to impose a narrative of value upon textual duration just as we do upon textual presence or absence, as discussed above—to say that Richard “merits” or “warrants” only 9 lines to Edmund’s 24 is to presume that importance, both for the composer of the text or its audience, can only be measured by length.

The Harley Scribe was rather more prone to removing parts of his source texts than he was to adding things. This tendency further works against episode length as a reliable indicator of overall significance within the text. The text of the Royal *Short Chronicle* consistently addresses itself to different concerns than the texts of other manuscripts. The Harley Scribe was very particular about the history he wished to craft. His alterations, emendations, and expansions to his source text reflect a recognizable set of priorities. At the smallest level, the Harley Scribe is noticeably attentive to what might be termed historical accuracy throughout his text, from legendary British history to the post-Conquest period. He provides “historically correct” lengths of several kings’ reigns (or something closer to the correct figure), against readings found in all other manuscripts, sometimes providing dates where none of the other manuscripts do so.<sup>102</sup> Thus, for Eadred, Edwyn, Edgar,

100. *Short Chronicle*, R.884–85, R.934–35.

101. Note that of Royal 12.c.xii, O’Farrell-Tate argues of its capitulum signs that their “primary function is to mark significant or interesting events and facts” (*Abridged Brut*, 60), which might be said rather more generally of paraphs and other similar signs.

102. See the introductory table of differences between the Royal 12.c.xii *Short Chronicle* and the other manuscripts. O’Farrell-Tate, *Abridged Brut*, 21–28.

Edmund Ironside, Hardeknut, Henry I, Stephen, Henry II, Richard, and John, the Harley Scribe offers different (and usually more correct) regnal lengths. This project of revision and correction culminates in the rather preposterously specific account of Henry III's reign as "lvj folle 3er / Ant tuenti dawes þerto" in the place of the apparently unsatisfying "seuene 7 fifti fulle 3ere" of the other manuscripts.<sup>103</sup> This impulse toward a concern recognizable by modern standards as historical accuracy is doubly significant. First, it tells us something of the agenda of the Harley Scribe, and his desire to craft a text without empirical errors, such as incorrect regnal lengths, or the assertion that Saint Kenelm was killed in battle with Edright. Second, the Harley Scribe here reveals that he has access to other historiographical sources beyond his exemplar of the *Short Chronicle*—his work to correct his exemplar relies upon still other exemplars.

Numbers are a particularly flimsy basis upon which to ground many textual conclusions, and stemmata that group texts according to the number of years a king reigned, or the size of an army, are not always particularly robust. It is all too easy when using Roman numerals to add or subtract inadvertently, or to emend more intentionally. For example, one can readily imagine a scribe feeling the need to emend the vast numbers seen in the unlikely claim that the Roman army sent to conquer Arthur had "Of an hondred þousend hors & four score þousend þer to . . . wiþ oute votmen þat were so vale þat þer nas of non ende."<sup>104</sup> As a neat case in point, two manuscripts of the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.4.26 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 205 both offer not a mere hundred thousand horses, but "two hondred þousend hors." Is this evidence of textual affiliation between the two manuscripts? Or have the scribes of these manuscripts separately stacked the odds against the British to heighten a remarkable victory? Or perhaps it is a scribal correction of the number of troops the Roman army sent to conquer Arthur?

Beyond the errors of mistranscribed Roman numerals or purely fictional numbers, historical facts can be an opportunity for systematic and intelligent scribal authorship. The Harley Scribe's consistent engagement with regnal lengths suggests it was a matter of particular interest and importance to him. More notable is his ongoing access to other texts containing different readings. Although for post-Conquest kings he might have been working

103. *Short Chronicle*, R.1009–10 and B.1041. O'Farrell-Tate observes: "The reign lengths given in *AEMB(R)* are frequently longer and more detailed . . . and are often more accurate" (*Abridged Brut*, 29).

104. Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 4105–7.

from memory, the Harley Scribe's concern with other types of accuracy with regards to the sequence of British and English kings is a pointedly textual concern. His exclusion of one particularly fanciful accretion to the historiographical tradition, discussed below, suggests that he used other sources to correct his instance of the *Short Chronicle*, and to support textual interventions that went rather beyond simply correcting historical infelicities. The multiple texts the Harley Scribe deploys to shape his own text suggest something of his understanding of the *Short Chronicle* itself. In modifying, altering, and adding to his unique text, his belief in the value of the text itself is revealed. The *Short Chronicle* was worth his time and labor to copy, and worth the effort to locate texts to compare it to, and to compose supplementary materials for inclusion.

The Harley Lyrics should balance an understanding of the Royal *Short Chronicle* as a repository of facts for the young or ignorant. The Harley Scribe was not a man lacking in critical faculty or aesthetic appreciation. He found the *Short Chronicle* sufficiently valuable in terms of both time and parchment to copy the text, and to enact a series of informed and even learned textual transformations. The Harley Scribe was concerned with the minutiae that constitute history. Along with his emendations to the lengths of kings' reigns and removing the misplaced anecdote of Saint Kenelm, the Harley Scribe excised "Pinnockschire" from the possessions of the "kyng of Merkyneriche."<sup>105</sup> His documented life in Ludlow, and thus his familiarity with which counties constituted the March and which obscure Gloucestershire towns were not, in fact, counties, suggest he was in a position to exclude the spurious county. Indeed, this is the one place in the Royal *Short Chronicle* where the rhyming-couplet scheme is interrupted.<sup>106</sup> The shift in rhyme reveals the Harley Scribe adjusting his text after excluding Pinnockshire, making his local text still more local precisely by excluding the record of a previous inscription of place.

Elsewhere, the Harley Scribe was forced to find different solutions to the sometimes flamboyant intermixture of history and romance that the *Short Chronicle* exhibits. Consider his response to a lesser-known eponym of English history, Inge, variously a Spanish or Saxon or Saracen maiden who absorbs much of Geoffrey of Monmouth's tale of Ronwenne. Here are the different texts of the *Short Chronicle*:

105. *Short Chronicle*, R.373.

106. O'Farrell-Tate notes that "lines 377–79 form a three-line rhyme on–schire," but concludes that "it is not possible to state whether R has omitted or added a line" (*Abridged Brut*, 56 and 57 n. 74).



*Additional 19677*

In þat tyme Seint Albon  
 for godes loue suffred martirdom  
 7 fourti 3er wit schame 7 schonde  
 was idryuen out of Engeland  
 in þat tyme wite 3e wel  
 com wesseil 7 drynk heil  
 in to þis lond witoute wene  
 þoru a maide bryzt 7 schene  
 he was icluped maide Inge  
 of hure can many man rede 7 synge  
 ¶ lordlynges hende 7 fre  
 þis lond hap hadde names þre  
 furst men clupid þis lond Albion  
 or Brut fram Troie com  
 7 nou Engelon icluped is  
 after maide Inge iwis  
 þilke Inge of saxons come  
 7 wit hure many moder sone  
 for gret hunger ich vnderstonde .  
 Inge wende out of hure londe . . .  
 7 of þe kyng he bad a bone  
 7 hei hure grantede sone  
 as muche lond he bad  
 as wit a bole hude myzte be sprad  
 þe kyng grantede þo hure bone  
 Inge an castel made hure sone . . .  
 ac whanne þe kyng awai was went  
 Inge after hure men he sent  
 7 seide to hom in þis manere  
 þe kyng tomorwe schal ete here  
 he 7 alle his men . . .  
 whenne we han al most izete  
 wassail y schal sai to þe kyng  
 7 sle hym witoute lesyng  
 7 loke þat 3e in þis manere  
 echon of 3ou sle his fere  
 7 so hi dude þenne  
 slou þe kyng 7 alle his menne  
 7 þus þoru hure quentyse  
 þis lond he wan in þis wise  
 & after hure name ich vnderstond  
 he cluped þis lond Engeland.<sup>108</sup>

*Royal 12.c.xii*

In þilke time Seint Albon  
 For godes loue þolede martirdom  
 ¶ Kyng Fortiger wyþ schome 7 schonde  
 Wes driuen out of Engelande  
 Pourh Hengistus forsoþe ywys,  
 Pat made þe tresoun, for þus hit ys;  
 At Stonehenges, wite ou wel,  
 Þer he hit made eueruchdel,  
 For Merlyn hem saide biforen hond  
 He ne schulde ner dure in England.  
 ¶ Rowenne þat was so feir may  
 Furst saide by þis day  
 To kyng Fortiger “wassail”,  
 Ant þat onsuere wes “drinkhail”.<sup>107</sup>

107. *Short Chronicle*, R.327–40.108. MS Additional 19677, f. 94<sup>va-b</sup> (*Short Chronicle*, B.271–90, 293–98, 303–7, 310–20).

The historiographical muddle in the left column is here taken from Additional 19677, but variously similar versions can also be found in CUL Dd.xiv.2, Auchinleck, and CUL Ff.v.48. The Inge story combines details and characters originally drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum*, though it conflates several episodes in the process. The Inge story in the *Short Chronicle* absorbs the following textual moments from the *Historia regum*: 1) the "Thongcastle" episode, in which the British king Vortigern is tricked; 2) the "wassail" and "drinkhail" exchange; 3) the treacherous murder of the Britons by the Saxons upon the utterance of "nimet oure saxas."<sup>109</sup> In Geoffrey's *Historia*, the British king Vortigern offers the Saxon leader Hengist as much land as can be covered by a bullhide, only to be tricked when Hengist cuts the hide into a thin string.<sup>110</sup> Hengist's daughter Ronwenne arrives after the Thongcastle episode, and she introduces the "wassail" and "drinkhail" exchange in the first of two distinct moments of linguistic intrusion, where English penetrates Geoffrey's Latin text. Ronwenne then seduces Vortigern, which leads to Hengist becoming Vortigern's father-in-law, and a swift increase in the Saxon migration to the island. Vortigern's son Vortimer briefly rules the Britons, but Ronwenne plots against him and bribes a member of his household to slip him a poison, which he drinks. Vortigern resumes the throne, and despite the counsel of his wife Ronwenne, opposes further Saxon incursions, a stance that leads to "peace" talks at Amesbury on May Day, where Hengist, "resorting to unheard-of treachery, ordered that each of his companions should have a long knife . . . and while the unsuspecting Britons were negotiating, on his signal, 'nimet oure saxas,' each should be ready to grab the Briton beside him . . . and slit his throat."<sup>111</sup>

All three of these episodes were extremely popular in the insular historiographical tradition. The *Short Chronicle* manuscripts other than Royal 12.c.xii offer a compelling decoupling of the radically overdetermined ethnic contest of Geoffrey of Monmouth's version. Inge is identified as a Saxon in only three manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle*: Additional 19677, Pilkington's CUL Ff.v.48, and the fragmentary version preserved in Rawlinson Poet. 145.<sup>112</sup> In the other texts of the *Short Chronicle*, Inge is from "Speyne" in the

109. See Margaret Lamont, "Becoming English: Ronwenne's Wassail, Language, and National Identity in the Middle English Prose *Brut*," *Studies in Philology* 107 (2010): 283–309; and Lamont, "Genealogical' History and the English Roll," in *Medieval Manuscripts, Their Makers and Users: A Special Issue of Viator in Honor of Richard and Mary Rouse* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 245–61.

110. *Historia regum*, 127–29.

111. *Historia regum*, 129–35.

112. The text of Rawlinson Poet. 145 is printed in Thomas Hearne, *Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle Transcribed, and now first published; from a MS. in the Harleian Library* (London, 1724), 2: 731–33.

Auchinleck version, and “of Sarcyns come” in Nicholas Bishop’s MS Dd.xiv.2. These texts separate Inge from the Saxon *adventus*, and also render nameless “the kyng” she interacts with, further distancing the narrative from the binary opposition of ethnicities that underpin the histories of Bede, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Henry of Huntingdon, and William of Malmesbury. The massacre at Amesbury is, in Geoffrey’s twelfth-century *Historia*, a climactic moment of Saxon/British strife. In the *Short Chronicle* it has been rendered a seamless transfer of power, featuring an eponymous woman of variable origin and a king without a name. This is not a text concerned about conquest, *translatio imperii*, and ethnic identity in the same ways, or with the same urgency, as its historiographical forebears.

The two moments of linguistic alterity in the *Historia regum*, where Saxon English disrupts the smooth contours of Latin (or within the narrative frame, British), implicate specifically English linguistic difference in treachery and conquest. In the *Short Chronicle*, “drinkhail” and “nimet oure saxas” become instead a single etiological account of the introduction of “drinkhail” to England. This account, moreover, erases the linguistic difference that makes the exchange notable in the first place, and in fact removes the climactic moment of murderous Saxon treachery from the text itself. Inge describes her plans, and then in the next line, “so hi dude þenne,” leaving the massacre to take place off-stage. The relentless continuity in the *Short Chronicle* manufactures a false sense of the continuity of political power, and obscures all moments of political discontinuity. Inge, in absorbing the epochal shift from British to Saxon, and the legacy of Saxon treachery, instead enables the *Short Chronicle* to offer a seamless narrative whereby the ethnically charged eponyms of previous historiographies, British-Brutus-Britain and Angles-Hengist-England, become de-problematized. This transformation is sealed by the textual segue from Inge to the geographical lists of the five Saxon kingdoms and counties and bishoprics of England—the Shiring.

The Harley Scribe cared about history, and far more importantly, about how history could be connected to history writing. This is not to call the Inge account “wrong,” of course, but rather to stress that the Harley Scribe knew in a different form the episodes attached to Inge. Specifically, he knew them in a narrative that resembles the account in Geoffrey’s *Historia regum* and the mainstream of the historiographical tradition.<sup>113</sup> The challenges faced by the Harley Scribe in negotiating the competing demands of his exemplar and his other texts, the demands of copying and composition, are seen in the

113. As ultimately attested by its inclusion in the Anglo-Norman and Middle English *Bruts*, which texts will come to define the “mainstream.”

decisions he made navigating the transition from the death of Saint Alban, immediately preceding the Inge episode. In MSS Additional 19677, Auchinleck, CUL Dd.xiv.2, and Rawlinson Poet. 145, the texts of the *Short Chronicle* all note that Saint Alban after “& fourti 3er with schame & schonde / Was idryuen out of Engelond.”<sup>114</sup> Following a brief account of Alban’s forty-year exile, these texts all turn to Inge and her introduction of “drinkhail.” The Harley Scribe, however, has written “Kyn<sup>g</sup> Fortiger wyþ schome 7 schonde / Wes driuen out of Engelonde / Pourh Hengistus forsoþe ywys.”<sup>115</sup> (See figure 5 and refer to Plate 3.) The Harley Scribe’s transformation of “fourti 3er” to “Fortiger” makes it immediately clear that the connection between the two is not, in the conventional sense, an instance of scribal error.<sup>116</sup> In the process of both copying his exemplar and composing his original text, the Harley Scribe is reading ahead in his exemplar. This is to be expected in any situation beyond strict replicative copying. The Harley Scribe came across the “fourti 3er” of Saint Alban’s exile, followed by the historiographical muddle of Inge absorbing three episodes from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum*. There are two likely possibilities to explain the transformation. The Harley Scribe either initially mis-read “fourti 3er” as “Fortiger” because he was conditioned by his knowledge that episodes associated with Vortigern were to come next in the Galfridian narrative and thus expecting to see Vortigern, or he has very cleverly adapted the line about Saint Alban’s exile to “Fortiger.”<sup>117</sup> The Harley Scribe uses the change to correct the historiographical account. He notes that Hengist’s treachery drives Vortigern out of Britain, reintroduces Ronwenne as responsible for “drinkhail” and “was-sail,” and reestablishes Vortigern as the correct audience for that exchange. Moreover, Vortigern, instead of suffering the indignity of being passed over as a nameless king, is identified as the victim of specifically Saxon “tre-soun.” The Harley Scribe, drawing upon a text or texts firmly in the mainstream of the historiographical tradition, recovers in twelve lines some of the highlights of Geoffrey’s *Historia regum* and the *translatio imperii* from the

114. *Short Chronicle*, B.273–74. It is significant that the Rawlinson Poet. 145 fragment uses Roman numerals, rather than spelling out the numbers, and reads “And xl. 3ere.”

115. Royal 12.c.xii, f. 64<sup>r</sup>; *Short Chronicle*, R.329–31.

116. Thus, O’Farrell-Tate: “confusion between *Fortiger* and *fourti 3er*, indicating that a scribal or auditory error seems likely to account for the variation at this point,” before concluding rather tortuously that Royal 12.c.xii’s exclusion of Inge “may represent the material contained in the original version” (*Abridged Brut*, 23). I believe her explanation is less convincing than the more straightforward explanation offered here.

117. It is important to note that the “g” of “kyng fortiger” is written above a caret, and written slightly above the line. See Royal 12.c.xii, f. 64<sup>r</sup>. It is likely that the Harley Scribe was copying from his own foul papers, rather than composing directly on the page. For a further discussion of compositional practices, see Chapter 4 below.

<p>             fram ye þre eleuthenes              y was bi fore y sent anfin to her              four hundred z hy an fourtizer              yo cftendom com first i yis lond              was sigebert kyng i engelond              he was a goude hoh man              isekmyster he first bi gan              estmyster he dudu first areie              nypp he was y bnyrd yere              hundred z four zer bey agon              nypp he was loken i a ston              loundel of hy is hole i founde              al ye fir z dai y he was led i giond              in y tyme seint albon              for godes louy gulfred marturde              z fourtizer i whame z schoude              was i dryuen out of engelond              i y tyme wite ze wel              com thesleil z bynk heil              i to yis lond i woute wene              youn a maide byyt z schene              he was ichiped marde iuge              of hure cam many man yete i hys              lordlynges hendes z fre              yis lond hys hadde names yre              first men chupid yis lond alken              or burt fram trois com              z non engelon ichiped is              after maide iuge z his              yise iuge of sayous come              z i hure many modur z              for gret hunger z              under stonde              iuge theude              out of hure              londe           </p>	<p>             z youn lunc of hure kyng              i yis lond he hadde restyng              z of ye kyng he bad a bone              z he hure grantele sone              as myche lond he bad              as i w a bole hude myte be sprad              ye kyng grantebe yo hure bone              iuge an castel made hure sone              z whene ye castel was al ymad              ye kyng to ye mete he bad              ye kyng hure granted ryzt anon              her ne wite nouit what belbold do              ac whame ye kyng a wa was i w              iuge after hure men he sent              z seide to hom i yis manere              ye kyng to moirbe schal ete here              he z alle his men              enere on of ons z on of hem              to gaterre schal sice auz mete              whene i we han al most z zete              i pallanl y schal sin to ye kyng              z ste hy i w oute lesyng              z luke y ze i yis manere              z thon of z on ste his fare              z so hi dudu yenne              slon ye kyng z alle his membe              z yis voruhure gneny se              yis lond he i gan i yis wile              z after hure name i onder stonde              he chuped yis lond engelond              hure a non sone z s i b y e              was engalond i thelyd a fone              to fone aynges troyndelich              y w a y e i w i z s i b y e r i c h e              y a h y n g h a d d e a l y e l o n d o f h e w              l o n d e           </p>
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Figure 5. London, British Library, MS Additional 19677, f. 94<sup>v</sup>

British to the Saxons. It is a series of modest changes to the text he was copying, but they reveal the Harley Scribe as a deeply engaged reader of the text in front of him, as well as of other historiographical texts. They show him not merely copying an exemplar, but conscientiously writing a new text into being, and shaping that text's historiographical and political trajectory carefully.

