Creative Reading:
Using Books in the Vernacular Context of Early Anglo-Norman England

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DPhil in English (to 1550)
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'humans have evolved to wonder, and understanding is a joy.'

For Mum
(1957-2018)

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Contents

List of Figures *i*
Abstract *ii*
Acknowledgments *iv*
Transcription Conventions *vii*
List of Abbreviations *viii*

Introduction: Reading Early Middle English 1

PART I: COPYING

Chapter 1: Scribal Readers 39

PART II: DESIGNING

Introduction 83

Chapter 2: Naming Texts: Here Begins a Chapter on Titles 92

Chapter 3: Dividing the Text 125

PART III: CONSUMING

Introduction 166

Chapter 4: Mark-Making in the Margins 170

Chapter 5: Reading Creatively 208

Conclusion: Creative Reading in Practice 255

Bibliography *270*

List of Figures

1.	Table 1: A Quantification of the Instances of Titling Across the Multilingual Manuscript Corpus	95
2.	Fig.1: BodL, MS Digby 4, f. 110v, the word 'Amen' at the end of *Poema Morale*	121
3.	Table 2: Words that take minor initials in the manuscript of Havelok in order of frequency	153
4.	Fig. 2: BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 24r, a scratched cross.	174
5.	Fig. 3: BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 17v, a cross with potentially datable features.	176
6.	Fig. 4: BodL, MS Hatton 28, f. 9v, manicule attached to a feathered body.	189
7.	Fig. 5: BodL, MS Douce 137, f. 60r, three face-shaped brackets.	194
8.	Fig. 6: BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 81r, nota design.	203
9.	Fig. 7: Varied designs of nota mark in BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 161v; BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 35r; BodL, MS Bodley 132, f. 226r.	204
10.	Fig. 8: BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 35r, fleuron	210
11.	Fig. 9: BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 107r, English verses added on empty ruling.	225
12.	Fig. 10: A quire diagram demonstrating the codicology of the first quire of BodL, MS Rawlinson G 22, where the English lyric 'Mirie it is…' falls on the verso of f. 1, and the eleventh-century Psalter begins imperfectly on f. 2.	233
13.	Fig. 11: BodL, MS Bodley 132, f. 228r, a reader's response to a book curse.	238
14.	Fig. 12: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 59, f. 66r, English verses written over a crayon draft.	249

Abstract

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This thesis responds to a lack of information regarding reading practice in literature in early Middle English. Here, reading is often used as a metaphorical or symbolic act—representing piety, devotional practice, or intellectualism—but how reading took place, how users engaged with books, is rarely figured. Other seams of evidence are therefore needed to access the reading process. The corpus of manuscripts on which I focus consists of thirty-three multilingual books containing English, Latin, and French produced in England between 1066 and c. 1300. Using this corpus, and inspired by the work of Leah Price, Juliet Fleming, Kathryn Rudy, and others, I seek to test the boundaries of what has previously been considered permissible evidence for reading, thereby adjusting and expanding current conceptions of the range of activities and practices high medieval book use entailed.

The thesis begins with a case study of some important readers: scribes. In chapter one, using the seven surviving copies of *Poema Morale* as a corpus I read against current critical considerations of *variance* in manuscript transmission as a sign of 'scribal authorship' in order

to establish practices of scribal reading. Chapters two and three go on to demonstrate how these 'scribal readers' prefigured a work's use as they copied, particularly when they chose to introduce or exclude textual apparatus in the form of titles, capitals, or paraph marks. The final part of the thesis examines the retrospective evidence of use left by readers who marked and altered their books to determine the extent to which readers conformed to the practices imagined by manuscript producers.

As a whole, then, the thesis showcases the variegated nature of reading practice—from critical analysis to nugatory scanning—and the alternative uses for books in English in this period. It shows that vernacular reading was a work of 'embodied intellectual labour' that benefitted from the material form of the book, and that engagement and manipulation of this form was not just tolerated, but expected, and perhaps actively encouraged.

Acknowledgements

Life does not end when the thesis begins: during the period in which this thesis was written my mother was diagnosed with cancer. She died in March 2018. I am grateful to have grown up with such a witty, self-effacing, and resliant role model, who supported in me in all things, and whose *grumpy love* will live in me always. I am thankful, also, for my father and my sister, who have supported my choices, celebrated my successes, and always accepted me. All of us are grateful to the NHS, whose tireless work kept mum adventuring for longer than we could have imagined and made her death more peaceful than we could have hoped.

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I have presented material related to this thesis to audiences at a number of conferences. The *Making Early Middle English* conference at the University of Victoria, BC in September 2016,

my travel to which was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, was particularly influential. I would also like to thank my audiences at the Biannual Conference of the New Chaucer Society 2016, and the Biennial Conference of the Early Book Society in 2017, for their thoughtful feedback on my papers. In particular, I am grateful to A. C. Spearing and Alexandra Reider, who read and commented on my work, as well as to Emma Campbell, Linne Mooney, Elizaveta Strakov, and Sarah Beachle who followed up on my ideas with valuable references. My attendance at these and other conferences would not have been possible without generous grants from the New Chaucer Society, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Royal Historical Society, and the Trans* Travel Fund awarded by the Society for Medieval Feminist Scholarship.

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Finally, my partner has been with me through all of it, read everything, and offered patience, kindness, and support throughout. I look forward to a time in the near future when we once again share our home and not just our word documents.

Transcription Conventions

Transcriptions from manuscripts are semi-diplomatic and follow the original use of **I** and **j**, **u** and **v**, tironian 'et' (⁊), and their word-division, punctuation, and capitalization. Abbreviations are silently expanded and marked with italics. Bold type is used when graphs are discussed as visual phenomena. Translations are provided for all quotes of notable length.

Symbol	**Represents**
(ra)	Round brackets indicate cancelled, illegible, or missed out letters, and any legible letters or overwriting is placed within the round brackets.
…	Ellipses indicate my selective omission of part of the transcription (also used where I omit part of a quotation from a secondary source).
/	Indicates a line break.
[ ]	Square brackets indicate edits made to quotes or transcriptions for the purposes of sense, they are also used to provide translations.

Abbreviations

Common abbreviations (for example, s. for shillings, or repr. for reprint) are not listed here and are abbreviated silently throughout this thesis. Where locations are already indicated by the name of a library, collection, or press (for example, Durham Cathedral, Maidstone Museum, and Cambridge University Press) locations are not repeated. Full information about each item can be found in the Bibliography.

Short Form	**Title, or library location**
AND	W. Rothwell, D. A. Trotter et al., *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (Universities of Aberystwyth and Swansea, 2017) <http://www.anglo-norman.net/>
ANL	Ruth Dean and Maureen Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: ANTS, 1999)
ANTS	Anglo-Norman Text Society
BL	London, British Library
BodL	Oxford, Bodleian Library
CBMLC	Richard Sharpe and James Willoughby, eds., *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* (University of Oxford, 2015) <http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CLAMS	King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies
CUL	Cambridge, Cambridge University Library

CUP	Cambridge University Press
DIMEV	Linne Mooney, Daniel W. Mosser, Elizabeth Solopova, Deborah Thorpe and David Hill Radcliffe, eds., *The Digital Index of Medieval English Verse*, based on the *Index of Middle English Verse* (1943) and its *Supplement* (1965) (University of York) <http://www.dimev.net>
DMLBS	R. E. Latham et al., eds., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Turnhout: Brepol*i*s, 2015) <http://www.dmlbs.ox.ac.uk>
DOE	Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey *et al*., eds., *Dictionary of Old English: A to H* online, (Toronto, ON: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016) <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca>
DOECorpus	Antonette dePaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang, eds., *DOE, Corpus*, (Toronto, ON: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2009) <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca>
ESawyer	Peter Sawyer, *The Electronic Sawyer*, ed. Simon Keynes *et al.* (London: King's College London, 2017) <http://www.esawyer.org.uk/>
GCC	Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College
HLQ	*Huntington Library Quarterly*
IPMEP	Robert E. Lewis, N. F. Blake and A. S. G. Edwards, eds., *Index of Printed Middle English Prose* (New York: Garland, 1985)
IMEP	*Index of Middle English Prose*, 23 v. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985-2017)
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
JMEMS	*Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*
LAEMECat	Margaret Laing, ed., *Catalogue of Sources for a Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993)
LALME	Michael Benskin, Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, *et al*., *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, 4 v. (Aberdeen UP, 1986)
LPL	London, Lambeth Palace Library
MAA	Medieval Academy of America
MED	Robert E. Lewis, gen. ed., *Middle English Dictionary* (University of Michigan, 2013) <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>
MMBL	N. R. Ker and A. J. Piper, eds., *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 v. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-2002)

Muzerelle, *Vocabulaire Codicologique*	Denis Muzerelle, *Vocabulaire Codicologique* (Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, 2002-2003) <http://codicologia.irht.cnrs.fr>
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary* (OUP, 2017) <http://www.oed.com>
OUP	Oxford University Press
PIMS	Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies
Riverside Chaucer	Larry D. Benson, gen. ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, third edition (OUP, 2008)
SEL	*South English Legendary*
SumCat	Richard W. Hunt, Falconer Madden and P. D. Record, eds., *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, 7 v. (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1895-1953)
SJC	Cambridge, St John's College
TCC	Cambridge, Trinity College
TEAMS	The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages, Middle English Texts Series
UP	University Press

INTRODUCTION

Reading Early Middle English

And sauteres deden he manie reden,
Þat God self shulde his soule leden
Into heuene bigorn his sone,
And þer wituten hende wone.[1]

In the late thirteenth-century romance of *Havelok*, reading is represented as a direct interaction with God. Here, Havelok's reading will result in an eventual meeting between him and the Almighty.[2] This instrumentalism is identified as the explicit goal of Havelok's reading by the conjunction 'þat': he reads *so that* he will go to heaven.[3] Indeed, the implication is that the more ('manie') he reads the surer he is of success. However, while early Middle English works often comment on the purpose of reading, as here, descriptions of the process of reading are rare. Whereas later works sometimes provide detailed accounts of the reading practices their

[1] G. V. Smithers, ed., *Havelok* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 8-9, ll. 244-7.

[2] See Martha Driver's figuration of later images of religious readers for whom 'reading…can lead the pious to a direct and personal encounter with the Divine': Martha Driver, 'Reading Images of Reading', *Ricardian*, 13 (2003), 190 [186-203].

[3] See *MED*, 'that (conj.)', senses 1, and 2.

characters undertake,[4] reading in post-Conquest works is usually metaphorical or symbolic, functioning as a stand-in for other activities or ideas.[5] Most commonly, as in *Havelok*, it is figured as a pious act that facilitates direct interaction or conversation with the divine. Thus, an English homily for Quadragesima Sunday states:

> swa hwá swá wule symle mid God*e* béon, he sceal hine ilomlice biddan ⁊ redan. Forþam þonne we us biddæþ, þon*n*e spece we wið Gode; ant þonne we redæþ, þonne specð God to ús
>
> [whosoever will ever be with God, must constantly pray to him and (also) read. Because when we pray, we speak with God; and when we read, God speaks to us.][6]

In this case reading Scripture substitutes for the speech act that begins a conversation. A similar metonymy is found in the early thirteenth-century dialogue *The Debate between the Body and the Soul*: 'Ðanne we on boke radeð, ðanne spekeð godd wið us'.[7] The devotee is, in fact, not *reading* but *conversing*, the book is simply a vehicle for the conversation. In these examples, as

[4] See, for instance, Chaucer's description of Criseyde reading with her ladies: *Troilus and Criseyde,* in *Riverside Chaucer*, 490, Book II, ll. 93-103. Or the reading of the narrator persona of *The Book of the Duchess* as he sits in bed unable to sleep: *Riverside Chaucer*, 331-4, ll. 44-290.

[5] For a similarly symbolic use of reading and the book in Victorian literature see the account of Leah Price, *How to Do Things with Books in Victorian Britain* (Princeton UP, 2012), especially 23-31.

[6] A. O. Belfour, ed., *Twelfth Century Homilies in Bodley 343*, EETS, OS 137 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1909), 48, ll. 10-12.

[7] Ferdinand Holthausen, ed., *Vices and Virtues, Being a Soul's Confession of its Sins, with Reason's Description of the Virtues: a Middle-English Dialogue of about 1200 A.D.*, EETS, OS 89 (London: Trübner, 1888), 141, ll. 19-20. In fact, this passage is simply a reversal of the example above, finishing, 'ðanne we ure bede seggeð, þanne speke [we] wið gode [then when we say our prayers, then [we] speak with God]' (ll. 20-1).

in *Havelok*, reading is indicative of all-round piety, and thus suitability for heaven.[8] Here, as in most textual figurations of reading in English writings of this period, reading is a symbolic act, metonymic of other traits or actions.

The practice of reading itself, then, is rarely the subject of literal explanation, fictive or otherwise. This thesis will seek to supplement the paucity of contemporary comment on the practices of reading through analysis of the material evidence. In so doing it will test the extent to which literary descriptions of reading in English can be aligned with historical practices. It will ask: can the few descriptions of idealised reading be relied upon to reflect the realities of reading practice? Are they accurate?

The figuration of reading as a conversation or interchange with God is reformulated in the conflation of reading and knowledge. As Orm explains: 'Acc þu shallt findenn þatt min word, / Eȝȝwhær þær itt iss eked, / Maȝȝ hellpenn þa þatt redenn itt / To sen ⁊ tunnderrstanndenn / All þess te better [Ah, you shall find that my word / Anywhere that it is advanced / May help those that read it / To see and to understand / All this the better.]'[9] In this case, reading Orm's work, it is promised, will lead to comprehension of the biblical exegesis

[8] Especially common is the pairing of reading and singing to stand in for the range of devotional activities occurring in ecclesiastical institutions: see Arthur S. Napier, ed., *Iacob and Iosep; a Middle English Poem of the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 8, l. 184; Carl Hortsmann, ed., *Altenglische Legenden* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1875), 513, l. 59; Susanna Fein, ed., 'The Death of Edward I', *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, TEAMS, v. 2 (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2014), 212, l. 54. A striking contrast to this is found in Richard Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century: from the Unique MS. B.14.52. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, v. 2, EETS, OS 54 (London: Trübner, 1873), 163—'þe men tilien in chireche. on salmes. and on songes. and on redinges and lorspelles. and on holde bedes [the men strive in Church, on psalms, and on songs, and on readings, and gospels, and on faithful prayers]'—which illustrates the wide range of possible activities. The 'Winteney Version' of the Benedictine Rule in BL, MS Cotton Claudius D.iii, ff. 52r-140r, gives detailed instructions for when and where both private and public reading was to take place within the life of the institution: see, for example, Arnold Schröer, ed., *Die Winteney-Version der Regula S. Benedicti* (1888, reprinted Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1978), 45, ll. 15-23; and 83, ll. 11-27.

[9] Robert Meadows White, ed., *Ormulum*, v. 1 (OUP, 1852), ll. 45-9.

within. In many vernacular texts, though, reading not only results in, but is also symbolic of, knowledge. The apparently idiomatic expression 'for swa we redeð [for so we read]', found in *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, suggests that encountering something set down in writing constitutes proof of its veracity.[10] Reading alone is the measure of the statement's truth. In *The Owl and the Nightingale* proverbs attributed to Alfred are regarded as fact, not only because of the authority of their source, but also because they may be read 'ine boke':

> Vor hit is soþ—Alured hit seide
> & me hit mai ine boke rede
>
> [For it is true, Alfred said it
> and I may read it in a book.][11]

This is despite the fact the phrases may not actually be drawn from Alfred.[12] The narrator's knowledge is also confirmed by reading in an English bestiary: 'ich it o boke rede [I read it in a

[10] In this case, the phrase '*Oratio lenit, lacrima cogit; hec ungit, illa pungit* [[a] prayer sooths, [a] tear compels; the former soothes, the latter stings]': Bella Millett, ed., with a glossary by Richard Dance, *Ancrene Wisse*, EETS, OS 325, v. 1 (OUP, 2005), 93, ll. 935-6.

[11] Neil Cartlidge, ed. and trans., *The Owl and the Nightingale* (University of Exeter Press, 2001), 10, ll. 349-50. In this case, the proverb attributed to Alfred reads, 'Eurich þing mai losen his godhead / Mid unmeþe & mid ouerdede; / Mid este þu þe miȝt ouerquatie / & ouerfulle makeþ wlatie; / An euerich mureȝþe mai agon, ȝif me hit halt eure forþ in on [Every thing may lose its godliness / With lack of moderation and with over-doing. / You can glut yourself with bounty, / And overfilling makes you sick, / And every merriment may go, if it limps ever forward—except one]' (ll. 351-6).

[12] E. G. Stanley, ed., 'Introduction', *The Owl and the Nightingale* (Manchester UP, 1972), 34; Cartlidge, 'Introduction', *Owl and the Nightingale*, XXXIX; Robert A. Rouse, 'Remembering Alfred in the Twelfth Century', *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England in the Middle English Romance* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 43-4 [11-51] points out that the eleven proverbs attributed to Alfred in the text maybe drawn from a no longer extant collection of Alfredian materials, but since none of these aphorisms appear in the extant sources it seems more likely that the attribution was chosen 'in an attempt to give them authority' (44). For a more detailed analysis of the role of proverbial material in *The Owl and the Nightingale* see, especially, Elizabeth Gee, 'The Function of Proverbial Material in *The Owl and the Nightingale*', *Parergon*, 24 (1979), 3-8.

book.]'[13] As well as its relation to unquestionable divine knowledge, the conflation of reading with verifiable truth may reflect the association of books more generally with places of learning—the Church, the school, the university. Thus, in a later *South English Legendary* copy of the *Life of St Edmund of Canterbury* reading is regularly invoked as a metaphor for the saint's activities while studying in Oxford.[14]

Even when reading does refer to the construal and comprehension of texts this is often secondary to the other signals it sends about the reader and their response to the work. Most accounts of reading practice "in action"—real or fictionalised—come in the form of idealised instructions for how particular works should be encountered. Before evensong, the English

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[13] Hall, ed., 'The Bestiary', *Selections from Early Middle English*, 177, l. 38. For some further examples of the confirmation of information as fact due to its readability see, Richard Morris, ed., 'The Passion of Our Lord', *An Old English Miscellany Containing a Bestiary, Kentish Sermons, Proverbs of Alfred, Religious Poems of the Thirteenth Century*, EETS, OS 49 (London: Trübner, 1872), 41, l. 131; Thomas Hearne, ed., *Peter Langtoft's Chronicle (as illustrated and improv'd by Robert of Brunne) from the Death of Cadwalader to the End of K. Edward the First's Reign* (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1725), 312; William Aldis Wright, ed., *The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, v. 1 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), 47, l. 646; Carl Horstmann, ed., *The Early South-English Legendary or Lives of Saints*, v. 1, EETS, OS 87 (London: Trübner, 1887), 352, l. 258. Related is the oral-formulaic device by which the narrator 'reads' his book aloud, which both assures the veracity of the information (because it comes from a written source), and implies a—potentially fictive—listening audience: for example, *Langtoft's Chronicle*, 67 ('of wham I salle rede'), 258 ('as I salle rede'), and 315 ('I turne ageyn to rede').

[14] Charlotte D'Evelyn, Anna J. Mill, eds., *The South English Legendary*, EETS, OS 236, v. 2 (London: OUP, 1956), 499, ll. 222-5: 'So wel lurnede þis holi man: & such grace hadde / Þat he bigan at Oxenford: & of art þer radde / Of art he radde six ȝer [So learned was this holy man, and such grace he had, / That he began at Oxford, and there he read art. / He read art for six years…]' This metaphor perpetuates in modern academia in the sense of 'reading for a degree': see *OED*, 'read, *v.*', senses 8. a, and b. See, also, Richard Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises (Sawles Warde, and Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd: Ureisuns of Ure Louerd and of Ure Lefdi, &c.) of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, EETS, OS 29 (London: Trübner, 1868), 15; G. L. Brook, R. F. Leslie, eds., *Laȝamon: Brut*, v. 1, EETS, OS 250 (London: OUP, 1963), 2, l. 31. Just as reading may be conflated with the act of learning, it may also, as in the Lambeth Homilies (Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises*, 134), be treated as a synonym for teaching: 'radeð and techeð godes laȝe in to þes monnes heorte [read and teach God law into these mens hearts.]' Robert Mannyng, *Robert of Brunne's 'Handlyng synne,' A.D. 1303; with those Parts of the Anglo-French Treatise on which it was Founded, William of Wadington's 'Manuel des Pechiez'*, ed. Frederick James Furnivall, v. 1, EETS, OS 119 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1901), 6, ll. 125-8 counteracts this suggestion with the reminder: 'Many þynges þer un mays þou here; / Wyþ ofte redyng mayst þou lere [Many things therein you may hear, / With regular reading you may learn.]'

'Winteney Version' of the Benedictine Rule directs, a nun should 'sittan hiȝ on anre stowe, ⁊ ræde an þa raca odðe lif þære heahfadera…⁊ feower leafum odðe fifum odðe swa micel, swa þæs dæȝes lyhtinȝ ȝeþfiȝe, of þære bec to redenne [sit [herself] in a place, and there read the books on the life of the Lord…and read four or five leaves, or as many as the day's light allows, of the book.]'[15] But, far more texts simply instruct their users *to* read without further comment. A late-twelfth-century homily commands: '⁊ þe þe réden cunne, þe ræde; þe þe nán ne cunne he lýste þam redendan [And he who can read should read; and he who cannot should listen to him who reads.]'[16] In this case, the instruction assumes an audience—at least in part—already familiar with the process and methods of reading and the benefits it may afford them: perhaps not unjustly for a written text. Here, then, reading is a valuable skill but one that needs no explanation; it is the underlying condition, the baseline from which other advantages can develop, a means to a more important end.

The multiple significances given to the act of reading in early Middle English texts is etymologically justified. The verb *to read*, from the Old English *ræden*, derives from the Indo-European root *rē-dh-*, *rō-dh-*, *rə-dh-*, which is shares with Germanic cognates such as the Common German **râ̂dan*, Old High German *rātan*, and Old Frisian *rêda*: "to advise or counsel", "to have control over something", "to explain".[17] Other cognates include several words that explicitly designate a number of forms of speech, for instance the Welsh *adrawd* ("to

[15] *Winteney-Version*, 89, ll. 6-17. The passage also instructs which books are considered suitable reading for this time—not the Book of Moses or the Books of Kings, which are 'unandȝytfulle [imperceptive/ lacking in layers of meaning]' (See *DOE*, 'andgyt-full', sense 1)—and variant orders of activities for different times of year.

[16] Belfour, ed., *Twelfth Century Homilies*, 56, ll. 11-12.

[17] See *OED*, 'read v.', etymology.

tell or narrate") and *amrawdd* ("conversation, discourse".)[18] In modern English these significations have been extended and narrowed to indicate primarily the interpretation of the written word. However, the *MED* lists fourteen possible definitions for the verb *rēden*, including all those designated by the cognates above, as well as 'to decree', 'to guide…to a place', and 'to prepare' or 'get ready'.[19] In this case "reading" in early Middle English may encompass a broad range of processes and actions, some only loosely related to the interpretation of writing. So, not only may "reading" in vernacular works from this period act as a metonym for any interaction that involves the transfer of knowledge—from the profane to the divine, on and off the page—on some occasions it may literally dispense with the book altogether. Reading, as evidenced by early Middle English textual culture, then, suggests a range of interactions that stretches far beyond the confines of the written word upon the page.[20] The question is, then: is this potential for multiplicity in reading reflected in the ways that medieval people encountered texts in the vernacular?

My answer to this is to remember the axiom that readers, being human, are therefore fallible and unpredictable.[21] Readers are liable to create their own paths through their texts, implementing a variety of reading practices as they do so. Despite occasional instructive passages, comment on "reading" in early Middle English is often a substitute for, or implies, comment on a number of other activities or qualities: education, piety, worldliness. Indeed, we

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[18] See, Nicholas Howe, 'The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Ethnography of Reading*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 58-79, reprinted in *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2002), 5 [1-22].

[19] *MED*, 'reden (v.(1))', senses 11, 12, and 14.

[20] For more on this, with a focus on Old English, see Howe, 'Cultural Construction of Reading', 4-9.

[21] Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430-1530* (OUP, 2007), 17-22, concludes that 'The readers of humanist literature were unpredictable' (21), while Daniel Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers in Fifteenth-Century Poetic Manuscripts', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73:3 (2010), especially 434-7, and 452 [433-52], questions the extent to which marginal instructions were obeyed by following readers.

might consider the relevance of the formulation "nonreading", in the sense Leah Price observes in Victorian literature, where 'writers [reduce] the term "reading" to a metaphor for activities that involve the interpretation of something other than books'.[22] Although, in the medieval case reading acts as a front for a range of activities more virtuous than those Price describes, many of these stretch the boundaries of activities we might formally identify as reading. In fact, these descriptions may gesture towards a variety of wider uses that readers had for their books. It is the aim of this thesis, then, to uncover the realities of post-conquest reading practices, and demonstrate how these practices interact with a range of wider uses to which people put their books in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Medieval Reading in Practice

In order to verify what readers *were* doing with books, scholarship has looked to palaeographers and book historians to interpret the manuscript evidence. Conceptions of the range and spread of literacy in England in the post-conquest period have changed dramatically in recent decades, in particular since the publication of Michael Clanchy's work on the subject in 1979.[23] Although most of the population would not have been trained to write, read, and

[22] Price, *How to…*, 8.

[23] Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (London: Edward-Arnold, 1979). Numerous useful investigations have followed, key to which are: Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton UP, 1983); Charles F. Briggs, 'Literacy, Reading, and Writing in the Medieval West', *Journal of Medieval History*, 26:4 (2000), 397-420; Marco Mostert ed., *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999); David Olson and Nancy Torrance, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Literacy* (CUP, 2009); Paul Strohm, 'Writing and Reading', *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox and W. M. Ormrod (CUP, 2006), 454-72; and Elaine Treharne, 'Textual Communities (vernacular)', and Teresa Webber, 'Textual Communities (Latin)', *A Social History of England, 900-1200*, ed. Julia Crick and Elisabeth van Houts (CUP, 2011), 341-51, and 330-40.

speak Latin, as denoted by the term *litteratus*, current scholarship is demonstrating how the pervasiveness of the written word throughout society from the Anglo-Saxon period onward resulted in a multiplicity of alternative "literacies".[24] Indeed, it is increasingly likely that by the twelfth century the majority of the population employed, or saw others employ, some variety of literacy in their daily lives. Even in secular life the written word was encountered on a regular basis, and though a layman might not have been able to make his way through a Latin treatise, his existence became governed by written legislation, bills of account, and certificates of good character.[25] These pieces of writing—as well as those found decorating the insides of

[24] Briggs, 'Literacy, Reading, and Writing', 401-5. See, also, Clanchy's revised third edition of *From Memory to Written Record* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 328-35, which will be cited from here on. For Anglo-Saxon examples see C. P. Wormald, 'The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and its Neighbours', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 27 (1977), 95-114; M. B. Parkes, 'Ræden, Areccan Smeagan: How the Anglo-Saxons Read', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1997), 1-22; M. B. Parkes, 'Reading, Copying and Interpreting the Text in the Early Middle Ages', *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 90-102; Susan Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (CUP, 1990), 36-62; Simon Keynes, 'Royal Government and the written word in late Anglo-Saxon England', *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (CUP, 1990), 226-57; and Michael Lapidge, 'The Study of Latin Texts in late Anglo-Saxon England [I]: The Evidence of Latin Glosses', *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Nicholas Brooks (Leicester UP, 1982), 99-140. For later work see Treharne, 'Textual communities', 341-51; Franz Bäuml, 'Varieties and consequences of medieval literacy and illiteracy', *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 239-65; M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', *Literature and Western Civilization: The Medieval World*, ed. D. Daiches and A. K. Thorlby (London: Aldus Books, 1973), 555-76, reprinted in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation, and the Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 275-98; R. H. Britnell, *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1330* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997); Inger Larsson, *Pragmatic Literacy and the Medieval Use of the Vernacular: the Swedish Example* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); Franz J. Arlinghaus, Marcus Ostermann, Oliver Plessow, and Gudrun Tscherpel eds., *Transforming the Medieval World*: *Uses of Pragmatic Literacy in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

[25] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 48-53; Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society', 46-51, 54-6; and Keynes, 'Royal Government', 228-9 observe the post-Conquest growth in the use of writing in governance and public office, but also the continuity and development from Anglo-Saxon practice this growth represents.

churches, devotional objects and personal possessions, and perhaps also private houses[26]—might not have been conventionally legible to all who observed them, but would have been the subject of pragmatic and communal literacies, accessible through the familiarity of their content and format,[27] or through communal interpretation aided by literate peers.[28] Thus, reading and writing became familiar—if mistrusted—processes, in which the majority of people shared some level of participation, either actively or passively.[29]

However, the widening definitions of literacy in the post-Conquest period have not been followed by parallel changes in the study of reading. While Malcolm Parkes and Paul Saenger have offered influential models of early and late medieval reading, and reading in the thirteenth century in scholastic Latin, high medieval English manuscripts remain relatively

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[26] Most surviving examples of these kinds of inscriptions date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but there is no reason to think that writing was not a feature of twelfth- and thirteenth-century interiors. Some thirteenth-century examples do survive, see Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (OUP, 2009), 28-32, 337-44; R. M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London: Methuen, 1952), 176-7. Although Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 338-41 identifies a possible 'retreat from textuality' in the century immediately after the Norman Conquest (337) this may have been supplemented by painted inscriptions. Elisabeth Okasha, 'Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England: the Evidence from Inscriptions', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 8 (1995), 69-74 makes a similar argument for communal literacy from the evidence of inscriptions before this period. Some examples of inscribed objects and locations will be featured in an upcoming exhibition at the Bodleian's Weston Library: see Daniel Wakelin, *Designing English: Early Literature on the Page* (Oxford: BodL, 2017), chapter 6.

