

‘Why Stant this Word Heere’: Text, Gloss, and Voice in Hoccleve’s ‘Remonstrance to Oldcastle’

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This article is concerned with reading in Hoccleve’s ‘Remonstrance to Oldcastle’ (c. 1415), specifically with the way in which what the poem says about reading contrasts both with other aspects of Hoccleve’s advice and with the kind of reading that is encouraged by its mise-en-page. In his attempt to counter Oldcastle’s heretical beliefs, Hoccleve twice counsels against engaged, interpretative reading: first in his praise of the orthodox family who avoid textual criticism of Scripture; second in the famous passage where he advises Oldcastle to read romance rather than the Bible. The article argues that the glossing of the poem nonetheless encourages very active engagement with Hoccleve’s own text, that such engaged reading reveals his remonstrance to be directed at Henry V as much as Oldcastle, and that the programme of supposedly innocuous reading that he suggests for Oldcastle is one of the points where this is most apparent. Paying close attention both to Hoccleve’s sources and to the form in which the text appears in MS HM 111, it demonstrates that every aspect of the text begs the question that Hoccleve encourages Oldcastle not to ask: ‘Why stant this word heere?’

One of the most striking features of ‘To Sir John Oldcastle’ is the voice that Hoccleve adopts in the poem. Addressed to a friend and associate of Henry V’s who had been accused of heresy, the poem was probably written in summer 1415, at a point when Oldcastle had been convicted as a heretic, but had escaped from custody; it both refutes specific points of belief attributed to him, and appeals to him in more general terms to return to the fold of the Church and the favour of the King.¹ What Hoccleve says is less striking than *how* he says it, however. Asserting that charity ‘comandith vs, if our brothir be falle / in to errour, to haue of him pitee, / And seeke weyes [...] / How we may ageyn to vertu calle’ (ll. 2–5), the first stanza posits Hoccleve and Oldcastle as brothers in Christ.² It thus invites us to read Hoccleve’s attempts to guide Oldcastle as an

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¹ See further M. C. Seymour (ed.), *Selections from Hoccleve* (Oxford, 1981), 129; Andrew Cole, *Literature and Heresy in the Age of Chaucer* (Cambridge, 2008), 106–8.

² All quotations from ‘To Sir John Oldcastle’ will be taken from the edition by Sebastian Langdell, forthcoming from the Exeter Medieval Texts and Studies Series, Liverpool University Press.

instance of fraternal correction, motivated by charity and affection in equal parts.³ He speaks as an estranged ‘brothir’, but a ‘brothir’ nonetheless, addressing Oldcastle in a strikingly intimate and urgent tone, with frequent exclamations and apostrophes, and consistent use of ‘thou’ rather than ‘you.’⁴ Thus, although the position from which Hoccleve speaks is ostensibly that of the Lancastrian regime, the tone of the poem belies its othering of Oldcastle. Far from being an official document, it gives the impression of being the unmediated record of a speaking voice; as Ethan Knapp has argued, the effect of such emphatic direct address is ‘to fabricate the presence of John Oldcastle’ and thus to create a face for the disembodied threat of Lollardy.⁵ But in Hoccleve’s holograph, San Marino, Huntington Library, MS 111 (henceforth MS HM 111), fabricated presence and speaking voice co-exist with a number of marginal glosses that, as a non-negotiable textual feature, resist the equation of speech with writing. Taking the relationship between the text and its glosses as its starting-point, this article will examine how Hoccleve’s voice interacts with the pragmatics of the page and the consequences of that interaction both for the kind of advice offered by the poem, and for the kind of reading it encourages.

‘SCRIPTUM EST’: READING AND GLOSSING IN ‘TO OLDCASTLE’

‘To Oldcastle’ is not the only poem of Hoccleve’s to survive in glossed form: *The Regiment of Princes* is extensively glossed, and the *Series* partially so. The vast majority of the glosses to both texts are source glosses: they provide quotations from earlier works and thus at first sight seem to ground Hoccleve’s work in established literary tradition. In practice, however, many of them attest Hoccleve’s interest in the effects of compilation, recontextualization, and juxtaposition: they frequently modify rather than underwrite Hoccleve’s text, so that what at first looks like a mirroring relationship proves instead to be one of divergence or ‘twinning’ (to use Hoccleve’s term).⁶ Something comparable occurs with the glosses to ‘To Oldcastle’—and this matters, because a glossed text inevitably makes its readers aware of the process of reading and in this poem reading—specifically correct reading—is one of the key issues at stake.⁷ In the stanzas where Hoccleve criticizes the laity for disputing about Scripture, he contrasts them with previous generations who passively accepted the teaching of the Church:

Oure fadres olde and modres lyued wel,
 And taghte hir children as hemself taght were
 Of holy chirche, and axid nat a del,
 ‘Why stant this word heere? And why this word there?
 Why spake God thus, and seith thus elleswhere?
 Why dide he this wyse, and mighte han do thus?’
 Our fadres medled nothyng of swich gere.
 Pat oghte been a good mirour to vs.

(ll. 153–60)

³ In Christianity, this practice has its roots in Christ’s words recorded in Matthew 18: 15–17. See further Edwin D. Craun, *Ethics and Power in Medieval English Reformist Writing* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁴ Cf. Seymour, *Selections*, 130.

⁵ Ethan Knapp, *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (University Park, PA, 2001), 138. For the complex rhetorical construction of Lollardy in Lancastrian political and literary texts more generally, see Paul Strohm, *England’s Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399–1422*, 2nd edn (Notre Dame, 2006).

⁶ See further Jane Griffiths, ‘“In bookes thus writen I fynde”: Hoccleve’s Self-Glossing in the *Regiment of Princes* and the *Series*’, *Medium Aevum*, 86 (2017), 91–107; for the *Series*, cf. also Thomas Hoccleve, *My Complainte and Other Poems*, ed. Roger Ellis (Liverpool, 2001), 226–33 and 270–3.

⁷ For dramatic demonstrations of the effects of glossing on the reading process, see Lawrence Lipking, ‘The Marginal Gloss’, *Critical Enquiry*, 3 (1977), 609–55; Johanna Drucker, ‘Entity to Event: From Literal, Mechanistic Materiality to Probabilistic Materiality’, *Parallax*, 15 (2009), 7–17.

Hoccleve writes of lay religious enquiry that occurs outside of clerical oversight as a potentially dangerous departure from transmission of an unchanging faith down the generations. His presentation of those who engage in such enquiry as textual critics who question ‘“Why stant this word heere? And why this word there?”’ (l. 156) indicates that he is thinking of that enquiry as grounded specifically in reading. Significantly, too, Hoccleve refers to the older generation in a way that is slightly infantilizing: even as he says that they teach their children, he reminds us that they themselves were formerly children who received that same instruction. He thus differentiates them—and, by extension, the enquiring lay readers with whom he contrasts them—from clerkly readers educated to engage with Scripture in person.⁸ Positing their unqualified attempts to analyse the words on the page as the opposite of listening—both in the sense of hearing the Bible read and in the sense of obeying—this imagined scene paves the way for Hoccleve’s exhortation to Oldcastle, shortly afterwards, not to ‘clymbe ... in holy writ so hie’ (l. 194). Yet although Hoccleve cautions against unsupervised investigative reading of Scripture, the layout of his own poem on the page encourages readers actively to compare text and gloss. This is the more striking in view of Alastair Minnis’s argument that the relative paucity of glosses in later Middle English texts may in part be attributable to the 1409 prohibition of religious debate in the vernacular.⁹ Even as it seeks to minimize opportunities for error to arise from misreading, ‘To Oldcastle’ appears on the page in a form that raises the question of how it should itself be read.