Another substantive rewriting by the Harley Scribe appears in the fourteen lines of Royal 12.c.xii that narrate the reign of Henry III. The Royal *Short Chronicle* rather emphatically directs the reader's attentions to a single issue:

After him reigned Henry  
 a god kyng ant holy  
 In his time wes werre strong  
 ant gret *strif* in Engeland  
 bituene þe barouns 7 þe kyng  
 Was gret stryuyng  
 for þe *purueance* of Oxneford  
 þat sire Simound de Mountfort  
 Meintenede, ant gode lawes  
 þerfore he les his Lyfdawes.<sup>118</sup>

The other manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle* also offer blandly generic praise of Simon de Montfort's political agenda. The Royal *Short Chronicle*, however, is the only text to refer to the contest between king and barons not as over "wickeded red" and "goude lawes," but over the "purueaunce of Oxneford."<sup>119</sup> The Provisions of Oxford were forced upon Henry III in 1258, and were repudiated by him in 1261.<sup>120</sup> Rather than being simply ancient history to the Harley Scribe, however, the Provisions of Oxford were deeply implicated in the baronial contest led by Thomas of Lancaster, specifically the Ordinances of 1311. The historical parallelisms considered above, with regards to the Office of Thomas of Lancaster opening Royal 12.c.xii, return abruptly here in the Royal *Short Chronicle*. As Maddicott notes: "Just as the strength of Montfort's claims had lain in Henry III's acceptance of the Provisions of Oxford, so Lancaster's case rested on the Ordinances and the King's oath to maintain them."<sup>121</sup>

118. MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 68<sup>v</sup>; *Short Chronicle*, R.998–1007.

119. *Short Chronicle*, B.1036, 1038.

120. See J. R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 157–63.

121. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster*, 322.

The implications of making this parallel explicit, however, depend upon when the Harley Scribe was writing the *Short Chronicle*, and the ways in which his composition of history writing was shaped by history itself. The Royal *Short Chronicle* comes to its end rather abruptly, not with a prayer for Edward I or Edward II (or Henry III) as in other instances of the text, but rather with a final political argument that works to summarize the entire reign of Edward II:

[p]o anon afterward  
 Reignede hys sone Edward.  
 þilke Edward, saunt 3 fayle  
 3ef þe erldome of Cornwayle  
 To Sire Pieres of Gauastoun  
 þat for enuie wes ynome  
 þe lordinges of Engelonde  
 To him heueden gret onde  
 For he wes wel wiþ þe kyng  
 heo heuden him in henyng,  
 ant seiden he wes *traitour*  
 to þe king 7 to heore honour  
 ant for he was louerd suyke  
 heo ladden him to warewyke  
 At gaueressich, 3e mowe wyte  
 þer his heued wes ofsmyte.<sup>122</sup>

There the text ends, two-thirds of the way down the first column of f. 68<sup>v</sup>, leaving the remaining column blank. F. 68<sup>v</sup> is the last folio of the quire, and indeed, of the booklet (though not, it should be clarified, of the manuscript). Much depends upon when, precisely, the completion of the Royal *Short Chronicle* is dated. Revard's extensive analysis of the paleographical features of the Harley Scribe suggest the text was copied after 1316–17 and before 1325–29.<sup>123</sup> The specifics of his argument ultimately rest upon the coexistence in the text of two different letter forms of “L” and “N.”<sup>124</sup> If the text is

122. MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 68<sup>v</sup>; *Short Chronicle*, R.1022–37.

123. Thus, Revard, “Scribe and Provenance,” 58; and O’Farrell-Tate, *Abridged Brut*, 47. I am grateful to Carter Revard for confirming that the “*Chronicle* is later than his three deeds of 1314 and 1315, but resembles his deeds of 1316 to 1320 and 1321, and is less like his deeds of 1325–29” (personal communication, 2006).

124. Revard, “Scribe and Provenance,” who points to “a mixture of *1b* and *1c*” corresponding to a charter of 1316, and “a mixture of *2a* and *2b* such as does not occur in any holograph later than 1320” (58). It is important to stress, however, that neither does that mixture of Revard’s

incomplete, it is nonetheless a remarkably suitable ending. Gaveston's execution completes the circle begun by the opening words of the entire manuscript, and the Office celebrating Thomas of Lancaster, "Gaude thoma ducum decus lucerna lancastrie."<sup>125</sup> Like Gaveston, Thomas also had his head "ofsmyte," in 1322, and the Harley Scribe may very well have brought his composing and his copying of the *Short Chronicle* to an end in response to Thomas's execution. The Harley Scribe was particularly responsive to a sense of historical and regional accuracy in writing Royal 12.c.xii, but there are times when history catches up with history writing.

The Harley Scribe's politics were hardly radical, and Gaveston was so thoroughly disliked that it was not particularly contentious, particularly after his execution, to write of his death. Using Gaveston's execution as the centerpiece of Edward II's reign places the Royal *Short Chronicle* squarely in both the larger tradition of insular historiography, and the nuanced politics of the Marches in the first decades of the fourteenth century. History writing is always a series of political decisions about the past, but in the Royal *Short Chronicle* we see the Harley Scribe making political decisions about the present. There is another example that offers, I believe, further evidence for this reading of the Harley Scribe's awareness of the present when writing about the past. The Harley Scribe also wrote *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*, an understudied Anglo-Norman romance only very recently beginning to receive the attention it deserves.<sup>126</sup> His decisions made while writing the text serve neatly to encapsulate his sophistication as a reader, translator, and writer. It is important, however, to realize the simultaneity of those roles, and the politically sensitive decisions faced by the Harley Scribe, whoever his audience. The poem's editors argue that the Harley Scribe "was himself the author of the prose *remaniement* which he copied."<sup>127</sup> The arguments behind this conclusion are various, though persuasive, but it is one particular feature of the poem that will be considered here: the abrupt change of handwriting and decoration in the midst of *Fouke*. Mid-line on f. 53<sup>r</sup> of Royal 12.c.xii, there is a change in handwriting that is so notable that it was first thought to indicate

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forms *2a* and *2b* appear in any holograph before 1320. *2a* forms only occur in three of the eleven dated holographs before 1320, as capital "N" was not a high-frequency form; throughout the Royal *Short Chronicle*, there are five instances of *2a* and six of *2b*. *1b* is also a problematic form, appearing in a single charter of 1316, and then reappearing late in the Harley Scribe's career, in charters of 1346 and 1348. Paleographically, I believe the text should be dated within a few years of 1320. On textual grounds, I would suggest it was written after Thomas of Lancaster's execution.

125. MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 1<sup>r</sup>.

126. I am deeply grateful to Ralph Hanna for sharing with me a prepublication version of his article on *Fouke*, "The Matter of Fulk: Romance and History in the Marches," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 110 (2011): 337–58.

127. *Fouke*, xxxvii.



a change in scribes. Neil Ker and Carter Revard have conclusively argued that the handwriting is still that of the Harley Scribe, but that a significant period of time had passed between the two stints.<sup>128</sup> (See figure 6.) Following the evolution of the Harley Scribe's script in a series of dated charters, Revard indicates the break might have been up to ten years, and offers a number of hypotheses for why the romance should have been set down, perhaps sometime c. 1327, and picked up again as late as 1333.<sup>129</sup> The poem's editors find a number of "linguistic peculiarities" in the first five folios after the Harley Scribe resumes translating and adapting his text, which suggest "that the scribe, who appears to be actually remodelling the verse text into prose, takes some time to adjust himself to the task of prosifying and modernizing . . . after taking up his pen again."<sup>130</sup> His work as a translator from verse to prose, from older Anglo-Norman to more contemporary forms, is an important reminder of the wide array of the Harley Scribe's literary skills.

The break in the script of *Fouke* appears mid-sentence, in the midst of a particularly dramatic scene. The titular hero, Fouke, a proto-Robin Hood figure, is about to capture the villainous King John, and hopes to coerce the king into granting various demands:

Le roy ly cria mercy, e ly pria pur amour Dieu la vie, e yl ly rendreyt entere-  
ment tou[t] son heritage e quanqu'il aveit tolet de ly e de tous les suens. . . .  
Fouke ly granta bien tote sa demande a tieles qu'il ly donast, veantz ces che-  
valers, la foy de tenyr cest covenant. Le roy ly plevy sa fey qu'il ly tendroit  
covenant, [change in script] e fust molt lee que issi poeit eschaper. E revynt  
a soun paleis, e fist fere assembler ces chevalers e sa meisné, e lur counta  
de mot en autre coment sire Fouke le avoit desçu, e dit que par force fist cel  
serement, pur quoi qu'il ne le velt tenyr

[The king cried for mercy, and in God's name, begged for his life. He prom-  
ised that he would restore to Fouke his entire inheritance and whatsoever

128. *Fouke*, xlv. The break comes towards the end of the fifth quire of Royal 12.c.xii, but on the recto, rather than the verso, of the final leaf of the quire. *Fouke* occupies quires 5, 6, and 7: 5<sup>12</sup> (ff. 33<sup>r</sup>-44<sup>r</sup>), 6<sup>10</sup> (stub of excised first leaf visible, ff. 45<sup>r</sup>-53<sup>v</sup>), 7<sup>8</sup> (ff. 54<sup>r</sup>-61<sup>v</sup>).

129. Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," 61. In the same article, Revard suggests the break might have been "a break of up to ten years ca. (?1328-38)" (71). He notes: "Obviously the Harley scribe was not working on a commission or a deadline; this break and resumption would seem to show a personal or familial interest in the text rather than a professional scrivener's concern" (71). Revard also offers more complex hypotheses for the break, suggesting the pause occurred between 1327 and 1331 and was connected to the Harley Scribe's loss of access to the FitzWarin archives prompted by the exile of various members of the FitzWarin family between March and December 1330.

130. *Fouke*, xlvi-xlvii.

53

e semist a geuols deuant l'p mot humbement le roy e ces des chis  
amoyent s'ue r'oise e iou de la nozete e de la peze le charbo  
nor estant alego bien longement d'ann vpleyue le roy auz  
non aul ceuf ou bisse passer p'p' op' mon seignour p'oca que  
le beste veuz d' s'ue mon veuz e me coramee si auoit longe coram  
on est ele e s'ue mon veuz e d' s'ue molt bien mener la on re la v'p  
eie auant d'ann vpleyn e n' d' s'ue s'ue fer le charboner p'p  
d'op re ma ferbo en m'p' q' on ele fist s'ue re en auerop s'ue  
p'ouer op' vpleyn e n' volz s'ue s'ue la grosse fomme de fer  
en s'ameyn e amoyne le roy s'ue archer q' d' auoit en molt bel  
s'ue s'ue mon veuz fer s'ue s'ue il est il accendie e re moy en l'essse  
e s'ue la beste veuz cest chom'p' p'p' oul ce da le roy s'ue hasti  
nement s'ue on le effesse de la forest e comanda p' amoyne hasti  
nement s'ue le roy s'ue q' re la p' amoyne e s'ue s'ue on  
euz chis e core s'ue amoyne est de l'auerop la forest s'ue e  
s'ue amoyne s'ue s'ue hors de la effesse e eferent le roy e le s'ue  
euz meinentant s'ue roy s'ue s'ue re re d' s'ue en mon b'andon  
euz s'ue s'ue Le roy trembla de pour q' il auoit s'ue d'ouze de s'ue  
s'ue s'ue q' ml moyne p' le s'ue damage e la de s'ue s'ue  
il auoit fer a s'ue e amoyne s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue Le roy s'ue s'ue  
m'p' e s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue la vie e p' l'p s'ue s'ue euz  
con son heretage e s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue de s'ue e de tous l' s'ue s'ue  
e s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
ch'os euz s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
ca bien core s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
chis la s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
q' ml s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
e s'ue s'ue e reuz a pour p'aleis e s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
euz chis e s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
euz s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
al s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
que tous de s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
euz le p'aleis s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue  
s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue s'ue

Figure 6. London, British Library, MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 53<sup>r</sup>

he had taken from him and all his friends. . . . Fouke accepted the king's offer on one condition. In the presence of all the knights here present, he would have to give his solemn word to keep this covenant. The king pledged solemnly that he would keep faith with Fouke [change in script]. He was overjoyed to be able thus to escape so easily. Upon his return to the palace, King John assembled his knights and his retinue, and told them in detail how Sir Fouke had deceived him. Since his solemn oath was made under duress, he had no intention whatever to keep it.]<sup>131</sup>

Fouke's story is typical of outlaw tales. Perhaps overexposure to similar moments in similar tales has lessened some of the appalling drama of this moment. Writing about kings being captured and kings begging for their lives, particularly English kings, requires a certain delicacy. In *Fouke*, the text navigates the overlapping worlds of the "historical" King John and Fulk Fitz Warin, and their romance doppelgangers.<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, when the Harley Scribe set down his text unfinished c. 1327, the doubled worlds of *Fouke* were themselves doubled, caught in the events of the present. The Harley Scribe was copying a text that blurred romance and history in the Marches of the early thirteenth century, yet also resonated quite specifically with his own present day. The seizure of Edward II by Isabella and Mortimer in late 1326, and Edward II's oath to Bishop Adam Orleton of Hereford that his son Edward III would succeed him, were momentous political occasions. It was not the time to translate a scene in which the King of England is captured and forced, under duress, to swear an oath.<sup>133</sup> Neither copying nor composing texts is without very real dangers in such circumstances. Though Edward II, unlike the romance King John, upheld his oath, Edward II did not escape his captivity, and was executed in September 1327.<sup>134</sup>

Upon Edward III's accession to power in 1330, one of Parliament's first acts was to reverse the proceedings against Thomas of Lancaster. The Harley Scribe, surrounded by the contentious and complex politics of the first decades of the fourteenth century, had set down his pen, freezing the nar-

131. *Fouke*, 50.2–4, 6–13. Translation from T. E. Kelly, "Fouke Fitz Waryn," in *Medieval Outlaws: Twelve Tales in Modern English Translation*, ed. Thomas Ohlgren (West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2005), 228.

132. See Hanna, "The Matter of Fulk."

133. For details of the deposition process, see Haines, *King Edward II*, 177–95. Note, too, the presence of the seal-motto of Bishop Orleton copied in Royal 12.c.xii, which occasioned much early speculation about links between the Harley Scribe and Orleton's household. I am not intending to revive the idea that the Harley Scribe was in Orleton's household, but want to stress how socially and geographically close the Harley Scribe was to Edward II's deposition.

134. Whether Edward II did in fact die in September 1327 at Berkeley Castle, or lived for years after, is unimportant for present purposes.

rative at a moment where King John had been taken captive and pledged to keep his oath to Fouke. John had not escaped from Fouke's capture in the forest, nor had he repudiated his oath because it was made under duress. And there, awkwardly, the narrative would sit from 1327 to perhaps 1333–34, when the Harley Scribe would return to his work and his translation, beginning the words that had brought him pause before: King John's joy that "e fust molt lee que issi poeit eschaper [he was able to escape so easily]." Poetry has consequences, for its readers and its writers. In copying Royal 12.c.xii, the Harley Scribe situates the Office for Thomas of Lancaster, the Royal *Short Chronicle*, and *Fouke* in the midst of extremely contemporary political concerns. In his work copying and composing, translating and innovating, the Harley Scribe quietly endorsed modest political reform, encouraging a role for good counsel and promoting a particular vision of accurate history writing. Twice, it seems that the Harley Scribe set down his pen at the moments when history had problematically and troublingly caught up with history-writing. Once, he waited until it was appropriate, or safe, to resume. Scribe, translator, and scribal author, he did resume his work, first bringing *Fouke* to an end, and then finishing Royal 12.c.xii. Working most likely in Ludlow, the Harley Scribe copied the last text into the last quire, ordered his quires, and had the volume bound in c. 1340. It was safe, by then, to begin the volume with a prayer for Saint Thomas of Lancaster.

## The Auchinleck Manuscript and the Writing of History

The Auchinleck manuscript has been called many things by many critics, and read in many different ways, but no critic has ever called the book unimportant. It is a thick book, preserving some forty-three items in Middle English and one piece in Anglo-Norman in the 331 folios that survive intact in the codex.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to the thirty-six items spread across 123 folios in Royal 12.c.xii, or the 121 items of Harley 2253's 140 folios, the Auchinleck manuscript features a large number of long texts, most notably the romances for which the book is best known. The codex has been described as "unique, without precedent or emulator" but also as a book that "recalls and resembles the behaviours of legal book-producers."<sup>2</sup> At once *sui generis* and recognizably a textual and cultural product embedded in the practices of book-making and illumination in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Auchinleck codex mixes a large number of "unique"

1. There are fourteen stubs in the codex, and ten folios preserved under three different shelfmarks at Edinburgh University Library, St. Andrews University Library, and University of London Library. See the online facsimile, "Physical make-up," at <http://auchinleck.nls.uk/editorial/physical.html>. All quotations of texts in the Auchinleck manuscript will be from the facsimile, and the line numbers will correspond to the online transcriptions, unless otherwise specified.

2. See Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, "Middle English Literary Writings, 1150–1400," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2: 380–90, esp. 388; and Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300–1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 79.

Middle English texts with other items well attested in other manuscripts. The book has been the object of studies focussed very narrowly on particular texts (frequently editions) and of philological analyses both partial and more comprehensive.<sup>3</sup> This chapter aims to reimagine the processes of composition for derivative texts preserved in the manuscript. In particular, the chapter will situate the Auchinleck manuscript and several connected historiographical texts amidst the challenges posed by source study when textual stability and transparent textual transmission are not assumed to be the only form of scribal practice. The second half of the chapter will turn to the technologies and processes of medieval composition, interrogating how texts were written and what is actually preserved in manuscripts.

The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* bears very little resemblance to the Royal *Short Chronicle* considered in Chapter 3. At about 2400 lines (roughly two and a half times the length of the Royal 12.c.xii text), the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* narrates the history of the island not from Brutus onwards, but from Albina, an eponymous founder of the island who was inserted into the historiographical narrative before Brutus. Albina's place in the historiographical and literary record has occasioned much study recently, remedying long neglect. She and her sisters were, however, anything but neglected soon after their first appearance. Dating the appearance of the Albina story is challenging, as it seems to appear in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English in the late 1320s or early 1330s. The earliest Anglo-Norman text that narrates the story of Albina and her sisters, known as *Des Grantz Geanz*, survives in BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra D.ix, dated to c. 1333–4.<sup>4</sup> There are in fact several versions of the poem, though only two have been edited: that in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix and a closely related shorter version that serves as a prologue to the Anglo-Norman *Brut*.<sup>5</sup> Although it is possible that some

3. For example, see Emily Runde, "Reexamining Orthographic Practice in the Auchinleck Manuscript through Study of Complete Scribal Corpora," in *Studies in the History of the English Language*, vol. 5 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2010): 265–87 and Alison Wiggins, "Are Auchinleck Manuscript Scribes 1 and 6 the Same Scribe? The Advantages of Whole-Data Analysis and Electronic Texts," *Medium Ævum* 73 (2004): 10–26.

4. MS Cotton Cleopatra D.ix is in fact a composite volume, bound by Robert Cotton in the early seventeenth century, combining at least five separate manuscripts, including a book associated with a vicar for Lichfield Cathedral, one from Fineshade Priory (Northamptonshire), a short chronicle potentially from the Welsh Marches, the "Epistola ad regem Edwardi III" mistakenly attributed to Archbishop Islip (after 1349), and sections of the *South English Legendary* located dialectally to Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. See Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1974), 111–12.