[27] Kathryn A. Lowe, 'Reading the Unreadable: Lay Literacy and Negotiation of Text in Anglo-Saxon England', *Writing in Context: Insular Manuscript Culture 500-1200*, ed. Erik Kwakkel (Leiden UP, 2013), 176-8 [151-83]; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 350.

[28] Michael Camille, 'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implication of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History*, 8:1 (1985), 33 [26-49]; and in relation to Anglo-Saxon inscriptions Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'First-Person Inscriptions and Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 9 (1996), 104, 109 [103-10]; Okasha, 'Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England', 71. Indeed, 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 suggests that fifteenth-century readers performed a similar form of communal reading when literate clerks read and glossed the trilingual works of Gower aloud for an audience of varying ability. See also Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (CUP, 1996).

[29] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 295.

understudied.[30] Rather, where post-Conquest reading is considered, English is rarely the focus of attention, with studies concentrating more on the reading of Latin or Anglo-Norman.[31] Exceptional is the study of the post-Conquest reading of Old English texts, which has been covered in some detail by scholars interested in the on-going production and circulation of these works.[32] These studies indicate that monastic cathedrals maintained a 'sustained and

[30] Parkes, 'Ræden, Areccan Smeagan', 1-22; Parkes, 'Reading, Copying and Interpreting', 90-102; Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford UP, 1997); Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Denise Despres, *Iconography and the Professional Reader* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo, eds., *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower* (Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, 2001); Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 'Professional Readers at Work: Annotators, Editors and Correctors in Middle English Literary Texts', *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary & Visual Approaches,* ed. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Maidie Hilmo, and Linda Olson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2012), 207-44; Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (CUP, 1990). This is not to undermine the significant efforts of scholars in the cataloguing of high medieval vernacular manuscripts in the second half of the twentieth century, which ensured that these items are now largely recorded: N. R. Ker, *English Manuscripts in the Century After the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), xv-xix; Richard Gameson, *The Manuscripts of Early Norman England (c. 1066-1130)* (OUP, 1999); Margaret Laing, *Catalogue of Sources for a Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993); Ruth Dean and Maureen Boulton, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: ANTS, 1999).

[31] Important for high medieval studies of reading are Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (CUP, 1996); and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, 1150-1300: Virginity and its Authorizations* (OUP, 2001), works that focus heavily on reading in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Shorter engagements with high medieval material are to be found, for instance, in D. H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800-1300* (CUP, 1994), 270-9; or Coleman, *Public Reading*, 23-4.

[32] For details of the twenty-seven manuscripts containing predominantly Old English and copied close to or after 1100 see Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne, 'Introduction', *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Mary Swan (CUP, 2000), 1-2 [1-10]; Mary Swan, 'Preaching Past the Conquest: Lambeth Palace 487 and Cotton Vespasian A.XXII', *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. Aaron J. Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 403-5 [403-23]; Ker, *Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon*, xviii-xix; and Elaine Treharne, *Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020-1220* (OUP, 2012), especially 93-121.

profound interest in English works,'[33] which were the subject of continued use if not in preaching directly to a lay audience—though some probably were used this way[34]—then as prompts or sources for the composition of sermons.[35] However, Old English also found other 'more private' applications among a 'broader reading base', including enclosed readers who were not well-versed in Latin, priests in pastoral roles, and other users interested in self-reflexive and 'self-motivated' moral instruction[36]—perhaps, as Mary Swan has suggested, including 'private female user[s]', such as 'secular vowess[es]'.[37] The diversity in critical opinion over potential audiences for Old English material is suggestive of the wide range of reading practices that may have been at work during this period.[38]

Aside from the renewed interest in Old English in recent decades, most work that does prioritise post-Conquest reading practice is restricted to studies of Latin. For instance, Christopher Cannon's recent investigation into the impact that the return of English to grammatical education had on vernacular poetry in the fourteenth century fails to mention the vast quantity of pre-existing vernacular material[39]—despite his authoritative treatment of these

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[33] Particularly the houses associated with Worcester, Rochester, and perhaps also Canterbury: Aiden Conti, 'The Circulation of the Old English Homily in the Twelfth Century: New Evidence from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 343', *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. Aaron J. Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 367-70 [365-402]; Elaine Treharne, 'The Form and Function of the Twelfth-Century Old English "Dicts of Cato"', *JEGP*, 102:4 (2003), 481-2 [465-85]; Mary Swan, 'Imagining a Readership for Post-Conquest Old English Manuscripts', *Imagining the Book*, ed. S. Kelly and J. J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 146 [145-57].

[34] Susan Irvine, 'The Compilation and Use of Manuscripts Containing Old English in the Twelfth Century', *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Mary Swan (CUP, 2000), 59-61 [41-61].

[35] Conti, 'Circulation of the Old English', 397-8; Swan, 'Preaching Past the Conquest', 423.

[36] Treharne, 'Form and Function', 484-5, 480-1, 478.

[37] Swan, 'Imagining a Readership', 157.

[38] Conti, 'Circulation of the Old English', 398.

[39] Christopher Cannon, *From Literacy to Literature: England, 1300-1400* (OUP, 2016), 4.

texts in other places.[40] To this end, scholarship is beginning to build a good picture of which Latin works were read in both religious institutions and as part of the school and University curriculum.[41] For instance, the catalogues belonging to religious houses have been used to ascertain a corpus of standard reading materials representative of monastic houses.[42] But catalogues like this are rare survivals and represent an elite audience of readers: those provided for by important religious institutions and, by the end of the thirteenth century, the scholars of universities.[43] Equally exceptional are the identifiable readers whose books can be recognised from booklists or ownership marks: people like Robert Grosseteste, St Margaret of

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[40] Crucially, Christopher Cannon, *The Grounds of English Literature* (OUP, 2004).

[41] See, for example, Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons: Studies in the* Manipulus Florum *of Thomas of Ireland* (Toronto, ON: PIMS, 1979); Teresa Webber, 'Reading in the Refectory: Monastic Practice in England, c. 1000-c. 1300', *The John Coffin Memorial Palaeography Lecture* (School of Advanced Study, University of London, 18 February 2010), revised transcript (2013); Webber, 'Textual communities', 330-40; Cannon, *Literacy to Literature*, 41-5, 63-9; Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*, 7-41.

[42] See Alan Coates, *English Medieval Books: The Reading Abbey Collections from Foundation to Dispersal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999). Among other examples of contemporary catalogues and cartularies are those of Durham (Durham, Muniments of Dean and Chapter, MS Misc. Ch. 7143) edited by R. A. B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral MSS to the end of the twelfth century* (Durham University Library, 1939); Rochester (Rochester Cathedral, Muniments, MS B. 854; BL, MS Royal 10. A. xii, f. 111v); and Rievaulx Abbey (Cambridge, Jesus College, MS 34) edited by A. Hoste, *Bibliotheca Aeldrediana* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962), 150-76. Similar studies of the contents of monastic libraries can be found in A. J. Piper, 'The Libraries of the Monks of Durham', *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 213-49; and R. W. Hunt, 'The library of the Abbey of St Albans', *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts & Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 251-77. For a wider overview of the contents of monastic libraries see: Teresa Webber, 'Monastic and Cathedral Book Collections in the Late Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, v. 1 (CUP, 2006), 109-25. See N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, second edition (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1964) and its *Supplement*, for a list of medieval libraries and their identifiable associated manuscripts. See also the full listing in *CBMLC*. Similar work has been done, mainly covering the later middle ages, on medieval nunneries and convents, where less information is available, see: David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995).

[43] M. B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', *The History of Oxford University*: *Volume II: Late Medieval Oxford*, ed. J. I. Catto and T. A. R. Evans (OUP, 1992), 408 [407-83]. See also: N. R. Ker, 'Oxford College Libraries Before 1500', *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J. Ijsewijn and J. Paquet (Leuven UP, 1978), 293-311, reprinted in *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage*, ed. Andrew G. Watson (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 301-20; R. A. B. Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College* (OUP, 1963); and F. M. Powicke, *The Medieval Books of Merton College* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931).

Scotland, or the French poet Richard de Fournival.[44] Little is known, then, about the reading habits of the newly literate laity, lesser nobility, and ordinary clergy, whose pragmatic literacy meant that reading was now an available pastime too.

A more wide-ranging understanding of reading experiences in the high Middle Ages may be accessed by considering reading practices—the ways in which people approached a text. Palaeographers have demonstrated how changes to the layout of the Latin page facilitated and reflected adaptations to the type of reading that took place in institutional contexts. The introduction of a more regularised system of word divisions, spacing, punctuation, and graphic signs by the twelfth century provided for more rapid and silent construal.[45] Alongside his work on punctuation and spacing, Parkes, followed by Richard and Mary Rouse among others, traces the increasing use of textual apparatus in the form of headings, running titles, chapter divisions, indexes, and marginal citations and references to visualise and supplement

[44] R. W. Hunt, 'The Library of Robert Grosseteste', *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of his Death*, ed. D. A. Callus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 121-45; Richard Gameson, 'The Gospels of Margaret of Scotland and the Literacy of an Eleventh-Century Queen', *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Jane H. M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (London: BL, 1997), 149-71; Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Bound Fast with Letters: Medieval Writers, Readers, and Text* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 115-38; Patricia Stirnemann, 'Private Libraries Privately Made', *Medieval Manuscripts, Their Makers and Users: A Special Issue of Viator in Honor of Richard and Mary Rouse* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 185-98.

[45] M. B. Parkes, 'The Contribution of Insular Scribes of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries to the "Grammar of Legibility"', *Grafia e Interpunzione del Latino nel Medioevo*, ed. Alfonso Maierù (Rome: Edizione dell'Ateno, 1987), 15-30; M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), 41-9, 70-81 especially 41-2; Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 243, 256.

the textual *ordo*.[46] These parallel developments meant that by the thirteenth century scholastic readers could access texts discontinuously, mining them for information and pithy expressions without needing to read the whole book slowly and methodically.[47] The current picture of reading practice in early Anglo-Norman England, then, has been dominated by a view of Latin, educated, literate readers moving away from the meditative *lectio divina* practised in monastic settings towards silent discontinuous practices.[48] In fact, such work has been crucial to developing understandings of the flexibility of medieval reading practice. However, the presence of paratextual apparatus to aid navigation of a work does not necessarily mean that readers chose to access the text discontinuously, or even that book producers intended for them to do so.[49] Some readers may have chosen to read a text from start to finish despite the inclusion of features that allowed for alternative approaches. In fact, some poetic texts surely demand to be read continuously? It is likely, then, that the shift from one mode of reading—slow careful *lectio divina*—to another—quick and selective scholastic referencing—was less

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[46] M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to R. W. Hunt*, ed. J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (OUP, 1976), 115-40, reprinted in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation, and the Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 35-70; M. B. Parkes, 'Layout and presentation of the text', *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume II, 1100-1400*, ed. Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (CUP, 2008), 55-74; Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* Revisited', *Ad Litteram: Authoritative Texts and their Medieval Readers*, ed. Mark D. Jordan and Kent Emery (University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 113-34; Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 7-39; and Henri-Jean Martin and Jean Vezin, eds., *Mise en Page et Mise en Texte du Livre Manuscrit* (Paris: Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1990).

[47] Jacqueline Hamesse, 'The Scholastic Model of Reading', *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), 103-19.

[48] See comments to this effect in Jennifer Richards and Fred Schurink, 'Introduction: The Textuality and Materiality of Reading in Early Modern England', *HLQ*, 73:3 (2010), 351-2 [345-61]. Studies of discontinuous reading include Peter Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible', *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies,* ed. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 42-79; Jane Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (OUP, 2014).

[49] See comments by Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers', 443.

clear than might previously have been implied.[50] Rather, the two must have co-existed, and mingled, with readers selecting the most appropriate mode of accessing the text for their particular needs.

This brief survey of the field demonstrates the scholarly consensus about reading in the high Middle Ages. However, it also indicates where some of the gaps in our knowledge may be found, and where this apparent consensus may obscure, rather than reveal, the complexities of medieval practice. For instance, the act of reading was governed by a number of mechanical processes, of which much has been assumed, but little is known. The physiological process of reading is perhaps the most likely feature of reading practice to be shared between the elite readers of historical record and the unnamed, unknown readers of the new literate classes; but most critical approaches to reading provide an account of what, where, and when people read without addressing the question of how. By what processes did people read once they had learnt how to do so?[51] What did this mean for their reading experience? And how did this

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[50] Nicholas Perkins, 'Reading the Bible in *Sawles Warde* and *Ancrene Wisse*', *Medium Ævum*, 72:2 (2003), 215-25 [207-37], for instance, shows how discontinuous scholastic reading might be used creatively in combination with the biblical imagination employed in monastic *meditatio*.

[51] As with Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*, especially 28-41, investigations into schooling in the post-Conquest period tend to be informed mainly by glosses, which were used later in the pupil's education: see, also, Tony Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin in 13th-Century England*, v. 1 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991). However, further investigation is needed into the process of construal as found in elementary education, which seems to have related letters and syllables to their vocalic qualities, and the effect this may have had on later reading practice. Indeed, education—particularly elementary education—may be a profitable avenue for identifying commonly shared reading practices. Unfortunately, evidence of elementary teaching in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is scant and studies of medieval education most often relate to early and late medieval practices, periods for which better records are available: Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548* (Princeton UP, 1985); Rita Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent in the Later Middle Ages: Lollardy and Ideas of Learning* (CUP, 2001); and to some extent Vincent Gillespie, 'The Study of Classical Authors: From the twelfth century to c. 1450', *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume II, The Middle Ages*, ed. Alistair Minnis and Ian Johnson (CUP, 2005), 145-238; as well as, importantly, Nicholas Orme, *Education in the West of England 1066-1548* (University of Exeter Press, 1976); and *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2006).

change as reading moved from an act of divine contemplation to one of pragmatic necessity? Indeed, was the change as definitive as has previously been suggested? Scholarship has emphasised particular types of reading, but should we not in fact be considering a continuum of practice in which distinctions were blurred and habits mixed? Finally, perhaps the biggest question posed by the field of reading in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries is how the previous scholarship on reading in Latin relates to manuscripts of the period that contain the vernacular languages? These are the questions to which I hope to provide some answers. This thesis, then, expands the current picture of reading in order to move away from a binary vision that suggests reading practices either involved slow meditation upon a text approached continuously, or the purely pragmatic engagement of users interested in finding discrete information. Beyond this, it will open up discussions of reading practice in English in the high Middle Ages. It will move beyond explicit comments by authors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to ask not just what and why people read at this time, but, critically, how. What does archaeological evidence in books reveal about reading English at this time that comments on reading do not?

The Place of the Vernacular: Decentralising Latin

The relatively small amount of surviving vernacular material from the high Middle Ages, particularly in English, and the fact that what is there has not been the subject of canonisation has led to this period being classified as a "dark age" without a strong written tradition: when monks guarded the secrets of older theological treatises and book production came to a halt.

The work of C. H. Haskins, however, prompted a revised view of the twelfth century as a 'renaissance' in scholarly activity.[52] Many of the creative achievements of twelfth-century thought have since been recognised and celebrated.[53] Even so, these studies tend to be grounded in the Latin texts that were 'the achievements of the monastic and ecclesiastical intelligentsia' with less time allocated to secular productions.[54] Recently scholarly interest in vernacular texts has grown, particularly the survival of Old English texts into this period, or the ways that thirteenth-century works prefigure later Middle English genres and writing styles, such as the increasingly popular Anglo-Norman histories and romances.[55] Nevertheless, apart from Christopher Cannon's detailed survey, early Middle English works have not been regularly studied since the early twentieth century.[56] What emerges in scholarship, therefore, is

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[52] C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1927). This critical opinion was slow to gain traction: see R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), especially 158-80; R. L. Benson and G. Constable, eds., *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1982).

[53] For instance, the works of scholars such as Adelard of Bath (Charles Burnett, ed., *Adelard of Bath: An English Scientist and Arabist of the Early Twelfth Century* (London: Warburg Institute, 1987)) or Robert Grosseteste (James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); R. W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), especially 111-232; John Shannon Hendrix, *Robert Grosseteste: Philosophy of Intellect and Visi*on (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2010)).

[54] Ian Short, 'Language and Literature', *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bell and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 191 [191-213].

[55] See, for instance, Short, 'Language and Literature', 191-2; Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (CUP, 2007), especially 121-58; Cannon, *Grounds of English Literature*, 172-92.

[56] *Ancrene Wisse* and the works of the 'Wooing' and 'Katherine Groups' may be the exception. These have been the subject of important studies by Bella Millett and others: for instance, Bella Millett, 'The Saints' Lives of the Katherine Group and the Alliterative Tradition', *JEGP*, 87:1 (1988), 16-34; Bella Millett, 'The Origins of "Ancrene Wisse": New Answers, New Questions', *Medium Ævum*, 61:2 (1992), 206-28; Bella Millett, 'Women in No Man's Land: English Recluses and the Development of Vernacular Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *Women and Literature in Britain: 1150-1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale, second edition (CUP, 1993), 86-103; Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989). Recent scholarship has shown a renewed interest in other forms of early Middle English literature also led by the work of scholars such as Susanna Fein, Dorothy Kim, and George Younge, much of which was showcased at the conference *Making Early Middle English*, University of Victoria, BC, Canada, 23-25 September 2016.

a linguistic hierarchy that reflects the view of Latin as the dominant language used by the clergy and scholastic elite, while French is granted a significant stake in secular writing for courtly audiences, and written English occupies a limited space attributed little merit.[57]

In recent decades the idea that French supplanted English as the vernacular language immediately after the Norman Conquest has been revised.[58] Instead, scholars, such as Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, have demonstrated the long parallel existence of English and French in England's vernacular culture, and the extent to which the two were subject to 'deeply interwoven lexical borrowing' and intellectual 'interchange'.[59] This lexical borrowing is as apparent in the import of specialist terminology from French into the vocabulary of tradesmen, as it is in highly structured moments of macaronic art.[60] The degree to which code switching between French, English, and Latin occurs in written discourse may suggest that thirteenth-century spoken language was equally linguistically permeable. Permeable language use, as Serge Lusignan has pointed out, is particularly likely among the developing 'professional administrative classes' who were required to interact with the French-speaking nobility as part

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[57] For the status of these languages, especially English, in this period, see Tim William Machan, *English in the Middle Ages* (OUP, 2003), 36-8.

[58] See Short, 'Language and Literature', 210; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'General Introduction: What's in a Name: The "French" of "England"', *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 1-2 [1-13]. Previously French was considered the dominant language: Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National Identity 1290-1340* (OUP, 1996).

[59] Wogan-Browne, 'General Introduction', 6; M. R. Warren, 'Translation', *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (OUP, 2007), 51-67.

[60] Laura Wright, *Sources of London English: Medieval Thames Vocabulary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Laura Wright, 'Bills, Accounts, Inventories: Everyday Trilingual Activities in the Business World of Later Medieval England', *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. D. A. Trotter (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 149-56; and, for the fourteenth century, Jonathan Hsy, *Trading Tongues: Merchants, Multilingualism, and Medieval Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2013). See, also Herbert Schendl and Laura Wright, eds., *Code-Switching in Early English* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).

of their work.[61] Even without this consideration, regular contact with the Church and the forces of administration and law meant that regardless of their level of comprehension, for many people contact with all three main languages was a regular aspect of life. Contemporary developments in English testify to this mixing, as more French-derived vocabulary entered the language moving it toward a version of English recognisable today.[62]

That is not to deny that the languages used in England were subject to a hierarchy, though more archaic ideas about the monoglotism of Insular readers, writers, and speakers have been superseded.[63] By the end of the thirteenth century French acted as the usual language of legal proceedings, administrative record, and courtly life: Edward I used French in his royal charters, and almost all the 8000 legal synopses written during his reign are in French.[64] Meanwhile, Latin remained the language of literacy, that of the cloister and the schoolroom, of theological discourse, and of scholastic debate.[65] But, strict linguistic stratification is to be treated with caution. Complaints were routinely raised about failing Latin

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[61] Serge Lusignan, 'French Language in Contact with English: Social Context and Linguistic Change (mid-13th-14th centuries)', *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 25-6 [19-30].

[62] Short, 'Language and Literature', 213. A brief but helpful overview of this shift can be found in Simon Horobin, *How English Became English: A Short History of a Global Language* (OUP, 2016), 27-30. For more detail see Manfred Görlach, *The Linguistic History of English* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), 21-2, 137-54; Laura Wright, 'The Contact Origins of Standard English', *English as a Contact Language*, ed. Daniel Schreier and Marianne Hundt (CUP, 2013), 58-74; Begoña Crespo Garcia, 'Historical Background of Multilingualism and its Impact on English', *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. D. A. Trotter (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 25-35.

[63] See, especially, Machan, *English in the Middle Ages*, 71-110 for current considerations on the status and use of each language.

[64] Lusignan, 'French Language in Contact with English', 21-2. See also W. Mark Ormrod, 'The Language of Complaint: Multilingualism and Petitioning in Later Medieval England', *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 33-7 [31-43]; Richard Ingham, 'The Persistence of Anglo-Norman 1230-1362: A Linguistic Perspective', *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 45 [44-54].

[65] Short, 'Language and Literature', 198-9.

ability among clerics, and it seems that Anglo-Norman often provided an alternative in the Church and the cloister.[66] In fact, flexibility in the use and status of language may have become increasingly common as multilingualism increased and language synthesis occurred.[67] In the 1307 canonisation trial of Thomas Cantilupe around half the clerics interviewed spoke in French rather than Latin, while the English used by the majority of rural inhabitants remains untranslated in the records despite the legal setting.[68] What is clear from current scholarship, then, is that the interplay between French, English, and Latin in high medieval England was at once more free and more complex than has previously been acknowledged. Other Insular vernaculars should also be considered. Language communities speaking, writing, and translating in and out of Welsh, Scandinavian languages, Dutch, and—until 1290—Hebrew, have all been identified.[69]

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[66] M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman in the Cloisters: The Influence of the Orders upon Anglo-Norman Literature* (Edinburgh UP, 1950); Marilyn Oliva, 'The French of England in Female Convents: The French Kitcheners' Accounts of Campsey Ash Priory', *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 90-102.

[67] Short, 'Language and Literature', 205, estimates, using data from the Domesday Survey, that in 1086 the number of French speakers in England numbered c. 15000, or less than 1% of the population.

[68] Lusignan, 'French Language in Contact with English', 20. For full discussion of the records of this trial see Michael Richter, 'Collecting Miracles along the Anglo-Welsh Border in the Early Thirteenth Century', *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. D. A. Trotter (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 53-61.

[69] See, for example, Helen Fulton, 'Negotiating Welshness: Multilingualism in Wales Before and After 1066', *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c. 800-c. 1250*, ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 145-70; Richter, 'Collecting Miracles', 57-9; Richard Dance, *Words Derived from Old Norse in Early Middle English: Studies in the Vocabulary of The South-West Midlands Texts* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), especially 68-103; Laura Wright, 'Trade Between England and the Low Countries: Evidence from Historical Linguistics', *England and the Low Countries in the Middle Ages*, ed. Caroline Barron and Nigel Saul (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), 169-79; Eva de Vischer, 'Hebrew, Latin, French, English: Multilingualism in Jewish-Christian Encounters', *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain (c. 1066-1520): Sources and Analysis*, ed. Judith A. Jefferson, Ad Putter, and Amanda Hopkins (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 89-103. A great deal of new work is emerging on the status of Hebrew in post-Conquest England, as was demonstrated at the *Making Early Middle English* conference.

English in a Multilingual World: A Corpus of Books for Study

Given the increasing acknowledgement of the mixed linguistic context it is perhaps surprising that trilingual—Latin, French, and English—codices produced in England in the twelfth and, especially, the thirteenth centuries have not received more critical attention. Though their presence is mentioned in discussions of multilingualism, and some of the poetic material contained therein has been discussed for its literary qualities, these volumes have most usually been investigated for their internal dynamics and organising principles on a case-by-case basis and are rarely considered in combination.[70] Nevertheless, as John Scahill notes, these multilingual books 'preserve the bulk of Early Middle English verse'.[71] As such, these volumes situate early Middle English writing within its multilingual cultural context, surviving alongside Latin without erasing the literate world in which written English participated.

A list of thirty-three such manuscripts is produced through comparison of the two most up-to-date catalogues of twelfth- and thirteenth-century vernacular works: Ruth Dean and Maureen Boulton's *Anglo-Norman Literature*, and Margaret Laing's *Catalogue of Sources for a*

[70] Particularly important studies to the development of this growing field are the later single manuscript collections edited by Susanna Fein, especially: *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: the Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000); *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives* (York Medieval Press, 2016). A further volume, *Manuscript Digby 86: Devotion, Science, and Literary Diversions for a Worcestershire Household, c. 1280* (York Medieval Press, forthcoming 2019), is in production. A similar volume was edited by Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch, eds., *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: the Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[71] John Scahill, 'Trilingualism in Early Middle English Miscellanies: Languages and Literature', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 18 [18-32].

Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English.[72] It is likely that further items, which have not yet been thoroughly catalogued, also exist. The corpus consists of:

1. CCCC, MS 405, s. xiii and xiv.in.; six-part composite manuscript containing mainly Latin and Anglo-Norman material, including an Anglo-Norman translation of the *Distichs of Cato*, as well as several short poems in English.
2. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, s. xiii.ex.-xiv.in.; mostly French verse and prose with a copy of *Poema Morale* in early Middle English.
3. GCC, MS 512/543, s. xiii.ex.; volume of Latin sermons belonging to John Rudham with short vernacular poems.
4. Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 258, s. xiii-xiv; manuscript in many parts, containing Latin *Narrationes*, as well as Edmund Rich's *Speculum Ecclesie* in French and several English verses.
5. SJC, MS E.8, s. xiii.ex.; mostly Latin religious excerpts in verse and prose, with a French poem and recipe, and the English translation of *Stabat iuxta Christi crucem* accompanied by music.
6. TCC, MS B.1.45, s. xiii; sermons in Latin, French, and English, with additional English verses.
7. TCC, MS B.14.39, s. xiii.ex.; bound together with MS B.14.40 (s. xv); French, Latin, and English notes and poetry including macaronic verses.
8. CUL, MS Ff.vi.15, s. xii-v.in.; mixed Latin volume with a poem on the *Ten Commandments* in English and an Anglo-Norman explanation of the *Trental*.
9. CUL, MS Gg.i.1, s. xiv.in.; large, mostly Anglo-Norman collection with English including *The Proverbs of Hendyng*, and *The Northern Passion*, and three Latin items.
10. CUL, MS Hh.vi.11, s. xiii-xiv; mainly Latin items including charters and notes relating to Ramsey Abbey, with English translations of the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* and a French homily on confession.
11. CUL, MS Mm.i.18, s. xii-xv; composite manuscript including 'The Cambridge Prologue', a French and English prologue to an unrecorded play.
12. BL, MS Additional 11579, c. 1300-25; theological texts in Latin and French with poems and translations in English.
13. BL, MS Additional 23986, s. xiii.ex.; roll with an Anglo-Norman political verse and an English version of *Interludium de Clerico et Puella*, now lost and only available from negatives.[73]

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[72] A more up to date version of *LAEMECat* can be found online: Margaret Laing, ed., *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English, 1150-1325* (University of Edinburgh, 2013) <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme2/laeme2.html>. However, for the purposes of this investigation the print catalogue is more useful. All records have been checked against the online record for any changes to the entry.

14. BL, MS Arundel 292, s. xiii.ex.; a bestiary in English verse with French and Latin poetry and prose.
15. BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, s. xiii.ex.; Layamon's *Brut*, along with other poetic items in Latin, English, and Anglo-Norman.
16. BL, MS Cotton Claudius D. iii, s. xiii.in.; the Benedictine Rule with chapters alternating Latin and English, with some French.
17. BL, MS Cotton Tiberius A. vi, s. xii^{2}-xiv^{2}; the B text of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (1042-1346) mostly in Anglo-Norman with some Latin, as well as *The Ely Cartulary* with some English writs and boundary clauses.
18. BL, MS Cotton Vitellius D. iii, s. xiii.ex.; largely destroyed by the Cotton fire, preserves parts of *Floris and Blancheflour*, as well as Macrobius, and some Anglo-Norman Alexandrine biblical narratives.
19. BL, MS Egerton 613, c. 1250; many parts containing religious and didactic verse and prose in Latin, French and English including two copies of *Poema Morale*.
20. BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, c. 1300; mostly Latin theological tracts with some proverbs and short verse in French and English.
21. BL, MS Sloane 146, s. xiii.ex.; several booklets containing herbals and medical recipes.
22. London, Dulwich College, MS XXII, s. xiii-xiv; fragments of *La Estorie del Euangelie* in English, and the *Miracles of the Virgin* in rhyming Anglo-Norman couplets.
23. LPL, MS 499, s. xiii.ex.; theological material including Grosseteste, with short English poems, some macaronic phrases, and prayers in French.
24. Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, s. xiii.in.; notes and sermons mostly in Latin with some French and English verses including a short version of the *Proverbs of Alfred*.
25. BodL, MS Bodley 652, s. xiii^{2}; mainly French, including Grosseteste's *Chasteau D'Amour* with Latin prologue, as well as the English *Jacob and Joseph*.
26. BodL, MS Digby 2, s. xiii.ex.; Latin treatises and religious poems in Latin, French, and English.
27. BodL, MS Digby 4, s. xiii^{1}; in five parts containing mostly Latin treatises and poetry, as well as *Poema Morale* in English, and some verse in French.
28. BodL, MS Digby 53, s. xii.ex.; treatises in Latin including Geoffrey of Vinsauf, along with the proverbs of Serlo of Wilton in French with Latin and English equivalents.
29. BodL, MS Digby 86, s. xiii.ex. (1272-82); celebrated English, French, and Latin collection of secular and religious verse and prose.