The ‘To Oldcastle’ glosses are far being from a systematic apparatus: there are just seven of them. However, they do appear to share a single purpose. With one exception, they are taken from the Church fathers and from histories of the Church, and the quotations underwrite Hoccleve’s attempts to correct Oldcastle’s beliefs.¹⁰ Hoccleve’s usual method is to translate or paraphrase the Latin of the glosses in the text, and although he does not necessarily follow them word for word, their presence nonetheless indicates that there is a dependable source for Hoccleve’s key claims; for example, glosses taken from Luke’s Gospel and the pseudo-Augustinian *De visitatione infirmorum* affirm that the sacrament of confession is instrumental in achieving salvation, while one from another pseudo-Augustinian text, *De fide ad Petrum*, asserts that heretics cannot be saved by any means.¹¹ As source glosses, they both convey and depend upon the authority of the written word: text and gloss seem to twin in the sense of reflecting one another. The phrase used to introduce one of the glosses, ‘Scriptum est’ [‘it is written’], encapsulates this position. It is a form of words that was conventionally attached to glosses taken from the Bible, and in ‘To Oldcastle’ it prefaces the quotation from Luke 17: 14, ‘Ostendite vos sacerdotibus’ [‘show yourselves to the priests’]. Copied in the margin at the point where Hoccleve counters Oldcastle’s lack of faith in the sacrament of confession (l. 84), it re-emphasizes that what is ‘scriptum’ is not just any word, but specifically the uniquely authoritative word of God.

⁸ For the question of lay competency and the complex and evolving relationship between orthodoxy and heresy at the time, see the essays in Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (ed.), *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout, 2011), and cf. Vincent Gillespie, ‘Vernacular Theology’, in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Middle English* (Oxford, 2007), 401–20.

⁹ Alastair Minnis, ‘Absent Glosses: The Trouble with Middle English Hermeneutics’, in *Translations of Authority in Medieval English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular* (Cambridge, 2009), 17–37.

¹⁰ The sources are: Fulgentius, *De fide ad Petrum*; Cassiodorus, *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita*; Luke 17:14; pseudo-Augustine, *De visitatione infirmorum*; Gregory the Great; the Justinian Codex; Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine* (see further Jenni Nuttall, ‘Thomas Hoccleve’s Poems for Henry V’, Oxford Handbooks Online, p. 6, pubd online August 2015 <<https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-61>> accessed 29 Oct 2021). The exception is the gloss that cites the Codex; the law in question is the one that prohibits disputation about the faith, however, so that it too is fully consonant with Hoccleve’s project of returning Oldcastle to the fold of the Church.

¹¹ These are the glosses adjacent to ll. 84, 89, and 33. For the text of that from *De visitatione infirmorum*, see ProQuest Information and Learning Company, Patrologia Latina Database, vol. 40, col. 1148 <<http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>>; for that from *De fide ad Petrum*, see *Sancti Fulgentii Episcopi Ruspensis Opera*, ed. J. Fraipont, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 91A (Turnhout, 1968), 757.

In the *Regiment*, however, Hoccleve frequently attaches the phrase ‘scriptum est’ to glosses taken from non-Scriptural sources—and a version of such extended use operates in ‘To Oldcastle’ as well.¹² This appears clearly at the point where Hoccleve introduces discussion of the Emperor Justinian’s prohibition of religious debate with the phrase ‘As it is written, whoso list it see’ (l. 186). Here, not only does the English equivalent of ‘scriptum est’ grant authority to a non-Scriptural text on grounds of its written status, but the mise-en-page reaffirms it. The gloss adjacent to this stanza gives readers the opportunity literally to ‘see’ what is written: quoting the relevant passage from the relevant law, it takes on the status of witness.¹³ Of course, it is not genuinely a witness to the law: it is a copy. But as Sonia Drimmer has argued, medieval manuscript texts occupy a strange middle ground between the allographic and the autographic: although, as *written* artefacts, they share the quality of the allograph—a work that provides ‘notation made of discrete units or syntagms – instructions even – for its repeatable realization in other physical or experiential formats’, as unique *artefacts*, they are as closely aligned with the autograph: ‘a work the physical manifestation of which is its end product, and which end product bears the traces of the history of its own production.’¹⁴ The in-between status of the manuscript means that deixis of the kind Hoccleve deploys in drawing attention to the words in the margin of MS HM 111) gives those words an iconic as well as a symbolic quality—just as when, in London, British Library, MS Harley 4866, Hoccleve introduces the Chaucer portrait in the margin of his *Regiment* with the words: ‘I have *heere* his likenesse / Do make’ (ll. 4995–6, italics mine). As Drimmer puts it, the power of the portrait derives from ‘the testimonial conditions of its display’, and with the Justinian gloss too, Hoccleve’s insistence on the *presence* of the words means that two distinct elements on the manuscript page (in this case, text and gloss), ‘together produce a certificate of authenticity and enter into a mutually ratifying exchange.’¹⁵

Thus far, Hoccleve’s treatment of the glosses in the text tallies with what is implied by their presence on the manuscript page: the particular ‘utterance’ of ‘To Oldcastle’ in MS HM 111 stabilizes the voice of the text, buttressing Hoccleve’s urgent and personal address with quotations that materially ground it in the authority of the written word.¹⁶ Yet the way Hoccleve mediates the glosses does not always bear out what is suggested by the mise-en-page: that his sources and, by extension, his own writing are immutable and (like Scripture in the hands of unsupervised lay readers) to be trusted rather than interpreted. Elsewhere, the way quotations from the glosses are presented in the body of the poem renders the relationship between text and gloss less than transparently mirroring. In some cases, Hoccleve introduces alterations of tone, as with the gloss taken from *De visitatione infirmorum*. Occurring at the point where he seeks to convince Oldcastle of the importance of confession, this is a particularly complex gloss, both conceptually and linguistically:

Augustinus de visitatione infirmorum dicit. ‘In muro Ciuitatis superne apponendus es lapis viuis, in cuius edificio non auditur securis aut malleus. Hic perferendus est strepitus / hic adiciendus est lapidi malleus / hic conterendum est totum lapidis superuacuum / strepitus

¹² See Thomas Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, ed. Charles R. Blyth (Kalamazoo, MI, 1999), glosses to ll. 2717, 3610, 3632, 4495, 4509, 4523, 4929, 4945, 5020, 5034.