5. See Ruth Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts*, with Maureen Boulton, ANTS Occasional Publications 3 (London: Nuffield Press, 1999), 26–30; and *Des Grantz Geanz: An Anglo-Norman Poem*, ed. G. E. Brereton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1937).

instance of the Albina story was circulating by c. 1327 when the historian Castleford claims to have composed his chronicle, as the only manuscript of Castleford's *Chronicle* dates to the end of the fourteenth century, precisely when the story first made an appearance remains uncertain.<sup>6</sup> Study of *Des Grantz Geanz* has been further complicated by the mistaken conclusions of the poem's editor, who misidentified the number of constituent books in the manuscript as three, rather than five.<sup>7</sup> Her precise dating of the poem to 1333–34 has been corrected by Carley and Crick, who offer instead a date for the relevant portion of the codex as 1332/4.<sup>8</sup>

The Middle English translation of the story of Albina found in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was part of the sudden surge in the legend's growth from obscurity to widespread popularity. In addition to the Cotton Cleopatra D.ix text, a version of the tale also serves as a prologue to at least sixteen manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut*, in a set of seemingly related manuscripts that narrate insular history up to 1333.<sup>9</sup> This grouping of prose *Brut* manuscripts suggest that the version of the Albina story which neatly prefaces the prose *Brut* was likely created sometime after 1333.<sup>10</sup> The Auchinleck manuscript has traditionally been dated to c. 1330–40, which puts it closely contemporary with the spread of the Albina story.<sup>11</sup> Helen Cooper's recent essay on the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* allows for a still more precise dating of the codex. The text refers to the tunnels and caves beneath Nottingham Castle, which were implicated in the arrest of Roger Mortimer in October 1330, indicating the manuscript was likely not copied before very late 1330 or 1331.<sup>12</sup> Cooper's important refinement of

6. James Carley and Julia Crick, "Constructing Albion's Past," in *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition*, ed. James Carley (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 347–418, esp. 350; and *Castleford's Chronicle, or the Boke of Brut*, ed. Caroline D. Eckhardt, 2 vols., EETS OS 305, 306 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). See also Julia Marvin, "Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman Prose *Brut* Chronicles [with an Edition and Translation of the Prose Prologue to the Long Version of the Anglo-Norman Prose *Brut*]," *Arthurian Literature* 18 (2001): 143–83.

7. *Des Grantz Geanz*, vi.

8. Carley and Crick note that Brereton's dating to 1333–34 derives from an *obit* on f. 74<sup>r</sup> of Cotton Cleopatra D.ix that is itself a later addition, but note the last date of the chronicle ending on f. 67<sup>v</sup> as evidence for dating the text to 1332/4. "Constructing Albion's Past," 351 n. 17. See also the catalogue description by Nigel Ramsay, available online at <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/cotton/mss/cle4.htm>.

9. Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, 26.

10. Lister Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1998), 33–35.

11. See Derek Pearsall and I. Cunningham, eds. *The Auchinleck Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1* (London: Scolar Press, 1977), vii.

12. See Helen Cooper, "Lancelot, Roger Mortimer, and the Date of the Auchinleck Manuscript," in *Studies in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Texts in Honour of John Scattergood*,

the date for Auchinleck (and her injunction that critics dating manuscripts by the chronicles they contain should check more than just the endings of those histories) pushes the composition of Auchinleck, and in particular the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, still closer to the 1332–4 range that seems to mark the first circulation of the Albina story.

The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* is unexpectedly connected to a textual tradition—the French *Lancelot-Grail* cycle—otherwise unattested in Middle English at this date.<sup>13</sup> The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* in fact demonstrably draws from several unexpected French and Middle English literary and historiographical texts. The following sections will trace the remarkable reliance upon diverse texts by the scribe(s) responsible for assembling those texts in the Auchinleck manuscript. Impressive access to a large number of historiographical and romance exemplars is also demonstrated in the sophisticated use of those texts by the composer(s) of texts preserved in the Auchinleck manuscript. The version of *Des Grantz Geanz* that prefaces the prose *Brut* would be the more obvious source for the writer of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, as one history text would thus be used to compose another. Against expectations, however, the Auchinleck text derives from the longer version of *Des Grantz Geanz*, which survives only in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix. The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* deploys the Albina story in precisely the same way that it occurs in the prose *Brut*, namely, as a doubled foundation narrative designed to precede Brutus's foundation of the island. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the version translated in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was not that circulating with the prose *Brut*. The Auchinleck translation reveals its indebtedness to the longer version of *Des Grantz Geanz* through several instances of lexical closeness.<sup>14</sup> For example, when Albina and her sisters have their lives spared, and are instead set adrift in a rudderless boat, *Des Grantz Geanz* describes the decision: “Mes les juges, qi furunt sage, / Pur l'onur de lur *parage*, / C'est a saver de lur pere,

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ed. A. M. D'Arcy and A. J. Fletcher (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 95: “If this interpolation is indeed a response to the events of that October . . . unless the lines were both written and copied within ten weeks of the events . . . the manuscript cannot have been produced before 1331 at the earliest.” I am grateful to Helen Cooper for sharing an early version of her findings with me.

13. Thus Cooper: “So far as I know, the episode in the *Short Metrical Chronicle* predates any other reference in Middle English to the adultery of Lancelot and Guinevere by over half a century” (“Lancelot,” 97).

14. Examples include “heye *parage*” (SC, A.77) from “haut *parage*” (DGG, C.32); “bis lond ichil sese to me” (SC, A.314) from “De la terre prist seysine” (DGG, C.256); “& gras & rotes gadred blieue / Frount & acren to her mete” (SC, A.318–19) from “Les herbes crues unt mangé, / Dunt grant plenté i troverent, / E des fruiz qe es arbres erent. / Glens, chasteines e allies” (DGG, C.270–73); and “& engenderd þo on hem / Geauntes þat wer strong men” (SC, A.343–44) from “E la furent engendré / Enfaunz qi geaunz devindrent” (DGG, C.424–25).



/ Ausi de lur bone mere . . . Unt agardé qe a dreit ne a tort / Ne deivent sufrir vile mort.”<sup>15</sup> The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* ascribes the decision to the women’s father, but the harshness of their sentence is tempered on the same grounds, “þemperour 3af jugement / Euerichon to ben ybrent / Ac for þai were of his linage / & ycomen of heye *parage* / He comaund swiþe a schip to make.”<sup>16</sup> The shorter version of *Des Grantz Geanz* does not contain these lines, instead describing the daughters as spared: “Doné lour feust par jugement / Pur ceo qe a si haute gent / Furent totes mariez, / Ne deivent estre dampnez / Ne aver nule vile mort.”<sup>17</sup> The linguistic and narrative evidence firmly supports a connection between the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* and the version of *Des Grantz Geanz* that survives only in MS Cotton Cleopatra D.ix.

It is the access to an unexpectedly large and diverse array of texts demonstrated by the composer of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* that is most remarkable. I will argue that Auchinleck Scribe 1 was responsible for composing the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, an act of scribal authorship recalling the Harley Scribe’s work in Royal 12.c.xii a decade before. Resolving questions of access to texts can be difficult—now-missing copies can always be conjectured to explain matters. It is nonetheless important to recall that exemplars do not exist outside of history. Tantalizingly, the portion of Cotton Cleopatra D.ix containing *Des Grantz Geanz* was copied by Alan of Ashbourne, vicar choral of Lichfield Cathedral by 1325, and dead by 1334. The book was likely still at Lichfield Cathedral in 1345, when it was described as “unus liber de gestis Anglorum ligatus in choro [one book of the deeds of the English, chained in the choir].”<sup>18</sup> Before it was chained in Lichfield, Alan of Ashbourne may have travelled from Lichfield with his book containing *Des Grantz Geanz*, or a scribe connected to the Auchinleck manuscript may have had access to it there. Speculation aside, somewhere the translator of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* encountered a text of *Des Grantz Geanz* that closely resembles that preserved in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix, and did so within a very few years of the text’s appearance in that manuscript. The writer of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* had in his hands copies of some extremely *au courant* texts. This suggests not what is called

15. *Des Grantz Geanz*, C.167–70, C.175–76; emphasis mine. See also J. R. Reinhard, “Setting Adrift in Law and Literature,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 56 (1941): 33–68; and Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

16. *Short Chronicle*, A.279–83; emphasis mine.

17. *Des Grantz Geanz*, L.166, 173–76.

18. *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, cited by Nigel Ramsay in his online description of Cotton Cleopatra D.ix, <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/cotton/mss/cle4.htm>.

“exemplar poverty,” but rather privileged access to a remarkably diverse and substantive selection of texts.<sup>19</sup>

It is the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*'s somewhat unexpected textual lexicon, the body of texts standing behind the texts in Auchinleck itself, that reveals both a sophisticated engagement with new texts shaped from source texts, and also the repeated (but distinct) use of some source texts. Another source text employed by Scribe 1 in shaping the *Short Chronicle* also seems to have enjoyed only very limited circulation. Though less fashionably contemporary than *Des Grantz Geanz*, the source is all the more intriguing for surviving in only a single *de luxe* copy. The texts that passed through the scribe's hands were not merely exemplars, but also texts read, appreciated, and retained. Amongst the narrative details and episodes used to support arguments for the manuscript's London provenance is a long and elaborate description of the consecration of Westminster Abbey. The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* narrates in approximately 130 lines the arrival of Christendom to the island with Saint Augustine and Ethelbert, the conversion of King Sebert by Bishop Mellitus, and then a rather unexpected tale of Saint Peter's personal consecration of Westminster. It is a curious story, in which Mellitus, Bishop of London, is asked by King Sebert to consecrate the newly built Westminster Abbey. While Mellitus passes the night in preparations, a fisherman gives a stranger a ride across the Thames. The stranger, who is Saint Peter in disguise, consecrates the Abbey with signs and symbols, including an odd double inscription of the Greek alphabet, “& on þe grounde ouer al / þat al men miȝt wele se / Of gru he made an a. b. c.”<sup>20</sup> Peter then returns to the waiting fisherman, at which point they go fishing and haul in a vast quantity of salmon. The fisherman is enjoined to warn Mellitus that the Abbey has already been consecrated by Saint Peter himself, and he duly delivers the message along with a salmon, which becomes the occasion for an expository aside marking a folk etymology: “In his name to ȝou present y make / Himselue þis saumoun he gan take / & anon for þat tiding / þat ich stede is cleped chering.”<sup>21</sup> “Chering” refers to Charing Cross, and the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* offers up here yet another doubled etymology, as it has done in interpolating Albina before Brutus. It is also a peculiarly local detail to find in the text—Charing Cross, the site of the Eleanor Cross built by

19. On exemplar poverty, see Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 31. See also Margaret Connolly, “Books for the ‘helpe of euery persoonne þat þenkiþ to be saued’: Six Devotional Anthologies from Fifteenth-Century London,” *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 170–81.

20. *Short Chronicle*, A.1178–80.

21. *Short Chronicle*, A.1241–44.

Edward I to honor his late wife in the 1290s, was not likely susceptible after a mere few decades to the reimagining of its origins offered here.<sup>22</sup> It is more likely, then, that the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* refers to the village, Charing, rather than the cross. Such instances of local knowledge, like the reference to Isabella and Mortimer in the caves below Nottingham castle, seem to offer evidence for the localization of the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript. Yet the number of such moments suggests local details do not unproblematically indicate texts produced locally.

The lengthy story of the consecration of Westminster Abbey by Saint Peter and the miraculous catch of salmon is drawn from Matthew Paris's Anglo-Norman *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*.<sup>23</sup> The *Estoire* survives in a single exceptionally beautiful and richly illustrated manuscript, Cambridge, CUL, MS Ee.3.59. Matthew Paris composed the *Estoire* between 1236 and 1245, most probably before 1240.<sup>24</sup> CUL MS Ee.3.59 was likely executed around 1255, and the text's recent translators note: "It is neither an original nor an autograph, but is believed to be a copy made at Westminster or in London of an earlier manuscript by Paris that has not survived."<sup>25</sup> There are a number of details that suggest the Middle English account in Auchinleck is a direct translation of the *Estoire*. Most notable is the obscure inscription of the Greek alphabet by which Peter consecrates the Abbey: "Eu sabelun les escriptures / Tutes fresches, e figures / Sanz esfauçure aperte a fresche. / I verriez l'abecé grezesche [The writing is fresh in the sand, and the figures are new and crisp, without a smudge. There you can see the Greek alphabet]."<sup>26</sup>

22. There survives a "folk etymology" for Charing Cross suggesting it derived from the placement of the Eleanor Crosses, "chère reine." More obviously, there was a small village called Charing on the location, attested by a deed in the Feet of Fines for 31 Henry III. See W. F. Prieux, *Notes & Queries*, 9th ser., vol. 3 (1899): 405–6.

23. Zettl notes the connection in his introduction, although he suggests the two texts share a common source, rather than being directly connected (*Short Chronicle*, lxviii).

24. See the discussion of date in the recent translation, Matthew Paris, *The History of Saint Edward the King*, trans. Thelma Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, The French of England Translation Series 1 (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 25–27. See also the standard edition of the text: *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei Attributed to Matthew Paris*, ed. Kathryn Young Wallace, ANTS 41 (London: ANTS, 1983).

25. *The History of Saint Edward*, 28. See also the facsimile of the manuscript available online, <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-EE-00003-00059/>. The history of the manuscript is unknown before the middle of the sixteenth century, and thus offers no information for its circulation before that date.

26. *La Estoire de Seint Aedward*, 2191–94; *The History of Saint Edward*, 82. The curious inscription is mentioned twice in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*: "Pat al men miȝt wele se / Of gru he made an a. b. c" (A.1179–80) and "Ȝe tokne þai may wele se / Of gru þai han an a. b. c" (A.1217–18). The Anglo-Norman text is obscure; as the translators note of the lines "E l'abecé eu pavement / Escrit duple apertement" (2201–2), "inscribing both the Latin and Greek alphabets was a customary part of the ritual of consecration. . . . Nonetheless, the fisherman's failure to

The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle's* use of this otherwise unattested detail is the only known evidence for the circulation of the *Estoire* in England. It is not possible to state where, when, and in precisely what form the composer of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* had access to the text of the *Estoire*. Matthew Paris's text nonetheless seems to have enjoyed some circulation, however limited. It has been persuasively argued that both the text of the *Estoire* and the images (or closely related images) of MS Ee.3.59 were the source for a series of stained glass panes from the early fourteenth century preserved in the Lady Chapel at the Benedictine Abbey at Fécamp, in Normandy.<sup>27</sup> Although hardly evidence for wide circulation, the use of the *Estoire* by the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*—the only evidence for its circulation in Middle English—is an important example of the impressively broad range of texts to which the composers of the constituent texts of the Auchinleck manuscript had access.<sup>28</sup> Beyond the forty-four texts preserved in the codex itself, supplemental texts were used to transform those source texts into new textual instances.<sup>29</sup>

Devotion to Saint Edward and supporting the claims of Westminster Abbey work rather differently in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, composed sometime after Mortimer's fall from power in the Nottingham Caves in late 1330, than they did in Matthew Paris's *Estoire*, composed almost a century before. For the Benedictine Matthew Paris, writing about Edward the Confessor offered fairly evident benefits—Henry III's devotion to the saint and

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mention any alphabet in Latin, and Paris's use of double . . . suggested the possibility . . . that the Greek had been written twice" (Fenster and Wogan-Browne, *The History of Saint Edward*, 135 n. 167). See also *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, ed. H. Luard, Rolls Series (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), xxv.

27. See Madeline Harrison, "A Life of St. Edward the Confessor in Early Fourteenth-Century Stained Glass at Fécamp, in Normandy," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26 (1963): 33: "All the surviving Fécamp scenes can be correlated with the text of the *Estoire*, and eight can be regarded as being taken from illustrations to the text, which, if not identical to those in the surviving copy in Cambridge, would have been closely related. . . . The remaining three scenes . . . are so close to the text of the poem, following details which are not in Ailred, that the artists must have had this Norman-French text before them. . . . It is thus certain that the glaziers worked from the text of the *Estoire*, and probable that they were also influenced by illustrations to it?"

28. Marisa Libbon argues that a surviving textual source stands behind the extremely strange account of Hengist and Selmin found in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. I am grateful to her for sharing her work in progress.

29. Although it would conveniently place both *Des Grantz Geanz* and the *Estoire* at Lichfield in the sixteenth century, the association of CUL MS Ee.3.59 with Lichfield Cathedral is incorrect. The long and mistaken conflation of the antiquary Laurence Nowell (d. c. 1570) with the related Laurence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield (echoed by Wallace, *La Estoire de Seint Aedward*, xv), incorrectly places CUL MS Ee.3.59 at Lichfield before entering Lambard's library. See the correct account in R. M. Warnicke, "Nowell, Laurence (1530–c.1570)," *ODNB*.

also to Westminster Abbey is well known. Indeed, the focus of the *Estoire* on many of the specific rights and privileges of Westminster is neatly captured in the story of the fisherman and Saint Peter. The anecdote works to reinforce the miraculous foundations of the Abbey's rights to a tithe of the salmon in the Thames.<sup>30</sup> The episode in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, however, does not indicate interest in the present-tense of Westminster Abbey's claims, rather than its history. This can be seen by comparing the additional materials that the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* adapted from the *Estoire*. Two further instances suggest the translator was interested more broadly in Saint Edward, reflecting a general interest during Edward III's reign in the saint as a specifically national saint.<sup>31</sup> In a moment marked visually and rhetorically, the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* narrates the life of Edward beginning with a two-line red and blue penwork initial on f. 314<sup>vb</sup>, "After him regned seynt edward / Knowdes sone basta[r]t." After those two lines (common to all versions of the text), the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* then adds two nondescript couplets on Edward's goodness and his heavenly reward. A red paraph sets off the third line, which introduces two additional moments translated from Matthew Paris's *Estoire*: Edward's vision of the destruction of the Danish fleet at sea, and his vision of a child in the elevated host. The text is translated more freely than the material on Westminster's foundation, but it is noteworthy what has happened to the text of the *Estoire*: what appear as two consecutive episodes in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* are separated by some 1300 lines in the *Estoire*. Like the arrangement of the texts in the manuscript, this is not an unconsidered assemblage. Not only did the composer of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* avail himself of several source texts, including *Des Grantz Geanz* and the *Estoire*, but while adapting his source texts he did so with a thorough knowledge of his exemplars, not only a few lines or an isolated episode.

How the Auchinleck manuscript was constructed—specifically questions about how the book might have taken shape and the commercial circumstances of its production—has been examined in great detail by a number of scholars.<sup>32</sup> I want to turn not to the production of the manuscript, but

30. See Fenster and Wogan-Browne, *The History of Saint Edward*, 18–19, and Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200–1400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 1–3. See also Wallace, *La Estoire de Seint Aedward*, 158: "This legend is the basis for the traditional tithe of salmon, as established custom at Westminster Abbey by at least 1231."

31. See W. M. Ormrod, "The Personal Religion of Edward III," *Speculum* 64 (1989): 849–77.

32. In addition to the facsimile, see, most importantly, Timothy Shonk, "A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript: Bookmen and Bookmaking in the Early Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 66 (1985): 71–91; and Hanna, *London Literature*, especially chaps. 2 and 3. See also Turville-Petre's discussion in *England the Nation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), chap. 4.

rather to the composition of its texts and the shape of its exemplars. Before considering composition, however, a few observations about the manuscript are necessary. It is clear that the manuscript's texts have been curated. That is, as with Harley 2253 and Royal 12.c.xii, the grouping and sequencing of Auchinleck's texts in broadly thematic clusters suggests a purposeful assemblage for the codex.<sup>33</sup> This is not surprising: books as large and expensive as Auchinleck do not come into being accidentally or carelessly. There is no consensus as to who the agent responsible for those clusters was, and no explanation currently accounts for the numerous instances of intertextual dialogue among texts in the manuscript. Moreover, the manuscript's constituent texts and scribes seem to manifest a number of different regional dialectal features. As with Harley 2253 and many Middle English texts, there are tensions between the dialects of the book's five or six scribes and the dialects of the texts: *LALME* localizes Scribes I, III, and V to London and environs, but texts such as *Floris and Blancheflour* are localized to the South East Midlands, and *Sir Tristrem* preserves certain northern forms.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, what seem to be "local" details and knowledge are exhibited by a number of texts, such as the Charing Cross detail and the notes about the caves beneath Nottingham Castle, or several locations clustered around York found in *Horn Childe*.<sup>35</sup>

The plurality of dialects, local details, and shared phrases has been deployed in support of arguments both for and against the common composition of some of the manuscript's texts. The disjunctions between scribal and textual dialect have been used to mediate against anything resembling authorship, that is, against texts composed newly for the manuscript. Yet, a

33. Wiggins, following the earlier work of Coss and Mordkoff, takes the idea of the compiler of the volume as evidence against common composition for the constituent texts. She suggests that texts did not have to be "adapted in order to provide context for one another, they could be found." Alison Wiggins, "Guy of Warwick: Study and Transcription" (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2000), 128. See also Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*, who imagines an editor for the codex, "[responsible for] reworking and adapting some texts, and perhaps even for composing works or commissioning their composition and translation" (112).