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[73] The side of the roll with the English text is reproduced in black and white by Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and the Winchester Dialogues* (University of Leeds School of English, 1979), 11. The roll is thought to have been missing since the early 1970s when the Library of the British Museum became a constituent part of the founding of the British Library; it is presumed 'misplaced among [the] very large collection of charters and rolls' (9).

30. BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, parts I & II, s. xiii.ex.-xiv.in.; *South English Legendary* with other English works and a French rhymed childhood of Christ.
31. BodL, MS Laud Misc. 471, s. xiii.ex.; manuscript in two parts, mostly Latin with several English poems and French works including the sermons of Maurice de Sully.
32. BodL, MS Laud Misc. 636, 1121-31 and s. xiii^{2}; *The Peterborough Chronicle* in English with a French chronicle of England to Edward added in the thirteenth century.
33. Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, part II, s. xiii.ex.; mainly verse both secular and religious in Latin, French, and English, including *The Owl and the Nightingale*.

This corpus, it will be noted, takes in several important volumes in the history of English literature. Included is the celebrated manuscript, BodL, MS Digby 86, along with the smaller related volumes Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, TCC, MS B.14.39, and BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix. All of these have attracted critical interest for the famous poetic works they contain, such as *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Layamon's *Brut*, or the *Proverbs of Alfred*. The corpus also includes BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, which contains an early version of the *South English Legendary* along with the romances of *Havelok* and *King Horn*.[74] All of these works are critical to the study of early Middle English literature, but rarely have their manuscript contexts been thoroughly considered. Due to their significance, these works will provide a base from which to build the case studies used in Chapter One (*Poema Morale)*, Two, and Three (*South English Legendary*, Layamon's *Brut*, *Havelok*, and *King Horn*). The corpus also takes in several large collections of homilies and sermons, including those in TCC, MS B.1.45, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, and Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 258. Other volumes in the corpus contain a range of materials, often dominated by a longer Latin treatise

[74] Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (University of Leeds School of English, 1974), 88-90.

that has been supplemented with vernacular devotional or instructional items, or reference works such as the trilingual herbals in BL, MS Sloane 146.[75]

Despite the diversity of the books amassed and the amount of extant early Middle English literary material in them, there are some notable absences. None of the copies of *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, are found in a heavily trilingual volume, and as such it appears here only as a comparative work.[76] *The Ormulum* also, though its significance means it is necessarily present, is used only for comparison. Alongside these early Middle English texts, there are some significant Anglo-Norman works that do not appear in these books.[77] In some cases, however, these works will come up in relation to their English translations. Finally, the many and varied Latin items in this corpus will be used to provide context, but will not be subjected to close analysis. To depart from conversations about Latin reading practices, which have been thoroughly investigated, Latin works will be discussed only when vernacular materials require contextualisation, allowing for a focus on English vernacular reading in particular.

It should perhaps be noted that the aim of this thesis is not to suggest that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries marked a particularly distinct period for reading practice, nor that it heralded some sort of dramatic change or renewal in vernacular reading. These materials were not chosen for the continuity or discontinuity they may reveal in comparison to earlier or later

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[75] For instance, BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii; BodL, MS Digby 2; or BodL, MS Digby 4.

[76] One manuscript dating to c. 1225-1230—BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra C. vi—contains a number of additional English, Anglo-Norman, and Latin prayers and lyrics, but no full texts within the manuscript textblock.

[77] For instance, *Boeve de Hamptoun* (*ANL*, 153) and *Gui de Warewic* (*ANL*, 154), which both travel alongside other works in French; or *Fouke le Fitz Waryn,* which occurs in a multilingual volume of a slightly later date (BL, MS Royal 12. C. xii). Some less well-known examples of lais and fabliaux, such as the *Le Lai du Cor* (*ANL*, 177), are found in the more heavily poetic volumes: BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 105r-9v.

evidence, although such studies would surely be fruitful and interesting.[78] Rather, the manuscripts have been selected for the intrinsic interest of the texts they contain and the habits of the reading population they may reveal. Where it is relevant comparison will be made to material outside of the period of study, but such comparisons will not form the basis of my argument.

Beyond responding to a shortage of work on vernacular materials, there are several ways in which this corpus provides a means of accessing a more diverse range of reading practices than has previously been observed. First, as a group, these books offer the opportunity to access a range of less specialist, anonymous readers. It is possible that, given the relatively small scale of the corpus, these manuscripts reveal the habits of readers just as exceptional as those named readers studied previously. Rather than revealing the "average" practice of a "general" reader, these books may be equally extraordinary. Nevertheless, the volumes contain a wide variety of material, from instructional texts on bird keeping to entertaining vernacular poetry—works suitable for a varied audience with a range of interests. Though evidence of provenance is scant, the conclusions of scholars about a number of these volumes support Scahill's conclusions that most trilingual collections were produced by a 'mixed milieu' of itinerant and secular clergy and household administrative staff, putting their readers beyond the consideration of most studies of university scholasticism or the clerical elite.[79] The same multilingual communities that often developed in groups—such as the growing literate, administrative classes—who carried out an intermediary role between

[78] Eric Weiskott, *English Alliterative Verse: Poetic Tradition and Literary History* (CUP, 2016), particularly 15-16, 76-7, 83-4; and Ian Cornelius, *Reconstructing Alliterative Verse: The Pursuit of a Medieval Meter* (CUP, 2017), 67-103, for instance, demonstrate such continuities in relation to formal features of English poetry.
[79] Scahill, 'Trilingualism', 18.

languages as a regular part of their work. BodL, MS Digby 86—well known for its poetic contents—for instance, is likely to have been copied by Richard de Grimhill II, perhaps a lawyer or estate manager, 'for his own use' before passing to another local Worcestershire household.[80]

Though it is questionable whether all of these manuscripts were bound as they are currently at the time of their production in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which may be an argument for discounting these volumes—a problem given further consideration in Chapter Five—this thesis finds such books equally instructive as evidence of certain practices of reading and use. This corpus, then, makes it possible to access the reading habits of a little-studied population of readers functioning outside or alongside specialist institutional communities: a wider and more diverse cross-section of the reading public than the highly literate users of Latin usually studied by intellectual historians.

Decentralising the Margin: Diversifying Reading Practices

Recent decades have seen a growing interest in the history of reading resulting in a turn to the margins as a source of evidence. Scholars have considered the varying presence of different varieties of marginalia and what they tell us about the readers who produced them.[81] While it is recognised that many readers, perhaps the majority, were silent participants in the history of a book—their presence going unrecorded due to their lack of physical interaction with the

[80] M. B. Parkes and Judith Tschann, 'Introduction', *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86*, EETS, SS 16 (OUP, 1996), lvii-lix [xi-lxii].

[81] Roger E. Stoddard, *Marks in Books, Illustrated and Explained* (Cambridge MA: Houghton Library, 1985), 1.

page[82]—marginal additions appear to provide the only legible evidence of readers.[83] The margin, then, has become central to the history of reading.[84] Indeed, these investigations have been fundamental in reopening the field of reading history, and revealing many aspects of reading practice. Chapter Four, for instance, uses readers' marks in the margins to consider the extent to which reading was an embodied practice with somatic implications.

However, the concern that such investigations touch on only the few esoteric readers who marked their books is a valid one. Though it is clear that mark-making was more widely accepted in medieval England than it is today, by making it the sole focus of investigation, scholars are liable to miss a plethora of readers who did not, or could not, comment in the

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[82] Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, Literacy* (CUP, 2005), 61-3 (61). See, also, concerns raised by Leah Price, 'Introduction: Reading Matter', *PMLA*, 121:1 (2006), 13 [9-16]; Steven N. Zwicker, 'The Reader Revealed', *The Reader Revealed*, ed. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Elizabeth Walsh, and Susan Scola (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2001), 11 [11-7]; Daniel Sawyer, *Codicological Evidence of Reading in Late Medieval England, with Particular Reference to Practical Pastoral Verse* (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2016), 8-11. Indeed, when considering reading in the Victorian period Leah Price, 'Reading: The State of the Discipline', *Book History*, 7 (2004), 312 [303-20] suggests that a more engaged reader may be less likely to 'pause long enough to leave a record'—see, also, Price, *How to…*, 19-20, 31-33—although I would counter that in the Middle Ages the opposite may be true. Price also recognises the ability of a reader to 'use' a book to pieces: Leah Price, 'From the History of a Book to a "History of the Book"', *Representations*, 108:1 (2009), 133 [120-38].

[83] Price, *How to…*, 33.

[84] See comments by Price, 'State of the Discipline', 313; Price, 'Reading Matter', 13-15; Juliet Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts in Early Modern England* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), 13. Studies that make use of marginal notes as their main source of evidence include, most crucially, William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Heather J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2001); Heather J. Jackson, *Romantic Readers: The Evidence of Marginalia* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2005); Stephen Orgel, *The Reader in the Book: A Study of Spaces and Traces* (OUP, 2015); Kerby-Fulton and Despres, *Iconography and the Professional Reader*; Kerby-Fulton, 'Professional Readers at Work', 207-44. Carl James Grindley, 'Reading *Piers Plowman* C-Text Annotations: Notes toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300-1641', *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower*, ed. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 2001), 73-142 attempts to create a wide and all encompassing taxonomy of these marginal additions. That taxonomy proves, however, overly complex.

margins, for whom reading was a 'historically invisible skill.'[85] Similarly, the centralization of marginal marks as a site of reading may minimise the extent of reading that happened between the margins.[86] Studies of discontinuous reading are liable to give the impression that reading practice entailed a series of short, scattered interactions occurring in the margins with little consideration for the space between the notes. Thus, the scholarly consensus on marginalia has suggested that reading can be one of two things: marginal or textual, fleeting or meditative—scholarly or monkish. This duality does not align with our lived experience of the book and may obscure as much as it reveals about the complexity of medieval reading practices. As scholars we are well aware of the variety of interactions that take place between and beyond these two opposing spheres: from scanned rereading of a teaching text to the nugatory memorisation of train timetables. In this thesis, then, I heed the call of Leah Price and others, to decentralise, but not discount, the margin as a space of reading.[87] I seek to develop the range of possible approaches available to a range of readers of English in the twelfth- and thirteenth-centuries, revealing where these touch, overlay, and interact.

In order to move beyond narratives of marginal, discontinuous reading, and consider a wider range of practices this thesis combines and rethinks book historical approaches to produce a mixed method that responds to critical theory. In doing so I seek access to the experiences of a more diverse range of less vocal, or verbal—though perhaps equally exceptional—categories of reader. Here, I respond to Price's challenge 'to situate the study of material culture as a player in theoretical debates rather than as a bolt-hole from which to wait

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[85] Seth Lerer, 'Epilogue: Falling Asleep over the History of the Book', *PMLA*, 121:1 (2006), 230 [229-34] articulates this concern.

[86] See, especially, Richards and Schurink, 'Textuality and Materiality of Reading', 346.

[87] Price, 'State of the Discipline', 313; Price, 'Reading Matter', 13.

them out.'[88] Many of the theoretical models used in this thesis are inspired by moves taking place in bibliographical studies of the early modern period and beyond, which have begun to look past reading to other uses of the book.[89] The concept of *use* has allowed scholars to observe a range of alternate, and pragmatic, interactions with the written word, freeing reading practice from modern assumptions of 'privacy, linearity and cleanliness.'[90] Similarly, observations of the "destructive" practices of readers—tearing, cutting, and sticking—have demonstrated the modes in which people transformed reading into a creative activity, and adapted it to their own needs, taking ownership over the written word through their manipulation of the book itself (see Chapter Five).[91] It is possible that by similarly liberating the use of post-Conquest books from the confines of our own text-based, text-focused habits a wider range of practices may be revealed. Indeed, the attempts that have been made to analyse particular seams of evidence in this way—by Jennifer Borland, Michael Camille, and especially Kathryn Rudy, among others—have offered a tantalising insight into what such broader,

[88] Price, 'Reading Matter', 15.

[89] See, especially, Sherman, *Used Books*; Price, *How to…*; Price, 'State of the Discipline', 305; Price, 'History of a Book to a "History of the Book"', 123-7. Crucial, also, is Juliet Fleming, *Cultural Graphology: Writing After Derrida* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), which considers writing as a multi-media, psychoanalytical phenomenon.

[90] Sherman, *Used Books*, xiv.

[91] See Juliet Fleming, 'Afterword', *HLQ*, 73:3 (2010), 552 [543-52]; Adam Smyth, '"Shreds of holinesse": George Herbert, Little Gidding, and Cutting Up Texts in Early Modern England', *English Literary Renaissance*, 42:3 (2012), 452-81; Gill Partington and Adam Smyth, eds., *Book Destruction from the Medieval to the Contemporary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). For users adding content to books, especially by "sticking" in material, see Kathryn M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*.

material-based methodologies may reveal.[92] I extend their exploration of the *use* of books, beyond the idealized notions of reading as a metonymy for spirituality or learning offered by writers at the time.

My thesis necessarily embraces eclecticism. I draw on the techniques of traditional textual editing, palaeography and codicology while bringing in ideas, methods, and theory from new and developing areas in book historical studies and beyond. Inspired by the work of Price, Juliet Fleming, Kathryn Rudy, and others, I seek to test, reassess, and push the boundaries of what has previously been considered permissible evidence for reading, thereby adjusting and expanding the current conceptions of the range of practices entailed in high medieval book use. That said, many of the approaches taken by these pioneering scholars are unsuited to the high medieval multilingual corpus, where provenance material is scarce, works go largely undecorated, and not enough material survives to provide scope for 'big data' approaches. In this thesis, then, more apposite is the 'radical patience' of the close readings

[92] For instance, for touching, see Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Dirty Books: Quantifying Patterns of Use in Medieval Manuscripts Using a Densitometer', *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, 2:1-2 (2010), 1-26; Kathryn M. Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment: The Social Lives of Medieval Books* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2015); Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals they Reveal', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2011), 1-56; Kathryn M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized their Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016); Kathryn M. Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). For the initial applications of this idea to the high Middle Ages see, particularly, Elizabeth Robertson, '"The Living Hand": Thirteenth-Century Female Literacy, Materialist Immanence, and the Reader of the *Ancrene Wisse*', *Speculum*, 78:1 (2003), especially 13 [1-36]; Jennifer Borland, 'Unruly Reading: The Consuming Role of Touch in the Experience of a Medieval Manuscript', *Scraped, Stroked and Bound: Materially Engaged Readings of Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. Jonathan Wilcox (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 97-114; and Michael Camille, 'Glossing the Flesh: Scopophilia and the Margins of the Medieval Book', *The Margins of the Text*, ed. D. C. Greetham (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 245-66. For glossing, Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*; Hunt, *Teaching and Learning*; Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities*; Jane Griffiths, '"In Bokes thus Writen I Fynde": Hoccleve's Self-Glossing in the *Regiment of Princes* and the *Series*', *Medium Ævum*, 86:1 (2017), 91-107; Carolynn van Dyke, 'The Auctor in the Paratext: Rubrics, Glosses, and the Construction of Vernacular Authorship', *Modern Philology*, 115:1 (2017), 1-30; and John Dagenais, *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture: Glossing the* Libro de Buen Amor (Princeton UP, 1994).

these scholars make, which combine analysis of material form with a careful consideration for and sensitivity to the whims controlling human action. With this in mind the chapters of this thesis tackle aspects of three very distinct seams of evidence:

1. textual indications of scribal reading (Chapter One)
2. the *ordinatio* of the work, including its layout and textual apparatus (Chapters Two and Three)
3. the material engagement of readers, including marginalia (Chapters Four and Five)

In each case I rethink what we might learn about reading from such evidence (or the absence thereof) by focussing on forms that have been less regularly documented. I accept the invitation by Alexandra Gillespie and Arthur Bahr to speculate, 'to look both carefully and imaginatively: carefully to see the surviving picture as fully as possible, and imaginatively in due recognition of what that picture has lost and cannot include.'[93] I seek to redefine eclecticism and speculation in positive terms: as the means by which book historical research can 'cut across' disciplinary and methodological boundaries and engage with both literary theory and textual criticism—among other fields—in order 'to maintain and develop the vital connection between textuality and materiality.'[94]

Using Medieval Books

The result of this method is a thesis that is esoteric in a number of ways, though hopefully constructively so. Chiefly, most of the following chapters do not maintain a single textual

[93] Arthur Bahr and Alexandra Gillespie, 'Medieval English Manuscripts: Form, Aesthetics, and the Literary Text', *The Chaucer Review*, 47:4 (2013), 358 [346-60].

[94] Richards and Schurink, 'Textuality and Materiality of Reading', 360.

focus—aside from Chapter One, which (in order to make the study of scribal variation manageable) centres on one work. Chapters instead draw from a range of materials, the treatment of which will be similar even when the subject is not. In this way, the thesis makes connections between the reading and use of disparate items without attempting to draw false links between their texts. Similarly, the range of bibliographical materials and theoretical models used means that no single methodological thread draws the chapters together. Rather, in each chapter a different strain of evidence is taken as a focus, leading to chapters that are materially engaged to differing extents depending on the evidence available. Such eclecticism in materials and methodology makes for responsible historical enquiry, avoiding prejudgement on what may be found.[95] As such, this thesis deliberately pursues diversity, so that layers of evidence and approaches build upon each other to present a picture of the physically engaged and generative practices of reading and use undertaken by the readers of early Middle English books.

My study begins, however, with a close study of a single text: *Poema Morale*. The variants across seven copies of this work (Chapter One shows) give an insight into the various reading practices of an often-overlooked class of readers: the texts' scribes. The chapter demonstrates that the scribe's copy of an exemplar provides the sole material evidence of a verifiably complete reading of the text—that reading made by the scribe as he copies. Through comparative and close analyses of the variants across multiple copies of the text, the "scribal errors" made in transmission, several types of reading practice can be identified, occurring at multiple levels and responding to a number of prompts. The chapter demonstrates that while

[95] Though, of course, it should be noted that this also constitutes embracing a 'bias', for here I deliberately look beyond text-based inward reading to other uses and material actions.

scribes often scanned their text in a detached manner to maintain speed and efficiency, they also engaged in close reading and interpretation. Furthermore, scribal reading is fundamentally generative, it is a creative act, it creates further copies of the text.

In their reading scribes also considered their own prospective readers, a thread taken up by Part II of this thesis. The textual and design choices made by scribes, or copied by scribes from the choices made by others, as they produced a manuscript influenced and guided the ways future readers approached the work.[96] Thus, by introducing into a work textual apparatus such as subdivisions (Chapter Two) or titles (Chapter Three), the scribes demonstrate an expectation that readers will adhere to given protocols of reading and access the text in particular ways; or at the least, that these features will be a useful part of the reading experience. However, it is up to readers how they interpret or subvert these design choices and the shared popular knowledge and reading norms that underlie them. The book's readers are, therefore, participatory in shaping the reading practice that scribes envisage for them. The ways in which readers interpreted these cues and incorporated them into their reading practice may reveal itself best through the evidence they left in their books: the subject of Part III. Though instances of detailed written notes or commentary left in the margins of texts are rare, non-verbal marginal marks (discussed in Chapter Four) are ubiquitous. These signs, which include pointing hands (*manicules*), crosses, and *nota bene* abbreviations, are used to mark a range of textual and non-textual features, but they all demonstrate how gestural interaction shaped reading practices. Reading was an act of 'embodied intellectual labour' that asserted itself through gestural mark making and other somatic acts: affective practices that show readers were not simply carried along by the form of the page or the shape of the text but

[96] See Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers', 437 for discussion of this consideration.

actively participated in it.[97] However, readers did not just respond to the material provided for them: physically involved reading also allowed readers to adapt their books to suit on-going or changing needs (Chapter Five). By adding new material to books, such as English lyrics, prayers, and proverbs (the case studies for Chapter Five), readers took the book beyond its initial textual purpose and prepared it for a range of further uses—sometimes involving dramatic changes to its material construction. Indeed, in many cases the material construction of manuscripts was designed to allow for, and even encourage, their continued adaptation and expansion.

What develops from these chapters is a picture of the creative practice that underlies reading in English between the late twelfth and early fourteenth centuries. Reading, in these manuscripts, is generative, whether by producing a further copy of the text, as scribes did when they read (Chapter One), or through the scratching of unthinking crosses on the page (Chapter Four). Reading provokes writing—or marking: writing on the mind, writing in the margin, writing on blank folios left at the end of the quire for the purpose of expansion (Chapter Five). Due to reading, then, the manuscript book never reaches a static, finished form, for creative reading practice ensured that books continued their transformation through the accretion of more material, more marks, more participatory gestures. These creative gestures also showcase early Middle English reading as an outward-looking practice, drawing from and pushing towards non-textual use. Readers involved their books in their lives, and thus, books became sites of exchange—where snippets of the external world were drawn in, read through,

[97] Catherine Brown, 'Manuscript is the New Digital', *Beyond the Imagetext* (New Chaucer Society, Queen Mary, University of London, 12 July 2016).

and sometimes recorded, but in which the textual often gave way or gave out to the creative, generative, impulses that allowed for further use.

PART I

Copying

PART I: CHAPTER 1

Scribal Readers

The scribe of a thirteenth-century poetic manuscript occasionally leaves a line or two of his copy incomplete, thus:

> Mest alle men he yeueþ drynke. of one deofles (senthe)
> He schal him cunne schilde wel. yef he him (wole hi þenthe)
>
> [Most all men he gives drink of a devil's (draft),
> He must know to shield himself well if (he wishes to think) for himself.][1]

The omissions seem to signal where the exemplar was deemed faulty or illegible and the scribe chose to leave a gap rather than copy erroneous material.[2] However, someone has filled in the missing words, as indicated by the round brackets, not long after the manuscript was

[1] Oxford, Jesus College MS 29, f. 173v; Betty Hill, ed., *An Edition of the early Middle English* Poema Morale *with Introduction and Commentary* (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1957), 292, ll. 329-30.

[2] See Daniel Wakelin, 'When Scribes Won't Write: Gaps in Middle English Books', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 36 (2014), 262 [249-78].

produced.[3] These corrections are not *ad hoc* compositions tacked to the end of the line to make up the discrepancies in metre and rhyme; rather, the additions agree with the textual tradition found across all extant copies of the poem.[4] These few words, then, provide an example of the (semi)traceable use of *this* copy in parallel with an exemplar. The supplementations this reader makes, although small, reveal his reading of a copy of a text that is rarely visible—the exemplar. In doing so the reader demonstrates the reflexivity of scribal work: reading is a necessity of textual production. One book generates another, as a copy cannot be made without the use of an exemplar. In fact, in contrast to critical interest in discontinuous reading practices, an established scribal exemplar may be one of the few manuscripts that we can confidently confirm has been read continuously throughout. However, what this reading practice consisted of—to what extent it was considered, engaged, or purely mechanical—is difficult to ascertain. How does one detect the use of a no-longer extant work, the only trace of which is a new copy of the text itself?

To answer this question it is worth considering the concept of *variance*. The tendency for scribes to alter the text of their copy creates familiar problems for editors and textual critics, and has been regarded as everything from the nuisance product of 'bad' copyists to the

[3] The correcting hand appears to be a late thirteenth-century Anglicana, characterized by 'looped back' forks at the top of the ascenders on **l** and **h**, and the round looping **w**, as well as the short **s**, which is open and slightly splaying on the upper loop, but closed on the bottom. Compare M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands 1250-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 1, Plate i, for similar forked ascenders with loops weighted to the right; and Charles Johnson and Hilary Jenkinson, *English Court Hand A.D. 1066-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), 42, fig. 10, for **s** and 52, fig. 8 for **w**. The copying date for the poem itself is placed sometime between 1256 and 1300: Betty Hill, 'The History of Jesus College, Oxford MS. 29', *Medium Ævum*, 32:1 (1963), 204 [203-13].

[4] Compare Hans Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische "*Poema Morale*": Kristisch Herausgegeben mit Grammatischer Durchprüfung und Deutscher Übersetzung* (Leipzig: Mayer & Müller, 1934), 195, ll. 333-4.

creative work of 'scribal editors'.[5] Since Bernard Cerquiglini identified the positive implications of *variance*, its potential to create 'joyful excess' in the transmission of texts, much work has been done on the inventive additions scribes made to their texts.[6] Here the ability of scribes to take a text and make it their own is brought to the fore, along with the 'intellectual and even creative engagement' that this represents, giving rise to the notion of 'scribal authorship'.[7] However, though there is certainly evidence that confirms the potential of scribes to radically reimagine their texts, most variance occurs at a much less conspicuous level.[8] Small alterations to word-choice, tense, and metre, as well as mechanical errors and other perhaps unintentional changes, make up the majority of the variants found in most manuscripts.[9] What is more, many of these points of variation may be the result of diligent scribes trying to correct perceived errors found in their exemplars.[10] Far from evidencing authorship, then, low-level variation seems to indicate a commitment to avoiding major changes, adapting rather than rewriting the text to conform to an imagined ideal. *Variance*, though it does occasionally bespeak a major project of creative participation on the part of a scribe, more often serves as a

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[5] Compare George Kane, *Chaucer and Langland: Historical and Textual Approaches* (London: Athlone Press, 1989), especially 208 [206-13]; to Derek Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts: Some Developments and Some Problems', *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (University of Chicago Press, 1985), 103 [92-106].

[6] Bernard Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology*, trans. Betsy Wing (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999), 21; for instance, in English books of this period, see Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State UP, 2012); Bella Millett, '*Mouvance* and the Medieval Author: Re-Editing *Ancrene Wisse*', *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. Alastair Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 9-20.

[7] Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts', 95.

[8] Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375-1510* (CUP, 2014), 46-9.

[9] See Lee Patterson, 'The Logic of Textual Criticism and the Way of Genius: The Kane-Donaldson *Piers Ploughman* in Historical Perspective', *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (University of Chicago Press, 1985), 61 [55-91].

[10] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 58-60.

reminder of the imperfect processes of scribal practice that aimed to make the truest copy possible and the points at which accurate transcription of the exemplar went wrong. At the root of that practice was scribal reading, or more properly scribal misreading.

While this point may seem pedestrian, its implications are fundamental to understanding the process of copying exemplars as an untapped evidence for the history of reading. The practice of scribal reading has been indirectly acknowledged by discussions of scribal authorship. Matthew Fisher, for instance, points out that the additions made to texts can sometimes prove that 'scribes read the texts they copied, and they also read texts that do not survive in their hand.'[11] Just as each variant reading of a text can be used as evidence for the scribal act of writing, putting pen to paper with the intention of correcting, altering—perhaps minutely—or transferring truly, then it is also evidence of the scribal act of reading that preceded it. For, while the process of making creative changes may entail a working knowledge of the text and perhaps other works from which extracts, themes, and information may be drawn, attempts to avoid alteration involve an even closer adherence to—and reading of—the exemplar. That is not to say that the reading practices of most scribes before or during their copying are analogous to either of the kinds of reading discussed in most scholarship: it is neither the ruminative *lectio* of monastic life, in which texts must be absorbed and pondered upon, nor the scholastic harvesting of information. Rather, scribal reading, based on evidence in the copying of exemplars, is the rapid redeployment of material for practical purposes. Reading, here, may be nugatory and transient—simply transferring the text from a to b—as often as it is critical or sustained. Nevertheless, while no copyist could have memorised every

[11] Fisher, *Scribal Authorship*, 8.

item he had ever reproduced, it does not follow that scribes had no sense of what they were copying.

Therefore, this chapter will use scribes' handling of exemplars as evidence for an admittedly specific type of continuous and complete reading of the text. In so doing, it will demonstrate how variations made during copying underlie different aspects of scribal reading practice. It will therefore engage with a number of critical debates about scribal variation, including dialectal translation, scribal editing, and occurrences of mechanical error to show that all of these practices can be related to the ways in which different scribes read their exemplars at different times. Previously, it has not been uncommon for editorial theorists to bemoan both mechanical copying—often resulting in a *literatim* copy—and engaged editorial behaviour in which the scribe intervenes in the text of his copy. Here, the *literatim* copyist is cast as unthinking, and the inventive copyist, interfering.[12] While recent scholarship, as noted above, has contested this view, offering analyses of the care and attention that scribes may have put into both of these practices, this chapter will show that such styles of copying overlap because of their root in scribal reading. It will demonstrate that scribes engaged with the text of the exemplar at a number of levels simultaneously, leading them to change their copying practice as they encountered specific textual triggers. Thus, a scribe who routinely scanned his exemplar memorising short sections—often half lines—of text to copy might resort to deciphering the letters one-by-one when he encountered a word he did not recognise, or might replace a couplet completely if aspects of its rhetorical make up struck him as discordant.[13] By

[12] See the opposition set up by Kane, *Chaucer and Langland*, 208, for instance.

[13] A similar argument is made by Roy Liuzza, 'Scribal Habit: the Evidence of the Old English Gospels', *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Mary Swan (CUP, 2000), 154-60 [143-65] in relation to the copying of Old English.

analysing the variance of a manuscript with an eye to the processes that caused it in this way we may gain insight into the make up and reading of its now-lost exemplar.