¹³ For the thematic significance of sight in ‘To Oldcastle’, see Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 139–42, and cf. Shannon Gayk, *Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2010), 48–59.

¹⁴ Sonia Drimmer, ‘The Manuscript as Ambigraphic Medium: Hoccleve’s Scribes, Illuminators, and Their Problems’, *Exemplaria*, 29 (2017), 175–94 (176).

¹⁵ Drimmer, ‘Manuscript as Ambigraphic Medium’, 180, 182.

¹⁶ For the argument that each manuscript is an ‘utterance’ of a text, see Ruth Carroll et al., ‘Pragmatics on the Page: Visual Text in Late Medieval English Books’, *European Journal of English Studies*, 17 (2013), 54–71; cf. Justyna Rogos-Hebda, ‘The Visual Text: Bibliographic Codes as Pragmatic Markers on a Manuscript Page’, *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 51 (2016), 37–44 (38–9). For analysis of page layout, see Stephen Partridge, ‘Designing the Page’, in Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (eds), *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500* (Cambridge, 2011), 79–103. For the weight of signification that Hoccleve grants to his sources, see Taylor Cowdery, ‘Hoccleve’s Poetics of Matter’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 38 (2016), 133–64.

[sit] peccatorum tuorum recordatio super quibus perstrepat in aure sacerdotis humillima tua confessio, &c.'

[You must be added as a living stone to the wall of the heavenly city, in the building of which no axe or hammer is heard. Here noise must be undergone; here the hammer must be struck on the stone; here everything superfluous about the stone must be destroyed. Let the memory of your sins be the noise above which your very humble confession sounds in the ear of the priest, etc.]

Hoccleve's paraphrase scrupulously reflects the sense of the gloss, but it does so by providing a non-literal translation, helpfully decoding the central metaphor of the hammer, while also giving greater prominence to the image of the soul as a 'quick stone' by placing it at the end of the stanza:

Heere, in this lyf, vnto God mercy crie,
And with the ax or hamer of penance
Smyte on the stoon. Slee thyn obstinacie.
Haue of thy synnes heuy remembrance.
Rowne in the preestes ere, and the greuance
Of thy soule meekly to him confesse –
And in the wal of heuene, is no doutance,
Thow shalt a qwik stoon be for thy goodnesse.

(ll. 89–96)

Hoccleve's mediation of the complex gloss makes it intellectually and affectively more accessible to the reader: not so much because of his reordering and demystification of its theology, as because he turns the almost aggressively impersonal Latin into something urgent and even emotional, abandoning its emphasis on passive suffering in favour of repeated exhortations to take action. Although the stanza follows the sense of the Latin, it is also wholly consonant with Hoccleve's personally engaged exhortations to Oldcastle throughout the text: it reworks the gloss in a way that calls to mind the current Instagram challenge @drawthisinyourstyle.¹⁷

With other glosses, Hoccleve's mediation alters their substance rather than their tone, as with that taken from Eusebius's *Life of Constantine*. According to Hoccleve, this provides evidence of Constantine's honouring of the ministers of God (ll. 217–22), and he attributes to Constantine the statement that priests '*been goddes to vs sent*' (l. 228; italics mine). In contrast, however, the gloss itself states that priests were given their authority *by* God, and stresses that their jurisdiction has limits:

De admirabili honore quem Constantinus Imperator exhibuit ecclesie Ministris ita scribitur: 'Deus vos constituit sacerdotes, et potestatem dedit vobis iudicandi et ideo nos a vobis iudicamur; vos autem non potestis ab hominibus iudicari,' etc

[Of the wonderful honour that the emperor Constantine showed to the ministers of the Church, it is written thus, 'God made you priests and gave you power to judge, and so too we are judged by you; you however are not able to judge except amongst men, etc'.]

¹⁷ In this challenge, cartoon-like images are posted on the Instagram accounts @drawthisinyourstyle and @drawthisinyourstylechallenge; participating artists create versions of the images in their own style and post them on their accounts.

Hoccleve's version does align with the way in which Eusebius presents Constantine throughout the *Life*, repeatedly emphasizing his piety and his support of the Church, but there is no precise precedent for it in the wording of this gloss specifically.¹⁸ The inventiveness of Hoccleve's paraphrase has the effect of significantly strengthening the emphasis on the power of Church, in order to make the example he provides to Oldcastle more forceful.¹⁹ Although it is an entirely justifiable reading of the *Life* as a whole, the gap between text and gloss shows that this reading is not a given, but rather Hoccleve's own. The same is true of a second alteration: whereas the gloss refers to Constantine's words as written ('ita scribitur'), Hoccleve introduces them as *spoken* by him ('thow seidest', l. 228).

This choice of verb is a significant one. In his paraphrase of the gloss taken from Fulgentius's *De fide ad Petrum*, too, Hoccleve states that: 'Seynt Austen seith [...] And yit, moreouer, he seith thus also [...]' (ll. 33, 41, italics mine), and the two discrete uses of the verb together draw attention to the complex relationship between the modes of speaking and writing in 'To Oldcastle'. It is possible, of course, that the use of 'seidest' and 'seith' is a purely conventional elision of the distinction between the two; in the *Regiment*, as well, Hoccleve frequently uses verbs of speaking to introduce his translations of the words of *auctores*.²⁰ Yet in a text whose strikingly immediate speaking voice is framed in written *auctoritates*, it makes a more than conventional impact. Just as Knapp argues that Hoccleve's insistent addressing of Oldcastle calls an absent figure into being, to give *auctores* a speaking voice renders them, too, almost personal presences in the poem, analogous to the embodied voices of Chaucer's *House of Fame*.²¹ Even as the glosses' written authority grounds Hoccleve's utterance, they too revert to the condition of speech. They thus align with the way that Hoccleve *deploys* his marginal quotations, which similarly elides the distinction between document and direct address, as glosses that initially appear objective are effectively re-voiced by Hoccleve himself. For example, in MS HM 111 the unimpeachably authoritative gloss taken from Luke is placed directly opposite the line 'Holy Writ therin is thyn aduersarie' (l. 84), so that its position on the page as well as its content reaffirms the truth of what Hoccleve writes. The quotation may have been 'scriptum' by God, but the way it is scripted in the manuscript is Hoccleve's own, and this particular material manifestation of God's word contributes as much to the refutation of Oldcastle as the word itself does.