34. Note that *Tristrem* also features a large number of non-northern forms. See Angus McIntosh, "Is Sir Tristrem an English or a Scottish Poem?" in *In Other Words: Transcultural Studies in Philology, Translation, and Lexicology Presented to Hans Heinrich Meier on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. J. Mackenzie and R. Todd (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1989), 85–95; and Runde: "The preponderance of northern forms in rhyming positions supports an association of *Tristrem* with the north" ("Reexamining Orthographic Practice," 283).

35. Hanna, *London Literature*, 126: "Unlike the Auchinleck borrowings from Western texts, fitful after the first section of the volume, this Northern influence is pervasive in Auchinleck and appears scattered throughout, examples distributed among at least six booklets." See also *Horn Childe and Maiden Rinnild*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Middle English Texts 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988); and Matthew Holford, "A Local Source for Horn Child and Maiden Rinnild," *Medium Ævum* 74 (2005): 34–40.

certain degree of “customization” for specific contexts has been permitted.<sup>36</sup> Wiggins, Coss, and most recently Purdie have unravelled some of the ever-increasing complexities of the texts present in the Auchinleck manuscript, arguing against common composition and instead for a more rapid, vigorous, and cross-contaminating world of exemplar circulation.<sup>37</sup> Such conclusions, though resting on close textual analysis, sit uncomfortably alongside many earlier arguments made on stylistic grounds, which are themselves a different type of equally close textual analysis. The “sameness” of some of the constituent texts has been remarked upon as evidence for shared authorship, most notably by G. V. Smithers, who suggested that *Kyng Alisaunder*, *The Seven Sages of Rome*, *Richard Coeur de Lyon*, and *Of Arthour and of Merlin* share a London-based author.<sup>38</sup> Broad comparisons of style no longer suffice to make convincing literary arguments, as Laura Hibbard Loomis noted with regard to traditional conceptions of source and analogue study when attempting to demonstrate Chaucer’s familiarity with the Auchinleck manuscript.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, scholars have examined the demonstrable textual connections, and thus the possible shared authorship, between the *Stanzaic Guy*, *Reinbroun*, and *Amis and Amiloun*; between the *Short Chronicle* and *Richard Coeur de Lyon*; between *Of Arthour and Merlin*, *Kyng Alisaunder*, *Richard Couer de Lyon*, and *The Seven Sages of Rome*; between *Sir Orfeo* and *Lay le Freine*; between *Seynt Mergrete* and *Seynt Katherine*; between *Lay le Freine* and *Sir Degare*; and between *Otuel* and *The King of Tars*.<sup>40</sup> This list should be arresting. It has been variously suggested that, in various combinations, sixteen of the 44 items surviving in the manuscript are the work of common

36. Thus, Hanna on the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* notes: “Originally another Western text, here it has been deliberately tailored for London use” (*London Literature*, 105).

37. See Alison Wiggins, “Imagining the Compiler: *Guy of Warwick* and the Construction of the Auchinleck Manuscript (NLS Advocates’ MS 19.2.1),” in *Imagining the Book*, ed. S. Kelly and J. J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 61–73; Peter Coss, “Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: The Early Romances, Local Society, and Robin Hood,” *Past & Present* 108 (1985): 35–79; and Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge, UK: D. S. Brewer, 2008), chap. 4.

38. Quoted in *London Literature*, 105 and 142 n. 2, where Hanna notes that “promised proof of common authorship never appeared.” Nonetheless, Hanna then quietly expands the list to include the first section of *Guy of Warwick*, crediting the assistance of Alison Wiggins.

39. Laura H. Loomis, “Chaucer and the Auchinleck MS: *Thopas* and *Guy of Warwick*,” in *Adventures in the Middle Ages: A Memorial Collection of Essays and Studies* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1962), 137: “The ‘parallel phrase’ method is now without honor as a method of establishing either source or common authorship.”

40. See the little-read second half of Laura Loomis, “The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop,” *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 57 (1942): 595–627; Pearsall and Cunningham, *Auchinleck*, x; and H. M. Smyser, “Charlemagne and Roland and the Auchinleck Manuscript,” *Speculum* 21 (1946): 275–88.

author(s). Such textual interconnections were, of course, the impulse behind Loomis's "bookshop" theory, and though some strands have been untangled, the manuscript's sweeping intertextuality has not been fully explained. Moreover, most arguments both for and against common authorship for Auchinleck texts rely upon insupportably narrow definitions of authorship and upon conventional understandings of scribal copying as replicative.

Composition entails scribes making decisions about the nature of their work.<sup>41</sup> Particularly for derivative texts such as the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, how such texts were written, and how constituent passages from other texts were identified, marked, and copied from exemplars, must reflect a series of decisions by scribal authors. In the unstable context where the sources of textual transmission may be plural and copying transformative, many of the arguments previously used to explain phrases common to multiple Auchinleck texts become problematic. Arguments against textual exchange during the creation of the manuscript (or those arguments for textual exchange in antecedent generations) rely upon recensionist models for the presence or absence of particular lines or passages in a number of interconnected texts. Such models assume a linear sequence of events. As I will argue below, different paradigms of composition and transmission link more closely the processes of composition and copying.<sup>42</sup>

Composition has always been treated as something largely inaccessible for medieval texts—the process that takes place before the material record of the moment on the manuscript page. It has therefore been kept carefully distinct from copying and transmission. Such clear distinctions, however, rely upon an unsustainable differentiation between authorship and nonreplicative copying. It is not necessary to distinguish Scribe 1's work as a scribe and the work of an Auchinleck redactor, compiler, editor, or translator whose hand is all over the texts of the manuscript, and perhaps the manuscript itself. Even Loomis, in her bookshop theory, maintained a strict separation of scribes from editors, and translators from versifiers. Auchinleck is Scribe 1's book, and he had a role in composing and revising some of its constituent texts, beyond merely copying texts and assembling the codex. The following

41. See Anne Hudson, "Tradition and Innovation in Some Middle English Manuscripts," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 17 (1966): 359–72.

42. Even Purdie concedes that some of the evidence for redaction and revision common to the Auchinleck texts of *Sir Degare*, *Lay le Freine*, and *Beves of Hampton* is difficult to accommodate in her models, noting that "these extremely complex intertextual relationships . . . are certainly more difficult to explain than any evidence adduced by either Loomis or Walpole and Smyser" (*Anglicising Romance*, 124 n. 109). See also Nicolas Jacobs, "Sire Degarré, Lay le Freine, Beves of Hamtoun and the 'Auchinleck Bookshop,'" *Notes & Queries* 29 (1982): 294–301.



section will argue for Scribe 1's scribal authorship of the *Short Chronicle*, and consider the consequences of his role in other texts in the manuscript connected to the *Short Chronicle*.

Auchinleck records textual transformations from multiple exemplars of a single text. As was seen with *Des Grantz Geanz* and the *Estoire*, exemplars do not exist outside of history. The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* has, at least since Zettl's 1935 edition, been known to share lines with the romance *Richard Coeur de Lyon*. Quite sensibly, the text from *Richard* was used to develop the *Short Chronicle*'s descriptions of Richard I's reign. The passage begins with a mock-oral introduction, a rhetorical flourish that can mark in the Auchinleck texts (including the *Short Chronicle*) moments of episodic narrative and imply textual transference, "Ichil 3ou tel in what maner / Listeneþ al þat ben here."<sup>43</sup> The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* narrative of Richard extends to 150 lines, as against nine lines in Royal 12.c.xii or eight lines in MS Additional 19677. The account consists of a rapid survey of Richard's career, including his preparations for crusade, a description of his floating siege tower and the bee hives catapulted into Acre, a note about windmills on his ships with colorful sails, his sundering of a chain with an axe, his quarrel with the French king Phillip, and his marksmanship with a crossbow bolt and a gold coin. All these episodes, of course, are familiar to readers of *Richard* (although, it should be stressed, not in all cases the Auchinleck *Richard*). But the patterns and the methods of borrowing reveal something about how the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* handles its sources.

Despite the clear connection between the two texts, neither the *Short Chronicle* nor *Richard* exists in some idealized form outside of specific manuscripts. The connections between the two editions of the text, and the resistance the *Short Chronicle* has demonstrated to recensionist editing, have obscured the connections that can be made between individual manuscripts of the two poems. Some scholars have argued that the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* derives its materials from a version of *Richard* that is not the one found in the Auchinleck manuscript.<sup>44</sup> Particularly because the only edition

43. *Short Chronicle*, A.2041–42. Consider the insistent repetition throughout *Arthour* of "so we finde [in/on] [þe/our] boke," which occurs in that form at least fourteen times, among some thirty references to books and rhymes in the text. The phrase also appears in *King Alisaunder*, and (with rather more obvious referent), "as it telleþ in þe boke" is found twice in *The Life of Adam and Eve*.

44. See Judith Mordkoff, "The Making of the Auchinleck Manuscript: The Scribes at Work" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 1981). Her argument rests heavily on one particular variant (annoyed/atened), and the observation that the "*Chronicle* passage directly following . . . draws on one in *Richard* . . . which is omitted from the Auchinleck and four other versions of the romance" (53). She is referring to the striking episode of windmills mounted on

of *Richard* was completed in 1913, it is worth reconsidering the connections between the two.<sup>45</sup> Two lines about Richard are present in every surviving manuscript of the *Short Chronicle*, suggesting they are common to the “core” of the text that predates later textual reimaginings of the poem: “Suþþen he was ischoten alas / At þe Castel Gailard þer he was / At þe Fount Euerard liggeþ his bon / & suþþe regned kyng Jon.”<sup>46</sup> These lines are likely translated from the very end of *Richard*: “Syþþe he was schot, allas, / In castel Gaylard, þer he was. / Þus endyd Rychard oure kyng,” where they are found in substantively this form in several manuscripts.<sup>47</sup> The presence of these lines in the common ancestor of the *Short Chronicle* suggests not one, but two moments of translation from *Richard* to the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*: one antecedent to the Auchinleck version and common to all surviving manuscripts of the *Short Chronicle*, and a second more extensive set of borrowings found only in the Auchinleck version. The first translation from *Richard* to the *Short Chronicle* took place prior to the Auchinleck manuscript’s creation. This is not necessarily surprising—textual contact can take place on multiple occasions, as texts circulated in parallel, and in intersecting and overlapping contexts. Incidentally, the couplet’s presence in the Royal 12.c.xii *Short Chronicle* offers the earliest evidence for the transmission and circulation of *Richard* some ten years before the Auchinleck manuscript.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, if the couplet was part of the core of the *Short Chronicle* dated to 1280, as attested by the fragment in MS Cotton Caligula A.xi, *Richard* may well have been circulating significantly before 1300. An entire romance narrating the reign of Richard was an obvious resource for the writers of history. More than one

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ships. Such extratextual conflation or supplementation has contemporary precedent, however. Note Hanna’s discussion of Oxford, Christ Church, MS 92, Walter de Milemete’s book, which “depicts a windmill-like machine, whose rotational motion casts beehives into a castle” (*London Literature*, 120). Marisa Libbon notes that, while the episode of the bees is present in Auchinleck’s *Richard*, the windmill episode is not present. She suggests a more complex model of textual circulation and the transmission of matters of “popular” culture. I am grateful to her for conversations on the manuscript, and on medieval textual and popular culture more broadly. See Marisa Libbon, “Cultural Nostalgia and the Production of Collective Identity in Medieval England,” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012).

45. An edition of *Richard* from the London Thornton manuscript (BL, MS Additional 31042) was the subject of a recent York PhD thesis by Cristina Figueredo.

46. *Short Chronicle*, 916–19.

47. See *Richard Löwenherz*, ed. Karl Brunner, *Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie* 42 (Vienna and Leipzig: W. Braumüller, 1913), 7207–9. Hereafter the text will be referred to as *Richard*, and specific versions will be prefaced by the name of the manuscript or shelfmark.

48. Lillian Herlands Hornstein, “Miscellaneous Romances” in *A Manual of Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500*, ed. A. E. Hartung (Camden: Archon Books for the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967), 158, describes *Richard* as “composed soon after 1300.”

author availed himself of the text, as suggested by the probable reference in the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, and certainly attested in extensive use of the romance by Robert Mannyng.<sup>49</sup>

Scribe 1 of Auchinleck copied *Richard*, and therefore had access to an exemplar of the poem that was not the version of *Richard* that survives in his hand. Scribe 1 was also responsible for a second distinct occasion in which *Richard* was used to modify the *Short Chronicle*. This is precisely the sort of circular textual borrowing that challenges most current models of transmission, staged in ways that trouble discrete recensions and the unidirectional strictures of editing. Copying and composition both take time, but need not take place sequentially. Mills has argued that the copying of the *Short Chronicle* seems to have taken place at an earlier stage of the manuscript's production, as Scribe 1's handwriting is noticeably smaller and finer in the *Short Chronicle* and the couplet version of *Guy of Warwick*, for example, than the script employed in the texts of booklet two, such as *Amis and Amiloun*.<sup>50</sup> (See figure 7.) I do not believe there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate this sequence. Although Scribe 1 is a remarkably consistent writer, his hand quite unsurprisingly exhibits substantive differences even within single texts, and certainly across stints, quires, and booklets. Establishing sequence paleographically (rather than codicologically) would likely require a secondary body of evidence akin to the dated charters by the Harley Scribe.

Anterior to the question of what order the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript might have been copied in is still another question of sequence: the order in which two texts, the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* and Auchinleck *Richard*, might have been composed. The lines shared by the two are sufficiently extensive to allow for a series of close comparisons. These comparisons will demonstrate that Scribe 1 was working with more than one exemplar of *Richard* when composing the *Short Chronicle*.

49. In a moment of *occupatio*, the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester refers its readers to a text likely to be the Middle English romance: "Me ne mai noȝt al telle her ac wo so it wole iwite / In romance of him [Richard] imad me it may finde iwite / So þat þe deuel adde þer to gret envie / & in is broþer herte Ion broȝte an tricherie" (Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 9986–89). Mannyng similarly points his readers to the romance, but he also adapts moments from the text: "Þe romance of Richard sais he wan þe toun; / his pele fro þat forward he cald it mate Griffoun" (Mannyng, *Chronicle*, II.3877–78).

50. See Mills, *Horn Childe*, 13, citing Mordkoff. Mills notes that "the unusually small scale of the hand throughout most of these two items led Kölbing to ascribe both to his phantom scribe [gamma]" (13 n. 7).

alle half azeie 7 mo.  
 7 afterward opon allhille.  
 e thellard wy tresoun 7 gyle.  
 rouzt him ful in thel wo.  
**S**o in atme at we tel in gest.  
 he rich doule lete make a fest.  
 only in somers tid.  
 er wat man agental gest.  
 he wete 7 drmk ful onest.  
 to fern bi ich alid.  
 othe semly folk wat sammed pane.  
 e rit baroun lalle 7 mare.  
 7 leuedit proude in prid.  
 m oreioie no myt be non.

he lordes alto bring of dalle.  
 o zamel ryt azamel lalle.  
 7 eren men of gret amour.  
 t there a foule mesaventure.  
 god pit heyt lict of alle.  
 u o lat it neuer to bifalle.  
 l eman he seyd may pit be soy.  
 b a fur wy outen op.  
 p at thal tolk wele wite the.  
 p enyt some myt p thal be.  
 p at myt thal je ad bedon.  
 p at slayn pan thal ben euichon.  
 7 fe pi lone ad y thal be.  
**P**at ichane thraue her pringte.

Figure 7. Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1, f. 50<sup>v</sup> (detail) and f. 304<sup>v</sup> (detail)

Auchinleck <i>Short Chronicle</i>	Auchinleck <i>Richard</i>
<p>When it was wrou 3t fair &amp; wel  He sett þerin a mangonel  þat þurth queyntise of mannes strengþe  It mi 3t cast þre mile o lengþe.  þe joinour þat it hadde to 3eme  He purueyd king richard to queme.  Anon he tok him þe be hiue  &amp; into acres slong hem biliue.  (<i>Short Chronicle</i>, A.2089–96)</p>	<p>When his castel was framed fair &amp; wel,  He lete sett þerin a mangonel,  &amp; comand his folk biliue  To feche him vp mani a be hiue.  (<i>Richard</i>, A.993–6; Brunner 2903–6)</p>
<p>þe weder was hot <i>in somers tide</i>,  þe ben brust out bi ich a side  þat wer anoied &amp; ful of grame;  þai dede þe sarra 3ins miche schame,  For þai hem stong in her vissage  þat al þai bigun to rage  &amp; hedde hem al <i>in depe celer</i>  þat þai durst com no nerer.  (<i>Short Chronicle</i>, A.2099–2106)</p>	<p>þe weder was hot <i>in somers tide</i>,  þe ben brust out bi ich a side,  &amp; were atened &amp; ful of grame,  &amp; dede þe sarra 3ins michel schame.  þai stungen hem <i>in her visage</i>,  þat alle þai gun for to rage.  þai hidde hem down <i>in depe celer</i>.  No man durst com hem ner  (<i>Richard</i>, A.1001–8; Brunner 2911–18)</p>

The process of translation of the passage from *Richard*, without question the original, to the *Short Chronicle*, is typical of Middle English translation more generally. The passage suggests the composer sometimes worked quite freely in adapting his text, yet also tended at times to remain close to the original. That is, translation from one Middle English text to another recalls precisely the act of copying, with all of the attendant variations and divergent practices thus implied. Lines A.2091–94 of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, coming between the two translated couplets from *Richard* (the first verbatim, the second drawing on the sense and rhyme of its source), are seemingly original to the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. In fact, however, lines A.2093–4 are shaped by *Richard*, drawn from a couplet found some five hundred lines later in the poem.<sup>51</sup> *Short Chronicle* A.2091–2, although without a precise analogue in *Richard*, exhibit the influence of the vocabulary of *Richard* in referring to the “queyntise” by which the catapult cast the beehives. The word (and more broadly the concept) is important to *Richard*’s construction of kingship and military success, yet is found almost exclusively in this particular section of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*.<sup>52</sup> The couplet in the Auchin-

51. *Richard*, 3455–56: “þe styward took ry 3t good 3eme / To serue, Kyng R. to queme.”

52. In the *Short Chronicle*, “queynt” forms appear at A.2091, A.2108, A.2111, and A.2172, all part of the *Richard* expansion, excepting only A.1079, “Lancelot was a queynt man,” without parallel in any other texts of the *Short Chronicle*. “Queynt” forms appear only twice in the

leck *Short Chronicle*, coming between the translated couplets of *Richard*, is not translated from that text, yet deploys its vocabulary. Composition is here shaped by its immediate proximity to translation.

The simultaneity of composition and translation reveals other issues that trouble the connections between the texts. In particular, the evidence suggests that the Auchinleck *Richard* was subject to the same scribal rewritings as the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* (see table on p 64). The longer and more coherent narrative is again found in *Richard*, which tells more fully of a chain stretched between two pillars across the bay at Acre. This makes the direction of borrowing quite clear: from *Richard* to the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. The transformative and unstable processes of translation, however, are recognizable among all versions of the two texts. The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* adapts the Auchinleck *Richard*, as suggested by the chain being cut into three pieces, rather than in two, and the rhyme on “pre” and “se.”<sup>53</sup> The Auchinleck *Richard* preserves the “chain : main” rhyme found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 228, as against the “chain : twain” reading of the five manuscripts that divide the chain in two, not three, parts.<sup>54</sup> It is a rather dramatic failure of logic to have the chain divided into three parts by *Richard*’s blow result in only two ends that “fel down in þe se.” This gaffe suggests that the Auchinleck *Richard* was being written and translated from its exemplar in precisely the same ways the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was adapted from the *Richard* in the same manuscript.<sup>55</sup> That is, the Auchinleck *Richard* itself demonstrates the same transformative relationship to its exemplar as the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* does to its exemplar(s). Further, this scenario explains the presence of certain details in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, details not found in the Auchinleck *Richard*, such as the famous windmills-on-ships episode. These moments likely reflect Scribe 1 working from both his own *Richard* and from a second *Richard* while composing the

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Auchinleck *Richard*, but a cursory examination of Brunner’s edition turns up at least fourteen instances in the edited text. See Geraldine Barnes, *Counsel and Strategy in Middle English Romance* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 1993).