An analysis of textual variants requires a work that survives in multiple copies. Due to the low survival rate amongst early Middle English texts, examples of these texts in multiple copies are scarce. However, five of the seven extant copies of *Poema Morale*, a late twelfth-century homiletic poem, are found in multilingual manuscript sources. To make the analysis of scribal reading manageable, this chapter focuses primarily on copies of this poem, with brief comparison to other works in the same manuscripts:[14]

1. TCC, MS B.14.52, ff. 2r-9v, s. xii.ex. (T)[15]
2. LPL, MS 487, ff. 59v-65r, c. 1200 (L)[16]
3. BL, MS Egerton 613, ff. 64r-70v, s. xiii.in. (e)
4. BL, MS Egerton 613, ff. 7r-12v, s. xiii^{1} (E)[17]
5. BodL, MS Digby 4, ff. 97r-110v, s. xiii^{1} (D)[18]
6. Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, ff. 169r-174v , s. xiii^{2} (J)[19]
7. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, ff. 115r-120v, c. 1300 (M)[20]

[14] See *DIMEV*, 2113; *LAEMECat*, 162.

[15] *LAEMECat*, 37. This dating agrees with that posited by M. B. Parkes, 'On the Presumed Date and Possible Origin of the Manuscript of the *Ormulum*: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 1', *Five Hundred Years of Words and Sounds: a Festschrift for Eric Dobson*, ed. E. G. Stanley and Douglas Gray (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1983), 124 [115-27], and sits a little earlier than the dating given by Hall, *Selections from Early Middle English*, v. 2, 312. However, its age relative to L is debated. Current consensus suggests that T is the earlier due to the inclusion of traditionally Ælfician materials in the homily collection that accompanies it: Bella Millett, 'The Use of "Model Sermons" in Early Middle English Preaching', *Medieval English Research Seminar* (University of Oxford, 4 November 2015).

[16] *LAEMECat*, 111; Hall, *Selections from Early Middle English*, v. 2, 312.

[17] Laing dates the whole manuscript to c. 1250 (*LAEMECat*, 85), but the volume is a composite, and e is the earlier of its two copies of *Poema Morale*, with e dating to the 'first quarter of the thirteenth century', and E to 'somewhat later'. See also Hall, *Selections from Early Middle English*, v. 2, 312; Betty Hill, 'Notes on the Egerton e Text of the *Poema Morale*', *Neophilologus*, 50:3 (1966), 352 [352-9].

[18] *LAEMECat*, 127; Julius Zupitza, 'Zum *Poema Morale*', *Anglia*, 1 (1878), 5 [5-38].

[19] *LAEMECat*, 145. Internal evidence suggests that J was written not long after 1276: Hall, *Selections from Early Middle English*, v. 2, 285.

[20] *LAEMECat*, 27.

Poema Morale treats many themes common to contemporary sermons and homilies, including 'commonplace and familiar learning', 'proverbial content', and the traditional tenets of the faith.[21] Several additional fragments of the poem are found in the form of extracted couplets used in contemporary sermons and copied into the margins of other books:

1. Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, ff. 46v, 93r, 253r (Ma1, Ma2, Ma3)
2. Durham University Library, MS Cosin V.III.2, f. 127v (Dur)
3. BL, MS Royal 7. C. iv, f. 106v (Roy)[22]

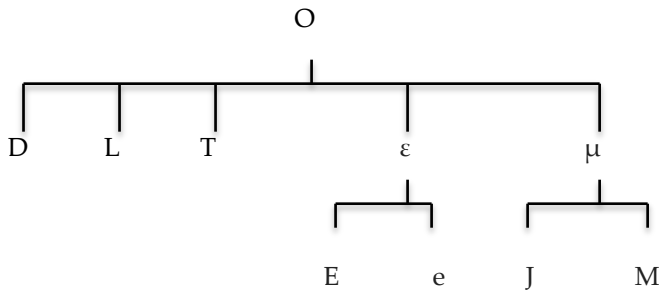
This accumulation of copies, which represents one of the largest surviving corpora of early Middle English verse, provides a manageable sample from which to draw conclusions without exceeding the range of the chapter. The discussion benefits from the close relationship between copies E and e, which may share an exemplar;[23] however, given that copies of the poem range between 267 and 400 lines in length, a relatively large number of variant readings are also

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[21] Hill, ed., *An Edition of* Poema Morale, i.

[22] *LAEMECat*, 120-1, 53, and 101 respectively. I will return to these fragments in Chapter Five, 215-7.

[23] Betty Hill, 'Notes on *The Conduct of Life*', *Notes and Queries*, 56:1 (2009), 12 [9-12] suggests that these two copies of the poem, now located in the same predominantly religious miscellany (BL, MS Egerton 613, ff. 7r-12v, and 64r-70v), derive from an exemplar 'not shared by the other texts.' Common consensus agrees that—if not directly related—the two manuscripts at least descend from a common exemplar, which Hans Marcus calls ε: Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische 'Poema Morale'*, 19, 21-4. Marcus, 19-20 also suggests that J and M share a common ancestor, but this conclusion has been less widely accepted by later editors. On the basis of his conclusions Marcus produced the most recent stemma for the manuscripts (23):



For earlier versions, see Zupitza, 'Zum *Poema Morale*', 36; Anna C. Paues, 'A Newly Discovered Manuscript of the *Poema Morale*', *Anglia*, 30 (1907), 223 [217-37]; Samuel Moore, 'The Manuscripts of the Poema Morale: Revised Stemma', *Anglia*, 54 (1930), 275 [269-87]. All of these attempts organise the manuscripts into two separate traditions.

present in some places. The divergences in the lines and means of transmission, which resulted in copies of such differing length, mean that *Poema Morale* has the potential to offer a broad overview of available reading practices. Accordingly, this chapter will treat *Poema Morale* as a case study to focus its investigations into scribal reading, *variance*, and the complex relationship these features share with the on-going use of the book.

Despite being one of the most widely attested examples of early Middle English literature, the critical attention to *Poema Morale* has been minimal, perhaps due to its dry, sermonic nature. Its usefulness as a case study, though, has been recognised in the field of early English linguistics.[24] But the bulk of scholarly interest is accounted for by Betty Hill's analysis of the text, which has focussed on the description of its material context and history.[25] In recent years the cultural significance of *Poema Morale* has received wider recognition—especially as the first record of lineated verse in English[26]—and is the subject of several on-going investigations.[27] The poem has been published in several editions, but only one—the 1934 edition by Hans Marcus—makes a critical account of all seven extant versions.[28] Other than this, the L, D, T and E texts were all published in isolation and in various combinations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The most up-to-date edition, save for a

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[24] Margaret Laing, 'A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English: the value of texts surviving in more than one version', *History of Englishes: New Methods and Interpretations in Historical Linguistics*, ed. Matti Rissanen, Ossi Ihalainen, Terttu Nevalainen, and Irma Taavitsainen (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 566-81.

[25] See, besides those already cited, Betty Hill, 'The Twelfth-Century *Conduct of Life*, formerly the *Poema Morale* or *A Moral Ode*', *Leeds Studies in English*, 9 (1977), 97-144; Betty Hill, 'A Couplet from the *Conduct of Life* in Maidstone MS A 13', *Notes and Queries*, 50:4, (2003), 377; Betty Hill, 'The Writing of the Septenary Couplet', *Notes and Queries*, 52:3 (2005), 296; Betty Hill, 'Notes on *The Conduct of Life*', *Notes and Queries*, 56:1 (2009), 9-12.

[26] As I stated in my paper, 'Lineating Verse in Early Middle English', *Making Early Middle English* (University of Victoria, 25 September 2016).

[27] See forthcoming work by Carla María Thomas, Leslie Carpenter, and Dorothy Kim, who kindly shared manuscripts of their current projects with me.

[28] Marcus, ed., *Frühmittelenglische* "Poema Morale", 169-200.

student edition of the T text,[29] is Betty Hill's now decades-old thesis, which provides a separate critical edition with comprehensive notes for each of the seven copies.[30] Traditionally, scholars have taken the T copy of the poem as their "base" text because it presents both the longest (400 lines), and probably the earliest version of the text. However, this copy is not demonstrably closer to a hypothetical original than several of the other extant copies.[31] Nor is it, in fact, any longer than copy E, as the T manuscript's length results from a repeated couplet which features at both lines 73-4 and 203-4, likely as a result of the scribe turning to the wrong page in his exemplar when he began a new page of his copy.[32] As such, where cross-corpus comparison is needed this study will refer to Marcus' critical edition, while readings of individual manuscripts will be taken from Hill's more recent separate editions, both with direct reference to the manuscripts.

Reading to Memorise, Reading the Memory

The potential for the *Poema Morale* to reveal information about the scribe's interactions with his exemplar has been superficially noted—sometimes without consideration of the implications—in relation to a number of manuscripts. Manuscript M, in particular, is regularly noted for the garbled order of its lines, which, Anna Paues suggests, may be attributed to a scribe who

[29] Carla María Thomas, 'Poema Morale', *Old and Middle English c. 890–c. 1450, An Anthology*, third edition, ed. Elaine Treharne (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 338-53.

[30] Hill, ed., *An Edition of* Poema Morale, 180-366.

[31] See n. 23.

[32] Hill, 'Twelfth-Century *Conduct of Life*', 98.

copied the poem from memory.[33] Thus, though M reproduces most lines of the traditional poem, the order in which it does so often 'differs wildly' from other copies.[34] So, where most manuscripts give:

46 þider we sendeð and selue bereð to litel and to selde.
47 þider we solde draȝen and don wel ofte and ilome;
48 For þer ne sal me us naht binimen mid wrangwise dome.
49 þider we solden alle draȝhen, wolde ȝe me ileuen,
50 For þer ne mai hit us binime, ne king ne his serreue.
51 Al þet beste þet we habbeð, þider we solde senden;[35]

M gives:

	Þider we sendeþ 7 us self bereþ to litel 7 to selde	*46*
	Þider ȝe scolde alle don þolde ȝe me yleue	*49*
	Þar ne miȝte hit us binime king ne no scerreue	*50*
45	Þider þe scolde bere 7 draȝe ofte 7 þel ylome	*47*
	Þar ne miȝte hit us binime mid none þronge dome	*48*
	Al þat faireste þat man haueþ to gode he hit scolde sende[36]	*51*

Here the scribe has not only inverted the middle two couplets, a regular feature of his copying, but he has also replaced the first half of line 48, 'For þar ne sal me us naht binime' with a repetition of the exchanged line, 'þar ne miȝte hit us binime'. In itself this example might be considered a matter of scribal error: eyeskip that led the copyist to start copying the correct line—'þider ȝe scolde'—but to complete the second half of the line with the ending from two lines below. However, the degree of error in M seems to go beyond either accident or carelessness: this copy lacks 69 lines present in other copies of *Poema Morale*, as well as adding

[33] Paues, 'Newly Discovered Manuscript', 225.

[34] Paues, 'Newly Discovered Manuscript', 224; Laing, 'Value of Texts', 571; Hill, 'Twelfth-Century *Conduct of Life*', 99.

[35] Marcus, ed., *Frühmittelenglische* "Poema Morale", 172, ll. 46-51.

[36] Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, f. 115v; Hill, ed., *An Edition of* Poema Morale, 194, ll. 42-7, with the equivalent line numbers of T added in italics to the right of the text.

four lines unique to this version.[37] It therefore exhibits an exceptionally large degree of variance from other written examples of the tradition, leading scholars to question whether this scribe was working from a written exemplar at all. Rather, Paues and others have suggested, the anomalies in the sequencing of this copy might be due to the copyist's struggle to recall the text from memory.[38]

Certainly, copying from memory is also shaped by, and contingent upon scribal reading practices. In order to be memorised, the text of the poem must have existed in some manner: this is not an original composition. It is quite possible that the copyist committed the text to memory after having read it in manuscript—or roll—form. In fact, committing the text, or at least passages of it, to memory was an important aspect of successful reading that was consistently reinforced throughout the medieval period. From an elementary stage, children were expected to memorise sections of their reading, and recalling aspects of the work was a vital part of the process of *meditatio* by which the reader applied her study to her daily life. Indeed, virtuous clerks may have been able to memorise whole books.[39] In this case, the M scribe might be engaging in a particularly careful and involved form of scholastic reading, which involved careful parsing of the text before committing it to memory to copy out later.

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[37] Hill, ed., *An Edition of* Poema Morale, 207 counts 335 lines in this version.

[38] Laing, 'Value of Texts', 571; Paues, 'Newly Discovered Manuscript', 225.

[39] For more on memorial copying practices, see Mary Swan, '*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies* in the Twelfth Century', *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne (CUP, 2000) 80 [62-82]; Mary Swan, 'Memorialised Readings: Manuscript Evidence for Old English Homily Composition', *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and their Heritage*, ed. P. Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 205-17; Loredana Teresi, 'Mnemonic Transmission of Old English Texts in the Post-Conquest Period', *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne (CUP, 2000), 98-116. Bella Millett, personal communication, 4 November 2015, thinks it likely that the text was memorised for delivery, and thus that it may have been transmitted this way too. See, also, assertions by Mary Carruthers for the memorizing of texts of similar and much greater lengths: Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: a Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, second edition (CUP, 2008), 197-201.

Equally, although more difficult to achieve with any degree of accuracy, the scribe may have memorised the poem from an aural performance, having heard it used in preaching or recited as a form of entertainment.[40] In fact, its origin in the memory of a heard event may better explain the high degree of inaccuracy found in M. Further, memorisation—whether from a written or a spoken original—might still be formulated as a type of reading. Juliet Fleming suggests, expanding on the work of Jacques Derrida, that a material support is unnecessary to the theoretical notion of writing.[41] Writing, she suggests, may occur in any medium, and upon any surface: neurons on tissue, memory on the mind? Certainly, in a twelfth-century sermon, memory is figured as the pen with which devotion is written upon the conscience.[42] It comes as no surprise, then, that linguistically many of the metaphors Richard de Bury supplies for reading—'*thesauros* [treasuries]', '*favi* [honeycombs]'—may also be applied to memory.[43] A scribe copying his text from memory, as the scribe of the M copy of *Poema Morale* may have done, therefore participates in a double reading. First he must read to memorise, copying the text from its source and writing it onto his conscience; later he must read that copy back to himself—remember it—and in doing so, copy it out again, returning it to a material form.

However, the consideration that M derives from a memorial transcription relies on a false premise: the modern idea that an oral or memorial transmission is less reliable than a written one, and would therefore explain an unreliable copy. In actuality, while scribes were

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[40] As Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 216 points out, listening students were also called upon to memorise material as it was delivered to them, so this method of dissemination does not necessarily point towards any less sophistication in the M scribe's practices.

[41] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 128.

[42] See Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 195.

[43] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 200; see Richard de Bury, *The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham Treasurer and Chancellor of Edward III*, ed. and trans. E. C. Thomas (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1888; reprinted by Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1960), 20-2.

popularly known to err in their transmission—later prompting the composition of humorous complaints, of which the most famous is *Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn*[44]—a trained memory was regarded 'as more reliable than [a] written copy' by many medieval scholars, including Bury.[45] Rather than memorial transmission, then, the inconsistencies and omissions in M may be consistent with the sort of 'verbal substitutions and conversational expansions' expected in texts recorded from direct speech as a listener to a lecture or sermon. The weighting of missing lines toward the end of the copy is suggestive of a listener who loses accuracy as they fall behind the pace of the speaker.[46] That said, M itself does not exhibit the type of tachygraphy found in twelfth-century sermon manuscripts copied directly from a spoken source: small, informal letterforms with a rapid and personalised *ductus*, and a highly flexible abbreviation system.[47] It is neat, with no marginal additions, and relatively few insertions; it abbreviates only the word *that*, and is written in a set script, with space and time committed to its layout. As such, it is unlikely that this particular copy of the poem came directly from an oral source, but it is probable that the types of disordered lines it exhibits

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[44] For more on this tradition before Chaucer, see Glending Olson, 'Author, Scribe, and Curse: The Genre of "Adam Scriveyn"', *The Chaucer Review*, 42:3 (2008), 290-5 [284-97]; John Scattergood, 'The Jongleur, the Copyist, and the Printer: The Tradition of Chaucer's *Wordes unto Adam, His Own Scriveyn*', *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context*, ed. Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1990), 499-508; and Robert K. Root, 'Publication before Printing', *PMLA*, 28:3 (1913), 420-6, 429-31 [417-31].

[45] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 202.

[46] Swan, 'Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', 80. See also Derek Pearsall, 'The Origins of the Alliterative Revival', *The Alliterative Tradition in the Fourteenth Century*, ed. Bernard S. Levy and Paul E. Szarmach (Kent State UP, 1981) 6 [1-24]; Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1992) 134-69; and Karl Reichl, 'The Middle English Popular Romance: Minstrel versus Hack Writer', *The Ballard and Oral Literature*, ed. Joseph Harris (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991) 262 [234-68] who all propose that oral transmission of a text causes greater corruption in the copy.

[47] See M. B. Parkes, 'Tachygraphy in the Middle Ages: Writing Techniques Employed for *Reportationes* of Lectures and Sermons', *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, 3 (1989), 159-69, reprinted in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 20, 26 [19-33].

point to a copy made from an oral performance, or more formal dictation to the scribe, earlier in its transmission history.[48]

In fact, one of the scribe's most common orthographical errors confirms that M itself was copied visually from a manuscript exemplar. He routinely omits the letter **n** from the construction <ing>, resulting in the spelling 'euenigges' for 'eueninges [evenings]', and 'ermigges' for 'erminges [wretches]'.[49] This is not a typical feature of the scribe's orthography, as he correctly transcribes the rhyme-word 'kinges' in the following line. It would be hard for this orthographical error, which fails to reflect the phonic qualities of the rhyme scheme, to be produced had the scribe heard the couplet spoken aloud. Rather, it seems likely that the consistent failure to account for the **n** in formulations following **i** represents a misapprehension of the macron used in the **n** suspension, perceiving instead an accent over the **i,** not uncommon following clusters of minims.[50] Therefore, while manuscript M is not itself a copy of either an oral or memorised version of the text, the possibility of either mode of transmission earlier in the text's history remains.[51] Indeed, copying from rough notes taken from an oral delivery may account for the confusion between superscript suspensions and accents, which in set scripts of

[48] Christopher Cannon, '"Wyth her owen handys": What Women's Literacy can Teach us about Langland and Chaucer', *Essays in Criticism*, 66:3 (2016), 277-300.

[49] Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, ff. 115v, and 117r; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 194, l. 56, and 199, l. 154; and f. 119r; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 204, l. 285. It is possible that both of these forms were in regular use in early Middle English orthography, and perhaps in spoken pronunciation. The *OED*, 'erming, n.1', lists the forms 'eremig' and 'ermigges' as possible early Middle English variants. However, it describes both forms as probable 'transmission error[s]', and does not list where either comes from: it seems likely that they refer to this manuscript.

[50] This accent is found reasonably regularly when **i** comes after **m**, **n**, and other minim heavy letterforms in this text. The macron suspension can also be found used successfully—see 'endi*n*gge': Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 186, l. 112.

[51] In fact, Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 20-1, sees the interference in vernacular textual history caused by spoken language as essential to the creation of such variance.

this period are usually distinct.[52] Given its themes and motifs it would not be surprising to find that *Poema Morale* was delivered in sermons and circulated widely in spoken, as well as written, form: rather it would be surprising if it were not. However, manuscript M is not direct evidence of this tradition of use—though it is very possible that this is the source of a great deal of its divergence—and more likely, it provides an example of a scribe attempting to read and copy, or rewrite, an abbreviated, tachygraphic exemplar. Its minor spelling errors reflect the work of a scribe who otherwise manages to unpick an exemplar that may have been difficult to read. Here, then, micro-variations in the orthography of the copy provide a better guide than more obvious irregularities to the transmission of the text and the reading undertaken by the scribe. Thus, the evidence in manuscript M reveals not a copy written from memory, but a reading of a text which is itself only a faint trace of memorial transmission—a memory of the memory, and a process of reading and writing instead.

Mechanical Engagement

Nevertheless, the most conclusive evidence that a text has been read in full may be found when decisive alterations are made throughout a copy. The most pervasive variation of this

[52] Albert Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books: From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (CUP, 2003): compare the diacritical strokes on **i** (59, 90), or the hairline strokes, set at around 45° from the base line, and touching or close to touching the letters they mark in plates 22, 23, with the heavy, horizontal, and sometimes lightly flourished macrons marking **n** and **m** suspensions in the same plates. Also relevant is the brief discussion of otiose strokes in English manuscripts (187), which observes the potential for confusion.

type comes in the form of complete "translation" from one dialect to another.[53] That is when a scribe shifts his text wholesale from the form of English found in his exemplar into another regional dialect.[54] Margaret Laing has previously drawn attention to the high degree of regionalism in copies of *Poema Morale*.[55] Although the dialectal forms represented are all of southern origin, they cover a broad geographical area: from the borders of Herefordshire and Shropshire, to Gloucestershire, and across the south to northern Kent and Essex.[56] The various iterations of the key accusative form of the word 'them'—'hem' (TLEM), 'hes' (T), 'hom' (L), 'hi' (LEeM), 'ham' (M), and 'heom' (EeJ)—illustrate this dialectal range.[57] However, a

[53] The practice of transposing texts from one dialect to another was described in terms of translation by several medieval scribes, including most famously in a colophon to a Norfolk recension of Richard Rolle's *Form of Living*: 'Here endith the informacion of Richard the Ermyte y^{t} / he wrote to an Ankyr translate out of Northown tunge / in to Sutherne that it schulde the bettir be vnderstondyng of men that be of the selve Countre Amen [Here ends the information of Richard the Hermit, which / he wrote to an anchoress, translated out of Northern tongue / into Southern so that it could be understood better by men of that area. Amen.]', CUL, MS Ii.iv.9, f. 197v. See, Angus McIntosh, 'A New Approach to Middle English Dialectology', *English Studies*, 44:1-6 (1963), 8 [1-11]; Richard Beadle, 'Prolegomena to a Literary Geography of Later Medieval Norfolk', *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of* A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English, ed. Felicity Riddy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991), 93 [89-108]; A. S. G. Edwards, 'Journeyman Manuscript Production and Lay Piety: the Hopton Hall Manuscript', *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 114 [113-21].

[54] This practice has been widely discussed, especially in light of the publication *LALME* and *LAEMECat*. See *LALME*, v. 1, 1-36. See, also, a number of essays in Michael Benskin and M. L. Samuels, eds., *So Meny People Longages and Tonges: Philological Essays in Scots and Mediaeval English Presented to Angus McIntosh* (Edinburgh: Middle English Dialect Project, 1981); especially, Michael Benskin and Margaret Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen* in Middle English Manuscripts', 55-106; and M. L. Samuels, 'Spelling and Dialect in the Late and Post-Middle English Manuscripts', 43-54. Many of these focus on texts produced after 1350; for earlier material, see especially Margaret Laing, 'Dialectical Analysis and Linguistic Composite Texts in Middle English', *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*, ed. Margaret Laing (Aberdeen UP, 1989), 150-69; and Laing, 'Value of Texts'.

[55] Laing, 'Value of Texts', 569; Margaret Laing and Angus McIntosh, 'Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 335', 14-52.

[56] Laing, 'Value of Texts', 571-3.

[57] See Laing, 'Value of Texts', 574. The importance of this form for dialectal analysis is described by McIntosh, 'New Approach to Middle English Dialectology', 3.

comparison of the opening couplet across the extant corpus gives a better sense of the scale of the orthographic variation present:[58]

T: Ich am nu elder þan ich þas a þintre 7 a lore.
L: ich em nu alder þene ich þes aþintre 7 a lare.
e: Ich aem elder þen ich þes. a þintre and alore.
E: Ic æm elder þanne ic þæs. aþinter and alore.
D: Ic am elder þanne ic þes / a þintre 7 ec a lore
J: Ich am eldre þan ich wes a winter and ek on lore.
M: [I]ch am elder þane ich þas of þintre 7 of lore

T: Ich þealde more þan idude mi þit oh to be more.
L: Ich þelde mare þene ich dede mi (þit) ahte don mare.
e: Ich þælde more þanne ic dude. mi þit ah to ben more.
E: ic þælde more þanne ic dude. mi þit ah to ben more
D: ic ealdi more þanne ic dede / mi þit oȝhte to bi more
J: Ich welde more þan ich dude. my wyt auh te beo more.
M: [I]ch eldi more þane ich dude mi þit aȝte beo þe more [59]

The scale of orthographic variation in just this opening couplet points towards not just the occasional alteration for poetic purposes, but adaptations of spelling to reflect both modernisation and personal and regional dialect. Here, then, scribes have made consistent changes to their exemplar *throughout* their copy. Such regular changes may suggest that scribes engaged in sustained linguistic parsing of their exemplar, as opposed to uncomprehending visual replication of its letterforms. Indeed, J. R. R. Tolkien suggested that complete dialectal translation required a scribe to read their exemplar with total comprehension throughout. For, he states, great concentration as well as 'knowledge in detail…of both dialects' is needed to

[58] This happens even despite the working in process, which may lead some scribes to begin their copy in a dialect closer to that of their exemplar before slipping towards a more comfortable one: see Benskin and Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen*', 66.

[59] Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 254, ll. 1-2; 353, ll.1-3; 306, ll. 1-2; 328, ll. 1-2; 216, ll. 1-4; 279, ll. 1-2; 192, ll. 1-2. Transcribed with reference to the relevant manuscripts: TCC, MS B.14.52, f. 2r; LPL, MS 487, f. 59v; BL, MS Egerton 613, ff. 64r and 7r; BodL, MS Digby 4, f. 97r; Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 169r; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, f. 115r.

allow scribes to convert every regional form.[60] That said, to identify—without caveats—a case of complete translation, we would need to compare a copy and its direct exemplar: a luxury not afforded by many texts.[61] There are no such manuscript pairs in the *Poema Morale* corpus.

Nevertheless, the range of dialectical forms in extant copies demonstrates that, at some point in the text's transmission history, dialectical translation did occur and perhaps was even usual. In some cases, scribes may even have deliberately set out to translate their exemplars. The intention to translate a text wholesale into another dialect may point to the scribe's anticipation of the use to which his work would be put—perhaps 'for reading aloud to congregations or other gatherings in the local dialect.'[62] To some extant—as per Tolkien's suggestion—this phenomenon might also be accounted for by scribal reading. In this case, by finding comparable samples of writing by the same scribe it may be possible to isolate some of that individual's reading practices. Of the *Poema Morale* manuscripts, the miscellanies J and L,

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[60] J. R. R. Tolkien, '*Ancrene Wisse* and *Hali Meiðhad*', *Essays and Studies*, 14 (1929), 111 [104-26].

[61] Occasionally these relationships can be identified, see Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 45-69; Daniel Wakelin, 'Writing the Words', *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (CUP: 2011), 50-54 [34-58]; and Richard Beadle, 'Geoffrey Spirleng (c. 1426–c. 1494): a Scribe of the Canterbury Tales in his Time', *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers*, ed. P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 116-146, especially his explication of the value of identifiable exemplars at 118-9. See, also, N. R. Ker, 'Copying an Exemplar: Two Manuscripts of Jerome on Habakkuk', *Miscellanea Codicologica F. Masai Dicata*, ed. P. Cockshaw, M. Garand, and P. Jodogne (Ghent: Story-Scientia, 1979), 203-10, reprinted in *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage,* ed. Andrew G. Watson (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 75-86; N. R. Ker, 'Eton College MS 44 and its Exemplar', *Varia Codicologica: Essays Presented to G. I. Lieftinick, I* (Amsterdam: 1972), 77-89, reprinted in *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage,* ed. Andrew G. Watson (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 87-99. In some cases it may be possible—to a certain degree—to back formulate the exemplar of related manuscripts through comparison of their contents and scribal practices. For instance, see Neil Cartlidge's work on manuscript J in relation to *The Owl and the Nightingale*: Neil Cartlidge, 'Imagining X: A Lost Early Vernacular Miscellany', *Imagining the Book*, ed. Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), especially 33-6 [31-44]. There is potential for a similar protocol to be followed using the related E and e copies of *Poema Morale*; however, there is not scope for this within the current study.

[62] Richard Beadle and M. B. Parkes, eds., *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: A facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27*, v. 3 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980), 56.

with other works alongside *Poema Morale*, were copied by the same scribe throughout, while work by the scribe responsible for T occurs at several other places in that manuscript. In his observations of the hands in this manuscript N. R. Ker notes several linguistic features that are limited to the work of the *Poema Morale* scribe (Hand 1).[63]

1. His use of **a** in place of Old English **æ**.
2. The replacement of Old English **sc** with **s**.
3. The insertion of **e** between **r** and a consonant.
4. The introduction of **ea** in front of **l** + consonant.
5. The use of the spellings *neih*, *þeih*, and *aihte*.[64]

The limitation of these variant spellings to the work of a single scribe suggests one of two things: either that the spellings are representative of what this copyist found in his exemplar, and the other scribe (Hand 2) routinely archaised his copy; or that this scribe of *Poema Morale* and some more pieces (Hand 1) made alterations to the orthography he found in his exemplar. The second of these explanations is more convincing, given the distribution of these forms across all the stints the scribe copied, including both *Poema Morale* and some homilies which originated in a different, and possibly orthographically distinct, exemplar. The poem is housed in a separate quire at the front of the manuscript, which has been lengthened by the addition of a singleton to prevent the text overrunning the quire boundary. Unlike the rest of the manuscript, this quire is not paginated. Rather, medieval pagination begins on f. 10r, marking the original start of a planned homiletic volume.[65] The configuration of the parchment in the *Poema Morale* quire, arranged HFHF where the rest of the volume is FHFH, also reflects its

[63] N. R. Ker, 'The Scribes of the Trinity Homilies', *Medium Ævum*, 1 (1932), 138 [138-40].