With other glosses, such revoicing does not so much increase their persuasiveness as wryly call into question the grounds on which that persuasion operates. A striking example occurs at the point where Hoccleve argues that only churchmen should 'medle of the doctryne / Of Cristes lawes' (ll. 137–8), and the adjacent gloss states that: 'Fides non habet meritum etc'. A shorthand form of Gregory the Great's doctrine of grace, it provides an incomplete quotation—with the absurd result that, read on its own, it tells us that 'faith has no benefit'. There is no implication that this is what it 'really says', of course: the 'etc' with which it ends was a conventional way of signalling that a marginal quotation was incomplete, and the use of such short-form quotations in glosses was itself a common practice. Yet the Gregory gloss does nonetheless appear—if only for a moment—to declare the very opposite of what it might reasonably be expected to say. Like Mede's incomplete quotation in *Piers Plowman*, or the addition of the moralization to the tale of Jereslaus's Wife in Hoccleve's own *Series*, it thus reveals with startling

¹⁸ The quotation in the gloss is taken from Eusebius, *Historiae ecclesiasticae*, X.2; see Eusebius, *Werke*, vol. 2.2: *Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Eduard Schiwhartz and Theodor Mommsen (Berlin, 1999), 961.

¹⁹ Cf. Sebastian Langdell's discussion of Hoccleve's treatment of the relationship between God and men in his 'Reading Through: Major/Minor Hoccleve', in David Watt and Jenni Nuttall (eds), *Thomas Hoccleve: New Approaches* (Woodbridge, forthcoming 2022).

²⁰ For the conventional nature of the elision, see Colette Moore, *Quoting Speech in Early English* (Cambridge, 2011), 4.

²¹ See *The House of Fame*, ll. 1076–7, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford, 1988).

clarity to what extent the meaning of a text may be altered by the way in which it is redeployed.²² The supposedly authoritative pre-text of the gloss is shown to be dependent on Hoccleve's text for its completion; it is here that readers are told explicitly that it is not 'faith' in general that has no benefit, but specifically faith that depends on reason:

For if we mighte our feith by reson preeue,
We sholde no meryt of our feith haue.
(ll. 141–2)

The point 'scriptum est', certainly, but by Hoccleve rather than by his *auctor*—and the incomplete gloss sharply reveals the danger of taking on trust what is written merely because it is written.

Something yet more disconcerting occurs with the gloss taken from the Justinian Codex (adjacent to l. 185). In MS HM 111, this includes not just a quotation from the law in question, but also the prefatory phrase 'Lege Nemo'. Since the quotation that follows begins 'Nemo Clericus vel militaris [...]', the obvious explanation is that this should be translated 'In the law [beginning] "Nemo"', and that it functions as Hoccleve's note to self, a reminder to look up the wording of the law and to insert it at this point in the margin.²³ But just for a moment it looks as if an alternative is possible: that 'lege' is not the dative of 'lex' [law], but the imperative of 'legere' [to read], and that the phrase reads 'Read [in] Nobody'.²⁴ Grammatically this doesn't quite work: in such marginal instructions, the name of the author to be read would normally take the accusative rather than the dative, giving the phrase 'Lege Neminem'. However, there are significant precedents for using the figure of Nemo as fake authority. He is an important (non-)presence in the *Regiment*, where he is named as the sole patron of Hoccleve and his fellow clerks (ll. 1485–91), and as Knapp has argued, Hoccleve's treatment of this figure derives from 'a stock character in medieval ecclesiastical satire', who was brought into being through the 'simple grammatical trick' of wilfully misreading Nemo as a proper name.²⁵ Specifically, Nemo was the subject of a parodic hagiography that was circulated and revised for over three centuries after its composition in the later 1200s. This made extensive use of Biblical quotations in which 'nemo' is mentioned, and repeatedly emphasized the impeccable authority of its source by phrases such as 'sicut legitur', 'ubi dicitur' and 'ut dictum est': that is, it used a technique identical to that which Hoccleve himself deploys to stress the authority of his glosses.²⁶ As Martha Bayless has argued, in the biography of Nemo: 'The essence of the joke is the overliteral interpretation of Scripture [...]. By invoking authority to such an extent [...] the sermon affirms that improper use of authority can lead to false belief.'²⁷ A similar joke seems to be implied by Hoccleve's gloss, which twice wrong-foots its readers: on the one hand, to read the instruction too literally is a mistake (we are *not* to read Nobody, but the law beginning 'Nemo'), yet on the other hand, the fleeting impression that a spoof *auctor* has been introduced in the margin calls into question the authorizing function of the other glosses as well.

With the 'To Oldcastle' glosses, then, even as their presence in the margins and the explicit references to them in the text imply Hoccleve's deference to or dependence on previous writing,

²² See William Langland, in A. V. C. Schmidt (ed.), *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B-Text* (London, 1978), Passus III, ll. 331–47; Thomas Hoccleve, 'Fabula de quadam imperatrice Romana', in Ellis (ed.), *My Complaynte and Other Poems* ll. 953–1069.

²³ The quotation is from the Justinian Codex, ll.4; for the text, see P. Krüger (ed.), *Codex Iustinianus* (Berlin, 1877), 9.

²⁴ The physical evidence in MS HM 111 is ambiguous: on f. 9v, the phrase 'Lege nemo' is ruled off from the following text by an underlining that extends upwards after the final 'o', which suggests that it may have served as a reminder to insert the rest of the gloss here, but the ink appears identical to that in which the rest of the gloss is copied, which suggests that both 'prompt' and gloss were written at the same time.

²⁵ Knapp, *Bureaucratic Muse*, 155.

²⁶ See Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996), 63.

²⁷ Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages*, 62.

his selective framing of the quotations fails to confirm that meaning is carried seamlessly across from one text to another; instead, it reveals the processes by which meaning is *made*. Rather than underwriting the body of the text, the glosses are subsumed by Hoccleve's voice, in a practice identified by David Lawton as common in late-medieval writing: the construction of an authorial voice through echo and quotation that is notable for 'both the high level of conscious rhetorical intention with which such quotation is deployed, and, above all, the astonishing extent to which quotations are inhabited, and thus, even as they are recognized, demand to be read in a new voice.'²⁸ In 'To Oldcastle' this effect is so pronounced that to consider text and gloss together not only reveals the extent of Hoccleve's reworking of his source material, but also encourages readers to think *like* Hoccleve, making meaning out of the gap between two elements of the text. Hoccleve's mediation of his *auctores*, both through translation and through *mise-en-page*, thus opens up a space for his own readers to ask why *this* word here?

CLIMBING HIGH IN WRIT: READING ROMANCE AND SCRIPTURE WITH OLDCASTLE

The complex relationship between the text and glosses of 'To Oldcastle' invites further consideration of other allusions to previous writing within the poem. The most prominent of these occur in the stanzas where Hoccleve tells Oldcastle not to read Scripture, but to substitute tales of Lancelot or Vegetius's *Art of Chivalry*—or, if he still desires the word of God, to read only Judges, Kings, and Joshua, Judith, Chronicles, and Maccabees:

Bewar, Oldcastel, and for Crystes sake
 Clymbe no more in holy writ so hie.
 Rede the storie of Lancelot de Lake,
 Or Vegece, Of the Art of Chivalrie,
 The Seege of Troie or Thebes. Thee applie
 To thyng þat may to th'ordre of knyght longe.
 [...]

If thee list thyng rede of auctoritee,
 To thise stories sit it thee to goon:
 To Iudicum, Regum, and Iosue,
 To Iudith, and to Paralipomenon,
 And Machabe.