53. Note, however, that although the rhyme is translated, the sense has changed in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*—“se” is no longer the noun “sea,” but the verb “see.”

54. Only four of which use the “chain : twain” rhyme, the last [Caius 175/96] uses “chain too : two.”

55. See Jacobs, “*Sire Degarré*,” 299: “All that can be said with certainty is that both stages of interpolation in *Degarré* involve the use of a redaction of *Beves* which survives only in the Auchinleck MS and which there is some reason to believe to have been itself made in the scriptorium in which that MS was copied. The case is sufficiently similar to that of *Degarré* and *Freine* to support the hypothesis that more than one copy of *Degarré* was made in the Auchinleck scriptorium and that the various copies were interpolated to differing degrees from the other two romances.”

Auchinleck <i>Short Chron.</i>	Auchinleck <i>Richard</i>	MS Douce 228	Brunner <i>Richard</i>
<p>King richard arriued to þe lond,            Ac first he smot a dint wel strong            Wiþ his ax a cheyne of þre;            Al þat þer were miȝt it se.            Swiche a dent as he smot þer            In lond nas smiten neuer er.            (A.2137–42)</p>	<p>&amp; king richard þat was so gode            Wiþ his ax afor schippe stode            &amp; whan he com ouer þe cheyne            He smot a strok wiþ miȝt &amp; mayn.            þe cheyne he smot on peces þre            &amp; boþe endes fel down in þe se.            Þo alle his marinere verrament            Seyd þer was a noble dent            (A.739–46)</p>	<p>Kyng Richard þat was so good            With his ax in þe schip stood            Wanne he came be fore þe chayne            He smot a dynt with myth an 7 mayne            He carf þe chayne þat þei myth se            Þat bothyrn endys fellyn in þe see            All þe marinere seydyn verament            That yt was a nobil dynt            Oxford, Bodleian            Library, MS Douce 228, f. 20<sup>r</sup></p>	<p>And Kyng Richard, þat was so good,            Wiþ hys ax in foreschyp stod,            And wherne he come to þe cheyne,            Wiþ his ax he smot it on twayne,            þat alle þe barouns, verrayment,            Sayde it was a noble dent            (Brunner, 2633–38)</p>

Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. It is possible, but not necessary, that the second text was the exemplar standing behind the Auchinleck *Richard*. If exemplar poverty is at play here, Scribe 1 nonetheless had access to at least two texts of *Richard* on at least two occasions, once while copying *Richard*, and a second time while composing the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*.

The plurality of exemplars and the subtly transformative processes of copying and composition explain why many of the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript bear the marks of common composition, without necessarily sharing authorship in a narrow sense. The direction of textual borrowings and translations is not always clear in a large number of texts preserved in Auchinleck. Moreover, there seem to be instances in which multiple tranches of borrowings and translations from an exemplar occur. There are nonetheless uncanny amounts of overlap among unexpected texts through the Auchinleck manuscript. Some of the repeated instances are likely common formulae or stock phrases—“þe weder was hot in somers tide,” quoted above, is utterly banal. As such, it is not sufficient evidence to argue convincingly for a connection between the Auchinleck *Richard* and the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. As part of the near-verbatim sequence of eight lines shared between the two texts, however, its transference from one to the other is clear. More curious is the phrase’s reappearance in the couplet *Guy of Warwick*, “Swiþe hastiliche þai gun ride, / Þe weder was hot in somers tide.”<sup>56</sup> (See figure 8.) It may well be that the three instances of the phrase in the Auchinleck manuscript attest to the phrase’s conventional nature, rather than indicating an intertextual connection. However, the examples multiply. Taylor notes: “The Auchinleck scribes were steeped in the idiom of Middle English romance.”<sup>57</sup> One might more usefully think of the Auchinleck scribes as creating the language of romance, not merely transmitting it. Where are the lines to be drawn between stock phrases, conventional formulae, and unusual turns of phrase? In translating *Des Grantz Geanz*, the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* rhymes “linage” and “parage,” where the rhyme is shaped by the vocabulary and rhyme of its Anglo-Norman source. Yet it is not a unique rhyme in the Auchinleck manuscript—the Stanzaic *Guy* uses the rhyme twice.<sup>58</sup> Also less

56. Couplet *Guy*, A.4125–26.

57. Andrew Taylor, “Manual to Miscellany: Stages in the Commercial Copying of Vernacular Literature in England,” *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 3. Taylor draws on Pearsall to revive something closer to the bookshop theory, although working after Shonk’s article, he advances a somewhat more specialized model hinging on Scribe 1: “As Pearsall notes, the people who worked on the manuscript were not just copying exemplars but also translating and modifying them. They knew the conventions of romance and had developed a considerable fluency in Middle English versification” (3).

58. Thus, “He mett a man of fair parage, / Ycomen he was of hey 3e linage” and “& art a man of fair parage / Ycom þou art of hei 3e linage” (Stanzaic *Guy*, 7455–56, 9018–19).



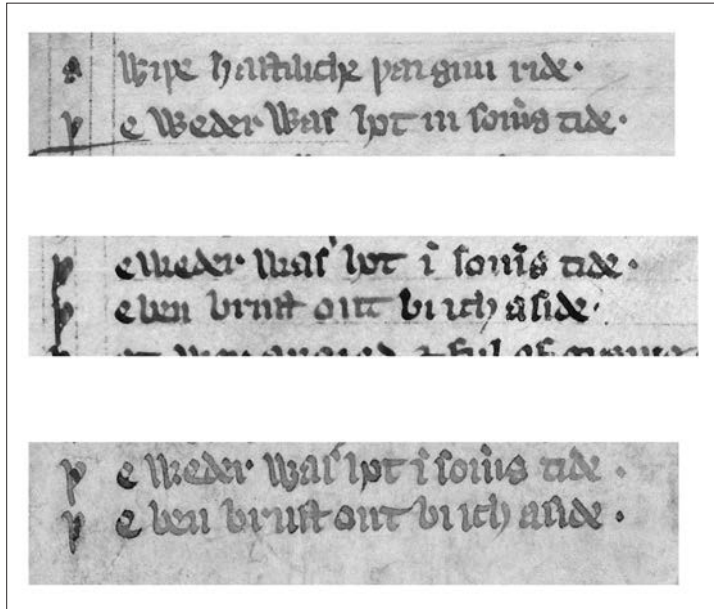


Figure 8. Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1, f. 315<sup>v</sup> (detail), f. 327<sup>v</sup> (detail), and f. 131<sup>r</sup> (detail)

obviously formulaic are two phrases shared very nearly verbatim by *The Legend of Pope Gregory* and the *Auchinleck Short Chronicle*: “& seyð schortliche att wordes þre” and “Wel depe at þe se grounde.”<sup>59</sup> Such small examples do not serve as evidence for debates over what might be called capital-A authorship. However, these moments cannot usefully be read to conclude the direction of borrowing for an entire text, or even for the phrase itself.<sup>60</sup> The evidence of common intervention, adaptation, and interpolation by an individual in numerous texts of the Auchinleck manuscript attests only to just that.

59. The full lines are “Into þat holi cite. / A cardinal spac þer among, / & seyð schortliche att wordes þre” (*Gregory*, 965–67) and “Schortliche he seyð at wordes þre / He wald haue þerof þe dignite” (*Short Chronicle* A.2165–66). Also, “Y knowe a roche al ridi rounde; / Þerin þer is an hous ywrouzt / Wel depe at þe se grounde” (*Gregory*, 919–21), which appears with variants twice in the *Short Chronicle*: “Woninge stede gode & sounde / Wel depe in þe hard grounde” and “Wel depe in þe se grounde, / Þer he kept it hole & sounde” (*Short Chronicle*, A.871–72, A.2065–66).

60. Such holistic concerns trouble Purdie and Mills in describing the connections between *Amis, Guy*, and *Horn Childe*. See Purdie, *Anglicising Romance*, 108–18.

The shared phrases amongst different texts of the Auchinleck manuscript thus need not indicate shared authorship *per se*. Instead, they suggest that an individual was responsible for customizing the texts of the book, and for writing and situating new texts in the book. Texts circulated not in some abstract, ahistorical manner, but as copies that themselves served as exemplars. Fair-copy to fair-copy transmission, and the replicative copying by which it is accomplished, does not explain or describe the Auchinleck texts. Such a model also cannot explain how derivative historiographies and other assembled texts were crafted. For those distinctly curated and adapted Auchinleck texts such as the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, there must have been multiple stages in the processes of composing it as a derivative text. The evidence of the nonlinear use of several different sections of Matthew Paris's *Estoire* suggests that the composer of the text did not merely pause while copying the life of Edward from his *Short Chronicle* exemplar, turn to a copy of the *Estoire* conveniently at hand, translate a few lines in his head, set them down in a perfectly executed formal bookhand directly on the page, and return to copying his exemplar before arbitrarily deciding, a few hundred lines later, that it was time to add a bit more *Estoire*. The customization of the *Short Chronicle* for the Auchinleck manuscript, specifically instances such as the lines drawn from the Auchinleck *Richard*, make it clear that the composer's exemplar must have been an *ad hoc* text, specific to the moment of Auchinleck's closely proximate copying and composition.

The localized exemplar of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was likely a variety of what for a later period are termed "foul" or "working" papers. Reliance upon such an intermediary step, one predicated upon being ephemeral, bears with it some uncertainty.<sup>61</sup> Finished products can also become intermediary steps: a finished manuscript can serve as an exemplar before then being the basis of further revisions. Some form of intermediary textual realization can both account for the unique nature of many of Auchinleck's texts and also explain the obvious copying errors made when transferring those drafts to the page.<sup>62</sup> Scribe 1, then, might well be copying his own written compositions, as Matthew Paris must have done when copying his own his-

61. See my article "When Variants Aren't: Authors as Scribes in Some English Manuscripts," in *Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Anne Hudson and Vincent Gillespie. (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), which discusses the holograph manuscript by the historian Ranulf Higden, a manuscript hovering at the uncomfortable seams of the multiple roles manuscripts can play, and falling between translation, copy, exemplar, and original.

62. Thus, for example, the obvious error that occurs in the midst of the Albina section—Scribe 1 writes: "Of hem we haue miche grame / To ous al it is gret schame" (*Short Chronicle*, A.75); this is noted by the online facsimile as "MS reads garme." See f. 304<sup>b</sup>, but also f. 49<sup>a</sup>, *Amis*, where Scribe 1 correctly copies "grame" rhymed with "schame."

tories, and as Higden did in copying his own *Polychronicon* in San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 132.

Yet, the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript express very particular anxieties over one form of temporary writing: wax tablets. What is now the first text in the manuscript, the fragmentary *Legend of Pope Gregory*, relates the strange account of Pope Gregory the Great, derived from a French version of Gregory's *vita*.<sup>63</sup> Born of an incestuous relationship between brother and sister, Gregory is set adrift by his mother, who writes the story of his birth and her hopes for his future on a set of wax tablets backed with ivory: "Tables sche toke sone riche / Of yuori layen hir bifore, / Wiþ honden sche wrot & sore gan sike / Hou he was biþeten & bore."<sup>64</sup> As a record of his identity, the wax tablets are a peculiar choice. Wax tablets are useful precisely for their impermanence, rather than their durability. At the same time, wax tablets are primarily a space for private writing, rather than public communication. The note Gregory's mother leaves for her son on the wax tablets seems to suggest a deep ambivalence about the permanence of writing. Even temporary texts that record a person's lineage, that record a person's history, inscribe that history in a larger cultural moment. In another primal misadventure, Gregory marries his mother, but spends so much time weeping in a private chamber over his sinful birth as recorded on his wax tablets that his mother becomes suspicious of his doings.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, while Gregory is out hunting, "Sche souzt & fond wiþ hert vnmild / Þe tables þat wiþ hir sone sche sent / & knewe it was hir owen child / Þat in his armes anizt sche went. / Þo þe leuedi hadde þe latters radde / Þat sche wrot, ich wene, / Sone sche bicom al mad."<sup>66</sup> Again, the wax tablets are unexpectedly durable records of written history, containing private writings that should have been made public. Ultimately, though, the *Legend of Pope Gregory* is concerned with the contest between the historical and the Christian. Gregory's tale is remarkable because he atones for sins that would seem to be unforgivable. His history is recorded on wax tablets, but also upon the parchment in Auchinleck,

63. For the French source, see *La Vie du Pape Saint Grégoire: Huit versions françaises de la légende du bon pécheur*, ed. Hendrik Bastiaan Sol (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1977); and Emma Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives: The Gift, Kinship, and Community in Old French Hagiography* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008).

64. *Legend of Pope Gregory*, 121–24. The closest similar Middle English version survives in the Vernon manuscript, printed in C. Keller, *Die Mittelenglische Gregoriuslegende* (New York and Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1914). See also, curiously, the very different "Life of Saint Gregory" from the *South English Legendary* preserved in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix, the Lichfield manuscript containing *Des Grantz Geanz*.

65. See Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

66. *Legend of Pope Gregory*, 750–56.

written by Scribe 1, parchment that testifies to Gregory's canonization and to the miracles he performed. The texts of the past, though fragile, cannot be easily erased, but their endings can be rewritten.

It is essential to understand the ways in which wax tablets, parchment scraps, and sheets of parchment make possible both composition and the forms of textual transference that stand behind derivative texts and Scribe 1's work on the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. In their seminal article on wax tablets, Richard and Mary Rouse note the puzzling lack of attention paid by scholars to how medieval texts were composed, and explore the use of wax tablets throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages.<sup>67</sup> There is a small body of regularly cited descriptions of wax tablets, such as the poem by Baudri of Bourgueil celebrating his stylus and wax tablet, and a description in Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi*, which will be discussed below.<sup>68</sup> There is no doubt that wax tablets were in wide use in the medieval period, and useful for a variety of forms of literacy. However, by the fourteenth century, the use of wax tablets seems to have been primarily for more practical forms of literacy, rather than literary composition. Wax tablets share qualities with other surfaces designed for ephemeral writing, such as slates or hornbooks, and thus were an obvious instrument for the schoolroom.<sup>69</sup> Other uses for wax tablets might be seen in several that survive from the French royal treasury, where large tablets were used to record the sums and processes of complicated royal finances.<sup>70</sup> In another instance of wax tablets as a medium of practical literacy, consider the set of wood-framed wax tablets discovered in 1989 by the York Archaeological Trust during excavations in Swinegate, York.<sup>71</sup> The set consists of eight small wood tablets with wax surfaces on both sides, held

67. See Richard Rouse and Mary Rouse, "Wax Tablets," *Language & Communications* 9 (1989): 175–91; and Rouse and Rouse, "The Vocabulary of Wax Tablets," *Harvard Library Bulletin* (1990): 12–19.

68. See Roger Chartier, *Inscription and Erasure*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

69. Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 133–34; and Rouse and Rouse, "Wax Tablets," 175–77. Note, however, the skepticism about slates as temporary writing surfaces (for specifically musical composition) in Randall Rosenfeld, "Technologies for Musical Drafts, Twelfth Century and Later," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 11 (2002): 45–63. See also Franz H. Bauml, "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 237–65.

70. See Élisabeth Lalou, "Un compte de l'Hôtel du roi sur tablettes de cire, 10 octobre-14 novembre [1350]," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 152 (1994): 91–127; Lalou, "Les tablettes de cire médiévales," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 147 (1989): 123–40; and Lalou, *Les comptes sur tablettes de cire de Jean Sarrazin, chambellan de saint Louis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003). I am grateful to Patrick Geary for these references, and for conversation on the subject.

71. See Michelle Brown, "The Role of the Wax Tablet in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in Light of a Recent Find from York," *Journal of the British Library* 20 (1994): 1–15.

in some form of a carrying-case, and accompanied by a small iron stylus. Michelle Brown has identified both Middle English and Latin words on the tablets, and describes the script as *Cursiva Anglicana*, likely datable to the last quarter of the fourteenth century. The tablets are approximately 2 inches by 1.2 inches. The text on these late-fourteenth-century tablets seems to be about five (very small) words to the line, and six or seven lines on the face of each tablet. Again, the utility of such tablets for practical writing is clear when used for a shopping list or a brief memorandum. However, though such tablets may have been sufficient to record short verses, it is difficult to imagine them as the site for large-scale verse or prose composition in later medieval England. Baudri may have celebrated his stylus and wax tablet, but he was writing in the middle of the eleventh century, when the expense of parchment and the economies of reading and writing were vastly different than those of London in the first half of the fourteenth century.

It seems extremely unlikely that lengthy poems were composed on miniscule wax tablets. Moreover, by the fourteenth century, contemporary references seem to suggest that wax tablets were not primarily thought of as compositional tools. The small York tablets and the large tablets of the French court were clearly employed for more practical forms of literacy: stenographic purposes, conducting business, keeping records while traveling, or as a repository for quotations or textual extracts. Quite a few ivory covers for late medieval wax tablets survive. Their dimensions and the quality of their decoration vary, but they again indicate personal, private literacies as distinct from the composition of longer texts.<sup>72</sup> Chaucer describes precisely such a practical, rather than poetic, use of wax tablets in the Summoner's Tale:

His felawe hadde a staf tipped with horn,  
 A peyre of tables al of ivory,  
 And a poyntel polysshed fetisly,  
 And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,  
 Of alle folk that yaf hym any good,  
 Ascaunces that he wolde for hem preye.<sup>73</sup>

72. I am indebted to the materials gathered by Karen Larsdatter on her website, particularly the sections on wax tablets and scribal tools more generally. See <http://www.larsdatter.com/tablets.htm>. Many of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century examples are quite small, and measure approximately 4 inches by 2 inches, as Walters Art Museum 71.267 (French, 1340–1360, 3 3/4" x 2 1/16") and 21.203 (French? Late 14th century, 3 11/16" x 2 3/8").

73. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, "The Summoner's Tale," 1740–45. See also Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), and his description of Saint Cassian's death at the hands of countless schoolboys stabbing him with their styli. The example

As an account book and an *aide-mémoire*, Chaucer's depiction of wax tablets anchors forms of composition that fall somewhere between the truly ephemeral and the remarkable resilience of parchment.<sup>74</sup> It is clearly a conventional image, anticipating very particular expectations. Other texts rely upon expectations that wax tablets imply more practical written literacy, a literacy of lists and accounts. For example, *Jack Upland*, the late-fourteenth- or early-fifteenth-century Wycliffite text, echoes Chaucer's association of wax tablets with inappropriate tabulation: "Frere, whi writist þou mennes names in þi tablis? Wenest þou þat God is suche a fool þat He wot not of mennes dedis but if þou telle Hym bi þi tablis."<sup>75</sup> In the early middle ages, Baudri of Bourgueil and Ordericus Vitalis discussed composition on wax tablets. By the fourteenth century, however, the popular image of wax tablets is not that of a monk with cold fingers laboriously clutching a stylus and inscribing devotional lines. Rather, they suggest a corrupt friar tabulating donations and donors for his own purposes.