[64] Ker, 'Trinity Homilies', 140. Jonathan Wilcox, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), 18, posits that the hand responsible for the *Poema Morale* is different from the first hand that works on the homilies due to the difference in script size and *mise-en-page* found between the first quire and those that follow; however, this seems unlikely given the strength of the linguistic evidence.

[65] Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 16-20.

genesis as a separate gathering slightly larger in size than the rest of the manuscript.[66] In fact, this quire may have existed as an isolated booklet for some time, certainly long enough for someone to fold it in half and carry it around like that.[67] It is more probable, therefore, that these items were copied separately from separate exemplars than transmitted together, only to be copied as separate pieces and later reunited.[68] The linguistic idiosyncrasies found across the work of the copyist of the T *Poema Morale*, therefore, seem to be a direct result of his copying and reading practices rather than the language or form of his exemplars.

The connection between dialectical translation and reading may not be immediately obvious. Rather, it might be suspected that translation brought texts more closely in line with scribes' spoken language.[69] However, these factors combine in a reading practice that involves an intermediary sonic stage between exemplar and copy. Here, the reading scribe speaks or hears in his head the words of his exemplar resulting in a copy written according to his own phonetic system. In this case, the T scribe must either have read his exemplar aloud as he copied, or transferred the material through a process of dictation, either his own internal

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[66] Elaine Treharne, 'Cambridge, Trinity College, B.14.52', *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan, and Elaine Treharne (University of Leicester, 2010), <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.CTC.B.14.52.htm>.

[67] As indicated by the vertical crease down the centre of the pages, particularly TCC, MS B.14.52, f. 2r, 3v, 7v, and 9v, where the parchment has become worn: Treharne, 'B.14.52'. See, for further examples of this practice, P. R. Robinson, 'The Format of Books: Books, Booklets and Rolls', *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 1100-1400*, v. 2 (CUP, 2008), 41 [41-54]; Parkes and Tschann, *Digby 86*, liii-lvi; Jonathan Wilcox, 'The Use of Ælfric's Homilies: MSS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 and 86 in the Field', *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 352-9, especially 353-5 [346-68].

[68] Equally, TCC, MS B.14.52 shares five homilies with LPL, MS 487 along with *Poema Morale*, so clearly some of these materials did circulate together in various combinations: Treharne, 'B.14.52'; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 99-100.

[69] *LAEMECat*, 38.

dictation or aloud to another.[70] As such, we might look to scribal copying practice as a source of evidence for the growing critical field of sound studies.[71] This sonic stage of reading has been presupposed by dialectologists of the later period (after c. 1350), who suggest that dialectal translation was almost required of copyists who used cursive handwriting; these later copyists relied on inner dictation to transmit whole lines and passages in order to maintain the speed and flow of their pen across the page.[72] For the scribe's construal of the text, then, dialectal translation suggests graphic signs were primarily related to the sound of their syllables. In fact this transaction between symbol and sound suggests—contrary to Tolkien—that translation is a largely automatic side effect of an aural stage in the scribe's reading practice, whether vocalised or not. Yes, the scribe must understand the words he reads, but the act of translation itself appears to occur as an almost mechanical part of that reading practice.

Or such would be the case if the scribe were simply parsing and pronouncing his exemplar phonetically, but it is clear that reading was not such a straightforward procedure. If it were, the resultant copy would present a phonetic reproduction of the exemplar, albeit adapted to the scribe's own pronunciation of his graphic cues. In fact, Richard Beadle has

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[70] Both of these options are attested to by a number of scholars: H. J. Chaytor, *From Script to Print* (CUP, 1945), 7-20. On the practice of reading aloud while copying see Camille, 'Seeing and Reading', 28; on "internal dictation" see *LALME*, v.1, 29; Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 21; Benskin and Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen*', 66, 90; Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 55.

[71] For an overview of this developing field see Dorothy Kim and Christopher Roman, eds., 'Medieval Sound', *Sounding Out!* (Binghamton, NY: 2016-17) <https://soundstudiesblog.com/category/medieval-sounds/>; and for work on manuscripts from this period in particular, see Dorothy Kim, '"'Playing the Medieval Lyric": Remixing, Sampling and Remediating "Head Like a Hole" and "Call Me Maybe"', *Sounding Out!* (Binghamton, NY: 2016) <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2016/04/11/playing-the-medieval-english-lyric-remixing-sampling-and-remediating-head-like-a-hole-and-call-me-maybe/>.

[72] *LALME*, v. 1, 29-30; Benskin and Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen*', 88.

warned against reading orthographic variation as indicative of phonology.[73] Some key regional forms clearly do not indicate sonic difference; for instance the notably Northern <itt> spelling of the word 'it'. Similarly, some graphetic features—such as certain allographs and abbreviation symbols—are likely to be localisable, but have no implications for pronunciation.[74] It might be suggested, then, that the relation of translation to the sounds of words is in fact secondary. Rather, translation relies on a mechanics of reading that is lexical or lexicological: the identification of groups of graphic signs with whole words in the scribe's own idiolect. Here, then, one set of graphemes relates to a separate, taught, concept of the word and its sense. Thus, a scribe's spelling system may be less determined by his regional accent than by the principal of recognising the connection between a graphic sign and its signifier. In this case, rote scribal reading could move directly to the conceptual sense of a word without the intervening sonic phase.

This graphically-determined reading practice would explain the type of partial translation—*Mischsprachen*—in which the scribe of the T copy of *Poema Morale* engages.[75] Without the 'inbuilt motive' for internal dictation caused by cursive scripts, scribes could rely more heavily on their muscle memory to transcribe visual cues. This may account for the greater levels of translation associated with some scripts and some scribes. Some elements of the scribe's orthography are likely to have been mechanically produced, particularly in the case of frequently used words or in highly current scripts. In these cases scribes may have

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[73] Beadle, 'Prolegomena to a Literary Geography', 99. See also, *LALME*, v. 1, 6; Michael Benskin, 'The Letter <þ> and <y> in Later Middle English, and Some Related Matters', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 7:1 (1982), 13-30.

[74] *LALME*, v. 1, 6-7; Benskin, '<þ> and <y>', 14-16, 24-6; and Beadle, 'Prolegomenon to a Literary Geography', 99.

[75] For more on *Mischsprachen* see Benskin and Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen*', especially 76-85; and M. B. Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 67.

developed a muscle memory for particular habitual spellings. As well as translating through determined lexical understanding, as described above, then, scribes also relied on their own unconscious responses. In many cases it is the combination of these two working methods, which resulted from two parallel levels of engagement with their reading, that resulted in two kinds of dialectal translation (or lack thereof) occurring within the same copy.[76]

Therefore, scribes who did not translate their copy may have read even more mechanically than those who did. Due to the relative scarcity of observable translation in post-Conquest manuscripts, Benskin and Laing have suggested that in this period, when most scribes were trained in the importance of Latin inflectional endings and the use of set scripts, replicative letter-by-letter copying was the more common practice.[77] It is clear that the scribe of the L manuscript favoured this technique. The texts that he copied are in several markedly different dialects, which he and his predecessors transmitted without change from their exemplars.[78] *Litteratim* copying like this necessitated that scribes follow their exemplar letter-by-letter, rather than word-by-word. As such, it demonstrates a type of reading that requires no conscious consideration of the meaning but rather focuses on the decoding of graphemes based on shape and form. The visual focus of the reading undertaken by the L scribe results in a series of *homeographic* errors. Occasionally the visual cues in his exemplar caused him to select the wrong character, leading to nonsensical transcriptions such as the replacement of the word 'nule' with 'uuel' in the lines, 'Þe m*on* þ*et* uuel don na god. ne neure god lif lede. er deð 7 dom come to his dure he mei him sare adreden [The man that evil did no good, nor never a

[76] See especially TCC, MS B.14.52, f. 6v; and comments by Ker, 'Trinity Homilies', 139.

[77] Benskin and Laing, 'Translations and *Mischsprachen*', 89; Fisher, *Scribal Authorship*, 37-44.

[78] Celia Sisam, 'The Scribal Tradition of the Lambeth Homilies', *The Review of English Studies*, 2:6 (1951), 111-2 [105-113].

good life led, when death and doom come to his door he may be greatly afraid.]'[79] While it stands to reason that an evil man 'don na god', there is no need to assert that evil people should be worried about going to hell. Rather, the text should be warning a redeemable reader or listener to embark upon charitable actions now in order to avoid such a fate. That the scribe of L managed to produce this transcription without consideration of the sense of the word within the line, or the sense of the line within the poem, suggests that his reading of the exemplar was not concerned with the wider meaning of his material. He looked neither backward nor forward within the text, or even within the line: his focus was narrowed to the level of the troublesome graph. Replicative letter-by-letter copying, then, suggests that rather than treating it as a textual whole, the scribe considers his exemplar a puzzle that needs to be solved and reproduced. He is reading it not for its content, but for the challenge of reading itself, and the process of copying that follows it. Such a practice seems to have been common among scribes writing in early Middle English: *homeographic* mistakes, like the one described above, are the most common form of error made by the *Poema Morale* scribes. Thus, in copy M the scribe substitutes 'ofþuȝte' with the nonsensical 'osþuȝte';[80] or in E the more plausible 'ritȝisnesse' replaces 'ritþisnesse'.[81] Here, it is clear that the mistakes both occur at the level of the individual grapheme: the M scribe recognised the similarity in form between **f** and long **s**; while the scribe of E was perhaps confused by the less-familiar **wynn**, and exchanged it for an Anglo-Saxon character still in use (albeit with a different valency).

Though misconstrued letters may initially cause accusations of carelessness among scribes, as suspected by Patterson, they also throw into contrast the success that underlies most

[79] LPL, MS 487, f. 62r; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 358-9, ll. 137-9.

[80] Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 203, l. 253.

[81] Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 331, l. 72.

of the reading scribes undertook.[82] For, the majority of the time scribes *do* manage to decode their exemplar adequately and produce a correct copy. But, if the mistakes that provide evidence for mechanical replicative copying are necessarily only present in moments when copying goes wrong, it is also worth asking: did scribes read in the same way when they copied correctly as they did when they made mistakes? It may be that reading practice varied across the copy. Thus, replicative letter-by-letter copying *can* occur adjacent to dialectal translations that suggest the reading of larger graphic units: in E, for instance, the scribe has significantly modernised the language of his exemplar compared to that found in the fraternal e copy.[83] On top of this, it might follow that, were replicative copying in use throughout a text, scribes would be liable to reproduce the appearance of their exemplars as well as the text. However, no two extant copies of *Poema Morale* have the same layout, suggesting that this aspect of the copy was not consistently transmitted from exemplar to copy. It might be suggested, therefore, that mechanical letter-by-letter decoding often takes place only temporarily when the reading fluency of the scribe has been disrupted by visual ambiguities.[84] Reading at this level, though it occasionally yields recognisable words—'ritȝisnesse'—also allows for unintelligible and garbled ones—'osþuȝte'. More commonly, though scribes seem to read for the lexical sense of the words, identifying their meaning; even dialectal translation, which could seem mechanical, relies on such understanding of what one reads.

[82] The implications of Patterson, 'Logic of Textual Criticism', 61.

[83] Hill, 'Notes on Egerton', 353. Alternatively, it may be that the scribe of MS e was liable to archaize his language: Laing, 'Value of Texts', 576.

[84] See Parkes, 'Reading or Writing?', 66.

Critical Reading

My initial focus on the mechanical types of reading detectable in micro-variations should not suggest that more significant variants cannot also shed light on scribal reading practices. In fact, more substantial changes, ones that may not reflect the text of the exemplar, are often rooted in sustained and engaged reading, beyond the level of linguistic parsing: reading as a process of interpretation. In one section of the J text, for instance, the scribe makes some alterations to a number of rhyming pairs. Thus, where the other copies have:

> And þet his oȝen nolde ȝeven þer he iseȝh þo niede,
> Ne nolde ihiere godes men þer he set at his biede.
> Þo þet wes oðres mannes þing lieure þanne hit solde,
> And waren al to gredi of selvre and of golde;
> And þo þe untreiwnesse deden þan þet hi solden ben holde.
> And leten þet hi solden don, and deden þet hi wolden;
>
> [And [he] that would not give of his own when he saw the need,
> And would not hear good men when they sat at his table;
> Those that love other men's things more than they should
> And were all too greedy for silver and gold;
> And those that were untrue when they should have been constant
> And gave up what they should do, and did what they wanted;][85]

The same lines in J read:

> Þeo þat almes nolde yeue þere he iseyh þe neode.
> Ne his poure kunesmen. at him ne myhte nouht spede.
> Þe þat nolde here godes sonde. þar he sat. at his borde.
> ⁊ was leof oþer mannes þing. leu*er*e þan beon schulde.
> ⁊ weren al to gredi. of seoluer. and of golde.
> ⁊ luueden vntrewnesse þat heo schulden beon holde.
>
> [You that would not give almes where he saw the need,
> And might not help his poor kinsmen;
> You that would not hear God's sending where he sat at his table;
> And loved other men's things better that he should
> And was all too greedy for silver and for gold;
> And loved untrueness when he should have been constant][86]

[85] Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische* 'Poema Morale', 190-1, ll. 263-8.

In the more common form, the rhyme words have distinct vocalic patterns, which are reflected in their spelling. They can thereby be split into three couplets: 'niede/biede' rhyming with the sound [ˈid(ə)], 'solde/golde' [ˈɒld(ə)], and 'holde/wolden' [ˈɒldəⁿ]. However, the changes in J revise the rhyming pairs to 'neode/spede', 'borde/schulde', and 'golde/holde'. Orthographically, then, it appears that the J scribe failed to make sense of the rhyme pattern in his reading of the text. But, in reality, these changes may be evidence of a more formally engaged reading practice. The pronunciation of the diphthong [e (:) o] in J's rendering of 'neode' was no longer close enough to the original pronunciation to constitute a rhyming pair. The scribe therefore added a substitute line in order to make up the rhyme scheme and maintain the sense of the poem: 'Ne his poure kunesmen at him ne myhte nouht spede.' 'Biede' is therefore replaced with 'borde' [ˈbɔrd(ə)], which though not a complete-rhyme for 'schulde' [ˈʃʊld(ə)] is presumably a closer match: compare the low, back vowel /ɔ/ in 'or' to the high, front /i/ in 'biede'.

Such emendations would be in keeping with current understanding of the phonological and morphological changes occurring in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; where from c. 1100 the *morae* of the [e (:) o] diphthong—as in 'neode'—tended to be assimilated into a single monophthong, with the first *mora* becoming rounder and the second more fronted. This resulted in a pronunciation of /øø/, which simplified to the phoneme /ø:/.[87] Orthographically, then, the spelling 'neode' as opposed 'niede' suggests a pronunciation of [ˈnø:d(ə)] in comparison to [ˈnid(ə)], a significant difference in the context of the rhyme scheme. The resultant rhyming pair, 'neode' and 'spede', then, are a closer phonological match:

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[86] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 172v; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 289-90, ll. 257-62.

[87] Jerzy Welna, *A Critical Survey of a Historical Phonology of English Vowels* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskeigo, 1987), 89.

[ˈnø:d(ə)]/[sˈpɛd(ə)], than 'neode' and 'borde'/'biede' would have been had the more common line order been followed.[88] The possibility that these changes were implemented to correct phonological problems with the rhyme scheme is further compounded by the fact that the added line, 'Ne his poure kunesmen at him ne myhte nouht spede' does not add any additional sense to the poem. Rather, it functions as a filler that simply reiterates and intensifies the sense of the preceding line: those who will not give alms to people in need—even if they are kin. In order to make such changes Scribe J must have been engaged in reading the text for its rhyming patterns, rather than simply copying the words as graphic signs.[89] The alterations therefore suggest, at least in this section of the poem, that a careful line-by-line engagement with the exemplar must be a factor of the scribe's reading; one which engages with the vocalic qualities of the lines and the consistency of their patterning. Here, his use of the exemplar appears to be structured primarily on a formal basis.

It may be disputed whether the J scribe was himself responsible for these changes, and not simply copying changes from his exemplar. That cannot be proven without considerably more evidence than can be offered here. However, the types of alteration and addition present in the J copy of *Poema Morale* are noted consistently across the whole miscellany of which *Poema Morale* is just one part. This same scribe's copy of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, for instance, is characterised by a need to 'regularise and modernise, and at times even "emend"

[88] Welna, *Critical Survey of a Historical Phonology*, 89; Roger Lass, 'Phonology and Morphology', *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, v. 2, ed. Norman Blake (CUP, 1992), 39-40, 42-6 [23-155].

[89] See Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 217-45 for later examples of scribes who demonstrate a similar interest in rhyme and poetic form.

what he thinks is nonsense.'[90] His 'more radical solutions' and 'freer' handling of the text often result in readings that—like the added line discussed above—are 'more formulaic and weaker in sense' than the original.[91] Thus, as in his *Poema Morale*, he omits several lines altogether, and occasionally alters the sense of the text, sometimes unintentionally and sometimes towards a more didactic tone.[92] Such additions 'expand the text at some point[s] where he fancied explanation or emphasis was needed' and indicate 'extensive rearrangement and editing' on the part of the scribe.[93] Across the volume, then, the J scribe is willing to correct both freely and creatively. These patterns of treatment, rather than being inherited from exemplars, appear to represent an active program of alteration, the product of personal literary and theological interest on the part of the copyist.

The unique two-line colophon at the end of the J scribe's *Poema Morale* clearly demonstrates that his exceptional practice was fundamentally guided by his reading. Thus, following the standard ending of the poem, J concludes:

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[90] Stanley, ed., *Owl and the Nightingale*, 6. Stanley notes in his edition that the rhyme scheme of *The Owl and the Nightingale* has also been disrupted by dialectal translation. However, in that case the translation results in unmatched pairs such as 'wise/ire', 'singinge/auinde', and 'worse/mershe': Stanley, ed., *Owl and the Nightingale*, 18. See, also, Lass, 'Phonology and Morphology', 28, 89. It is possible that these different methods for coping with the influence of dialectical change upon rhyming pairs are both found in these work's separate exemplars; or, alternatively, that the copyist read this section of J with more care than he did some of the other texts in his collection.

[91] Cartlidge ed., *Owl and the Nightingale*, xlii-xliv.

[92] In his *Poema Morale* scribe J omits: Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische '*Poema Morale', 174, ll. 69-70; 182, ll. 165-8, 173-4; 187, ll. 223-6; 196, ll. 343-4; and 199, ll. 381-4.

[93] Helen Pennock South, *The Proverbs of Alfred Studied in the Light of the Recently Discovered Maidstone Manuscript* (New York UP, 1931), 16, 20. See also comments by Derek Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London: Routledge, 1977), 77.

> Bidde we nu leoue freond. yonge and ek olde.
> Þat he þat þis wryt wrot. his saule beo þer at holde. Am*en*.
>
> [Bid we now dear friends, young and also old,
> that the soul of he who wrote this writ be in safe-keeping. Amen.][94]

This couplet is a formulaic explicit that could follow any number of literary texts, and lends nothing more to the narrative, but acts rather as a short testimony to the scribe's labour and an exhortation to prayer.[95] Compare, for example, as Elizabeth Bryan does, the colophon of *A Luue Ron* in the same volume:

> And yeue him god endynge. þat haueþ iwryten þis ilke wryt. Am*en*
> [And give him good ending that has written this same writ. Amen.][96]

Here the same theme, the remembrance of the writer in perpetuity, is at work. The composition of such a couplet might suggest 'scribal authorship,' although Bryan notes that the use of the verb 'iwryten' in these contexts is distinct from the concept of authorship and does not necessarily imply that the scribe thought of himself in these terms.[97] In fact, it seems this scribe is aware of his own role in the transmission of the work as its copyist: the word 'writer' rarely denoting original composition before the mid-fifteenth century.[98] Either way what is more significant for this investigation is what these lines demonstrate of the scribe's

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[94] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 174v; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 295, ll. 389-90.

[95] For further explanation of the formulaic elements of colophons and explicits see Lucien Reynhout, *Formules latines de colophons* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 22, 325-9; and, though he does not include poetic works, note in particular the formulas '…si(c) deum habeatis protectorem […may he have God as protector]' (67-81), 'Scribere qui nescit… [He does not know how to write…]' (95-100), and especially 'Qui scripsit scribat semper cum domino vivat [Let he who wrote this always write and live with the Lord]' (171-85), which was particularly popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when 55.17% of its instances fall [174].

[96] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 188v; for further discussion see Elizabeth J. Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture: The Otho Laȝamon* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 28.

[97] Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 26-8 makes this point in relation to the *Poema Morale*, which she erroneously identifies as a single text existing only in the Jesus College codex and entitled—as it is the manuscript—'Tractatus quidam in anglico'.

[98] See the examples for *MED*, 'writer', sense (d); *OED*, 'writer', sense 3.a.

taste as a reader, as he uses this couplet to showcase his ability to recognise and reproduce poetic form. He also demonstrates his skill with word play—'wryt wrot'—and produces a doublet—'yonge and ek olde'—revealing his knowledge of current fashions and verse protocols. In so doing he exhibits the influence and extent of his wider reading. That the J copyist was well read in poetic convention should come as no surprise: if he read all the texts he put in his manuscript as he did his *Poema Morale* he would have encountered a great deal of poetic material in this venture alone.[99]

Other alterations the J scribe makes to his *Poema Morale* add further layers to the inter-textuality of the poem. For instance, he adds an extra line after l. 14:

> Mon let þi fol lust ouer go. and eft hit þe likeþ.
> [Man let your foolish desire be put aside and once again it will gladden you.][100]

The source of this line can be traced to a couplet found in the poem *Long Life*—'þarefore. let lust ouergo. / And eft hit þe likeþ'.[101] Its presence here, therefore, seems to reflect this scribe's familiarity with other poetic material circulating within his milieu. Given that the full text of *Long Life* is also in the J manuscript, it is probable his addition of a line from this poem to his *Poema Morale* was inspired by reading some of the other exemplars he had assembled to

[99] Twenty-seven of the twenty-eight items in the volume are verse compositions. For details see Hill, 'History of Jesus College', 203.

[100] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 169r; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 279, l. 15.

[101] Hill, 'The Twelfth-Century *Conduct of Life*, formerly the *Poema Morale* or *A Moral Ode*', *Leeds Studies in English*, 9 (1977), 102 [97-144]. See, *DIMEV*, 3370; Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 180r; see Hall, *Selections from Early Middle English*, 29, ll. 45-6 titled as *Memento Mori*, and also known as *Death's Wither-Clench.*

produce his manuscript.[102] However, by incorporating the line here, the J scribe demonstrates his ability to read comparatively between texts, making thematic and formal connections. Meanwhile, this scribe reveals his own interest in participating in wider textual networks, making a claim to his own worldliness as a reader.[103]

The claim of erudition made by the J scribe's inclusion of the additional line is based on its relation to a network of wider literate knowledge. Though the line inserted into the J copy of *Poema Morale* may have been redacted from an exemplar for *Long Life*, it is possible that this line also circulated separately as a popular epithet. The poem is attested, in part or in full, by

[102] It is likely, in fact, that the J copyist collected his poems from several exemplars. In this manuscript *Long Life* is found copied in unbroken succession with four other items, with no textual apparatus having been imposed to distinguish where one work ends and the next begins. This is unusual behavior for a scribe who, though he does not usually leave much space between texts, reliably provides a decorated capital and/or a rubricated incipit or title before each item, giving either some information about the text or a short description. In some instances these can be quite long: for instance, on the two lines before he begins his copy of *A Luue Ron*, he writes: 'Incipit quidam cant*us* que*m cum* posuit frat*er* Thomas de Hales de ordine fratr*um* minor*es*. ad instanciam cui*us*dam puelle d*e*o dicate' [Here begins some of the songs which were set by Father Thomas Hales of the order of the Friars Minor, at the request of a certain girl dedicated to God] (f. 187r). In contrast, his *Poema Morale* is titled simply: 'Tractatus quidam in anglico' [Tract which is in English] (f. 169r) For more discussion of these titles see 102-4. However, the fact that he did not separate the five items that include *Long Life*, even though the first text is preceded by an incipit—'Incipit de muliere samaritana' [Beginning of the Samaritan woman] (f. 178v)—suggests that these five items were transmitted to him together, in a different format from most of his other exemplar, and that he was unable distinguish the divisions between them, perhaps conceiving of them as one (rather unusual) work.

[103] The M copy of *Poema Morale* participates in similar intertextual networks. Here the poem opens with the opening couplet from another contemporary homiletic poem, *Sinners Beware* (*DIMEV*, 2042; Horstmann, ed., *Altenglische Legenden*, 505-10): '[Þ]e holi gostes miȝte us alle helpe ϧ diȝte us wissie ϧ us teche / y scilde us fram þe unþiȝte bi daie ϧ bi niȝte þat þencheþ us bipeche [The Holy Ghost might help and direct us all, advise us and teach us / And shield us from the devil, that wishes to seduce us, by day and by night]', (Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 192, ll. i-ii). After the initial two lines, the text stops and the same hand begins *Poema Morale* on the following line. A second, rubricated capital at the start of *Poema Morale* is the only distinction between the two (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, f. 115r). It may be that these lines were copied in error due to a mix up in the exemplar; however, had he wished, the copyist could easily have deleted the incorrect opening. Since this did not occur it might be suggested that, in reading over his error, the scribe realised the aptness of the lines in question to the subject of the poem he was about to copy and decided to preserve them.

five other manuscripts.[104] One of these versions has been copied with musical notation, and appears in a volume that collects popular English proverbs alongside other preaching materials.[105] The collocation of *Long Life* with this proverbial material, and its association with music, suggests it too may have circulated outside of the written form as an element of popular knowledge. The material copied by scribes, then, may not only be read from the exemplar, or the memory of the read exemplar, but from the wider world. Here, the scribe's response to what he reads, registered in what he rewrites, is informed by his broader knowledge and culture. The resulting copy, therefore, is also positioned within that nexus, connecting the book and its future readers with the external world.[106] But those connections require critical and incisive engagement with the exemplar in order to select—perhaps without conscious application—the appropriate phrase that conforms to the style, rhythm, rhyme, and content of his reading and a suitable place for it to fall. The process of creative intervention, then, demands the scribe's careful reading of his exemplar: he must read the text, determine where to alter it, and assess how those changes will fit into the rest of the work.

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[104] *DIMEV*, 3370; *LAEMECat*, 161. See Bartlett Jere Whiting with Helen Wescott Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases From English Writings Mainly Before 1500* (London: OUP, 1968), 362, L591: 'Let Lust overgo (*conquer*) and it will like (*please*) you.'

[105] Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 93v; *MMBL*, v. 3, 317-21. Among the English proverbs in the collections are three separate iterations of a single couplet (Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische '*Poema Morale', 180, ll. 144-5) extracted from *Poema Morale*, discussed further in Chapter 5.

[106] For further consideration of this interplay between written epithets and the reading of popular culture see Chapter 5, where this is discussed in relation to Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 93-111.

However, even when a scribe's use of the exemplar appears to involve engaged consideration, it may not consistently do so. Though the insertion of an extracted aphoristic line demonstrates the J scribe's wider literary knowledge, it disrupts the form of the poem: the line forces the rhyme into an anomalous triplet—'myslykeþ… bispikeþ… likeþ'—not replicated elsewhere in the work.[107] The second hemistich is also hypermetric, with the second and third strong stresses falling together on the twelfth and thirteenth syllables of the line:

x / x / x / x /|| x / x / /x
Mon let þi fol luft ouer go . and eft hit þe likeþ.

Compare this to the standard septenarius metre:

(x) / x / x / x /|| (x) / x / x / x[108]

It seems the scribe's addition has not been altogether successful. In fact, the disruption this line causes to the textual form of the poem may suggest that the copyist paid little attention to the impact his addition had on the lines around it. Despite the determined nature of his addition, then, it may be that this scribe had little interest in reading backwards and forwards in the text to test its metrical fit within the framework of the rest of the poem. In fact, even wholly successful creative additions need only to accord with the lines immediately surrounding them without requiring the same level of engagement throughout the rest of the text.

Creative interventions, then, often respond to specific needs or aspirations on the part of the copyist, or—more commonly—to textual moments that cause the copyist to err in the reading of his exemplar. Manuscripts L and J, for instance, are both missing the same lines from a section of the poem that elsewhere reads:

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[107] Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 279, ll. 13-15.

[108] See Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische '*Poema Morale', 29.

> Þanne deað is ate þare dore, to late he biddeð ore;
> To late uorlet þet euele worc þet hit ne mai don na more.
> Senne let þe and þu nah hoe þanne þu ne miht hi do more;
> He is sot þet spo abit to habben godes ore.
>
> [When death is at the door, too late he begs forgiveness,
> Too late gives up that evil work that he may do it no more.
> Give up sin and stop now while you might still do more,
> He is a fool that so delays to have God's forgiveness.][109]

The shared rhyming pair—'more'/'ore'—and the similarities in content make these couplets notably repetitious. The *polyptoton* on the words 'late', 'lateð', and 'lat', and the echoing phrasing of 'hit ne mai don na more' and 'þu ne miht hi do more', may cause confusion and hinder the reader, even though they serve rhetorically to emphasise the inevitability of 'dome' for those who do not repent.[110] Literary language is often illegible language, and these lines commonly seem to have been identified as problematic. Thus, at some point in the transmission history of L the second couplet was excluded completely.[111] Meanwhile, the J scribe replaced it with an alternative:

> Bilef sunne hwil þu myht. and do bi godes lore.
> And do to gode hwat þu myht. if þu wilt habben ore.
>
> [Believe son while you might, and live by God's law,
> And do to God what you might, if you will have forgiveness.][112]

The same couplet that caused trouble for the scribes of manuscripts L and J has been partially erased in the text of the poem in manuscript e, suggesting that the corrector—perhaps the scribe himself or perhaps a later reader—also picked up on the repeating components and took the lines to be erroneous, starting to remove them only to stop himself when he realised they

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[109] Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische* 'Poema Morale', 179, ll. 127-30.