(ll. 193–98, 201–5)

Just as the glosses give conflicting signals about the kind of reading the poem advocates, so too does this passage. Hoccleve first exhorts Oldcastle to give up reading Scripture, then offers suggestions for further reading that include not only a number of romances and an art of chivalry, but also selected books of the Bible. Despite this inconsistency, the reading list has not attracted any very detailed attention. The reference to Lancelot has generally been taken as a sneer at Oldcastle's intellectual level, although Sebastian Langdell has made the more nuanced suggestion that the allusion to Vegetius 'seems to have been touted for what it signified rather than for what it actually discussed.'²⁹ Langdell's observation aligns well with Hoccleve's emphasis, both here and throughout the poem, on Oldcastle's knighthood. For Hoccleve, to be a knight of the realm

²⁸ David Lawton, *Voice in Later Medieval Literature* (Oxford, 2017), 8.

²⁹ Sebastian J. Langdell, *Thomas Hoccleve: Religious Reform, Transnational Poetics, and the Invention of Chaucer* (Liverpool, 2018), 28.

entails—or should entail—being a knight of Christ too: for example, in the very first stanza, his assertion that Oldcastle is 'fro Crystes feith twynned and goon' (l. 8) is immediately followed by the exclamation 'Allas, þat thow þat were a manly knyght [...] Haast lost the style of Cristenly prowess' (ll. 9, 12).³⁰ The implication is that Oldcastle's separation from the Church results in division from his established position in society as well—with the two things together resulting in a total loss of identity. Because, as Langdell argues, Vegetius's work had 'come to signify "orthodox chivalry"', it is a plausible remedy for such loss of self, and the suggested romance reading, with its emphasis on knighthood, seems also to have the potential to function in that way.³¹

But this does not account for Hoccleve's recommendation of several books of Scripture immediately after he commands Oldcastle to give up the Bible. What these books have in common is an emphasis on civic unrest and division: specifically division that is caused by a people's forgetfulness of their duty to God. As M. C. Seymour has argued, they are pertinent to Hoccleve's attempt to reclaim Oldcastle for religious and social orthodoxy—yet they are also critically applicable to the state of the nation.³² The Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges demonstrate repeatedly that the covenant between God and his people places obligations on both sides, not on God alone. They recount the conquest of the Promised Land, but also show how the triumphal progress of the Chosen People is interrupted whenever God withdraws his favour, whether that is following the sinful action of an individual (as in Joshua 7), or by the failure on the part of entire communities to take possession of the land God has ordained for them (as in Joshua 18 and Judges 1). Individual and communal failings alike are treated as indications of insufficient faith, and bring about the consequences described in the final chapter of the Book of Joshua:

si dimiseritis Dominum et servieritis diis alienis convertet se et adfliget vos atque subvertet postquam vobis praestiterit bona (Joshua 24:20).

['If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.']

The events that are recounted in the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges also feature in the four books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles (Hoccleve's 'Paralipomenon') as part of larger narrative histories of Judah and Israel; they are briefly recapitulated once more in Judith 5, where they serve as foil for Judith's own unquestioning fidelity to God.³³ The two books of Maccabees recount a different, yet parallel narrative in which Judas Maccabeus and his family violently resist the subjugation of the Jewish people by the Greeks, placing preservation of their religion above personal interests and even personal safety. As in Joshua and Judges, in Maccabees too the Jewish people suffer because of the presence among them of those who 'recesserunt a testamento sancto et iuncti sunt nationibus et venundati sunt ut facerent malum' (I Maccabees 1: 16: 'forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen').³⁴ I Maccabees presents this as a largely triumphal narrative, in which Judas Maccabeus, like Judith, exemplifies fidelity to God in the struggle to redeem his people. In contrast, II Maccabees emphasises the continued division of the Jewish nation; here, the author exhorts his readers:

³⁰ Cf. Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 105, 112–13.

³¹ Langdell, *Hoccleve*, 29. Cf. Catherine Nall, *Reading and War in Fifteenth-Century England: From Lydgate to Malory* (Cambridge, 2012), 1–2.

³² Seymour (ed.), *Selected*, 131.

³³ Hoccleve's allusion to 'Kings' is to the Vulgate I–IV Kings; this corresponds to I and II Kings and I and II Samuel in the Anglican tradition.

³⁴ Because the Vulgate divides I Maccabees 3 into two separate verses, I Maccabees 16 in the Vulgate is I Maccabees 15 in the Anglican tradition.

obsecro autem eos qui hunc librum lecturi sunt ne abhorrescant propter adversos casus sed repudent ea quae acciderunt non ad interitum sed ad correptionem generis esse nostri [...] non enim sicut in aliis nationibus Dominus patienter expectat ut eas cum iudicii dies venerit in plenitudine peccatorum puniat

ita et in nobis statuit ut peccatis nostris in finem devolutis ita demum in nos vindicet propter quod numquam quidem a nobis misericordiam suam amovet corripiens vero in adversis populum suum non derelinquit (II Maccabees 6: 12, 14–16)

[‘Now I beseech those that read this book, that they be not discouraged for these calamities, but that they judge those punishments not to be for destruction, but for a chastening of our nation. [...] For not as with other nations, whom the Lord patiently forbearth to punish, till they be come to the fulness of their sins, so dealeth he with us, Lest that, being come to the height of sin, afterwards he should take vengeance of us. And therefore he never withdraweth his mercy from us: and though he punish with adversity, yet doth he never forsake his people.’]

The Scriptural reading that Hoccleve recommends to Oldcastle thus not only puts forward positive exempla of people who serve their nation through loyalty to God, but also repeatedly stresses the danger to nations that results from their departure from orthodoxy, and calls for solidarity in the face of that threat. Even as Judith and Judas Maccabeus offer models of faithful service that foreshadow what might be expected of a knight, the nations divided through want of faith stand for an England disfigured by heresy.³⁵ Thus, if the suggested reading is understood as intended exclusively for Oldcastle, it indicates how he might redeem himself by reconciling with Henry and suggests that, by returning to the Church, he might not only heal religious divisions within the nation but also resume active service to Henry in the war with France. It is this that Hoccleve appears to suggest when he directly contrasts Oldcastle with Henry in the penultimate stanza of the poem:

Looke how our Cristen prince, our lige lord,
With many a lord and knyght beyond the see,
Laboure in armes. And thow hydest thee[.]
(ll. 499–501)

The war with France was itself perceived as an attempt to counter division by reunifying two parts of the kingdom, so that Oldcastle’s participation in it would mark his return to knighthood in the fullest possible sense: his resumption of martial as well as Christian knightly in service of national unity.³⁶

Yet although Hoccleve asserts that his reading list is intended specifically for Oldcastle, the Biblical books he recommends repeatedly demonstrate that divisions within nations arise not simply from failures among the people, but specifically from weak or insufficiently faithful rulers. In this respect, they seem far more applicable to the King than to his errant knight. In 1415, at a time when Oldcastle had been condemned as a heretic, but—due to Henry’s leniency—had escaped from imprisonment, and when his goods had not yet been seized by the state, Henry was arguably failing to exercise precisely the kind of responsibility that—for example—Joshua

³⁵ The anonymous author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* (c.1417) also likens Henry V to Judas Maccabeus: making a case for Henry’s exemplary piety, he identifies Maccabeus as a precedent. He also compares England to Israel as God’s chosen nation, making explicit the comparison that is implicit in the Scriptural reading that Hoccleve proposes for Oldcastle. See Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2000), 33, 39.