The means by which medieval texts were composed likely varied as much as the uses of wax tablets. The following sections will trace the materiality of longer projects of composition. I will argue that some medieval texts, including derivative historiography, were written directly on the manuscript page. By the end of the fourteenth century, although parchment remained expensive, it was not unimaginably so, and its expense did not preclude its use in composing texts. Evidence from the earlier Middle Ages suggests compositional practice was more substantially shaped by the then-greater expense of parchment. Wax tablets were not the only solution to the problem confronting the medieval author: how to compose a text. I want to focus here on the technologies employed for composition, on the technological and physical supplements to human capacity.<sup>76</sup> In the ninth century, the Irish philosopher John Scottus Eriugena likely oversaw the production of his *Periphyseon* in a manuscript scholars believe to be partly an autograph, Rheims, Bibliothèque

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appears in Higden's *Polychronicon*. In Trevisa's translation, he notes: "children at Malmesbury, þe whiche children stiked hym to dethe wiþ here poyntelles." Higden, *Polychronicon*, 6: 331.

74. As depicted in manuscript illuminations and drawings, wax tablets are sometimes represented as much larger objects than those that survive. It is unclear whether this is due to the wide existence of larger-format wax tablets, or nonproportional representation. See The Holkham Picture Bible (BL, MS Additional 47680, f. 27<sup>v</sup>), the Huntingfield Psalter (New York, The Morgan Library, MS M.43, f. 18<sup>v</sup>), and The Morgan Library, MS M.92, f. 110<sup>r</sup>.

75. See *Jack Upland*, in James M. Dean, ed., *Six Ecclesiastical Satires* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), 128.

76. On the notes taken by university students, see Charles Burnett, "Give Him the White Cow: Note-Taking in the Universities in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *History of Universities* 14 (1998): 1–30. I am grateful to Christopher Baswell for this reference.

Municipale, MS 875.<sup>77</sup> A sophisticated philosophical text, the *Periphyseon* in MS 875 features a series of devices for accommodating layers of textual revision introduced in holograph by the author (and also by another hand). One critic explains the evidence as indicating that Eriugena was sometimes “working freehand” and other times, suggests that the process reveals Eriugena “[having] already written his text on a wax tablet . . . [he let] a Caroline scribe complete it.”<sup>78</sup> It is not, in itself, surprising that an author should employ different methods when composing a lengthy text, or when inscribing that composition on parchment. The heterogeneity of Eriugena’s approach, however, is remarkable for how early in the medieval period we find an author composing directly on the page, modifying his own text, and supplying his scribes with scraps of parchment and wax tablets to be copied fresh or inserted into an existing text. The practices of Eriugena resemble later medieval approaches to composition, particularly those for nontheological texts. Eriugena’s working methods anticipate later attitudes towards parchment, its expense, and its availability.

Even in the twelfth century, writing texts required larger quantities of parchment than might be expected. The Benedictine monk Eadmer (d. after 1126) narrates a dramatic moment in the creation of his *Vita Anselmi*, in which he used at least four sets of parchment leaves to write his text. The proliferation of such now-invisible vellum should go some way to reshaping our understanding of where composition could and did take place. Eadmer’s recounting of his struggle in writing the *Vita Anselmi* is well known, but will be quoted at length in order to clarify the steps of his writing process:

Praeterea cum operi manum primo imposuissem, et quae in cera dictaveram pergamenae magna ex parte tradidissem; quadam die ipse pater Anselmus secretius me convenit, sciscitans quid dictitarem, quid scriptitarem. Cui cum rem magis silentio tegere quam detegere maluissem; praecepit quatinus aut coepto desistens aliis intenderem, aut quae scribebam sibi ostenderem. Ego autem qui jam in nonnullis quae scripseram ejus ope fretus et emendatione fueram roboratus; libens parui, sperans eum insita sibi benivolentia quae corrigenda correcturum, quae aliter se habe-

77. See Paul E. Dutton, “Eriugena’s Workshop: The Making of the *Periphyseon* in Rheims 875,” in *History and Eschatology in John Scottus Eriugena and His Time*, ed. Michael Dunne and James McEvoy (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 141: “My fundamental assumption is that Eriugena’s handwriting has been identified.”

78. Dutton, “Eriugena’s Workshop,” 156. Dutton (155 n. 54) rejects the suggestion by T. A. M. Bishop that composition and revision could not have taken place on separate parchment or tablets. Dutton observes further: “It is also possible that on occasion Eriugena handed over new passages on scraps of parchment” (157).

bant singula loco sibi competenti ordinaturum. Nec hac spe, opinio mea fefellit me. Siquidem in ipso opusculo nonnulla correxit, nonnulla subvertit, quaedam mutavit, probavit quaedam. Unde cum nonnichil corde laetarer, et quod edideram tanta ac tali auctoritate suffultum forte plus aequo paenes memetipsum gloriarer; post paucos correcti operis dies vocato michi ad se pontifex ipse praecepit, quatinus quaterniones in quibus ipsum opus congesseram penitus destruerem, indignum profecto sese iudicans, cuius laudem secutura posteritas ex litterarum monimentis pretii cujusvis haberet. Quod nimirum egre tuli. Non audens tamen ipsi precepto funditus inobediens esse, nec opus quod multo labore compegeram volens omnino perditum ire; notatis verbis ejus quaterniones ipsos destruxi, iis quibus scripti erant aliis quaternionibus primo inscriptis.

[When I had first taken in hand this work [the *Vita Anselmi*] . . . and had already transcribed on to parchment a great part of what I had drafted on wax tablets, Father Anselm one day called me to him privately and asked what it was that I had drafted and transcribed. And when I showed that I would rather keep silent than speak, he ordered me either to show him what I had written, or to give up and concentrate on other things. Now, since I had often shown him similar things which I had written, and had received his help in correcting them when I had got things in the wrong order, I gladly showed him what I had written, hoping for his corrections. Nor was I deceived in my expectation, for he corrected some things, struck out others, changed some, approved others. I was filled with joy to have my record supported by so great an authority. Indeed, I was bursting with pride. But, a few days later he called me to him, and ordered me to destroy the quires in which I had gathered the whole work together, judging himself unworthy of any such literary monument for posterity. I was utterly confounded. I did not dare to disobey him flatly; but I could not face the destruction of a work on which I had spent so much time. So I obeyed him in the letter by destroying the quires on which the work was written, having first transcribed the contents on to other quires.]<sup>79</sup>

79. Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. R. W. Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), II.lxxii, pp. 150–51. The translation, which differs slightly from that in his edition, is taken from R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 412. Eadmer also relates a well-known account of how Anselm wrote his proof of the existence of God, the *Proslogion*, “on wax tablets, which he gave to one of the monks for safe-keeping. A few days later . . . they had disappeared . . . Anselm therefore wrote the work a second time, and had the same monk store the tablets with greater care . . . the next day, the monk found them . . . ‘strewn about in small pieces.’ Only at this point did Anselm order that the work be copied onto parchment.” Quoted in Rouse and Rouse, “Wax



Eadmer's specificity is quite revealing. Although the initial stage of composition takes place on wax tablets ("in cera dictaveram"), Eadmer then transcribes ("tradidisse") his text to parchment in a rough state—that is, still as a draft. Anselm makes corrections to Eadmer's parchment draft, including those "things in the wrong order" ("quae aliter se habebant singula loco sibi competenti ordinaturum") which might indicate either text misplaced from a compositional perspective, or multiple folios or quires physically (rather than narratively) disordered. Moreover, Anselm also "corrected some things, struck out others, changed some, approved others" ("Siquidem in ipso opusculo nonnulla correxit, nonnulla subvertit, quaedam mutavit, probavit quaedam").<sup>80</sup> The language of Anselm's changes to Eadmer's transcriptions make emphatically clear that the correction process takes place on the parchment draft, not upon wax tablets. Eadmer then assembles the work in quires, the third step in the process of composition, and the second stage on parchment. Eadmer here presumably copies (or, more accurately, transfers) his draft along with Anselm's changes to a new set of parchment leaves. When Anselm's humility condemns the work to the dustbin, Eadmer copies the text yet again, presumably from the recopied quires that incorporated Anselm's changes. This final illicit copy, it should be stressed, was likely still not a fair copy. That is, given the unfinished state of the work as a whole (and the subject still being alive), further stages in the text's writing must have taken place before a fair copy was produced. Eadmer's anecdote tells something about the preliminary use of wax tablets, but also more importantly indicates that parchment was not so impossibly precious as to preclude three distinct sets of quires of a single text in the hand of the text's author: Eadmer's draft, his revised draft, and his illicit copy of the revised draft. Moreover, a fourth set of parchment leaves was needed for a final copy. The only leaves that now survive, they were also written by Eadmer, well after Anselm's death, and survive in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 371, where the *Vita Anselmi* fills ff. 147<sup>r</sup>–189<sup>v</sup> of the codex.<sup>81</sup> The text itself survives in some twenty-three manuscripts in at least two recensions (plus one unique manuscript), suggesting there were still further instances of revision, expansion, and altera-

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Tablets," 179. It is oddly unclear in this anecdote whether Anselm had to compose the proof a third time before it could be committed to parchment. For a somewhat different reading, see M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 271.

80. In his edition of the *Vita Anselmi*, Southern translates this passage slightly differently: "For he did in fact, correct some things, and suppress others, change the order of some, and approve other things in this small work" (150).

81. See the online catalogue of the manuscripts at the Parker Library at [http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/manuscript\\_description\\_long\\_display.do?ms\\_no=371](http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=371).

tion to the text.<sup>82</sup> Parchment may have been expensive, but it was an obvious medium for the composition of texts.

Moving closer to the time of the Auchinleck manuscript, by the thirteenth century a number of examples suggest composition commonly took place on parchment, even when wax tablets were available. The use of such scraps of parchment, “cedula” or “schedula,” is well attested.<sup>83</sup> In the *vita* of Saint Foy attributed to Bernard of Angers, the text narrates how Bernard “made notes on scraps of parchment for the purpose of remembering precise details, and then turned the notes into prose narratives.”<sup>84</sup> The theologian Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253) was an “inveterate scribbler on scraps of parchment.”<sup>85</sup> A number of parchment scraps survive in Grosseteste’s hand, including those bound in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Savile 21.<sup>86</sup> Grosseteste’s habits suggest the obvious appeal of working on parchment rather than wax: its immediacy and convenience. Parchment scraps, the necessary byproduct of trimming parchment sheets, must have been reasonably plentiful in any situation where parchment was being used.<sup>87</sup> Such scraps might later serve as exemplars, but they also might feature as “finished” texts, as in MS Savile 21. Parchment scraps share with wax tablets a limited, and thus potentially limiting, writing surface. Richard and Mary Rouse briefly note the way in which that limited writing space might have influenced compositional practices. With admirable circumspection, they point to a possible connection between wax tablets and the “length of units in composition” in scholastic arguments or in homilies and sermons.<sup>88</sup> Their insight is an important one for the endless subdivisions of medieval scholasticism.

The longer narrative poems and histories of later medieval England indicate that physical supports to composition other than scraps and tablets must

82. See Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi*, xiii–xxv for a discussion of the versions of the text.

83. See D. C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 13: “For example, the word *scheda* could mean a ‘literary trifle’ in the twelfth century but in the late thirteenth century the preliminary draft of a text or document.” See also M. Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 194–95.

84. K. M. Ashley and P. Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 6.

85. J. J. McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98.

86. See Burnett, “White Cow,” 17–18 and fig. 5.

87. See Rodney Thomson, “Parchment and Paper, Ruling and Ink,” in Morgan and Thomson, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, 75–83. Thomson points to parchment’s undoubted expense but also exposes how little is known about the processes of arranging its large-scale production, and its prices. See also Stinson, “Knowledge of the Flesh: Using DNA Analysis to Unlock Bibliographical Secrets of Medieval Parchment,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 103 (2009): 449.

88. See Rouse and Rouse, “Wax Tablets,” 187.

have been available for those who authored texts. It is a small step from composing on scraps of parchment to composing on fully prepared folios—composition directly on the page. This is not a radical argument, but the question remains as to how common the practice was. Early in the twelfth century, Guibert de Nogent (d. ca. 1125) notes with some pride that, “For the composition and writing of this or my other works, I did not prepare a draft on the wax tablets, but committed them to the written page in their final form as I thought them out.”<sup>89</sup> What composition directly on the page might look like, and how it might be distinguished from copying, poses certain challenges.

Some unique evidence survives in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS français 1446, a mixed thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscript containing a number of texts, including the *Fables* of Marie de France, *Le Couronnement de Renard*, and parts of the prose redactions of *Les Sept Sages de Rome*.<sup>90</sup> The codex is typically discussed in the context of Marie de France’s works, or with reference to the songs inset in its texts, but it is the drafts of a romance by the otherwise unknown Bauduins Butors in four versions scattered over approximately thirty folios that are of interest here.<sup>91</sup> Bauduins Butors, writing after 1294, sets forth his incredibly ambitious plans for a sweeping romance, grandiosely titled *Roman de fils du roi Constant*.<sup>92</sup> As Berthelot notes, calling the few scraps of the text that exist a “romance” is misleading: “What does exist . . . is the *announcement* of a text.”<sup>93</sup>

It is a dazzling announcement, in which Butors proposes a series of Arthurian romances that recall in their impossibly vast scope the ending to Chaucer’s *Squire’s Tale* and its promise to tell the untellable at great length.

89. Quoted in Rouse and Rouse, “Wax Tablets,” 179, from C. Swinton Bland and J. Benton, eds., *Self and Society in Medieval France: The Memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent (1064?–1125)* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

90. See Lewis Thorpe, “The Four Rough Drafts of Bauduins Butors,” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 12 (1968): 3–20; Thorpe, “The Four Rough Drafts of Bauduins Butors (continued),” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 13 (1969): 49–64; and Thorpe, “The Four Rough Drafts of Bauduins Butors (concluded),” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 14 (1970): 41–63. The *Fables* in MS fr 1446 are illustrated with an author portrait at the beginning of the prologue. See Keith Busby, *Codex and Context* (New York: Rodopi, 2002), 1: 212–14. Note that currently the codex is made up of at least three originally distinct manuscripts, discussed in Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 32–35.

91. In addition to Busby, *Codex*, 1: 477–79, see Ardis Butterfield, “Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58 (1995): 49–90, especially 75 n. 72.

92. See Anne Berthelot, “From One Mask to Another: The Trials and Tribulations of an Author of Romance at the Time of *Perceforest*,” in *The Medieval Author in Medieval French Literature*, ed. Virginie Greene (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 103–15.

93. Berthelot, “From One Mask,” 104.

The announcement, or more properly announcements, take place in four successive iterations. Each attempt is abortive and inconclusive, the legacy of a writer seemingly in the simultaneous throes of grand literary ambition, the thrill of composition, and writer's block. In the few thousand lines that survive in MS fr. 1446, the author makes his bid for literary immortality quite strongly: he names himself six times and associates himself and his project with at least four different noble patrons. Access to parchment was clearly an issue, however. Although his first draft occupies the main text area of ff. 108<sup>v</sup>–111<sup>v</sup>, his second attempt mostly occupies the bottom margins of other texts (all of f. 70<sup>v</sup> and the foot of ff. 71<sup>r</sup>–109<sup>r</sup>, thus running along the bottom of folios containing the *Couronnement de Renard* and Marie's *Fables*). His penultimate attempt occupies an entire folio at f. 112<sup>r</sup>, and his final draft composition takes place on ff. 112<sup>v</sup>–114<sup>v</sup>.<sup>94</sup> Bauduin Butors's grand vision remains incomplete, offering us a record of the painfully human spectacle of unmet aspirations.

Bauduin Butors's texts are at once drafts and final copies, almost certainly composed directly on the page even as he worked in ever-diminishing fits.<sup>95</sup> Butors did not find it inappropriate to begin his masterpiece on the few blank folios available at the end of a quire. The second draft of the prologue and introductory material, which begin on a blank verso but continue on the foot of subsequent folios, suggests again a compromise between the need for parchment upon which to write and his ambitions and expectations for the text. That is, the author seems to perform his sense that the *Roman de fils du roi Constant* deserves to begin at the top of a blank folio, thus asserting its status as a major text, even if a mere folio after that beginning the text is physically and textually subordinated to other texts. Though composed directly on the page, the text contains a few minor errors. This is an enormously important reminder that mechanical errors do not only take place when scribes copy texts. Errors that are thought of as scribal can occur when an author composes directly on the page. The acts of poetic composition and physical transcription took place then, as now, simultaneously. The converse is also true, however: the act of physical transcription can be, in itself, an act of composition. Scribal authorship is a mode of copying as much as it is a means of composing. The complex intertextuality of the texts of the Auchin-

94. The foliation and divisions of the four drafts are Thorpe's, described in "The Four Rough Drafts," 4–5.

95. Thus, Thorpe: "If he had made rough copies first, then he would surely have jettisoned three of them, and only one would have been written up as the finished product. All in all, there seems little doubt that what exists in MS 1446 *must* be his rough drafts. Two things then follow: even when dittographies are included, there are very few errors of copying" ("The Four Rough Drafts," 17).

leck manuscript, some copied and some authored by Scribe 1, points to the innate materiality of scribal authorship.

The remainder of this chapter will look at scribal authorship and composition on the manuscript page in a mid-fifteenth century codex, London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58. I will consider the codex as a whole, before turning to Scribe 1's responsibility for the book, and to the derivative historiographical text that is the book's core. The parchment manuscript contains, among other items, a unique version of the Middle English *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, the romance *Richard*, and the text known as the Anonymous "Kings of England."<sup>96</sup> As was the case with Auchinleck, Arundel 58 is very much the book of one of its scribes, here identified as Arundel Scribe 1. There are three hands at work in the codex: Scribe 1 writes ff. 1–98<sup>v</sup> and 304–42, Scribe 2 writes ff. 99<sup>r</sup>–264 and 276–303, and Scribe 3 copies a mere ten folios, ff. 265–75.<sup>97</sup> Scribe 1, however, is responsible for a remarkable colophon that both dates the book and takes in the entirety of the book's contents. At the top of f. 1<sup>r</sup>, Scribe 1 begins his book, "The tabile offe cronycul offe Engelond fro quene Albina the furste erthely creature that entriede in to this lond vn to kyng Richard the Secunde." Taking up the diction of his own rubric, the scribe provides a short prose account that summarizes the entire history of the island, beginning (a bit awkwardly, given the uncorrected error) "[T]he ferste ether ertheley creature that entred in this lond." The text consists of little more than name-dropping: it races through the reigns of Brutus, Arthur, Vortigern, Alfred, Ethelred, Edward the Confessor, Harold, William the Conqueror, and Henry fitz Empress, before ending with "Harry the vi." At the foot of f. 1<sup>r</sup>, Scribe 1 then begins his colophon, in which he specifies not merely the historical endpoints of his narrative, but the endpoints of his book as a whole:

96. See my DPhil thesis, "Once Called Albion," chap. 4; and Linne Mooney, "Lydgate's 'Kings of England' and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings," *Viator* 20 (1989): 255–90. See also Anne Hudson, "An Edition of Part of the Chronicle Attributed to Robert of Gloucester with a Study of the Original Language of the Poem" (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1963); Matheson, *The Prose Brut*, 330–34; Richard Moll, *Before Malory: Reading Arthur in Later Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); and Pamela Robinson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 888–1600 in London Libraries* (London: British Library, 2003), 29.