[110] Rhetorical technique described by Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova*, ed. and trans. Margaret Nims (Toronto, ON: PIMS, 1967), 57; Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars Versificatoria*, ed. and trans. Roger P. Parr (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette UP, 1981), 83.

[111] See LPL, MS 487, f. 62r; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 359, ll. 142-4.

[112] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 170v; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 284, ll. 129-30.

were necessary. Here, then, several copyists somewhere in the manuscripts' transmission histories appear to have recognised the same discordance in their exemplar as they worked. Certainly, the desire among scribes to correct apparently erroneous material is indicative of the critical judgement to which they subjected their exemplars.

Nevertheless, the places where emendation occurs, and the fact that it is sometimes misplaced, indicate that critical reading was rarely sustained across the whole exemplar. Rather, this confusing quatrain illustrates some of the textual moments that might cue such engagement, such as repetition, rhetorical devices, and disruptions to the rhyme scheme. When scribes encountered these perceived failures—what medieval grammarians might consider the "poetic licence" to err from accepted language usage—they seemingly disrupted an otherwise mechanical reading process akin to scanning the text.[113] As the reaction of the corrector in manuscript e demonstrates, his initial perception and correction of the error occurred automatically as he read; it was not until he had partially deleted it that he reconsidered the line, determining it belonged there. Here, then, the scribe read his copy responsively: operating at the surface level of the text until a perceived discordance demanded a critical reaction.

[113] See Nicolette Zeeman, 'The Schools Give a Licence to Poets', *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (CUP, 1996), especially 158-161 [151-80]. Donatus, 'Ars Maior', *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475*, ed. Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter (OUP, 2009), 93-9, for instance, discusses poet's permitted use of *metaplasmus* (a deliberately odd form of a word), *schemata* (figures, which deliberately use words oddly), and tropes; a sentiment echoed by many later medieval grammarians, see, Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, 263-4, 387, 475, 497-500, 504, 588-90.

This is not to suggest either that scribal reading practices were unthinking, or that scribes' responses should not be considered engaged or creative. Rather, scribal reading practices were focussed upon a different set of concerns and functioned on a different level than either modern academic reading practice, or contemporary *lectio* in the monastic or scholastic senses.[114] Even in his corrections the J scribe demonstrates a creative engagement with the content of the poem. His rewriting of the repetitive couplet above, for instance, changes the focus and meaning of the lines so that, rather than simply acting as the voice of inevitable doom, they provide a solution: God's mercy is attainable through belief, prayer, and obedience. The variant lines, then, marginally change the experience that future readers, after this revision, might get from the poem. The lines add to the poem's didacticism through an exhortation to confess, and orient the text towards the problem-solution format popular in contemporary sermons.[115] A greater emphasis on confession may not be surprising in later copies of *Poema Morale*: such alterations could conceivably be the result of a ripple effect caused by doctrinal shifts in the Church enshrined during Lateran IV in 1215, which saw a renewed

[114] For descriptions of monastic *lectio divina* see: Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2011), especially 88-103; Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi, third edition (New York, NY: Fordham UP, 1982), 11-16; Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory, 350-1100* (CUP, 1994), 68-74. For scholastic reading see, for instance, Hamesse, 'Scholastic Model of Reading', 103-19.

[115] For an expansion on 'the evolution of the sermon-form in the thirteenth century', including this call and response, statement and explanation format, see Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 65-9.

emphasis on confession over the course of the thirteenth century.[116] As with some of his other interventions, then, the adaptation brought about by the J scribe shows a clear vision of the text's purpose and its reception.

The possibility of a scribally instigated editorial programme may suggest a copyist that engaged in active and critical reading with a concern for the needs of prospective readers. When the fraternal copies of *Poema Morale* (E and e) differ, e tends to agree with the common reading, while E is more likely to exhibit a simplified or modernised variant.[117] Perhaps, like the J scribe, the copyist of E was deliberately implementing simplifications and modernisations throughout his copy, taking into account the abilities of his prospective audience. However, these changes entailed excising rhetorical structures such as the *polyptoton* described above. For instance, the E *Poema Morale* reads: [118]

> ȝiue his for godes luue eft heo hit scullen a finden
>
> [Let him give [his possessions] away for God's love, then he shall find it [God's love].][119]

Where most copies have:

> Ȝieue hi for godes loue, þanne deð he hi wel ihialde.
>
> [Let him give [his possessions] away for God's love, then does he keep them well.] [120]

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[116] See, for instance, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, which Leonard Boyle, *The Setting of the* Summa Theologiae *of St Thomas* (Toronto, ON: PIMS, 1982) argues was written as a resources for Dominicans who acted as confessors: John Berkman, 'Being Reconciled: Penitence, Punishment, and Worship', *Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells, second edition (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 102 [97-111]. See, also, Catherine Rider, 'Lay Religion and Pastoral Care in 13th-Century England: the Evidence of a Group of Short Confession Manuals', *Journal of Medieval History*, 36:4 (2010), 327-40.

[117] Hill, 'Notes on Egerton', 353.

[118] Patterson, 'Logic of Textual Criticism', 61. When Patterson speaks of mistakes, he means any alterations the copy underwent in the hands of its scribe that moved it away from the authorial, or "best", text.

[119] BL, Egerton MS 618, f. 7v; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 330, l. 56.

Here, the scribe has altered the second hemistich of the line to provide what might be considered a simpler rendition, substituting an easier reading in place of a harder one. However, in so doing the E scribe removes the parallel created between the first and second hemistich by the repetition of the same word ('hi') across the medial caesura. The verbal interlinking of the half lines balances the cause ('ȝeue hi for godes luue'), with its result ('þanne deð he hi wel ihelde'), indicating their reliance upon one another and thereby standing in for the unspoken conditional 'if'. This technique—the principal of *traductio*—was recommended by guides to the art of poetry, and may have been intended to appeal to those literate in Latin poetics.[121] While these scribes seem to be concerned with the accessibility of their texts, then, their alterations may also indicate a lack of appreciation for the significance of the rhetorical structures they are excising, revealing the less sophisticated aspects of their reading practices. Speaking critically, the mode of alteration the E scribe engages in is simply a process of adaptation of material that is already there, a process requiring only the substitution of phrases he considers arcane for those he considers more comprehensible. As a reader, then, his practice may be less considered than it first appears.

However, that is not to say that this move towards simpler forms is the result of unwitting error. Rather, as Patterson notes, it 'provides an interpretive gloss in place of the text. He [the scribe] transmits, in other words, a text that has been preread'.[122] Thus, in another half line substitution, where the common text of *Poema Morale* employs the perhaps unfamiliar

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[120] Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische '*Poema Morale', 173, l. 56.

[121] See, for instance, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova*, 56.

[122] Patterson, 'Logic of Textual Criticism', 72.

phrase 'wrangwise dome', a judicial term probably referring to a sentencing error,[123] the E scribe opts for a less specialist and more widely comprehensible phrase: 'mid wronge ne mid woȝe [with wrong nor with woe.]'[124] Similarly, the phrase, 'eft heo hit scullen afinden', eradicates the confusion potentially caused by the poetic framing of the antonyms 'ȝeue' and 'ihelde', and the repetition 'hi… he hi…'. Although the resulting text may not be as rhetorically sophisticated, or erudite, as the original, these alterations do make contextual sense, indicating that the scribe must have understood, on some level, the meaning of what he replaced. This scribe, then, is making use of an intermediate form of reading, which, though not exhaustive, simplifies aspects of the text considered difficult to comprehend. It is both a recognition and rejection of literary language, in favour of a plainer, more usable, utilitarian form of textual communication. What is more, in doing so the scribe demonstrates consideration for the needs and abilities of future readers of, or listeners to, the text.

Scribal Readers

Most scribal copies, then, are indicative of a mixed reading practice that varies according to number of factors. These practices could be classified in terms of levels of engagement with the content of the text being read and copied. Perhaps the practice that has attracted most comment among editorial theorists occurs at the surface level of the text—in the, apparently

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[123] *MED*, 'dōm (n.)', sense 2a. *Poema Morale* provides the earliest attested poetic usage of the phrase 'wrangwise dom', which may suggest its previous obscurity, or limitation to the sphere of judicial language.

[124] Compare the common reading of 'For þer ne sal me us naht binimen mid wrangwise dome' (Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische* 'Poema Morale', 172, l. 48), to the simpler iteration, 'For þere ne scal me us nout binimen mid pronge ne mid poȝe' (BL, MS Egerton 618, f. 7v; Hill, ed., *An edition of* Poema Morale, 330, l. 48).

mechanical, scanning by which scribes lifted information from the exemplar and transferred it to the page of their own copy. Evidence of this nugatory reading practice is found in several of the sorts of unthinking error bemoaned by editors: mechanical slips caused by the misreading, or misremembering, of the exemplar text. However, this chapter has demonstrated that even these apparently mechanical processes are sometimes the product of consideration and thought. For instance, though some degree of dialectical translation may come naturally to a scribe who copies his text along to his own internal dictation, I have stressed that comprehension is required for a scribe to see 'hem' and think 'hi'. Meanwhile, the memorisation of short sections of the exemplar to be repeated back also entailed a double-reading. Here the exemplar was read and then the memory of it read again.

However, when discordance or disruption—be it visual or formal—interrupted the flow of scanning then a scribe's level of engagement with his exemplar might change. For instance, when a scribe failed to make sense of a word as a whole, his field of engagement might have narrowed to deciphering its characters individually, resulting in an attempt at *litteratim* transcription. Equally, a discordant rhetorical formulation, or problematic rhyme, might have caused a scribe to make creative interventions in the text by rewriting part of the line or inserting new material. These interventions show scribes reading the text more deeply, engaging with its sense and themes in order to produce fitting responses to the surrounding material and adjust in ways that befitted their aims. Nevertheless, just as mechanical scanning could sometimes rely on careful consideration of the exemplar, creative interference did not necessarily rely on sustained engagement throughout the text. Rather, these changes often take their cue from the immediate circumstances of the preceding or rhyming line without looking further backward or forward to the rest of the work. Scribal reading, it seems, is adaptive: it

moves between different levels of engagement at a number of layers within the text. Though it may begin by scanning the surface of the exemplar, the focus often becomes deeper or narrower in response to textual conditions. Scribal readers, then, reveal the polysemy of reading, that reading practice is not only one thing, but varies in response to different kinds of engagement with the text.

More might be said about the range and types of errors committed by scribes. If Fleming is correct that writing is '*parapraxis all the way down*', then '*there are no* [circumstantial] *errors*.'[125] Rather, every error is triggered by something, be that physical, psychological, or due to the material conditions of the work. As such, a close-reading of the distribution, make up, and textual implications of scribal error has the potential to reveal more about the physiological and mental process underlying scribal reading than has been covered here. Similarly, while Daniel Wakelin has demonstrated the potential for 'scribal correction' to reveal the concerns and considerations scribes had for their writing, corrections also offer a tantalising glimpse of scribal reading practices.[126] In particular, scribes who returned to correct their work necessarily undertook a form of re-reading, perhaps in relation to their own exemplar or a further copy of the text.

But errors and corrections are just one part of a wider process of copying, all of which can be evidence for the history of reading. Crucially, this chapter has shown that for scribes, writing relies on, comes in tandem with, and effectively *is* an act of reading. It is a decision making process—whether to retain, change, or adapt the text of their exemplar—that relies on effective construal of and engagement with the text. However, as a practice, at every level of

[125] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 46.

[126] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, see, for instance, 261-74.

engagement scribal reading also looks outwards from the text. Reading does not occur in isolation. Rather, scribes' reading is influenced by a range of non-textual factors, from the sharpness of their own memory to the dialect spoken around them. Further, in their engagement with reading, scribes draw on their experience of other texts they have read and their wider knowledge. Meanwhile, as they read scribes often considered the on-going use of their work in the hands, or voices, of future readers, using this projected reading to shape the composition of the copy they produced. It is these means of setting up the text for future reading—and the extent to which readers made use of them—that I shall consider in the following section.

PART II

Designing

PART II

Introduction

The presence of textual apparatus and finding aids—titles, subdivisions, marginal glosses and commentaries, indexes, and numbering systems—became a consistent feature of both religious and secular Latin works by the end of the thirteenth century.[1] These features have been used as evidence for a change in reading practice: a move from monastic *lectio divina* towards a more selective, discontinuous approach to the book, where the new textual divisions were used to access only the relevant parts of the argument.[2] In recent years discontinuous reading practices have dominated critical discussions of later Middle English literature and the intellectual

[1] Parkes, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', 53. See also Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 5; Parkes, 'Layout and presentation', 55-74; M. B. Parkes, '*Folia Librorum Quaerere*: Medieval Experience of the Problems of Hypertext and the Index', *Fabula in Tabula: Una storia degli indici dal manoscritto al testo elettronico*, ed. C. Leonardi, M. Morelli and F. Santi (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1995), 23-50; Lesley Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page: Manuscripts of Theology in the Latin West to 1274* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2001); Lesley Smith, *The* Glossa Ordinaria*: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), particularly 91-139.

[2] Parkes, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', 35. For a more detailed discussion of this transition, its implications, and the scholarship surrounding it see the 'Introduction' to this thesis.

history of later periods.[3] In fact, it has been suggested that several canonical Middle English authors of the fourteenth century—Langland, for instance—wrote with a paratextual schema in mind.[4] In other cases, book producers selected the textual apparatus for their work according to their own interpretation of its *ordinatio*.[5] Certainly, English works with multiple textual divisions, marginal notes, and searchable numbering systems are common by the fifteenth century.

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[3] See, especially, Peter Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls', 42-79; and William W.E. Slights, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001). Daniel Sawyer, 'Navigation by Tab and Thread: Place-Markers and Readers' Movements in Books', *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), 113 [99-114], discusses the variety of ways in which reading might be discontinuous. In fact, the popularity of this critical approach may have obscured our vision of other modes of accessing the text (see the introduction to this thesis, 27-32), and as a small number of scholars have taken pains to point out, such developments did not preclude the on-going practice of a variety of forms of continuous public and private reading aloud after the thirteenth century: Leonard E. Boyle, 'Tonic Accent, Codicology, and Literacy', *The Centre and Its Compass: Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor John Leyerle*, ed. Robert A. Taylor, James F. Burke, Patricia J. Eberle, Ian Lancashire and Brian S. Merrilees (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1993), 1-10; Joyce Coleman, 'Aurality', *Middle English: Oxford Twenty First Century Approaches to Literature,* ed. Paul Strohm (OUP, 2007), 68-85; and especially Coleman, *Public Reading*. Similar arguments have been made for the continuation of oral practices alongside increasing literacy in Western Europe: D. H. Green, 'Orality and Reading: The State of Research in Medieval Studies', *Speculum*, 65:2 (1990), 267-80; Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*; Cerquiglini, *In Praise of the Variant*, 15-21; and Camille, 'Seeing and Reading', 26-49. And for the ongoing practice of reading aloud alongside that of silent reading: Treharne, 'Textual communities (vernacular)', 341-51; Hackel, *Reading Material*; and Nancy Mason Bradbury, *Writing Aloud: Storytelling in the Late Medieval Period* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

[4] Robert Adams, 'Langland's *Ordinatio*: the *Visio* and the *Vita* once more', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 8 (1994), 51-84; Lawrence Clopper, 'A response to Robert Adams, "Langland's *Ordinatio*"', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 9 (1995), 141-6; see also Stephen Partridge, 'Designing the Page', *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (CUP, 2011), 101-2 [79-103] on Hoccleve and Gower, and Rouse and Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* revisited', 124-5 on Christine de Pizan.

[5] A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 186-93 [163-210].

However, such features are notably absent from thirteenth-century vernacular works.[6] This is a puzzle for the history of reading English. Such increasingly conventional aspects of Latin page design cannot have remained unknown to copyists and readers in the vernacular, who would usually have learned to read and write primarily in Latin. In fact, in multilingual manuscripts (the corpus for this thesis), Latin works equipped with extensive apparatus are bound together with vernacular texts, sometimes copied by a single scribe. Thus, in the second part of one composite volume, the same hand copies a series of Latin and French theological and pastoral items.[7] Here, the Latin works are often subdivided, with subjects named and numbered in red ink, alternating red and green capitals marking each new theme, and *auctoritates* named either in the text—for example, 'Isidorus dixit'—or set apart in the margin. Whereas in the French items red ink is only employed for major capitals, to provide highlights on majuscules (which are used to pick out a number of words including names), and to write the very occasional paraph.[8] It is not that textual apparatus was not known, or not understood,

[6] In all the manuscripts surveyed for this investigation very few vernacular items are supplied with contents lists. Exceptional is the slightly later multilingual collection CUL, MS Gg.i.1, ff. 1r-6r (s.xiv[1]). Whereas several books contain chapter lists or indexes for one or all of their Latin works: for instance, BodL, MS Digby 4, ff. 48r-95r; BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 3v. In later centuries some users added extra apparatus to vernacular works of earlier dates in order to facilitate their on-going use. For more on this practice see Parkes, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', 67; George Keiser, 'Practical books for gentlemen', *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III , 1400-1557*, ed. Lotte Hellinga and J.B. Trapp (CUP, 1999), 475 [470-94]. Though this phenomenon is widely acknowledged, and contributes to a picture of the on-going use of early manuscripts over a number of centuries, it has been the subject of little independent scrutiny. The addition of textual apparatus by later readers has also been noted in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts (Winfried Rudolf, 'The Addition and Use of Running Titles in Manuscripts Containing Old English', *New Medieval Literatures*, 13 (2011), 49-97), and in manuscripts from as late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts', *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: Scolar Press, 1995), 208 [207-26].)

[7] BodL, MS Digby 20, ff. 62r-166v.

[8] Compare, for instance, a page of the incomplete copy of Defensor's *Liber Scintillarum*, on BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 63r, to the opening of the Edmund Rich's *Miroir de seinte eglise* (*ANL*, 629), on f. 143r.

then, simply that it was not wanted, or not needed enough to justify the effort of providing it, to the same extent in vernacular works.

The lack of textual apparatus may have been due to the genre and type of material circulating in the vernaculars at this time. However, complaint poems, romances, and histories all have Latin analogues, many of which had numbered books and chapters, indexes, and marginal notes in the form of dates, names, and thematic headings. The extent to which the same features can be found in vernacular examples of these types of text is much more limited, and if textual apparatus is present it is usually inconsistently applied. Thus, in several copies of a Latin debate between the body and soul, the *Visio Philiberti*, the text is broken up into stanzas with a red inter-title marking each change of speaker—for example 'Hic a*nim*a disputat cu*m* corp*or*e [Here the soul debates with the body.]'[9] By contrast, in one well-marked copy of an English poem on the same theme, though large coloured initials mark the places that the speaker changes, no signals are given as to the speakers' identities.[10] Even in works of similar length and type, then, the application of textual apparatus is distinct.

The fact that those features most commonly associated with non-linear use of the book—the finding aids that make such productions navigable—have been eschewed by the makers and users of Anglo-Norman and early Middle English works may indicate a difference in expectations for the ways readers engaged with these works. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century vernacular literature may have been subject to reading practices that did not require as much internal navigation of the book. Either because readers preferred to read their vernacular

[9] See BodL, MS Lat. Misc. d. 68, f. 25v. See, also BodL, MS Digby 28, ff. 27r-31v, and BodL, MS Laud Misc. 315, ff. 97r-98v. For a list of the all the manuscripts see David P. Baker and Neil Cartlidge, 'Manuscripts of the Medieval Latin Debate Between Body and Soul', *Notes and Queries*, 61:2 (2014), 196-201.

[10] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 195v-200v.

books continuously and totally, in which case, as Lesley Smith wryly points out, they need only have had at their disposal a bookmark with which to keep their place; or because for encounters with these kinds of texts—romances, debate poems, edifying and homiletic verse, short prayers and sermons—untargeted, self-selected, or improvised reading was considered preferable.[11] While it is true that in vernacular compilations unequipped with finding aids 'Intimate knowledge would be required to locate a specific text' quickly, it is possible that the location of a *specific* text was not the objective.[12] Thus, at the beginning of the fourteenth century Robert Mannyng wrote:

> Whedyr outys þou wylt opone þe boke,
> Þou shalt fynde begynnyng on to loke.
> Oueral ys begynnyng – oueral ys ende,
> Hou þat þou wylt turne hyt or wende.
> Many þynges þer yn mayst þou here;
> Wyþ ofte redyng mayst þou lere.
>
> [Wherever you will open the book
> You shall find a beginning to look upon,
> Everywhere is a beginning – everywhere is an end,
> Whichever way that you turn it or go.
> Many things you may hear there in;
> By reading often you may learn.][13]

In this more literal depiction of the act the reader is encouraged to 'start and end anywhere' in the book, finding his reading by chance, and in this way to 'create his own text and to begin

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[11] Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page*, 33.

[12] Vincent Gillespie, *'Lukynge in Haly bukes*: *Lectio* in some Late Medieval Spiritual Miscellanies', *Analecta Cartusiana*, 106 (1984), 1-27, republished in *Looking in Holy Books: Essays on Medieval Religious Writing in England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 136 [113-44].

[13] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 6, ll. 121-6. Mannyng engages very literally here with the material structure and mechanics of the book, particularly the status of the page as an unstable or transient barer of the text under the control of the reader. Compare, for instance, 'Hou þat þou wylt turne hyt' (l. 124), to Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, in *Riverside Chaucer*, 67, l. 3177: 'Turne over the leef and chese another tale.'

groping his soul wherever the book falls open.'[14] In either case, it seems, the opportunity to introduce elements that would aid a discontinuous, or selectively non-linear, reading of the book has been rejected in favour of an alternative mode of accessing the text that did not rely on quick or discriminating navigation.

However, the limited use of textual apparatus in early Middle English works may be inflated by a linguistic problem. Since the useful term was introduced by Gérard Genette, in a work translated in 1997, twenty years ago, scholars have routinely combined different aspects of page design and textual apparatus—as I have been doing above—into a single entity: the paratext.[15] Though the implementation of specific paratextual elements has been studied in isolation at particular times, for instance, in the case of the unusual layout of the tail-rhyme in the *Tale of Sir Thopas*,[16] it is not unusual for these features to be considered only in the ways that they function as a unified whole. This parallels the misuse of the term *ordinatio* observed by Mary and Richard Rouse, who note how M. B. Parkes' original definition has slipped into a mode of scholarly shorthand that amasses the features he observes into a single entity by which to define a text's layout.[17] As a result the most visually striking elements of organisation, such as marginal glosses and commentaries, and highly developed textual divisions, have

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[14] Lawrence Clopper, '*Ordinatio* and Rhetoric: Signs for Reading *Cleanness*', *Chaucer Yearbook*, 5 (1998), 123 [117-38].

[15] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (CUP, 1997), 2; as discussed by William H. Sherman, 'On the Threshold: Architecture, Paratext, and Early Print Culture', *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 67-81.

[16] Judith Tschann, 'The Layout of "Sir Thopas" in the Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Cambridge Dd.4.24, and Cambridge Gg.4.27 Manuscripts', *The Chaucer Review*, 20:1 (1985), 1-13; Rhiannon Purdie, 'The Implications of Manuscript Layout in Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 41:3 (2005), 263-74; Rhiannon Purdie, *Anglicising Romance: Tail-Rhyme and Genre in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008); Jessica Brantley, 'Reading the Forms of Sir Thopas', *The Chaucer Review*, 47:4 (2013), 416-38.

[17] Rouse and Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* Revisited', 113-34.

tended to take the foreground in studies and sometimes to stand in for the whole.[18] In reality, as Genette emphasises, the paratext is 'a heterogeneous group of practices and discourse' collected together under one name.[19] Not only is each element separate and separable from the whole, but each has its own effect on the text and its own use for the reader. Rather than considering the wholesale import of '*ordinatio*' from the space of the Latin page into the vernacular, then, a more nuanced approach to each paratextual element must be arrived upon. Though chapter divisions, contents lists, and modes of numbering may be notably absent from early Middle English books other less visually striking elements *are* present, often in a variety of combinations and contexts. This part of the thesis, then, will ask how the application of individual features—titles, capitals, and the use of rubrication and colour to subdivide and mark a variety of textual elements—reflects the reading practices applied to particular texts and the books that contained them.

The relationship between layout and reading, however, is more complex than this question implies. For, there is no provable correlation between the two; rather, the layout of the text on the page reflects both the scribal reading of the text, and the scribe's consideration of readers' needs. While most of the time most scribes sought to transmit the text of their exemplar accurately to the best of their ability, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the distribution and layout of text on the page seems to have been subject to more flexibility.

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[18] Most recently, on marginal glosses, van Dyke, 'The Auctor in the Paratext'. See, also, Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities*; William Schipper, 'Textual Varieties in Manuscript Margins', *Signs on the Edge: Space, Text and Margin in Medieval Manuscripts*, ed. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), 25-56; Traugott Lawler, 'Medieval Annotation: The Example of the Commentaries on Walter Map's *Dissuasio Valerii*', *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (OUP, 1991), 94-107. On section divisions see, for example, Adams, 'Langland's *Ordinatio*', 51-84; Clopper, 'A Response to Robert Adams', 141-6. Clopper, '*Ordinatio* and Rhetoric', 118 conflates these features in his use of the term *ordinatio*: 'Modern readers in turn may use the scribe's *ordinatio* as a guide to reading a difficult poem.'

[19] Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

Indeed, it may have been more difficult for scribes to reproduce accurately the layout of their page than it was to reproduce the content.[20] Rather, scribes tended to adapt the form of their copy in response to the materials they had available—by reducing the size of the script or the margins in order to use less parchment, for instance—or to the needs of their readers.[21] Thus, Richard and Mary Rouse consider the format and layout of books, 'a response to the demands of the audience.'[22] They suggest that the introduction of highly abbreviated 'pocket' Bibles in the 1260s and 1270s came as a direct result of the increase in mendicant preachers at that time.[23] However, though it demonstrates the importance of certain features of layout to the on-going use of books—people kept using 'pocket' Bibles because they were portable—this explanation does not account for the influence of *projected* use on the introduction of such features. Layout and textual apparatus are not only a reflection of actual use but also an indication of how the makers *thought* a manuscript might be used: a form of scribal commentary predicting the use of their work.[24]

Chapter Two will begin by addressing a feature taken for granted by modern readers: the title of the text. It is by means of the title that we identify the text, and mark where it begins. However, many medieval works—especially those in the vernacular—circulated without titles, or with different titles in their various copies. What did they provide for readers and users of the book? It may be that titles provided a pivot around which readers' discussion

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[20] Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 238-40. For the range of available layouts see Parkes, 'Layout and Presentation', 55-64. This is not to suggest that scribes did not reproduce *elements* of design and layout from their exemplars, which by the fifteenth century were important aspects of the work, and can be used to trace the transmission histories of several important works: Partridge, 'Designing the Page', 81-97.

[21] See, for example, Ker, 'Copying an Exemplar', 85; and Ker, 'Eton College MS 44', 90-1.

[22] Rouse and Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* revisited', 125.

[23] Rouse and Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* revisited', 126-7.

[24] Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers', 433-52, tackles similar problems with regard to annotation.

of the work outside of the context of the book could turn; or titles might simply offer a practical means of saving space and breaking up the text during scribal copying. Further ways of potentially breaking up and subdividing the text will follow in Chapter Three, which focuses on coloured capitals, and paraphs. In each case, the chapter will ask what is marked, and how such marking helped to facilitate interactions with the book.

PART II: CHAPTER 2

Naming Texts

Here begins a chapter on titles

Robert Mannyng is clear about the significance of the title he assigns to his text:

> Men clepyn þe boke handlyng synne.
> Yn frenshe þer a clerk hyt sees,
> He clepyþ hyt manuel de pecchees.
> Manuel ys handling wyþ honde,
> Pecchees ys synne to vndyrstonde.
>
> [Men call the book *Handlyng Synne*.
> In French where a clerk sees it
> He calls it *Manuel de Pecheiz*.
> 'Manuel' is handling with the hands,
> 'Pechiez' is sin to understand.][1]

Here, Mannyng explains the way his title puns upon that of Grosseteste's original—*Manuel de Pechiez*—by translating the French 'manuel' for its adjectival sense, 'avec les mains [with the hands]', rather than its nominal one.[2] In so doing he demonstrates how titles might be used as a shorthand to identify and refer to a work. Mannyng's pun is effective because the French title provides a common reference point for his readers, and needs no further explanation. However, Mannyng's prologue also demonstrates that the title is not only a name by which to

[1] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 5, ll. 80-4.

[2] *DMF*, 'manuel', sense I.

identify the work, but also that it has a meaning requiring explanation. In fact, Mannyng's explanation of the title's relevance takes up around half of his prologue. For instance, he states:[3]

> Handlyng synne be clepyd oponly.
> For hyt touchyþ no pryuyte
> But opon synne þat callyd may be.
>
> [*Handlyng Synne* may be named openly
> For it touches nothing private
> But upon what may be termed sin.][4]

For Mannyng, then, it is clear that his title is reflective, providing a commentary on what the text contains and how people should use it.

Nevertheless, the title of a work, so Gérard Genette tells us, holds one obligatory purpose: 'sheer and strict designation, or identification'—it allows us to distinguish unambiguously between texts.[5] All other possible functions are secondary to this need. If this is the case it is possible to suppose that the titling of a text reflects an aspect of its handling: knowing what one is reading, and where it begins and ends. It indicates that people need to be able to refer to the work outside of itself, that it has transcended the material text and its private consumption. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the work is part of the public sphere—however small that sphere may be. By the twelfth-century a number of common Latin texts,

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[3] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 5-6, ll. 80-140.