³⁶ For this view of the war, see Lee Patterson, ‘Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate’, in Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (eds), *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History* (Princeton, 1993), 79–84.

is instructed that he should, when God tells him 'non ero ultra vobiscum donec coneratis eum qui huius sceleris reus est' (Joshua 7:12: 'neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you').³⁷ Thus, what is presented as advice to Oldcastle may by extension serve as criticism of Henry as well: Oldcastle may represent the heresy that has infected the nation, but it is want of leadership that has allowed that infection to take place. Such a reading is supported not only by the general tenor of the Scriptural books cited by Hoccleve, but also by a more specific reference. As Jenni Nuttall has shown, Bishop Arundel had previously used Judas Maccabeus as figure of King Henry IV in a sermon preached at the time of his accession, identifying him as liberator of a kingdom oppressed by the misrule of Richard II and the monarch who, in the words of I Maccabees 6:57, had come 'to take order for the affairs of the kingdom'.³⁸ This makes Hoccleve's inclusion of Maccabees on his reading list a pointed one. One of Henry V's key strategies of self-legitimization was to align himself with Richard II, rather than with his usurping father; elsewhere, Hoccleve himself had contributed to that realignment.³⁹ Here, however, the reference to Maccabees reconnects Henry V with Henry IV, and specifically with Henry's assumption of the throne he had won from Richard. It thus markedly reverses Hoccleve's previous presentation of the monarch. Among the criticisms made of Richard in the years leading up to his deposition were those of failure to follow the counsel of established advisors and excessive reliance on and weakness towards his favourites.⁴⁰ Accordingly, by linking Henry V with Henry IV and distancing him from Richard, the allusion to Maccabees may contain a warning to Henry V not to repeat Richard's mistakes by showing leniency towards Oldcastle, but instead—like his father—to take firm command of the kingdom.

Considered in this light, even the innocuous-looking suggestions that Oldcastle should read Vegetius and Lancelot confirm that Hoccleve is advising Henry as well. Of the two, the reference to Vegetius does so most obviously. His *Art of Chivalry*, which frames its discussion of the arts of warfare in discussion of a king's duties, is a work that Hoccleve will later—in the *Series*—claim to have considered translating for Duke Humfrey, before rejecting it on grounds that the Duke is already a perfect knight ('Dialogue', ll. 561–5); in the Prologue to the *Troy Book*, Hoccleve's contemporary Lydgate similarly links Prince Henry's perfect knighthood and physical prowess to his reading of the *Art of Chivalry*.⁴¹ The fact that the *Art* is the source for the final part of Aegidius's *De regimine principum*—itself one of the main sources for Hoccleve's *Regiment*—confirms its association with advice literature, and so too does manuscript evidence. In Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 233, the 1408 English translation of the *Art* is bound with Trevisa's translation of Aegidius.⁴² In four other manuscripts, it is bound with Lydgate and Burgh's *Secrees of Old Philisoffres* (a version of the *Secreta Secretorum* that was later printed by Pynson as *The Governance of Kings and Princes*), and in one of these (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 416) with Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* as well.⁴³ The inclusion of this last suggests that the connection

³⁷ For the Church's attempts to encourage Henry to show less leniency towards heretics, see Nuttall, 'Hoccleve's Poems'.

³⁸ See Jenni Nuttall, *The Creation of Lancastrian Kingship: Literature, Language and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), 28–9.

³⁹ See Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, 101–27, esp. 114–19; cf. Mary C. Flannery, *John Lydgate and the Poetics of Fame* (Cambridge, 2012), 65–6.

⁴⁰ See Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven, 2008), 108–34.

⁴¹ *Lydgate's Troy Book*, ed. Henry Bergen, 4 vols., EETS e.s. 97, 103, 106, 126 (London, 1906, 1908, 1910, 1935 (for 1920)), Prolog. ll. 70–90. For Vegetius, see further Geoffrey Lester, *The Earliest English Translation of Vegetius' De re militari* (Heidelberg, 1988), and Nall, *Reading and War*, 11–47.

⁴² The prose translation of Aegidius into English was commissioned by the military Lancastrian Thomas Berkeley, whose family was Trevisa's patron (see Nicholas Perkins, *Hoccleve's Regiment of Princes, Counsel and Constraint* (Cambridge, 2001), 89–90). For the translator, see further Ralph Hanna, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley and his Patronage', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 878–916 (898–901); for the 15th-century reception of Vegetius, see Nall, *Reading and War*, and Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford, 2007), 80–92.

⁴³ Pynson's edition is *The present book called the gouernance of kyngs and prynces* (London: Richard Pynson, 1511), STC 17017. As well as in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 416, *The Secrees of Olde Philisoffres* is also bound with *The Art of Chivalry* in London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 285; London, British Library, MS Sloane 2027; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS

between Vegetius and advice literature extended to Theban material too—and in its juxtaposition of the reference to Vegetius with the suggestion that Oldcastle should also read ‘The Seege of Troie or Thebes’ (l. 197), Hoccleve’s reading list reflects precisely that association.⁴⁴

Given the company it keeps, Hoccleve’s seemingly derisory reference to ‘the storie of Lancelot de Lake’ also looks less like a gesture of contempt towards Oldcastle than a reassertion of the connections between ‘To Oldcastle’ and advice to princes. Although the Vulgate *Livre de Lancelot del Lac* is neither thematically nor materially associated with the other texts that Hoccleve cites, it does contain a lengthy digression on the nature and duties of a king. At the point where Arthur and his knights are failing to defeat the knight Galehaus, who has wrongfully invaded the lands of ‘la damoisele des marches’, Arthur is visited by a wise man who calls him the worst of sinners. He justifies this not only by reference to Arthur’s adulterous conception, but also by alluding to Arthur’s personal choices: because, as ruler, he has favoured the rich over the poor, the wise man says that to regain God’s favour he will have to make full confession and institute a reign of largesse that will heal divisions within the kingdom and win the hearts of the people.⁴⁵ Although this is just one episode in an extremely substantial work, the anonymous author of the mid-15th-century Scottish *Lancelot de Laik* found it important enough to expand it significantly into a passage that comments obliquely on the rule of James III.⁴⁶ This provides a suggestive analogy for Hoccleve’s reworking of one of the books he recommends for Oldcastle. Several of the points made in the digression align effectively with the arguments Hoccleve levels at Oldcastle—notably that only confession and full repentance can bring about forgiveness of sins, and that only a priest may hear confession. Yet other of the wise man’s charges echo the emphasis on faith (and specifically faithful rule) that is central to the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges, as well as to Eusebius’s *Life of Constantine* (which Hoccleve cites in the gloss to l. 225). In particular, the observation that Arthur has forgotten that it is God who made him king, and that the disloyalty of his people is a sign of God’s displeasure, strongly echo God’s words to Joshua: ‘li regnes ne puet ester maintenues se li communs des gens ne si acorde [...] Ne contre la volente dieu ne puet durer nule desfense’ [kings cannot be upheld if the common people are not agreeable, nor can there be any defence against the will of God].⁴⁷ Hoccleve’s bracketing of ‘the storie of Lancelot de Lake’ with Vegetius and stories of Thebes and Troy is thus not neutral: instead, it is one of a surprisingly large number of mutually reinforcing references that align a poem addressed to the king’s errant subject with the advice to princes tradition, and emphasizes in particular the dangers to good rule that arise when a ruler ignores that advice.