97. There has been a fair amount of debate over the number of hands at work in the codex: Hudson, "An Edition," believes it is "possibly by a single scribe" (1: 17), whereas Matheson, *The Prose Brut*, concludes that there may be two hands at work, but possibly only one. Robinson identifies four hands, although she demurs that the fourth hand is "a hand similar to that of hand 1" (*Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts*, 29). My conclusions here differ from those in my DPhil thesis. I am grateful to Hollie Morgan for sharing her work with me and corresponding about the manuscript. Morgan argues that there are three hands present in the manuscript. See Hollie Morgan, "A Study of London, College of Arms, Arundel MS. 58" (MA thesis, University of Leicester, 2010).

this tabel kalender of more plennarly knewlich ffoluyng with a boke offe the fful text. All so | A petegreu ffro William conquerour of the Crowne of Englonde lyny-ally descendyng vn to kyng Henri the vi in the end of thys boke lymned in ffygurs. Thys boke with hys Antecedens and consequens was ful ended the vj day offe August ; the zere of oure lorde anno m cccc. xlvij And the [small blank space] yere of oure souerayn lorde kyng Harry the vj affter the conquest the xxvj.<sup>98</sup>

Crucially, the colophon comprehends the entire codex: the “tabel kalendar” refers clearly to the table of contents that occupy the following folios, the “boke offe the fful text” to the unique and much-expanded version of the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, and the “petegreu . . . in the end of thys boke lymned in ffygures” to the illuminated “Verses on the Kings of England” that conclude the codex. Scribe 1 knew the whole book. His description incorporates not only those portions he actually copied (the beginning and the end), but also the stints copied by Scribes 2 and 3. The codex is a planned and deliberate assemblage of texts, and Scribe 1’s awareness of the whole is incontestable.

Despite the uncorrected error in the opening rubric, several of the colophon’s features suggest that Scribe 1 was a sophisticated, well-educated, and in particular, a well-read man. He employs two terms, “antecedens” and “consequens,” in a novel way and in an unexpected context. Both terms are frequently found together, but almost exclusively in dense and pointedly learned Latin theological, grammatical, or philosophical texts.<sup>99</sup> Neither word is common in Middle English, and their use here likely points to Scribe 1 having absorbed a Latin theological or grammatical vocabulary.<sup>100</sup> The technical, even academic register from which the terms derive does not obscure their meaning here: they refer to the texts before and after the “boke” that is the Arundel *Chronicle*, namely, the Albina prologue and the illumi-

98. MS Arundel 58, f. 1<sup>r</sup>-1<sup>v</sup>.

99. See, for example, P. King, “Consequence as Inference: Mediaeval Proof Theory, 1300–1350,” in *Medieval Formal Logic: Obligations, Insolubles, and Consequences*, ed. Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 117–46; King intriguingly notes that, while “consequent” has remained a primarily logical term, “modern logicians have been . . . not at all [successful] with ‘antecedent,’ which still has a broad range of uses not tied to either conditionals or consequents—for instance, in speaking about one’s background or genealogy” (139).

100. “Consequens” does appear in some French legal texts. See the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, “consequence.” The *MED* offers instances of “antecedent” twice in Passus 4 of the C-Text of *Piers Plowman*, in Reginald Pecock’s *Rule of Christian Religion*, the *Donet*, and *The Follower to the Donet*, in the *Wycliffite Sermons* preserved in MS Bodley 788, and most frequently in Guy de Chauliac’s *Grande Chirurgie*, a medical text. It should be noted that they frequently appear as a pair, as in the *Wycliffite Sermons*: “al oonli whanne antesedent and consequent ben convertiblis in kynde.”

nated “Verses on the Kings” that conclude the volume. Again, Scribe 1’s language encompasses Arundel 58 as a whole. Moreover, he frames the book as inherently amenable to the structure of logical argument, as a kind of logical proof of history.

Imagining the book as a singular entity does not resolve the difficulties posed by composing a derivative text, and assembling heterogeneous sources into a composite whole. The text of the Arundel *Chronicle* was first identified as unique by Hearne in his 1724 edition of the *Chronicle*. The large-scale alterations to the text performed by the Arundel *Chronicle* are most obviously seen in the prose passages that disrupt the single column layout employed to accommodate the long-line verse of the *Chronicle*. Instead, the prose is continuously written in two columns of equal length. (See figure 9.) There are 60 mixed-format folios in the manuscript, and on the whole Scribes 1 and 2 accomplish the transitions between prose and verse without difficulty.<sup>101</sup> This is not, in itself, surprising. Scribes tend to be so astonishingly good at the sorts of calculations necessary to accomplish their task that we take their skills for granted, noticing only their mistakes, made particularly available by the insidious prevalence of the trope of the incompetent scribe. In Arundel 58, the two scribes have miscalculated (or otherwise encountered difficulties) while negotiating 19 of the 96 transitions between prose and verse.<sup>102</sup> Both scribes avoid wasting parchment, and instead choose to “mis-write” verse in the two column layout reserved for prose. In order to visually mark the verse as such, they leave the second line of each line of verse to form a “ragged” right margin—the long lines of the *Chronicle* are too long to fit in the width of a single column. (See figure 10.) It is a sensible solution that saves parchment, and that in itself may account for both scribes employing it. Yet the consistency of the layout and of the solution asserts the continuity of the book, and suggests something like a house style.<sup>103</sup> Scribe 2 is either working to Scribe 1’s model (and thus has some portion of Scribe 1’s

101. Thus, for shorter prose interpolations, the scribes must calculate the number of column-inches that will be required, and then rule two columns on a mixed-format folio appropriately. For example, see f. 89<sup>r</sup>, f. 96<sup>r</sup>, and f. 134<sup>r</sup>, where columns of more than twenty lines of prose are balanced to within a line. While it is easy to estimate how many lines verse will occupy when copying from an exemplar, copying prose can vary considerably with respect to the size of parchment or script. I am deeply grateful to Anne Hudson for her insights on scribal behaviors, and for discussions about this manuscript.

102. As many of the prose additions extend beyond a single folio, the 60 mixed-format folios are not equal to the 48 prose passages, and thus 96 transitions. Two of the instances are Scribe 1’s solution to the problem, while the remainder are Scribe 2’s: Arundel 58, f. 81<sup>r</sup>, 145<sup>r</sup>, 154<sup>r</sup>, 157<sup>r</sup>, 159<sup>r</sup>, 162<sup>r</sup>, 166<sup>v</sup>, 193<sup>r</sup>, 198<sup>v</sup>, 200<sup>r</sup>, 200<sup>v</sup>, 201<sup>r</sup>, 205<sup>v</sup>, 214<sup>v</sup>, 216<sup>v</sup>, 220<sup>r</sup>, 278<sup>r</sup>, 300<sup>v</sup>, and 334<sup>v</sup>.

103. That is, both scribes are consistent in their use of single columns for the long-line verse of the *Chronicle*, double columns for prose, and filling mismeasured columns lineated for prose with miswritten verse.

herbene men & none outthe myghte ge  
te a pnce to byngne hem to hure forme  
stat and dignite a yen/ And yet that  
litele vborship that is laft hem thur  
gh thi suffyrmte is ene the lenge  
the lasse, outthe that Saxones that  
ene to gertayno were tytoe bigyn  
nere vwith a coume to be crowned for  
the name of kyng/ whal make hem  
the moe be a lofes in the contre that  
they come of/ and the rath they whal  
come to hem/ & also that name whal  
make hem the prutter/ & th/ whol yey  
be a boune to for so aloure nacion for  
ene they were tytoe & no fey to eny  
wholde holdo/ wherfore by my consul  
bade were hit to holde hem dou/ than  
to an hano hom/ and outthe facforth  
that kyng Cortager vwithheld hom fer  
ft/ in some of pees they vwithte/ as

for to fighte for the contre/ as in vwithan  
they sey tyme/ they obelkede hure vwith  
kednesse/ yldyngi/ couel for good/ and  
by tyde hym/ & the lordes of thys lond  
at Stonherge tretostly slogh/ After  
that they bitide dwelie Ambrose to  
vwithan aft horzible oth/ & vwith by  
ctyng they yaf poyson/ Arthur also  
they deceyvede vwithan vwith wordred  
his newels a yent hure othys & tren  
thys that they were bounde to hym/ yey  
fighte a yent hym/ Also to kyngi kate  
rye they baite hure fey/ be yngyngs  
Epon hym out of yrlonde Gurmord  
of Aunfrak/ thurgh vwithar destrucoun  
the contre vwith vwithaft/ and he vwithame  
ly put of his Reaume.

¶ When y Cadeball hure y/he send word pa  
to Edwyne/ y/he nolde assente per to  
& y/m on londe/ o kyngdom that there  
any ptyng/ so were mad/ y/me thre times bere

And seide hit vwith a yent the vwithone/ of his faderes olde  
ffor thi assente ther to/ he seide that he nolde  
Edwyne vwith the vwithroth/ y/mogly/ and sikke his more oth  
to be crowned a yent his vwithalk/ & vwithere hym mane o/ loth  
And Cadeball vwith his oth/ y/he y/he corone bere  
for to smyte of his hed/ vwithder his corone there  
thys vwithaz strif bitte ynt hem th/ by gedere/ o/ stus faste  
and by nocthe humber/ they mette atto lafte  
many thousand of Cadeballas men y/ were broght to dethe  
and hym self vwith a feilke men/ corpede a hunc vwithethe  
and northward fley by the see/ thurgh Swolonde  
& so forth in the see/ fort he com to yrlonde  
Edwyne then toke a non/ his oft and gret possor  
& destruyde Cadeballas lond/ a boune fer and ner  
Anon to seynt Dandis/ the lond at thurgh out

Figure 9. London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58, f. 81<sup>r</sup>



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*Et habet.*

With our lives. of amonestment  
 that they shulde rest of thulke  
 well doynge. And he passing  
 the wast mountaynes of Ton  
 tree. And also passing the see in  
 the day of the Natyvyte of our  
 lord. he come in to the forsaide  
 kynges sight. and in our half he  
 I salued a non. he ofred him the  
 lives that we ceute him. And then  
 he I cleped to him the Wysest of his  
 teamme. of wyther ordre. For dre  
 x and lone of all myghty god. of  
 saynt Petre apostolene p-ince  
 And for our fladerlyche admon  
 cion. granted ferme pees with  
 all his sones and doughtres that  
 now be th and hed after to comene  
 And with alle say full. Withoute  
 gyle. For wythe thyng I the me  
 sente he Edelwyne of the holy ch  
 che of Shyborne bysshop. And keef  
 fran Eryelholde. come and Edel  
 ned Wolframsone. Whiche passed  
 the see and come to Rycharde yar  
 chon. And he our amonestment  
 pesibliche a non byng. and huryng  
 the ordmannces and witt of the  
 forsaide kyng granted and co  
 formed ferme pees to holde with  
 him. and sones and doughtres  
 ffut and futuro. and with all  
 his treke. in this forme that if  
 any of them. or we any wronge  
 hath do to any other. that hit re  
 p-riablich may be amended. &  
 so pees ed more dwelle unbrof  
 by our dedes and wittes. assed.

In the myrchonseyde in thro.  
 accord weid. Forer the bysshop  
 Full hughes sone. Thurtyn the  
 sone of Emppo. The date of Ro  
 ane the th of march. In the  
 yer fro the Incarnacion of our  
 lord. v. C. and xy. The my in  
 dixon. And hit is accorded. that  
 non vesceyne of other men.  
 Withoute herdenles. Of this  
 Pope John. that was deped.  
 Gerebert many unwillous myg  
 buth I wryte no me may see i  
 the prombles of Popes. This  
 was he that the ffende by hote  
 hym he shulde nat depe. or he  
 hadde song a masse atte Jerusa  
 lem &c. Wherme the dauco  
 Ich tolde of ere weid I wende hom  
 Some anon after warde mo  
 theme ther come.  
 In my hatle of this londe hane  
 ne they hadde.  
 And trayted of this londe. hem  
 the way hadde  
 So that vrozthimberlond ofte  
 hy deffynde  
 And also destroyed they in the  
 est syde.  
 The westcontre. Also they wome  
 Denenshew  
 And the Donne of Excestre sette  
 thay a fuyr  
 Our kyng weaved also. as he  
 myght do  
 Witte wreche of his broth wdel  
 harde cam hym to. His polber  
 was lre worthe so atien ende.

*Exyme*

Figure 10. London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58, f. 145<sup>r</sup>

first stint available to him), or is otherwise familiar with the solution (instructions from the book's supervising editor, for example). Miswriting verse in the columns reserved for prose solves a problem, however, that can only occur when the exemplar does not feature the same layout as that of the manuscript being copied.

The mistakes made in fitting prose interpolations into the area ruled for them suggest that composition and copying are simultaneous or taking place in very close proximity.<sup>104</sup> Consider moments such as those observed by Richard Moll, who identifies instances of Middle English verse (not drawn from the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester), that preserve untranslated Anglo-Norman, "ke" and "peron."<sup>105</sup> Such moments suggest Scribe 1 is here translating from a source as he writes Arundel 58, something also seen in Chapter 1, where the Middle English text of the MS Ashmole 35 version Gower's *Confessio* employs the declined Latinate form "Tiresiam" for Tiresias. Such evidence suggests that copying and composition were a single act. Yet, if that is the case, it poses a problem for understanding Scribe 1's role in creating the codex, and Arundel 58 as a whole. It accounts for the errors made in underestimating the extent of the prose additions to the *Chronicle*, which now reflect the processes of assembling a derivative text from multiple sources. It does not, however, address Scribe 2's role in the codex. Composing a derivative text requires an enormous amount of planning. It cannot have been a matter of simply opening three or four relevant historiographical texts, and copying a few lines from one and translating a few lines from another. Identifying passages to be copied or translated, and identifying the sequence in which they were to be copied, requires a specifically textual infrastructure to accomplish. Arundel 58 preserves some signs of that infrastructure, along with a rhetoric specific to the processes of composition.

The texts incorporated into the Arundel *Chronicle* are not a plurality of texts juxtaposed in the form of an inert compilation. At every level, the composition of the text and of its appearance on the page demonstrates purposive engagement and determined participation in the traditions of history writing. Scribe 1 carefully facilitates the transitions from verse to prose and back again by embedding them in the larger narrative of the reading expe-

104. In almost all of the instances of miswritten verse, the amount of prose to be copied has been overestimated. The magnitude of some of these mistakes suggests this is not merely a mechanical error, as, for example, f. 220<sup>a-b</sup>, where the miscalculation has left a column and a half filled with verse.

105. Thus, "Ke in the boke of Seint Graal me may rede and se, / But that thes clerkes holdeth nocht as for auctoryte," and "to helpe hym that he myghte the swerd of the peron a-say" (f. 55<sup>r</sup>), where the scribe has added "ston" above the line. See Moll, *Before Malory*, 208 and 316 n. 46.

rience of his derivative text. He uses a variety of phrases to accomplish this integration, ranging from short phrases to longer and more complex rhymes. Some of these transitions are verse, and are thus visually indistinguishable from the verses of the *Chronicle*. The experience of the reader is thereby made continuous. That is, the visually distinct prose and verse portions of the text refer to each other, thereby establishing a singular coherence that overcomes the visual opposition suggested by their layouts. For example, the transition on f. 80<sup>v</sup> anticipates, in verse, the prose that is to come, “And as wise in bothe side speke of this matere / In ryme y fynde hit noght write but in prose here / as hit in latyn is rad y wole telle nouthe / aftur the storye of Geffray of Monemouth.”<sup>106</sup> This is not the argument of a scribe, but rather a scribal author. Scribe 1 here imagines his text to be, as he describes it in his colophon, the “fful text,” a text that incorporates the words of “bothe side” of an issue. He brings together the prose and the verse, the Bedan and the Galfridian, Latin and Middle English, into a unified text. He is writing a text and holding himself responsible to a vision of history and history writing that aspires to a kind of historiographical completeness.

The author of the Arundel *Chronicle* marks other formal transitions for his reader, bridging the gaps between prose and verse through the text’s articulated awareness of both. He renders the text continuous even as it threatens to seem discontinuous, engaging the reader precisely as a reader. Here, he marks a shift from prose back to verse, but does so by making clear the historiographical argument standing behind his assemblage of the derivative text:

Many sor  
rowful thyngus and thyngus sodey  
ne fell in his tyme . Which beth  
tolde in the Ryme here after  
for hit accordeth to the latyn  
prose the most part . And now to  
the geste rymed . that telleth sum  
what more than the prose hath  
tolde of summe thyngus . and yut  
nought all that the prose hath tolde  
¶Whanne that kyng William Rous  
as Rymed is byfore

106. MS Arundel 58, f. 80<sup>v</sup>. Other examples marking transitions include “Ryme here after,” f. 198<sup>va</sup>; “And for as muche as we speke her of cristendom / a litel in prose y wole rehers,” f. 90<sup>f</sup>; “whiche in Ryme afterward is tolde more pleynure,” f. 185<sup>ra</sup>; “¶prose more pleyne of the same mater,” f. 221<sup>v</sup>; “as myche notable þynges in the cronicles rymed that is nat in this prose,” f. 300<sup>vb</sup>.

Accorded was with Curthose 7  
othes swore<sup>107</sup>

The scribal author here draws attention to the plurality of sources that are the foundations of his derivative text. He visibly compares the historical coverage, as it were, of multiple texts in his observation that “the geste rymed . . . telleth sum what more . . . and yut nought all.” He also concerns himself with textual fidelity, an always-pressing issue for translations. He rightly claims of the *Chronicle* that “hit accordeth to the latyn prose for the most part,” echoing distantly the opinions of the scribal verses of MS Royal 20.a.xi contrasting the works of Wace and Langtoft.

There is an insistence throughout the codex on clarity that recalls the Harley Scribe’s concern with historical accuracy in the Royal *Short Chronicle*. The text of the Arundel *Chronicle* repeatedly deploys some variation of the phrase “more pleyne of the same mater” to describe the logic behind the sometimes awkward transitions made from verse to prose and back again.<sup>108</sup> The text stresses its aspiration to be “pleine” for the reader, performatively exposing its constituent texts, comparing them to each other in order to provide both clarity and demonstrable thoroughness.<sup>109</sup> This emphasis is still further compelling evidence for Scribe 1’s authorship of the Arundel *Chronicle*. In his colophon, that quintessential moment of the voice of a scribe in a space framed by the rhetoric of authorship, Scribe 1 describes the book to come and also records the date of its completion. In the visual space of scribal holograph that colophons offer, Scribe 1 describes the table of contents as “more plenarly knewlich.” Throughout Arundel 58, in stints copied by both Scribes 1 and 2, and particularly at the transitions from prose to verse and back, the text emphasizes that it seeks to provide a text “more oppen” and “more plenure fullich.”<sup>110</sup> The imperative describes both the logic and the labor standing behind the assemblage of this derivative text. Such moments work to expose to the reader not the ruptures between constituent texts, but rather the continuity of the Arundel text. The consistency of that

107. MS Arundel 58, f. 198<sup>va</sup>. Lineation of the manuscript is retained, especially as the final four lines are an instance of miswritten verse. The final couplet of the passage quoted is a lightly translated version of Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, 7966–73, followed by more strictly replicative copying equivalent to *Chronicle*, 7974.

108. MS Arundel 58, f. 221<sup>v</sup>: “¶prose more pleynere of the same mater.”

109. The confusion and slippage among the several definitions in the *MED* of “plain” and related adjectives and adverbs suggest that multiple senses are always available in the word’s use.

110. MS Arundel 58, f. 136<sup>vb</sup> and f. 185<sup>ra</sup>. See also “more pleynure,” f. 193<sup>vb</sup>; “more pleynere,” f. 221<sup>v</sup>; “Now be cause the story in Ryme is nought full plenere,” f. 284<sup>r</sup>; and “And hit is to remember that the ffrensh story telleth more plenure,” f. 287<sup>v</sup>.

rhetoric throughout the book—its appearance in Scribe 1’s colophon, and the shared vocabulary throughout the *Arundel Chronicle*—argue that Arundel 58 is Scribe 1’s book, and the *Arundel Chronicle* is Scribe 1’s text.