[4] Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 6, ll. 138-40.

[5] Genette, *Paratexts*, 80. See also E. A. Levenston, 'The Significance of the Title in Lyric Poetry', *The Hebrew University Studies in Literature*, 6:1 (1978), 63 [63-87]; Els Rose, 'Paratexts in the *Virtutes Apostolorum*', *Viator*, 44:2 (2013), 372 [369-88]. I use the term *title* in this chapter, as Genette does, to refer simply to the name given to a work external to the work itself. In the majority of cases these examples will relate to the name that travelled with the work in manuscript copies, usually in a marginal position either above or next to the main text.

such as psalters and hymnals, came to be known by set names.[6] Thus, a late eleventh-century book list from Bury St Edmunds refers to, among other items, 'the ænglisce saltere [psalter]', and 'the imnere [hymner]', as well as 'the pistelari [epistolary]…the grete sater [psalter] ⁊ the litle tropere [troper].'[7] Classical Latin texts were also commonly ascribed titles, which remained consistent throughout the medieval period.[8] However, as Table 1 shows, many texts in post-Conquest England, especially those in early Middle English, were not ascribed titles. Meanwhile, those that are named in all or some extant copies often do not follow consistent naming formulae, but are ascribed different titles in different places. Even in a volume that does contain some texts with a title, it is usual to find just as many without one.[9] These observations raise a number of questions. First, if a text was not assigned a title, does that necessarily imply that its content was confined to the page: that is, that it was not identifiable outside of the immediate situation of its consumption, or that it was only read and never

[6] M. Maurice Helin, 'Les livres et leurs titres', *Marche Romane: Cahiers de l'Association de Romanistes de l'Université de Liège*, 6:3-4 (1956), 142 [139-52]; Paul Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Büchertitel*, v. 1 (Munich: Bayerischen Akademie de Wissenschaften, 1949), 6-31; on Breviaries see also Andrew Hughes, 'The Scribe and the Late-Medieval Liturgical Manuscript: Page Layout and Order of Work', *The Centre and Its Compass: Studies in Medieval Literature in Honor of Professor John Leyerle*, ed. Robert A. Taylor, James F. Burke, Patricia J. Eberle, Ian Lancashire, and Brian S. Merrilees (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1993), 155 [151-224]; and on the *Glossa Ordinaria* see Smith, *The* Glossa Ordinaria, 3.

[7] *CBMLC*, B12.1-17; BodL, MS Auct. D. 2. 14, f. 173r; Ker, *Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, 350, 290.

[8] See Richard Sharpe, *Titulus: Identifying Medieval Latin Titles, An Evidence-Based Approach* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 29. Birger Munk Olsen, 'Les Titres dans les Manuscrits des Poètes Classiques Latins Copiés du IX^{e} au XII^{e} Siècle', *Titres et Articulations de Texte dans les Œuvres Antiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Fredouille, Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, Philippe Hoffmann, Pierre Petitmengin, and Simone Deléani (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 513 [511-27] suggests that as much as 66% of Classical Latin poetry copied between the ninth and the twelfth centuries was provided with a title in the manuscript.

[9] See, for instance, BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, which contains just one title, for *The Romance of Havelok*, f. 204r, which may have been added later in the fourteenth century (the title has since been damaged by trimming of the upper margin and is only partially legible, it reads, '( ) Hauelok quam Rex Anglie'), compared to four untitled texts; BodL, MS Digby 86 has a very high proportion of titled items (sixty-six) but still includes twenty-two without titles.

Table 1: A Quantification of the Instances of Titling Across the Multilingual Manuscript Corpus

Classmark	None	Works with Titles		
		Latin	French	English
BL, MS Cotton Claudius D. iii, s. xiii.in.		2*	-	*
Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, s. xiii.in.	X	*	-	-
BodL, MS Digby 4, s. xiii[1]	X	-	-	-
TCC, MS B.1.45, s. xiii	X	*	-	-
BL, MS Egerton 613, c. 1250		-	4	-
BodL, MS Bodley 652, s. xiii[2]		-	1	-
BodL, MS Laud Misc. 636, 1121-31 and s. xiii[2]	X	-	-	-
BL, MS Arundel 292, s. xiii.ex.		3*	-	4*
BodL, MS Digby 86, (1272-82)		14	34	16
Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, s. xiii.ex.		1	6	15
TCC, MS B.14.39, s. xiii.ex.		3	4	3
BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, s. xiii.ex.		-	3	1
BL, MS Additional 23986, s. xiii.ex.		-	-	1**
BodL, MS Digby 2, s. xiii.ex.	X	-	-	-
SJC, MS E.8, s. xiii.ex.		5*	-	-
BodL, MS Laud Misc. 471, s. xiii.ex.		11*	3*	-
BodL, MS Digby 53, s. xii.ex.		10*	-	-
GCC, MS 512/543, s. xiii.ex.	X	*	-	-
BL, MS Sloane 146, s. xiii.ex	X	-	-	-
BL, MS Cotton Vitellius D. iii, s. xiii.ex.***	X	*	-	-
BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, c. 1300		3*	5	-
Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 258, s. xiii-xiv		3	1	-
CUL, MS Hh.vi.11, s. xiii-xiv		8	-	-
BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, s. xiii.ex.-xiv		-	-	1
CCCC, MS 405, s. xiii and xiv.in.		5	2	-
CUL, MS Gg.i.1, s. xiv.in.		-	29	1
BL, MS Additional 11579, c.1300-25		8*	-	-
BL, MS Cotton Tiberius A. vi, s. xii[2]-xiv[2]		-	1 (s. xiv[2])	-
CUL, MS Ff.vi.15, s. xii-v.in.		6*	-	-
CUL, MS Mm.i.18, s. xii-xv		3	-	-

* Short titles are found for individual sermons, songs, or categories of *distinctiones*.
** Roll misplaced, only one side available in facsimile.
*** Damaged in Cotton fire, numbers refer to remaining visible titles.

Unaccounted for in this table are the manuscripts Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123; LPL, MS 499; and London, Dulwich College, MS XXII, for which data was not collected.

spoken of? The answer is surely no, but how untitled texts were used does bear consideration, particularly if the names of titled works were adopted, perpetuated, and used outside the immediate context of the book. Secondly, how might a text be used if its reader knew it by more than one name? Finally, if it was perfectly possible for texts to be used without a title, why did people bother to add one? What does assigning it a name mean for the reading of the text?

As shown by the table above, many of the manuscripts in this corpus contain only one or two examples of titled works in the vernacular. In fact, the vast majority of early Middle English works with titles in this corpus are found in a couple of larger poetic collections, particularly BodL, MS Digby 86 and Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29: manuscripts that seem, in general, to be marked by the tastes and interests of notably well-informed scribes. Much of the literary critical discussion of medieval titles in this chapter will, therefore, draw on these heavily titled volumes. Focussing on these manuscripts as single cases of the intensive use of titles allows for comparison to be made across and within the manuscript, revealing how a scribe's practice varied depending on his text and his exemplar. In addition, by dint of their size these poetic volumes contain more items that are also copied in other manuscripts than some of the more 'miscellaneous' manuscripts in the corpus. As such, they provide a greater scope for comparing the titling across all extant copies of a single text to see how titling is handled in the textual transmission of specific works. However, other manuscripts will be brought in for the purposes of comparison—especially in relation to more palaeographical aspects of the investigation.

Titles have not received much critical attention. In 1975 John Hollander was able to state that 'no general theory of titles and titling has ever been propounded' and this is still

largely the case.[10] Discussion is even less developed in relation to medieval literature, which has largely been studied in the hope of establishing where and when titles are applied with less consideration of their further implications for use and interpretation.[11] More recently, the study of titles has been usefully considered for what tools they can offer critical approaches to the medieval text itself. Thus, Julia Boffey has examined the titles of late medieval lyric poetry in an attempt to determine contemporary views of their formal and generic ascriptions.[12] Related is the use of titles in the compilation of book lists. Here the title plays a functional role, providing a means of indexing the text in relation to other works. In these contexts, Richard Sharpe has shown, titles were used to make claims about the form and content of the work, as well as to recognise the book that contained it.[13] What all of these studies have in common is their agreement that medieval titles were fluid in the forms they took, the places they were used, and the occasions they were added and removed.[14] Nevertheless, beyond identifying their pragmatic use in cataloguing, studies of Middle English titling have rarely explored how

[10] John Hollander, '"Haddock's Eyes": A Note on the Theory of Titles', *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form* (OUP, 1975), 212 [212-26].

[11] See, for instance, Lehmann, *Mittelalterliche Büchertitel*. Or, more recently, Dora Maček, 'Some Notes on Titles, Topics and Themes in Old English', *Studia Romanica et Anglica Zagrabiensia*, 34 (1989), 187-200; Munk Olsen, 'Les Titres dans les Manuscrits des Poètes', 511-27; Jean Vezin, 'Épigraphie et Titres dans les Manuscrits Latins du Haut Moyen Âge', *Titres et Articulations de Texte dans les Œuvres Antiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Fredouille, Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, Philippe Hoffmann, Pierre Petitmengin, and Simone Deléani (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 549-58.

[12] Julia Boffey, 'What to Call a Lyric? Middle English Lyrics and their Manuscript Titles', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83:3 (2005), 671-83. See also Maldwyn Mills, 'Generic Titles in Bodleian Library MS Douce 261 and British Library MS Egerton 3132A', *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance*, ed. Phillipa Hardman (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 125-38; Graham A. Runnalls, 'Titles and Genres in Medieval French Religious Drama', *Tréteaux*, 2 (1980) 23-8, reprinted in *Études sur les Mystères* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998), 51-7.

[13] Sharpe, *Titulus*, 24-34.

[14] See, for instance, Sharpe, *Titulus*, 22.

readers might interpret titles, or use them in their interactions with the text.[15] For discussions of this nature we must look to theorists of modern print literature.[16] These critical approaches can be useful in understanding the sporadic titling of early Middle English works found particularly in poetic compilations of the thirteenth century. They help to show how the application of a title might reflect and direct the use of the work within and outside of the volume. Nevertheless (as will emerge), the vast proportion of texts went untitled, and the lack of a title might also encourage certain types of reading practice.

Talking about the Text

The use of the title to identify the work, both outside of and inside of the book, seems from a modern perspective a fair requirement.[17] In fact, as early as the thirteenth century the Latin noun *titulus* was used to mean both 'the heading of a book or section', and a 'mark, token, [or] sign'—that is a label providing identification.[18] This definition is literalised in its classical root, where the *titulus* was the physical label affixed to a scroll in order to identify its contents

[15] For consideration of some of these issues in relation to the much earlier Latin *Virtutes Apostolorum* (s.vi) see Rose, 'Paratexts in the *Virtutes Apostolorum*', 369-88.

[16] See, particularly, Genette, *Paratexts*, 55-103; Stephen G. Kellman, 'Dropping Names: the Poetics of Titles', *Criticism: a Quarterly for Literature and the Arts*, 17:2 (1975), 152-67; Hollander, '"Haddock's Eyes"', 212-26; Harry Levin, 'The Title as a Literary Genre', *The Modern Language Review*, 72:4 (1977), xxiii-xxxvi.

[17] Editors and cataloguers also sympathise with this need, and have regularly been responsible for inventing titles for untitled, or multi-titled, works in order to allow for 'convenient' identification, regardless of how consistent those titles are with the original: Sharpe, *Titulus*, 23-6.

[18] *DMLBS*, 'titulus', sense 1b; sense 2.

without the need to unroll the whole document.[19] Certainly, ascribing a common name to a text eased its identification when the item was in regular, even daily, use. For instance, the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*, and compline responsory *In Manus Tuas* are usually titled where they appear in manuscripts, despite the fact that their texts ought to be immediately identifiable.[20] The use of conventional titles, however, means that reference could be made to them without the need to recite or transcribe the whole text, or even the opening lines. Thus, they may, perversely, stand in for, or remove the need for, consumption or production of the full text. The titling of such items in manuscript copies, though, where the text is necessarily present, may primarily be due to their derivation from the liturgy. In service books, which contained a great variety of texts that were referred to in different orders depending on the office being performed, reading was unavoidably non-linear.[21] In order to be able to move around these capacious books therefore the separate parts of the service needed to be carefully labelled, otherwise a reader risked having to go through the whole book to find the correct passage. In this context, then, titles allow not only for identification of, and reference to, a given item, but they also aid the understanding of textual relations within the book, allowing a reader to

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[19] Helin, 'livres et leurs titres', 140; see also Claude Moussy, 'Les Appellations Latine des Titres de Livres', *Titres et Articulations de Texte dans les Œuvres Antiques*, ed. Jean-Claude Fredouille, Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, Philippe Hoffmann, Pierre Petitmengin, and Simone Deléani (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 5 [1-7]; Revilo P. Oliver, 'The First Medicean MS of Tacitus and Titulature of Ancient Books', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 82 (1951), 243 [232-61].

[20] The recognisability of these texts is assured by the fact that they not only represented significant moments of lay participation in the Mass, but also all congregants were expected to know them by heart, as emphasised by the synodal statutes of 1215-81: see Andrew Reeves, *Religious Education in Thirteenth-Century England: The Creed and Articles of Faith* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 39-46.

[21] Stallybrass, 'Books and Scrolls', 47. Due to the quantity of material they contained some service books, such as the thirteenth-century Bibles copied with Missals like SJC, MS N.1 (ff. 408, 255x180 mm), might be very large increasing the need for strategies to ease navigation: Laura Light, 'The Thirteenth-Century Pandect and the Liturgy: Bibles with Missals', *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, ed. Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 211 [185-215].

identify which office different items belonged to, and to comprehend and navigate a series of texts that may occasion a lot of movement within the volume.

In the case of the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, *Credo*, and *In Manus Tuas*, though, there are further implications; for, when these items are translated into the vernacular, their titles usually are not. Thus, the opening folio of one devotional miscellany dated to the turn of the fourteenth century—possibly from the Benedictine cathedral priory in Norwich—contains a set of English verse translations of the articles of faith.[22] Titles are provided for these items in the blank space to the right of the texts, copied using red ink in the same hand as the rest of the work and prefaced with a paraph: '¶Credo in deum'; '¶P*ate*r noster';[23] '¶Aue maria'; '¶In man*u*s tuas'.[24] It may be that the failure to translate the names of the prayers is simply a reflection of their place in common parlance: the Latin name was more familiar to readers than an English translation would have been. By allowing people to refer briefly to the short prayers that everyone was supposed to know, and used on a regular basis, the names themselves entered the 'cultural repertory', giving them a currency that meant they could circulate independently of the Latin liturgical texts to which they originally referred.[25] But, when such names are invoked to title texts that may be—within the limits of translation—vastly different,

[22] BL, MS Arundel 292, ff. 3r-v; Hanneke Wirtjes, ed., *The Middle English* Physiologus, EETS, OS 299 (OUP, 1991), ix; xxxv-xl.

[23] BL, MS Arundel 292, f. 3r.

[24] BL, MS Arundel 292, f. 3v.

[25] Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Towards a Taxonomy of Middle English Manuscript Assemblages', *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (OUP, 2015), 278 [263-79]; for more on cultural repertoires, see Gillis J. Dorleijn and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, eds., *Cultural Repertoires: Structure, Function and Dynamics* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), especially Alisdair A. MacDonald, 'The Cultural Repertory of Middle Scots Lyric Verse', 59-85; and the definitions provided by Gillis J. Dorleijn, and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, 'The Structure and Function of Cultural Repertoires: An Introduction', xii [ix-xix].

it is likely that there are additional reasons for doing so. The *Pater Noster* discussed above, for instance, reads:

> Fader ure ðatt art i*n* heuene blisse
> Ðin heȝe name itt þurðe bliscedd.
> Cumen itt mote ði kingdom.
> Ðin hali þil it be al don.
> In heuene ⁊ in erðe all so.
>
> [Father our, that is in heaven,
> Your holy name is worthy bliss;
> Thy kingdom permit to come;
> Your holy will, may it be all done
> In heaven and on earth also.][26]

Whereas the same section of a *Pater Noster*, with the same title, copied in another manuscript of the thirteenth century has:

> ¶Vre fader in heuene yhalȝed bo þy name
> þy kyned*re* to us mote come for þar is blisse and game
> ¶Al þi wille be ydo: boþe day and niȝt
> In heuene also on erthe: alse his is riȝt
>
> [Our father in heaven hallowed be your name
> You nature to us must come, for there is bliss and joy.
> All your will be done, both day and night,
> In heaven and also on earth, as is right.] [27]

The title is clearly the common thread between these two items, rather than the text, the final three lines of which are almost entirely distinct. Here, the titles present the centre of the textual network. On the one hand, they provide reflection upon the translation process, indicating the dependence of the English on the liturgical precedent. This relationship is even clearer in one

[26] BL, MS Arundel 292, ff. 3r- v; *DIMEV*, 1295; Wirtjes, ed., *Middle English* Physiologus, 47-8, ll. 23-7.

[27] Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 27, f. 162r.

early fourteenth-century example, which is titled, 'þe pater noster vndo on englissch'.[28] However, in noting the textual connection, the Latin titles also serve to convey the devotional significance of the English. As Tim William Machan has noted of Middle English writing more generally, the continuity of the prayer's text is unreliable, but due to its alignment under a shared title, 'the absolute truths that the work attempted to recuperate' cannot fail.[29] So, not only did readers know which texts these titles identified, but also the names themselves carried associated meanings—those of religious efficacy, obligation, and devotion—that reinforced their spiritual use within and outside of the book.[30]

Very few titles ascribed to vernacular works can be demonstrated to have the same sort of cultural currency as those of the articles of faith. In some cases, where the naming element in a title is found repeated more than once, wider public knowledge of the name may be considered a possibility. Thus, the two extant copies of one English antiphon are both titled 'Incip*it* antiph*on*a de sancto Thoma marture in anglico,' suggesting that the title was used to identify the work outside of the codex.[31] It may be, since the text is identified as an antiphon, that it circulated orally as part of the corpus of popular song. Similarly, the three titled copies of the *Manuel de Pecheiz* viewed for this study all share the common verbal formula 'la/le

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[28] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 19.2.1, f. 72r. The verb phrase 'undo on' was used to mean 'translated into' from at least the late fourteenth century, when it appears in an early version of the *Wycliffite Bible*. It is also found in a copy of the *Northern Homily Cycle of Sermons on the Gospels* (*DIMEV*, 1202), which though the manuscript dates to c. 1400 is thought to have been composed around the year 1300. From a similar date the same construction is also used to denote the explanation, and interpretation of scripture: *MED*, 'undon (v.)', sense 7.

[29] Tim William Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts* (Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1994), 140-2 (141).

[30] Kellman, 'Dropping Names', 161-2 observes the same phenomenon in modern titling, where repeating elements of well-known title can 'yoke' a text to other works, such as sequels.

[31] *DIMEV*, 2047; Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 185v. The second copy is located in Winchester, Winchester College, MS 4, and the title reported in *DIMEV*; see also *MMBL*, v. 4, 581-2.

manuel de p*e*ch*is*/es/ez'.[32] Such a phrase may have been in more widespread use to identify the text, as suggested by Mannyng's translation discussed above, and been copied into the manuscript, despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that many other manuals of sins were in circulation at this time.[33] In fact, the use of the definite article 'la/le' appears to confirm that name of this work was already known: not '*a* manual of sins' but '*the* manual.'

Nevertheless, these cases are exceptional. Most attested titles are not witnessed more than once. Still more texts are not ascribed a title at all. In these cases, then, are we to suppose that people had no means of referring to a common text? Perhaps readers simply had no interest in doing so? The potential for confusion is rife, but it seems unlikely that confusion, or silence, about the identity of a text was the default. As is well established, it is likely that before 1450 books containing vernacular works were bespoke products, and—when not made for the copyist's own use—were produced by scribes on commission.[34] It stands to reason, then, that the readers who ordered these books must have been able to communicate which items they wished the scribe to include. It is equally unlikely that someone interested enough to pay for a bespoke book would have neither the will nor the ability to discuss it. In some cases these manuscripts were luxury items clearly designed to be displayed; as such, they would surely

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[32] *ANL*, 635; CUL, MS Gg.i.1, f. 294v; BodL, MSS Greaves 51, f. 1r; Hatton 99, f. 1r. Further examples of works where titles may share a common 'naming' elements include 'les ounsse peines de enfer' (*DIMEV*, 6112; *ANL*, 556); 'la passyun i*e*hs*u*s crist en engleys' (*DIMEV*, 2341-2); and some copies of 'le oreisoun mestre peres de pecchame' (*ANL*, 630); the 'vii morteus pecchez' (*ANL*, 666); and 'le ymage du mounde' (*ANL*, 326).

[33] Morton W. Bloomfield, *Incipits of Latin Works on the Virtues and Vices, 1100-1500 A.D.* (Cambridge, MA: MAA, 1979), 3-4: the popularity of the subject among medieval copyists is easily demonstrated by the fact that this volume lists 6553 separate *incipits*.

[34] Among many accounts of this situation, see Ralph Hanna, 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England', *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 37 [37-52].

also attract discussion.[35] In addition, it is likely that many such bespoke books belonged to people with genuine literary interests, and a particular wish to collect vernacular texts. If Richard de Bury could write a twenty-chapter treatise on the love he had for his books, it seems unlikely that other enthusiasts would not have wanted to talk about, identify, and name them too. Either, then, these apparently untitled texts in fact circulated with common names in verbal discourse that were not reflected in their written form; or people employed alternative strategies to allow them to identify, commission, and discuss their texts. This is not to say that such conversations were not fraught with difficulties, as people struggled to remember and communicate the works they had heard about and wanted included, simply that they must have been possible.

Reading the Text in the Title

If and when a text *was* assigned a title then, even if only in a single manuscript by an individual scribe, what does that title tell us about the producer's prefiguration of the reading of the text? In criticism of modern literature, titles are considered to function as an authorial 'commentary' on the work, directing the reader towards its central themes, and setting their expectations for its content.[36] In this understanding, then, titles are necessarily authorial. Indeed, for Genette, 'By definition, something is not a paratext unless the author…accepts

[35] See, for instance, a mid fourteenth-century copy of the *Romance of Alexander* equipped with beautiful decorated borders, and sometimes peopled initials (BodL, MS Bodley 264); or even in this more humble corpus, the historiated opening initial of one copy of Layamon's *Brut* (BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 3r), or the figurative framing, initials, and coloured and decorated astronomical diagrams in a large miscellany dated to the opening of the fourteenth century (CUL, MS Gg.i.1).

[36] Kellman, 'Dropping Names', 154. See, also, Hollander, '"Haddock's Eyes"', 217.

responsibility for it.'[37] However, as shown above, it is likely that the majority of titles in early Middle English books were not authorial. Rather, in most cases the titles found associated with vernacular texts have been introduced from a number of separate sources. Some titles may have been transmitted with the exemplar, while others may have been known to the copyist or the commissioner, who had heard them used. In this case, the fact that a title is not authorial does not necessarily mean that it is solely the invention of the scribe. Rather, some titles developed—and were copied or added by scribes because they had—their own shared cultural currency. However, if the title ascribed to a text does not have an authorial, or even a single point of scribal, origin then what is its status in relation to reading? Some modern critics say that this renders the title useless, adding little extra information to the work.[38] However, I disagree; a title that has been assigned to a text by a copyist or reader must at least be considered a fair reflection of the text's reception at the time of its ascription. In fact, the few titles that are found in manuscripts of early Middle English works could be considered—even for temporary periods of time—a more accurate record of reading, or at least of readers' responses to and discussions of, the text than those of authorial inception. They say not 'this is what I wish the text to be called', but rather 'this is what I know the text as.' Medieval titles, then, not only provided a commentary to guide future readers, they also reflect the reading—cultural and/or bookish—of the person that assigned them.

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[37] Genette, *Paratexts*, 9. See also Hollander, '"Haddock's Eyes"', 212-26; Theodor W. Adorno, 'A Title', *Notes to Literature*, v. 2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York, NY: Columbia UP, 1992), 299-302; John Barth, 'The Title of This Book', *The Friday Book: Essays and Other Nonfiction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1984), vii-x; all of whom implicitly consider the authorial intent behind the title.

[38] Levenston, 'Significance of the Title', 72. Similar implications are made by Genette, *Paratexts*, 3; Adorno, 'A Title', 301.

Titles might also act as directions or reflections upon how to approach or consume the text, urging the user toward specific modes of reading or applications of the work in particular ways.[39] In one of its manuscripts, for instance, an Anglo-Norman treatise is titled:

> Cest liueres q*ui* ensegne *com*m*en*t on doit Gentiex oiseaus garder. ⁊ norrir ⁊ faitier. ⁊ acoi on puet conoistre sil est gentils ⁊ [en] natures. Apres orres la medicine de lor diu*er*se maladies. ⁊ *com*m*en*t on les puet garir. ⁊ coi on puet conoistre q*ua*nt li oiseaus est maladies. ⁊ quell mal il a. la p*re*miere rubrike est…
>
> [This book which teaches how one must keep noble birds. and how to nourish and train them, and also how one can tell if they are noble in nature. After you will hear the medicine for their diverse maladies, how one can care for them, and how to recognize when the bird is sick, and which illness they have. The first rubric is…].[40]

Hereafter the title describes what is under the first rubric before it becomes illegible. The length, and breadth, of the title serves to summarise the subjects of the entire treatise, perhaps in order to support a more general audience for the work by mapping out the structure of the text. In comparison, another copy of the same treatise is titled simply 'Ci comence le medicinal des oiseus [Here begins the medicinal of birds]'.[41] This shorter title might be considered less prescriptive as to the content and use of the work. Alternatively, it may suggest an expectation that the reader had encountered the work before, hence the use of the definitive article 'le', and knew about its other subjects. The title acts purely as a prompt to the memory that distinguished this text from other works in the volume. This short title, then, may favour returning reference readers, whereas the longer and more comprehensive description may be designed to provide access for new readers, acting almost as a table of contents that picks out various strands of the argument and begins to outline its structure through the use of

[39] Boffey, 'What to Call a Lyric?', 680.

[40] BL, Additional MS 46919, f. 24v.

[41] BodL, MS Digby 86, f. 49r.

prepositions ('Apres') and positioning ('Cest liueres', 'la premiere rubrike'). Alternatively, a long title that begins to lay out the work's *ordinatio* may ease specialist selective use, alerting readers to the text's divisions so that they could pick out only the sections of interest to them; meanwhile, a shorter title that only partially describes the contents of the work may sometimes necessitate a more complete reading of the text, if only for a reader to find the sections he wants to read in full. The ways a title describes or comments on a work, then, may have particular implications for who its readers were, what they hoped to gain from the text, and their reading practice.

In some cases, though, the descriptive information provided by titles does not appear useful for either recording or prefiguring reading. In fact, some titles seem to do more to cloud what is forthcoming than to explain it. For instance, one page of the literary anthology in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, records the title 'Incipit de muliere samaritana [Begins the woman Samaritan]'. What follows, however, is up to five separate texts that are copied in succession with no distinction made between them.[42] *The Woman of Samaria* does begin below the title, but three or four further items are inserted into the middle of the work before the original poem resumes, concluding the section preceding the next marked item.[43] It is possible that the copyist became confused about the order of texts, or the textual boundaries, in his exemplar, leading him to merge these items under one title largely unrelated to most of them. In this case, then, the title actually makes it harder for a potential reader to locate the other items, obscuring them by presenting them under the title of a single work. The title, therefore, may prove a hindrance, or a deterrent, to reading some of the items at all. Similarly, some titles

[42] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 178v.

[43] *DIMEV*, 5874, 5698, 3370, 4270.

give little to no information about the texts they appear to be naming, providing the reader with no cues to their subject or content. Certainly, the title 'Tractatus quidam in anglico [A certain tract in English]' in the same manuscript provides minimal information about that text: that it is in English. Any reader who encountered the first line could have gleaned this fact as easily.[44] What's more, there are twenty-six other items in English in this manuscript, so it is highly unlikely anyone looking for *Poema Morale* in particular would recognise it from report only of its language.[45] Instead, the title requires readers to read further in order to identify the work, even if it is very familiar; a reader who did not know the poem, which begins somewhat obliquely, would need to read a considerable amount to surmise its themes. In some cases even apparently extensive titles may be tangential. The long title assigned to Thomas Hale's *Luue Ron*, seems to act more as a biography for the author—naming him and describing the situation of composition—than a commentary on the text:

> Incipit quidam cant*us* que*m com*posuit frater Thomas de hales de ordine fratr*um* minor*es* [sic]. ad instanciam cui*us*dam puelle d*e*o dicate
>
> [Here begins the song which Brother Thomas de Hales of the order of the Friars Minor composed at the request of a certain maiden dedicated to God.][46]

The only further detail given is that the work takes the form of a 'cantus [song]'. In fact, the information this title *does* relay 'could simply have been extracted from the text.'[47] In these cases, rather than providing a guide to reading, titles seem to push prospective readers toward further investigation. That perhaps suggests that there was no expectation of these texts being

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[44] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 169r.

[45] For a full list of the contents of the volume see Betty Hill, 'Oxford, Jesus College MS 29, Part II: Contents, Technical Matters, Compilation, and its History to c. 1695', *Notes and Queries*, 50:3 (2003), 269-70 [268-76].

[46] *DIMEV* 104; Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 187r; Thomas of Hales, *Luue Ron*, in *Moral Love Songs and Laments*, ed. Susanna Fein, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), 32, l. i.

[47] John Scahill, 'The Friar, the Maid, the Writer and the Reader', *Poetica*, 36 (1992), 1-2 [1-14].

used by new readers, or readers who would use the text selectively, knowing what they were looking for; rather it might presuppose a more continuous, unguided reading practice.