Morgan 775. The *Secrees* is, like Vegetius, one of the sources for Aegidius’s *De regimine principum* (see Lydgate and Burgh’s *Secrees of Old Philisoffres: A Version of the Secreta Secretorum*, ed. Robert Steele, EETS s. 66 (London, 1894), p. xii).

⁴⁴ The way Hoccleve links Thebes and Troy in a single line now inevitably calls Lydgate to mind, and although, according to the conventional dating of the poems, he cannot be instructing Oldcastle to read either Lydgate’s *Troy Book* (completed 1420) or his *Siege of Thebes* (1422), both of which postdate ‘To Oldcastle’, Lydgate’s works are nonetheless sufficiently close in time to provide an indication of the kinds of resonance Trojan and Theban material had in 15th-century England: see further Robert J. Meyer-Lee, ‘The Memorial Form of John Lydgate’s *Troy Book*’, *Exemplaria*, 29 (2017), 280–95; Patterson, ‘Making Identities’; Strohm, *England’s Empty Throne*, 187–91; cf. also Jennifer N. Easler, ‘Futile Counsels: Prophecy and Poetry in John Lydgate’s *Troy Book*’, *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 35 (2021), 95–114; Robert J. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge, 2007), 49–87. Indeed, is just possible that Hoccleve is here alluding to Lydgate. Although both the *Troy Book* and the *Siege of Thebes* were completed after Hoccleve wrote ‘To Oldcastle’, they predate Hoccleve’s copying of MS HM 111, c.1422–6. Ellis has observed with reference to Hoccleve’s holograph manuscripts (including MS HM 111) that ‘We have to allow for the fact that when he made these later copies of his own works he was also acting as editor of them’ (*My Complainte and Other Poems*, 159), and it is possible that the two stanzas of the reading list are an addition made by Hoccleve as ‘editor’ during the re-copying of ‘To Oldcastle’; if they were omitted from the poem, there would be no disruption of its sense. If they are an addition, they may postdate circulation of both the *Troy Book* and the *Siege of Thebes*, making an allusion to those texts a real possibility. This is necessarily speculative, although the phrasing ‘the Seege of Troie and Thebes’ does suggest that a reference to Lydgate may be intended; Lydgate uses the phrase ‘the siege and destruction’ early in both the *Troy Book* (Prol. l. 107) and the *Siege of Thebes* (l. 185).

⁴⁵ See H. Oskar Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of The Arthurian Romances*, vol. 3: *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac*, Part I (Washington, 1910), 212–20.

⁴⁶ See Bertram Vogel, ‘Secular Politics and the Date of *Lancelot of the Laik*’, *Studies in Philology*, 40 (1943), 1–13.

⁴⁷ Sommer, *Lancelot del Lac*, I, 217.

But such a reading is possible only if Hoccleve's sources are either actively consulted or already familiar, not if a reader confines themselves entirely to Hoccleve's own text. To uncover it thus requires a very different kind of reading from both that which the poem explicitly advocates and that which is implied—if not always supported—by the presence of source-glosses. But there is one point where Hoccleve *does* indicate that consultation of a work outside his text may be desirable. This is the citation gloss that appears alongside Hoccleve's instruction that Oldcastle should take the emperor Theodosius as an example of conformity to the teaching of the Church (l. 51). It is unique among the glosses in 'To Oldcastle' in that it does not provide a quotation, but instead instructs the reader to go directly to Cassiodorus's *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita* for information about the humble way in which Theodosius subjugated himself to the Church:

De Theodosij illustris Imperatoris obedienciali humilitate/respice in historia tripartita, libro ix, vbi narrat: 'Cum apud Thesoloniam Ciuitatem,' &c.

[Of Theodosius the illustrious emperor's humility to the rule, see *Historia Tripartita*, Book IX, where it is said: 'After the city of Thessalonica,' &c.]

The reference Hoccleve provides is a detailed one, citing not just the book, but the beginning of the relevant passage, and use of the imperative 'respice' [see] commands its readers to follow it up. This matters, not only because it encourages a different way of reading from the poem's explicit distrust of interpretative reading practices, but also because such a reading confirms that Hoccleve is writing to Henry as much as he is to Oldcastle. Both text and gloss imply that Theodosius's humility came after he had caused offence to God, but they are silent about the nature of that offence. By failing to specify that detail, Hoccleve is able to present Theodosius as if he were a straightforward exemplum of Christian obedience for Oldcastle to take as model. As a ruler, however, Theodosius is a more fitting mirror for Henry, and consultation of Cassiodorus confirms that this is the more significant parallel.

Theodosius's offence was his ordering of the massacre at Thessalonica, when (reputedly) thousands of citizens of the city were slaughtered as revenge for their killing of one of his military commanders; in consequence, Bishop Ambrose banned Theodosius from receiving Communion until he repented.⁴⁸ As Patterson has shown, a 1421 sermon by John Pauntley, preached at a time when Henry had just proposed reform of the Benedictine rule, presents Ambrose's disciplining of Theodosius as an example of the time when churchmen were able to resist tyrannical rulers with impunity.⁴⁹ Although Hoccleve's poem predates this proposed reform, the sermon does indicate that Theodosius was an exemplum available for use, and it is possible that Hoccleve is relying on his association with the Thessalonian massacre to call to mind one of the more notorious episodes in the Battle of Agincourt: the massacre of a group of French prisoners when it looked as if a relieving force might come to the aid of the near-defeated French army.⁵⁰ On the face of it, Hoccleve's allusion to the war with France appears to be a positive one, as he presents Henry's engagement as an instance of public service that contrasts with Oldcastle's self-interested self-concealment. Yet in the *Regiment*—for example in his account of the condemned heretic John Badby's execution—criticism or correction is formulated in the

⁴⁸ See Cassiodorus, *Historia Ecclesiastica Tripartita*, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 71, ed. Walter Jacob (Vindobonae, 1952), IX: 30 (540–46), although the precise phrase quoted by Hoccleve is not found here. An account of the massacre is also included in Eusebius *Werke* 2.2, XI: 18, 1022–4; see further John Curran, 'From Jovian to Theodosius', in Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 13: *Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge, 1998), 78–110 (esp. 107–8); Daniel Washburn, 'The Thessalonian Affair in the Fifth Century Histories', in Emily Albu, Harold Allen Drake and Jacob Latham (eds), *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (Aldershot, 2006), 215–24.