In assembling the *Arundel Chronicle*, Scribe 1 demonstrates an incredibly broad textual lexicon. In addition to his (obvious) familiarity with the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, he translates or adapts a number of texts, including—but emphatically not limited to—Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia regum*, the Anglo-Norman *Brut*, and the texts of John of Glastonbury, Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, Nicholas Trevet, and particularly William of Malmesbury.<sup>111</sup> The impressive and consistent appeal to this corpus of texts throughout the *Arundel Chronicle* further confirms the text is Scribe 1’s production. He composed some verse directly on the page, particularly the transitions he wrote to anticipate and respond to his prose interpolations. He also translated from his source texts without intermediaries at times, as seen in the Anglo-Norman forms that survive untranslated. We also see Scribe 1 working from whatever might have preceded Arundel 58, whether scraps of parchment or wax tablets, in those instances where he has misestimated the extent of the prose to be translated or copied, resulting in miswritten verse. In a few cases, we see him making mechanical copying errors, as did Bauduin Butors in his tragic textual announcements.<sup>112</sup> Scribe 1’s compositional exemplar must have indicated the layout of Arundel 58 without actually modeling it, given Scribe 2’s similar occasional difficulties in creating mixed-format folios to accommodate prose and verse.<sup>113</sup> After Scribe 1 composed the *Arundel Chronicle*, it fell to Scribe 2 to copy over half of the codex. In copying Scribe 1’s exemplar, Scribe 2 performs something wholly typical of scribal practice, an unproblematic aspect of replicative copying. Scribe 2 was largely responsible for transforming the text into the finished page, for adhering to a set of visual and textual standards, and for applying those standards throughout his work. Arundel 58 is not a particularly attractive book, despite its occasional illuminated initials and program of rubrication. Nonetheless, the book was not created without effort or expense: not only do the Anonymous “Kings of England” feature illuminated roundels, but throughout the book there is a regular plan of illuminated decorated initials with borders. An expensive book, Arundel 58 is the mate-

111. See Fisher, “Once Called Albion,” 169–70; and Moll, *Beyond Malory*, 203–5.

112. For example, the struck-through “cronicles” on MS Arundel 58, f. 87<sup>rb</sup>.

113. Scribe 2 also makes errors typical of a scribe copying a text, as at f.133<sup>va</sup>: “In this doyn-gus / Athelston shewed shewed wysdom / and holynesse”; at f. 178<sup>rb</sup>: “but Natheles he truste sum what / in the multitude of his Peple / But natheles he truste sum what / in the multitude of his peple”; at f. 179<sup>ra</sup>: “not vsing not vsyng”; or the line of verse marked as omitted and supplied at the foot of the folio on f. 210<sup>f</sup>.

rial remnant of a scribal author copying his own derivative text, which also attests to the skills of his fellow scribe, Scribe 2, who fashioned the book as a book.

Scribe 1 of Arundel 58 composed on a much grander scale than did Auchinleck Scribe 1 in the *Short Chronicle*. Starting with the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, a text of some 18,000 lines, rather than with the *Short Chronicle*, a text of perhaps 1,000 lines, Arundel Scribe 1's project to create a definitive historiographical record was a deeply learned and intertextual undertaking. Arundel Scribe 1 created a new history in verse and prose, written directly on the folios of Arundel 58, combining deftly derived text and measured contributions, such as the verses he writes on Scota, eponymous founder of Scotland, and Edward I's seizure of the Stone of Scone.<sup>114</sup> Time passes for books as well as for texts—Auchinleck Scribe 1 confronted the history of the texts in his hand and that passed through his hands. He translated and adapted *Des Grantz Geanz*, the work of Matthew Paris, *Richard*, and other texts in order to write an Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* featuring both important historical detail and intriguing historical anecdote. The *Short Chronicle* invited scribal authorship, and both the Harley Scribe and Auchinleck Scribe 1 responded to that invitation to compose unique texts in dialogue with the other texts of the manuscripts, and with the historical circumstances of the books' production. History is always written on the historical page, and history writing records its own history as much as the history of the past.

114. See MS Arundel 58, f. 17: "Aftur a womman that Scote hyght . the doughtur of Pharaon / that broughte into Scotlond ; a white marbel ston / that was ordeyned for hure kyng . whan he crowned were / And for a gret jewel longe . hit was yholde there / kyng Edward with the lange shankes fro Scotlond hit sette / By syde the shryne of seynt Edward at westmester let hit sette." I do not believe these verses have been discussed elsewhere.

## EPILOGUE

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Medieval history writing encouraged some scribes to assemble compilations, others to craft derivative texts, and still others to become scribal authors. The extraordinary number of surviving manuscripts of the Middle English prose *Brut* is comparable to another very different text, the Wycliffite Bible.<sup>1</sup> In both cases, the “author” of the texts is conceptually subordinated to the larger needs and agendas of the texts, and their need to perform their authority while remaining authorless. The Middle English prose *Brut* survives in groups of manuscripts that share various textual features in common, most frequently the point at which the history ends. Thus, there are versions that extend to 1333, to 1377, to 1419, and to 1461, and still other manuscripts that end at any of these dates but otherwise contain substantively different texts. Many manuscripts of the Middle English *Brut* exhibit moments of unique local interest, revisions or emendations of facts, and substantive interpolations, additions, or expansions to make partisan political points. The instability of the text of the *Brut* is not ultimately surprising—history writing invites participation, and encourages sophisticated readers to go beyond simply reading the text at hand.

1. Counts for both vary, but Matheson records 181 manuscripts, and a recent estimate suggests at least 253 manuscripts of the Wycliffite Bible, excluding manuscripts of the *Glossed Gospels*. See Lister Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1998), 6; and Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 306.

When scribes become scribal authors, we are confronted with the leap from reader to writer. It is a shift difficult for us to imagine, shaped by the print-culture experiences that still frame our engagements with text, even as they are reshaped by the digital. When physical books arrive in our hands, they arrive bound, printed, static, and complete. We might annotate them, but they do not present the opportunity to revise them. The modern book certainly does not permit us to author a new book within its covers. An obvious analogy to the plurality of textual intervention in manuscripts is the digital realm, where crowd-sourcing and wikis shaped by participating communities are reimagining many historical models of textual production. The content thereby produced, however, is not the same as that seen in texts such as the Middle English *Brut*. There may be collective and individual responsibility for creating digital content, but at no point are we implicated in its transmission. Many people may edit a single page on Wikipedia, but the changes they make are stored, hosted, and propagated from Wikipedia's servers. The text of a Wikipedia entry may well be the result of the work of multiple individuals, some of whom may even be actively collaborating, but at no point in the digital chain are users responsible for transmitting the content they produce and consume, for putting it to other uses. We may write blogs, comment on the articles and blogs of others, and engage in vigorous discussions on Twitter, but the mechanics of transmission, of how our words get from our fingers to our screens to still other screens, are not part of writing. In being excluded from that step, we are excluded from engaging a text with the responsibilities and opportunities that every medieval scribe confronted.

Medieval scribes read books before they copied them, and they made intelligent judgments about the texts contained in those books. They expressed their opinions in marginal annotations and witty verses. Crucially, though, those opinions also register in which texts they chose to copy, and in how they copied them. Every medieval manuscript is the end-result of a series of political, spiritual, poetical, and decidedly individual decisions about a text. Script and *mise-en-page* are themselves the result of those decisions, even as they condition the subsequent reception of the book. Medieval textuality is thus perpetually a process, an opportunity—though not necessarily an occasion—for intervention. It is precisely as an opportunity, as the site of transformation rather than preservation, that medieval manuscripts are best situated in their textual and historical contexts. Medieval manuscripts perform their meanings, but they typically obscure the transformations underlying the processes through which those meanings were constructed. Manuscripts have long been read as compilations, as the result



of scribes working with an underlying purpose, arranging and anthologizing constituent texts into a more meaningful whole. Such scribal intentionality, however, did not stop at the level of the book.

This book has explored not only the ways in which scribes wrote manuscripts, but more troublingly, the ways in which the very term “copying” is misleading with regards to the wide range of scribal behaviors attested in medieval manuscripts. Although transformations of dialect do not necessarily pose challenges to our interpretations of texts, scribal inventions of the layouts of source texts begin to point to the spectrum of the authorial in which scribal authorship should be understood. Medieval scribes did many things beyond reproducing the texts of their exemplars, and the conceptual certainty we have established by describing medieval texts as “copies” is often unwarranted. Some texts are, of course, copies, even unproblematically so. There are, nonetheless, entire categories of medieval texts for which the legacy of transmission precludes any meaningful understanding of the text that initiated the sequence, of the text we would like to label as the original. The stakes were high for those who wished to be seen as authors, and many sought to prevent the erosion of their authorship by relying upon devices likely to be reproduced by replicative copying: acrostics such as those in Higden’s *Polychronicon* and Thomas Usk’s *Testament of Love*, or the identifying prologues in Mannyng’s *Chronicle* or Lazamon’s *Brut*. Yet, if scribes chose more transformative varieties of copying, authorship could be erased.

The anxieties of authors, however, and our own preferences for “better” texts have obscured the self-confidence of scribes. Chaucer could write his *Retractions*, and assert his authorship of his texts while performatively rejecting the responsibility for, and moral implications of, his “worldly endytinges.” Scribes, however, cannot write retractions. Scribes cannot disentangle themselves from the worldly, physical forms of the texts in their hands. For a relatively brief period this unity was the site of exploration and experimentation rather than liability. There was a moment between the corporate imagination of primarily monastic literacy in England in the twelfth century, and the commercialization and professionalization of scribes and the book trade from the later fourteenth century. In that space, regional vernacular composition thrived, and a remarkable number of texts were produced, texts that expanded the idea of the literary and with it the authorial. Many of those texts were conventionally authored, but many more were the work of scribal authors, not bound by convention or intention to copy without alteration or invention. Instead, scribes found their own voices and

wrote new texts. Their voices can resemble, sometimes to the point of being almost indistinguishable, those of the texts that were the starting points of scribal authorship. But they are nonetheless the voices and the hands of medieval scribes, scribes who themselves transmitted, read, and wrote medieval texts.

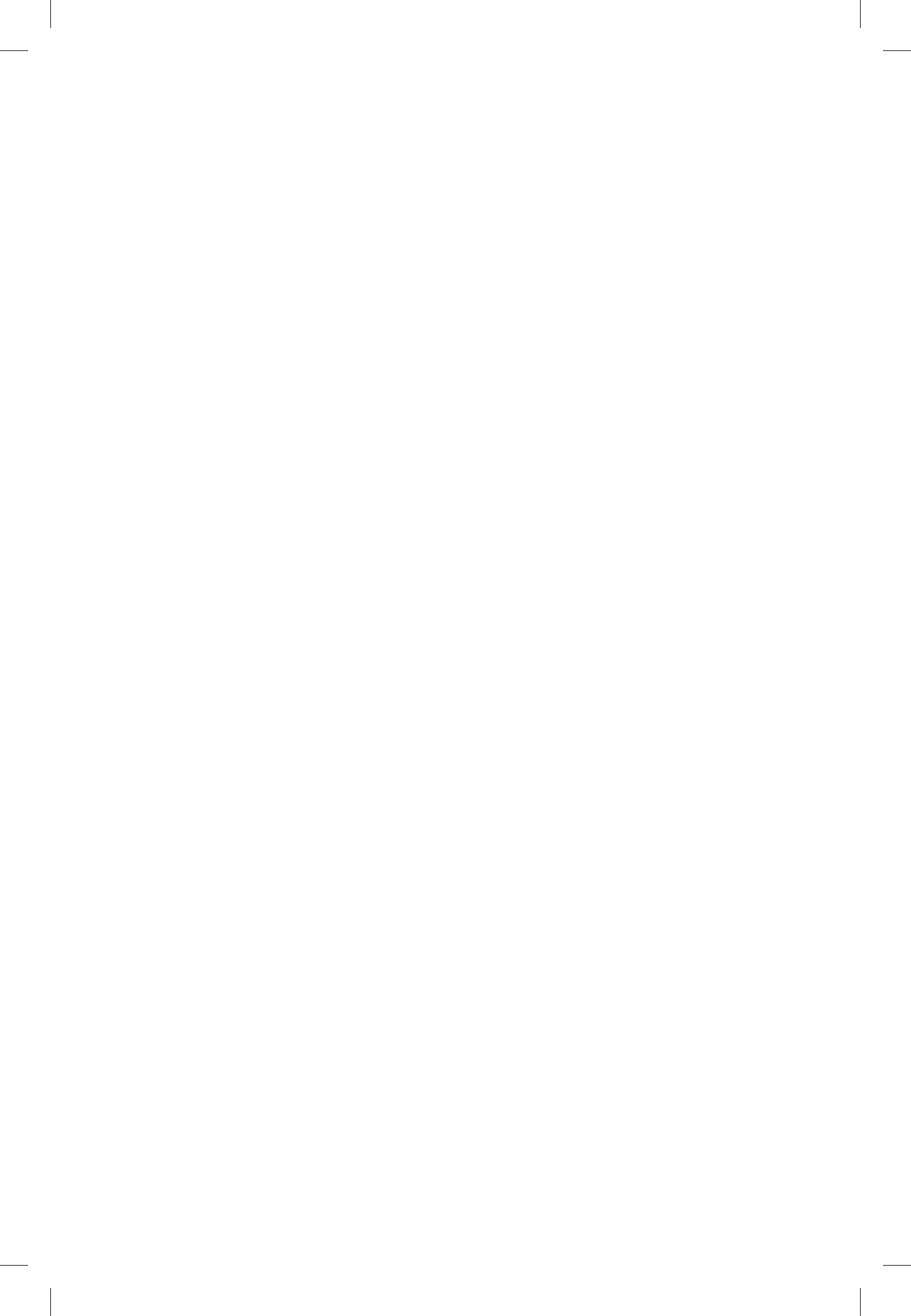




Plate 1. London, British Library, MS Arundel 74, f. 2r



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**T**un broht in to englonde  
 Cristen dome gylt e peos  
 from pe pope E lombenes  
**S**illa Lina from goddes soude  
 wude fro arche bishopes in islonde  
 ant godly he made also  
 Leod bishopes sey to  
**H**er was to fore pe come of seint bishop  
 from hundred e a lre e forva zey  
**S**iochacn filke time  
 Gude Cristen dome muche prue  
 in filke time seint Albon  
 for goddes loue soldde mynstridom  
**E**thyn forager of sthomee sthonde  
 was dynen out of englonde  
 from hengesst wso he ydys  
 hit made pe wofra for hit yd  
 et stonhenges wete on Wel  
 sey he hit made encyuchdel  
 for mynstridom hem saide bishop  
 he ne schude wete dune in englonde  
**E**thome pat was so few may  
 fust saide by his day  
 to byng stred Cassil  
 ant pat answee was drink hant  
**E**the a new cone e sinpe  
 was englonde deled on fyne  
 to wif bynges welleche  
 pat were sinpe viche  
**H**at on hude to his partie  
 pat Lond of ten pat is so duple  
 ant tweie bishopes in ys lond  
 Wel by were beome yfand  
 pe cyhel bishop of canterbur  
 ant of conest pat ys myny  
**E**the byng of esy was ychemon  
 he hude to ys pomon  
 Bytosthine Barysthyre  
 Southsex Southhamsthyre  
 Northsex Somersete sthyre  
 Deresete sthyre e Denesete sthyre  
 ant sey to al cornwale  
 ant in is lond saunt staple  
 he hude wif bishopes viche  
 epe mste no wer here plibe  
 Of Salisbur was pat on  
 He was a synpe wofpmon  
 he schyve bonne was so he se  
 ant nou at Salisbur ys he  
 pe bishop of Welles al so  
 pat at hache woude so  
 pe bishop of Wyndchestre  
 ant pe bishop of Chycheestre  
 ant of Exere al so  
 filke was deled a no  
 pat on at wedyng saunt staple  
 pat o sey at sein Germeyn in cornwale  
**E**the byng of werbyn viche  
 was sey non ys plibe  
 he hude Gloucestre sthyre  
 Wycestre sthyre ant Warewike sthyre  
 Seafford sthyre e Chester sthyre  
 Derby sthyre e Schyropsthyre  
 al pe narch e hereford sthyre  
 Oxnesford sthyre e Lodboghamne  
 hereford sthyre e Montidone  
 Northhamsthyre e Lecestre  
 Lyncolne sthyre pat ys beare  
 ant pe schyve of Hereford  
 Rybmondesthyre us nou to blam  
 ant in is lond pat was so muche  
 he hude from bishopes viche  
 Of Lyncolne e of Chester  
 Of hereford ant of Wycestre  
**E**the byng pat was of Hereford

Plate 3. London, British Library, MS Royal 12.c.xii, f. 64<sup>r</sup>



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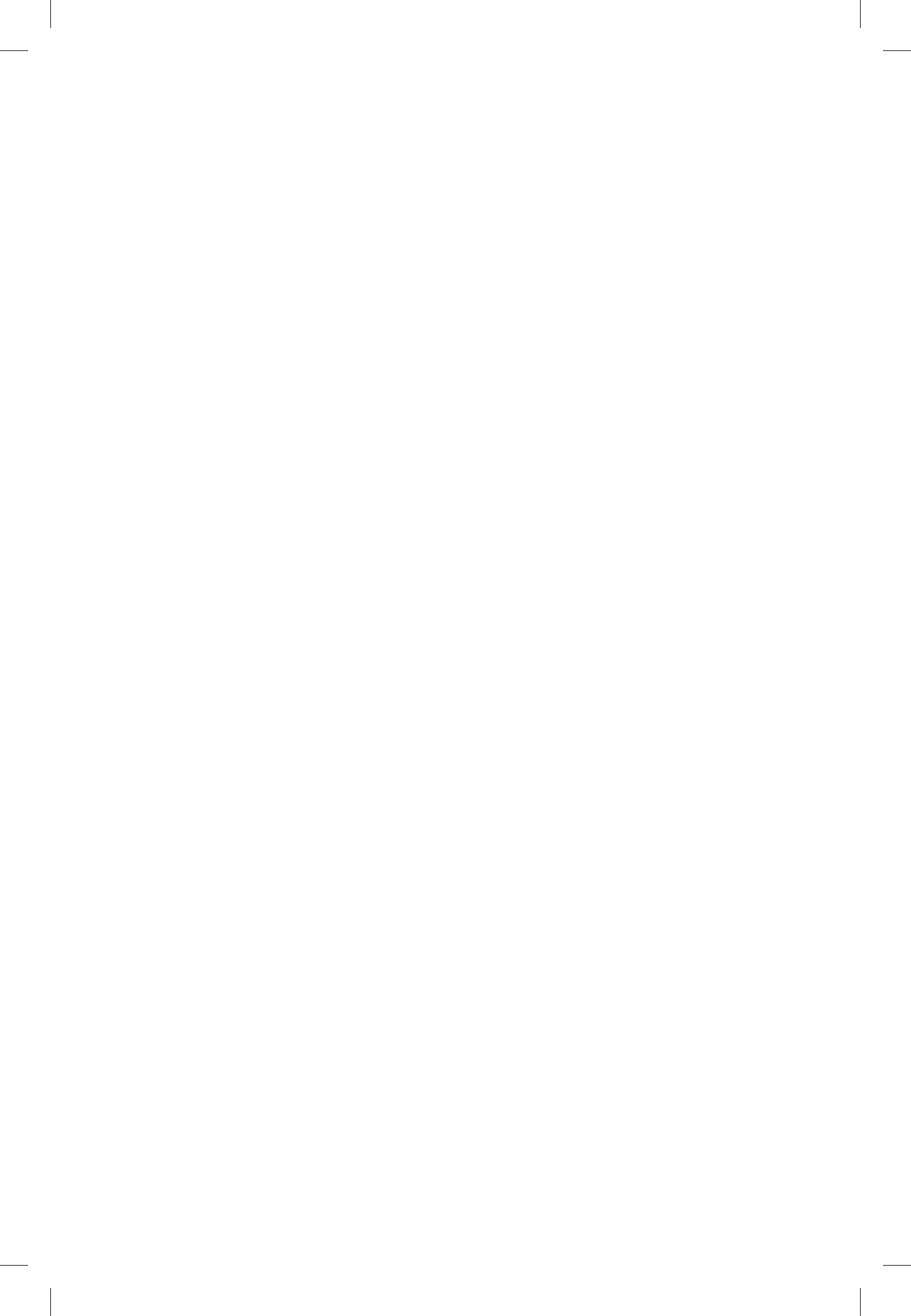
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