⁴⁹ Patterson, 'Making Identities', 94–5.

⁵⁰ See John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (1976), 107–12; for the account in the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, see Curry, *Battle of Agincourt*, 37.

guise of praise, and it is possible that something equivalent occurs here too, especially in view of Hoccleve's extensive appeal for peace at the end of the *Regiment*.⁵¹ Not only does the massacre itself impute an act of tyranny to Henry, but the precise wording of Hoccleve's reference, in the penultimate stanza of the poem, to Henry's being busy 'beyond the see' (l. 500) may imply that the King is failing to deal effectively with discord and heresy at home while distracted by action abroad.

Thus, if its exhortation to 'read' is followed up, the Cassiodorus gloss implicates Henry as well as Oldcastle in the rise of heresy in the kingdom, complementing the reprimand that is implicit in the Scriptural reading that Hoccleve advocates and in the advice Arthur receives in the Prose Lancelot. Despite its ostensibly Lancastrian project, the hidden advice to princes in 'To Oldcastle' suggests a Hoccleve who is seriously orthodox in his insistence that the king as well as his subjects should uphold the Church, and seriously orthodox too in his emphasis on even a monarch's subjugation to it. Because that position is implicit, Hoccleve's portrait of the state of the nation depends to a surprising extent on active engaged, interpretative reading of both his sources and his own manuscript pages: it is this that reveals an attack on a single heretic to be a far more inclusive criticism of the state of the nation and its monarch's methods of rule—and that fits his readers to identify and be on guard against the causes of division in the state. Thus, Hoccleve's pre-texts and sub-texts together suggest a Hoccleve who (as is evident from his other works too) is profoundly committed to reading and writing as processes of *making meaning*. Despite Hoccleve's praise of the family that quietly accepts the teaching of the Church, he consistently twins from his own advice to take the written word on trust. What is represented on the page is not just a one-way series of exhortations, but a process of argument in which readers too can play an active part; it is by *continuing* to read that the readers of 'To Oldcastle' can share in the community of voices it represents. The exhortation in the Cassiodorus gloss is thus the only point at which what the text *says* about reading corresponds with what it *implies* about it. Elsewhere, both in the glosses and in the reading list, there is significant divergence between the kind of reading encouraged by the appearance of the manuscript page and the way that the poet's voice subsumes the authority of the written word. As Bonnie Mak has argued, 'The page transmits ideas [...] but more significantly influences meaning by its distinctive embodiment of those ideas'—yet in 'To Oldcastle', such embodiment is frequently a form of misdirection.⁵²

'O OLDCASTLE': VOICING THE UNVOICEABLE

There is one textual feature in MS HM 111 that encapsulates such misdirection. This, unexpectedly, is the first catchword in the manuscript: 'O Oldcastle' (fol. 2^v): a textual feature of a very different kind to those we have previously examined. A catchword is a mark provided by a scribe (or, later, by a printer) to assist the binder of the text. Appearing at the foot of the last page in a quire, it consists of the word or phrase with which the first page of the following quire begins: by ensuring that these match, the binder is able to sew the quires in the correct order without having to engage in detail with the text. Thus, although catchwords were generally written (and always printed) at the same time as the text, they are not part of it: whereas glosses, although separate from the text, are intended to be read in conjunction with it, catchwords are purely to do with the construction of the physical book. Typically, they are positioned well below the text and towards the gutter, so that their non-textual status is signalled by the amount of blank space around them.

This particular catchword is different, however. It is unusually conspicuous. Unlike the other catchwords in the poem, it is written in script as large as that of the text, and is centred at the

⁵¹ *Regiment*, ll. 5209–439. For Badby, see Cole, *Literature and Heresy*, 114–30, and Nicholas Perkins, "'Heer Y die in thy presence': The Rewriting of Martyrs in and after Hoccleve", *Review of English Studies*, 69 (288) (2017), 13–31.

⁵² Bonnie Mak, *How the Page Matters* (Toronto, 2011), 4.

foot of the folio; moreover, because the end of the gloss from *De visitatione infirmorum* is copied immediately above it, there is no blank space between those elements of the mise-en-page that are intended to be noticed by its readers, and the catchword, which is aimed at the binder alone.⁵³ In consequence, there is no interpretative distance: it appears as if they are part of a single utterance. Finally, in a neat irony, the manuscript has in fact been misbound at this point, so that the first words on the next folio are *not* 'O Oldcastle' (as they should be), but instead, the apostrophe 'O Womman', with which 'The Complaynte of the Virgin' begins: it is as if Oldcastle's power to disrupt the established order extends even to Hoccleve's text. Together, all of these factors combine to make the catchword look, just for a moment, as if it is part of the text: a sorrowful apostrophe of the stubbornly recalcitrant heretic that echoes Hoccleve's direct speech to him in the text and as serves as an oddly material instance of the way that Hoccleve's insistent address to Oldcastle invokes his presence, not just a purely practical aid to the binder.

Like the poem as a whole, the catchword thus begs a question concerning the relationship between the intentional and the accidental—between the conventions of formulation and mise-en-page, on the one hand, and the effects of those conventions in this specific poem and (especially) in the specific 'utterance' of this poem in MS HM 111, on the other. Although it is a sign of the text's construction, not of its meaning, here it looks just for an instant as if it *does mean*: as if it is not only written in Hoccleve's *hand*, but also in Hoccleve's *voice*. Indeed, it may echo the playfulness that is apparent in Hoccleve's treatment of the 'Lege Nemo' and 'Fides non habet meritum' glosses. Even if this effect is purely accidental, for the brief moment that it is mistaken for apostrophe, the catchword draws Hoccleve's direct address to Oldcastle out of the text into the margins. It seems to create a fleeting, intimate contact with the writer who, outside the formal boundaries of the text, and outside its formal attempt at persuasion, records a 'spontaneous' reaction to Oldcastle's intransigence for us to overhear. And although the catchword is unique to this particular manuscript, it reveals how the effect of such incidental material features of the text may translate to its *replicable* aspects as well, including the glosses.⁵⁴ Prompting a heightened awareness of the reading process, in particular of the mutual give-and-take between formal aspects of the text and poetic voice, it reflects in miniature the experience of reading 'To Oldcastle' as a whole, as a poem in which every feature of the text begs the question: 'Why stant this word heere?'

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⁵³ For the signifying capacities of white space, see Johanna Drucker, 'Graphical Readings and Visual Aesthetics of Textuality', *TEXT*, 16 (2006), 267–76.

⁵⁴ Cf. Drimmer, 'Manuscript as Ambigraphic Medium'.