Alternatively, these oblique, almost opaque, titles may themselves be evidence of someone reading his book. A surprisingly high proportion of the works included in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, are titled.[48] It is likely that some of these items—such as the 'Antiphona de Sancto Thoma Martyre in Anglico' (discussed above), Chardri's 'petyt plé', or 'le Doctrinal'[49]—circulated with titles using similar formulations in other manuscripts.[50] Other titles, though, may be of this scribe's own devising. The titles of several items appear to be only partially complete, as if the copyist, or a predecessor, had settled on an opening framework—'Tractatus quidam [A certain tract]' or 'Item cantus [Another song]'—but failed to devise the naming or descriptive element. Thus, in this manuscript both *An Orison of Our Lord* and *Homily on Sothe Luue* are given the title 'Tractatus quidam', written in red ink.[51] Meanwhile, the *Song of the Annunciation* is assigned the title 'Item Cantus' in the margin next to the start of the text.[52] The brevity, and lack of descriptive detail—beyond a gesture to their form—in these two-word titles leaves them feeling incomplete: as if further explanation is still to come. However, the failure to complete these titles may provide a model for how others were constructed. Such titles seem to have been built using a standardised framework where the form of the text was supplied with a descriptive sub-clause. 'Tractatus quidam in anglico [A certain tract in English]' is perhaps the briefest possible iteration of this model, taking all the necessary

[48] Twenty-one out of thirty-three (64%), compared to only four out of thirteen items (31%) in its sister manuscript (BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix).

[49] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 185v; f. 224v; f. 201r.

[50] See, for instance, Winchester, Winchester College, MS 4, f. 185v; BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 149r; BodL, MS Digby 86, f. 177r, respectively.

[51] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 192r; *DIMEV*, 3190; Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 193r; *DIMEV*, 5479.

[52] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 188v; *DIMEV*, 1467.

information to complete the formula from a glance at the poem. In this manuscript the titles of both texts that have been named 'Tractatus quidam' are positioned centrally on the line above the text and followed by a punctus. It seems, therefore, that the scribe of the volume has copied them as though they were complete.

However, it may be that when the titles were originally applied, to a preceding exemplar, their producer never completed the job. Perhaps their producer intended every item in his volume to have a title and put in place the formulaic elements to support this. But when it came to it he did not or could not finish implementing his plans, either because the necessary further reading of the text by the scribe at the later stage of correction and rubrication never occurred, or because he simply ran out of enthusiasm for the task and the reading and summarising it required, resulting in less substantial descriptions. Thus, some of his titles were never extended beyond the formal ascription 'Tractatus quidam'. Reading against these incomplete titles it is possible to observe a reader—the scribe that introduced the rubricated titles throughout the volume—who often engaged in careful and selective rereading of certain texts for the specific purpose of identifying subjects, themes, and bibliographical details: as in 'le medicinal des oiseus'. Just occasionally, though, he became disengaged from his self-imposed task and switched to a more nugatory and less comprehensive reading style. Here, even while the formulations of some titles may undermine their apparent ability to direct or describe reading, they continue to reflect one individual's interactions with the book.

While the content of titles may not always provide much evidence for scribal expectations of how the text would be read, the language they are in might. Many of the titles assigned to vernacular texts were written in Latin. The common use of Latin for titles may reflect the development of titling in Latin works. Perhaps Latin was considered the language of

titles at that time. However, if this were the only explanation then one might assume that as titles became more familiar the tendency to provide them in Latin would diminish. Instead, it appears the use of Latin in titling became a sustained convention in its own right, with Latin employed regularly in the formulation of titles throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[53] English texts are far more likely to receive Latin titles than their Anglo-Norman counterparts, reflecting the relative status of all three languages.[54] It may be that, as with the use of scriptural names for vernacular translations of the fundamental religious texts, Latin code-switching in a title lent authority to the vernacular work.[55] It seems, then, that 'Lewed' English required greater reinforcement through its relation to a Latin title, than the more courtly and sophisticated French.[56] Given the discussion of the articles of faith at the beginning of this chapter, it might be assumed that Latin titles were primarily used to confer devotional efficacy on works translated from scripture, liturgy, or prayer. This relationship seems to hold true in the case of the few Anglo-Norman examples, several of which are vernacular devotions: one is a liturgical hymn titled 'Gloria in excelsis deo en fraunceis [*Gloria in excelsis Deo* in

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[53] Julia Boffey, 'Forms of standardization in terms for Middle English lyrics in the fourteenth century', *The Beginnings of Standardization: Language and Culture in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. Ursula Schaefer (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006), 68 [61-70].

[54] See 'Introduction', 17-21.

[55] Maček, 'Some Notes on Titles', 189.

[56] Just one of many writers to describe English as a 'lewed' language is Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, 3-4, ll. 43-4: 'For lewed men y vndyr toke / On englyssh tunge to make þys boke.' The relative status of the three languages may also explain the large proportion of English works assigned titles in French, which may have granted greater accessibility than Latin, flagging the text's vernacularity, while still appealing to the courtly and clerical elite. Thus, romances and histories, often considered staples of the courtly milieu, were regularly titled in French—for example, Langtoft's *Chronicle of England* is titled in one copy 'Ici commence le brut coment li bon rei Edward*us* gaigna Escotz e galis' (CUL, MS Gg.i.1, f. 328v). However, language choice in a title was not purely designated by theme, form, or potential audience. The English romance of *King Horn* (*DIMEV*, 312) is titled in English even as it ascribes itself the traditionally French form of a 'geste': BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 83r; see *DMF*, 'geste', sense A; *MED*, 'geste', sense 1.

French]';[57] another the 'Oracio ad deum [Prayer to God]' attributed to Edmund Riche.[58] Some English works with Latin titles have similar sources, for instance, the English expansion of the hymn 'Dulcis ih*es*u memoria'.[59] Here, the titles point the reader to the source and in so doing tell the reader how to respond to the text by conferring upon it the authority of its origin. Such titles suggest an expectation that these religious texts, though they exist independently from their Biblical and liturgical sources, remain connected to them—perhaps in use as well as in content and significance. In particular, the parallels in form—Latin title preceding vernacular text—between these items and contemporary vernacular sermons, which were often preceded by a thematic line taken from scripture,[60] are notable, especially as liturgical and vernacular verses could both be quoted in this context.[61] Perhaps, then, these verses and their Latin titles were also designed to be read or recited aloud to an assembled audience by those engaged in preaching, the title announcing the scripture under discussion in a similar manner.[62] Medieval titles, therefore, not only offer a commentary on the texts they preceed, but may also give directions on other aspects of the text consumption.

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[57] *ANL*, 869; BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 134v; Fein, ed., *Complete Harley 2253*, v. 3, 349-50.

[58] *ANL*, 888; BodL, MS Digby 86, f. 200v.

[59] *DIMEV*, 2899; BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 77v; Fein, ed., *Complete Harley 2253*, v. 2, 436-7. Although, it should also be noted that on occasion devotional and liturgical works also received vernacular titles. A Marian prayer and a lyric against simony in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, for instance, are titled in English: 'Her begynneþ þe vif blyssen of vre leuedi seynte marie' and 'Hwou holy chireche is vnder note' (*DIMEV*, 3019 and 6528; Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, ff. 181r-v). Meanwhile, in another manuscript Latin copies of the Gradual and Penitential Psalms have been assigned the French titles, 'Les xv saumes' and 'Les vii saumes' (BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 62v and 65r, respectively.)

[60] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 67.

[61] See Siegfried Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and its Middle English Poems* (Cambridge, MA: MAA, 1978), 68-100.

[62] For more on the practices of preaching and use of sermons in this period see Helen Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 33-49, especially 33-4; David L. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 13-63.

Reading on the Page

However, not all vernacular texts with Latin titles were suited to the task of aural, devotional performance. The Latin scriptural passages that begin sermons are intrinsically connected to the body of vernacular text: not only do they provide the theme, but they are often referred to, explained, and translated in the opening lines, requiring that the Latin be recited with the rest of the sermon.[63] The same practice might be applicable to some of the Latin titles given to vernacular texts translated from devotional counterparts, like 'Dulcis ih*es*u memoria'. Here the Latin provides a starting point, which the text implicitly comments upon through its translation. But other Latin titles are more bookish in their formulations. For instance, titles that begin with the formula 'Hic incipit' or 'incipit', such as 'Incip*it* alt*er*cacio int*er* filomenam ⁊ Bubonem', announce the start of the work rather than participating in it.[64] This formulation is also found in French and English with constructions such as 'Ci comence', or 'Her beginneþ', as in the title for the English romance of King Horn: 'Her bygynneþ þe geste of kyng Horn'.[65] Such statements are auxiliary to the text, and would be extraneous to an aural rendition where the verbal and visual gestures of the speaker performed the opening.[66] Rather, the announcement 'incipit' constitutes a book-based enactment of these opening gestures, where 'hic' refers to a given point on the physical page of the manuscript copy. The formula 'hic incipit', then, proves to be self-demonstrating: it begins the narrative by announcing the

[63] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 64-86; Spencer, *English Preaching*, 33.

[64] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 156r.

[65] BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 83r. See, also, for an example of each, BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 122v and 127v, respectively.

[66] Genette, *Paratexts*, 12.

beginning of the narrative.[67] This bookish play would be lost in aural delivery, which is not to say that aural delivery did not happen as well, simply that this type of title anticipates a different kind of visual, bookish, and materially engaged reading—and that such reading aloud might involve *not* reading aloud the words of the title. The title is about the page, not about the performance.

It is clear, then, that titles are equally important to *on*-page reading practices as they are to the *off*-page necessities of identification and discussion. The materially engaged nature of the 'Hic incipit' formulation is fundamentally concerned with written form and its limitations, particularly when it comes to distinguishing textual boundaries. It announces the start of a work—'hic'—where the beginning may not otherwise be visually acknowledged.[68] Indeed, the application of a title, whatever its wording, delineates the extent of the work through the visual hierarchy it maps onto the page. Thus, texts in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 are written continuously, with titles in red ink on single lines between them.[69] The red ink renders the titles visually distinct from the text, thereby creating a red frame, which establishes the top and bottom of each item. Titles, then, can actually function to conserve space in large multi-text volumes by packaging each item in as economical a form as possible. Rather than leaving larger gaps between works, or marking the beginning of an item with a cost-intensive decorated initial—as at the beginning of one copy of *King Horn*, where a gap of two lines follows the previous work, before the new text begins with a four-line blue and red capital—a

[67] Barth, 'Title of This Book', ix-x. For a similar point see Levin, 'Title as a Literary Genre', xxvi.

[68] See, for instance, the English section of BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix (ff. 233r-248v), which is copied continuously, sometimes with initials of a maximum of three lines in height marking the beginning of a new item, and sometimes with nothing to distinguish the new text from the previous work.

[69] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 144r, for example. See, also, among others, BL, MS Harley 2253, which achieves the same effect using red underlining, and larger brown scripts.

title can assert the division in as little as a single line.[70] Similar claims have been made for the stabilisation of divisions in the Bible achieved by the development of pandects, most notably 'Paris' Bibles, in the early thirteenth century.[71] The unification of the books of the Bible into 'one consecutive book in a single binding' allowed readers access to them all in one place as never before.[72] Along with this move, scribes also provided the apparatus that made these codices navigable—especially running titles for every book, and stable chapter numbers within each book[73]—facilitating the kind of discontinuous reading that liturgical practice required, and sometimes reducing them to a portable 'pocket' size.[74] The ease of distinction between texts facilitated by titles, and the uniform visual hierarchy they promoted, might allow for similar selectivity in the use of miscellaneous volumes, allowing readers to navigate them without having to read the material in between. At the same time, when used efficiently titles could markedly reduce the size of a volume, resulting in a practical and portable book that a reader might carry with him and dip into at will. Titles were, therefore, not only directed book

[70] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 219v.

[71] For details of this process, see Christopher de Hamel, *The Book. A History of the Bible* (London: Phaidon, 2001), 114-29; Laura Light, 'The Bible and the Individual: the Thirteenth-Century Paris Bible', *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York, NY: Columbia UP, 2011), 235-6 [228-46]; Laura Light, 'French Bibles c. 1200–30: A New Look at the Origin of the Paris Bible', *The Early Medieval Bible: Its Production, Decoration, and Use*, ed. Richard Gameson (CUP, 1994), 155-76. For a discussion of the use of the term 'Paris' Bible, see Light, 'Thirteenth-Century Pandect', 197-8.

[72] de Hamel, *The Book*, 114.

[73] de Hamel, *The Book*, 124-8.

[74] de Hamel, *The Book*, 129-39; Light, 'Bible and the Individual', 238-9; Peter Stallybrass, 'Epilogue', *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, ed. Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 385 [379-94]. Some debate has been raised as to what extent *Paris Bibles* tended to be smaller than other contemporary examples, with de Hamel in particular suggesting that the reduction in size came as part of the same set of developments (114-9; 131-2). In either case, it is notable that 'pocket Bibles' enjoyed considerable popularity in this period: de Hamel, *The Book*, 118-9; and especially Laura Light, 'The New Thirteenth-Century Bible and the Challenge of Heresy', *Viator*, 18 (1987), 278-9 [275-88].

use, but also mediated the design of the book's material form and how this governed readers' interactions with the text.

Reading Beyond the Title

It should not be forgotten, however, that many vernacular texts circulated without titles. In six of the books surveyed here only Latin items are titled, and eight more have no major titles at all.[75] It is equally possible that the choice not to title a work also encouraged or facilitated certain reading practices. It might be, for instance, that the lack of titles in some volumes is indicative of a greater expectation of linear reading. Thus, in one poetic collection in which titles are employed elsewhere, three French poems are copied consecutively without titles.[76] Given that all are extracted from longer works, and share as their theme the inconstancy of women—the first offering a ribald exploration of the vulgar dangers a peasant encounters by trusting his wife with some wishes, and the following two providing an anti-feminist explanation of its moral—it is likely that the three items were designed to be read together and may even have been considered a single work.[77] Nevertheless, other examples are not so clear-cut. For instance, though most of the English items in one important collection, such as *The Latemest Day* and *Litel Soth Sermun*, are not assigned titles; the majority are distinguished at the

[75] See Table 1, 89.

[76] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 113r-114r.

[77] The items in question are extracted from the fabliau *Les quatre souhais saint Martin* (*ANL*, 192), the 'A' version of *Le blasme des fames* (*ANL*, 202), and *Le Chastie-Musart* respectively. Dean does not include this last item in her catalogue, however Parkes and Tschann, eds., *MS Digby 86*, xxiii-xxiv identify it as a separate work last edited by Anna Pensa Michelini Tocci, ed., *Chastie-musart (Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 1323)* (Rome: Ateneo, 1970), 178.

beginning by a coloured initial of several lines in height.[78] The beginning of almost all the texts is therefore recognisable if the reader is equipped with a prior knowledge of the work and knows its opening lines; but, since large capitals are used elsewhere in the manuscript at places that do not relate to textual boundaries, the start of the text is neither distinctly, nor unquestionably, picked out. All but one of the items in this section is found in multiple surviving copies, and most appear to be lyrics that may have had a much wider aural circulation.[79] In which case it is possible readers had enough familiarity with the works to recognise their opening lines without the need for textual notification. However, it might be that the works were intended to be read together—not as a single text, but as a related collection in which each item is closely connected to the preceding one, and the boundaries between works are fluid. The assumption that miscellanies and other compilations were designed to be read through consecutively used to be common in criticism, but is now considered naïve.[80] In most cases this seems justified, as the organising principles suggested to support the idea of 'through' reading have rarely withstood scrutiny. Nevertheless, in this case

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[78] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, ff. 233r-249r. Sequentially the untitled items are: *DIMEV*, 3370; 4270; 6410; 6339; 5640; 6475; 1773, see *LAEMECat*, 69-70.

[79] All but one of these lyrics are found elsewhere, either in the closely related manuscript Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, or, where there are more than two surviving copies, also in the other larger contemporary verse and sermon collections BodL, MS Digby 86; BodL, MS Laud Misc. 471; BL, MS Arundel 57; BL, MS Royal 2. F. viii; TCC, MS B.14.39; and Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13. 'Will and Wit' (*DIMEV*, 6410; BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 246v) is the only unique item in the manuscript, but it may also have been found in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, prior to the loss of a leaf (see Cartlidge, 'Imagining X', 33, and n. 4; Neil Cartlidge, 'Orthographical Variation in the Middle English Lyrics of BL Cotton Caligula A. ix', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 98:3 (1997), 253 [253-9]). The order of the items in both manuscripts is the same, however, only in the Cotton MS do they appear consecutively. The Maidstone copy of 'Death's Wither Clench' (*DIMEV*, 3370; Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 93r) is copied with accompanying music, which suggests it was also transmitted aurally as a popular song. Most of these items have been included in modern editions of lyrics at some point.

[80] See, for example, Derek Pearsall, 'The Whole Book: Late Medieval English Manuscript Miscellanies and their Modern Interpreters', *Imagining the Book*, ed. Stephen Kelly and John J. Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 25-9 [17-29].

the combination of visual and textual evidence may support just such a practice. It has not previously been noted that the texts follow a consistent narrative, which appears to respond to *The Owl and the Nightingale*'s (ff. 233r-46r) lack of conclusion on how to live a pious life: 'Ne chan ich eu na more telle—/ Her nis na more of þis spelle [Nor can I tell you any more, there is no more of this tale.]'[81] The following items begin with a *memento mori* urging the reader to moral reform (f. 246r), followed by a penitential prayer to the Virgin (f. 246v), advice to follow one's wits (f. 246v), descriptions of the day of judgement and the abuses of the age to be found there (f. 246v; ff. 247r-8r; f. 248v), and end with a short rhyming sermon on pious conduct (f. 248v). When read together, then, the items provide a full answer to the birds' squabble, taking the reader from repentance and reform of their own practice to what they will find at the end of days, and overturning *The Owl and the Nightingale*'s refusal to commit to a single route toward salvation with the assertion that:

> Al so wis so he god his.
> for hire erndinge.
> To þe blisse of heuene.
> he us alle bringe.
>
> [All so wise, so good, he [God] is
> for her [Mary's] interceding.
> To the bliss of heaven
> he will bring us all.][82]

The second of the two items on Doomsday is the only text in the selection that does not open with a coloured initial, but instead follows on directly from the previous work.[83] Here, then, the items with the most closely connected themes may have been merged to create a seamless text; while the coloured capitals mark the changes in topic and style between separate items,

[81] Cartlidge, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, 43, ll. 1793-4.

[82] Richard Morris, ed., 'A Lutel Soth Sermun', *Old English Miscellany*, 190, ll. 97-100.

[83] The same conflation of these two items occurs in TCC, MS B.14.39, ff. 43r-45v: Cartlidge, 'Orthographical Variation', 253 and 255.

but deliberately avoid delimiting textual boundaries. In this case then, the reduced textual apparatus actually supports the miscellany's progressive argument, as though it were designed to be read in a particular order.

Nevertheless, since the coloured capitals in this sequence also ensure that the textual boundaries are not lost, continuous reading was not the only option. A number of other alternatives also overcame the problem of asserting textual boundaries without the use of titles. Perhaps the most familiar of these is the *incipit* or *explicit*. For, despite Stephen Kellman's arch assertion that a title 'enables us to talk about the poem without having to recite it each time we do', lack of a title does not necessarily mean people had to use the whole text as an identifier.[84] Rather, as is the case still, many texts could have been recognised from their opening lines.[85] Sometimes these lines are visually distinguished from the rest of the text. Thus, the first nine lines of the untitled copy of *The Owl and the Nightingale* are copied in a larger and more elaborate *textualis* than the rest of the poem.[86] Similarly, the first four lines of one copy of *Poema Morale* are picked out in red.[87] In both cases, then, the opening lines of new texts are visually distinguished by the register and hierarchy of their scripts, which separates them from

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[84] Kellman, 'Dropping Names', 165.

[85] Sharpe, *Titulus*, 45-51.

[86] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 233r. It is arguable that the following fifteen lines are also in a slightly larger register than the rest of the text, though not as large or as ornate as the opening nine, but the differences here are much less marked. N. R. Ker, ed., *The Owl and the Nightingale: Facsimile of the Jesus and Cotton Manuscripts*, EETS, 251 (OUP, 1963), xiv-xv suggests that this is, in fact, a product of the scribe 'finding the right size of script' to fit his writing space due to the fact that the script becomes closer to the intermediate size of lines 10-24 after the first folio. However, even if this is true of the size variation between lines 10-24 and 25-40, it seems unlikely that the scribe would initially have considered what Ker terms an 'impossibly large hand such as was used for service-books' appropriate for writing the whole item. Rather, I would suggest the scribe took his inspiration from such books in order to create a formal, display script. This hypothesis is made, in passing, by Rosemary Huisman, *The Written Poem: Semiotic Conventions from Old to Modern English* (London: Cassell, 1998), 118 [99-126].

[87] LPL, MS 487, f. 59v.

both the preceding item and the following, thereby marking the textual boundary.[88] Certainly, there are advantages to choosing the first lines of a text as an identifier over and above a separate title. Whereas the title is extrinsic to it and in some ways also ontologically separate from it, the first lines of the text are intrinsic to the work.[89] While a title could be left off during copying, the opening was less easily removed, making it a more stable witness. As such, the title may be less susceptible to selective reading than it seems due to its more overt textual instability.[90]

A more common and consistent visual and textual marker is the explicit found at the end of a text. Whereas the opening lines of an item are usually specific to each given work, the closing words often follow a predictable set formula, which may hint at the more habitual customs of navigating the codex. Thus, some texts are followed by the word 'Explicit', and others the word 'Amen', written on the line beneath the end of the work and often spread out to fill the width of the ruling or distinguished visually with coloured ink and decorative, or majuscule, lettering. At the end of one copy of *Poema Morale*, for instance, the letters of the word 'AMEN' are elongated, with decorative line work between them, turning the word itself

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[88] Clopper, '*Ordinatio* and Rhetoric', 120 notes that the Latin lines from scripture that attend the beginning of vernacular sermons also take on this role.

[89] Kellman 'Dropping Names', 153-4 describes the ontological separation of titles from non-written works of art, where the title exists in one medium and the object it designates in another, however the same might be said for titles in manuscripts which may be composed and copied at a different time and in a different medium from the rest of the work. Hollander, '"Haddock's Eyes"', 213 also describes the 'ontological power' of titles, although he sees their power as rooted in the increasing necessity of their application as an aspect of literary form.

[90] Opening lines, however, are not immune to fallibility. At the start of the M copy of *Poema Morale*, the scribe begins—perhaps mistakenly—with the first couplet of *Sinners Beware* (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 123, f. 115r). In this case, then, the opening lines would provide no assistance in identifying the text that followed them. Written in red, though, they still provide a boundary frame that distinguishes the text from the previous item, allowing the reader's eyes to skip straight to it when navigating the manuscript. See 67, n. 104.

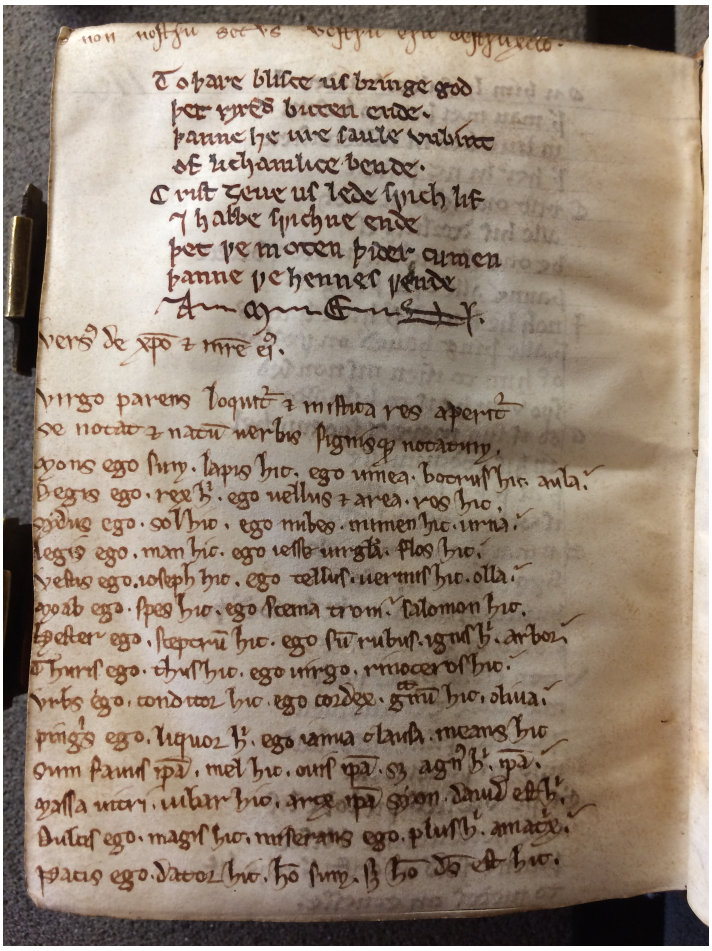


Fig. 1: BodL, MS Digby 4, f. 110v, the word 'Amen' at the end of *Poema Morale*, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

into an extemporised line-filler or visual boundary that separates the text from the following item (fig. 1).[91] Formulaic explicits like this might simply be another means to distinguish between items for a non-linear reader. However, in some cases, additional information about the text, including its title, is added to these concluding formulae. For example, one copy of *L'Assumption de Nostre Dame*, attributed to Herman de Valenciennes, closes with the lines 'Chi finist le Genesi et de la morte n*ost*re dame sainte marie et Rob*er*t lescrivain lesc*ri*t a son cos demeine et fud parfait a la nunciacione n*ost*re dame en lan de grace m.cc. et iiij^{xx} [Here ends Genesis and the death of Our Lady Saint Mary and Robert the scribe wrote it by the act of his

[91] BodL, MS Digby 4, f. 110v.

hand and [it] was completed by the Annunciation of Our Lady in the Year of Our Lord 1280]'.[92] There are several potential explanations for the location of this information, each rooted in possible reading practices. Firstly, quite unlike the new habit of giving biographical information in preliminary *accessus* at the start of learned texts in Latin, it may give end-focus to material considered important by the copyist.[93] Explicits provided a digest of salient facts about the work in a position undisruptive to the content of the text.[94] However, if the reader came to the volume looking for a specific text, then positioning this information at the end of the item may reflect expectations for how a reader would move through the book. Here, rather than working from beginning to end, readers could move back and forth through the volume in a cyclical motion, identifying the work first by its end before flicking to the beginning to read it in full and finish at the end again where the title is reinforced. Thus, readers may have been expected to approach the book from the back. Daniel Sawyer, following up an offhand comment by M. B. Parkes, has tentatively suggested as much from his investigation of the binding structures used in this period, where a (usually) single long strap fastening to a pin in the centre of the back board, may mean that books were regularly opened from the rear.[95] In this case, the explicit and colophon may be the first part of the text the reader encounters, with

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[92] BL, Harley MS 222, f. 127v.

[93] On *accessus* see, for instance, Alistair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, second edition (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), especially 23-7, 177-90.

[94] As such, it acts as the most basic form of 'memorial lay-out' possible. More complex forms are described by Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 265-73 in her discussion of *catena* formats.

[95] Sawyer, *Codicological Evidence of Reading*, 6-7. For binding structures, see Graham Pollard, 'The Construction of English Twelfth-Century Bindings', *The Library*, 12:1 (1962), 17 [1-22]; J. A. Szirmai, *The Archeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 167-8; Christopher Clarkson, 'English Monastic Bookbinding in the Twelfth Century', *Ancient and Medieval Book Materials and Techniques*, v. 2, (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apolostolica Vaticana) 181-200. This practice might also account for the common positioning of medieval indexes, as well as the placement of modern French contents lists, at the rear of the volume.

the information positioned there allowing the work to be identified from the outset. Here, the encounter with the text remains linear, only the direction of manipulation of the codex runs counter to modern Western expectations. Conversely, then, where titles are used, the standard placement at the beginning of texts may suggest a change in the way scribes expected books to be manipulated, with the reader approaching a text from the front.

Conclusions

Titles envision and facilitate certain processes of reading by highlighting particular topics within the text, and directing the reader towards sources and analogues that prompt particular uses. Titles, then, are selective: geared towards a certain set of imagined readers approaching the book in particular, sometimes quite bookish, ways with specific outcomes in mind. However, titles may also be part of a more democratic practice. Having a reliable and replicable naming element meant that works could be identified and discussed, commissioned and put into more books, beyond and outside of the books and exemplars in which they circulated, without the need for readers to recite or paraphrase sections of the text in order to identify them. Indeed, once a title had been absorbed into popular knowledge, the work could be discussed without being read, or physically encountered, at all.[96] This should not imply that everyone was now welcome, or participating, in the discussion of literature; but the imposition of titles on vernacular works made it possible for these items to enter the field of popular knowledge in a more fluid and dynamic way than would have been available previously.

[96] For a wry take on this phenomenon in modern times see Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk about Books you Haven't Read*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (London: Granta, 2007).

Titles were a shared reference point upon which people might map, or feign, their cultural experience.

Titles also played a pragmatic role in the layout of the page. By framing the text titles allowed manuscripts to be produced more economically, with little page space wasted on gaps or more-costly initials. Assigning a title, often written in a different style or colour, to a work also made the book easier to navigate. Particularly in larger miscellaneous or poetic volumes, titles could help distinguish between works quickly, allowing for a selective, non-linear approach to the book. However, in this role titles were part of a dynamic set of textual apparatus that could be used intuitively to map out the text, directing and facilitating readers in various ways. Books without titles, therefore, could be equally sophisticated in the ways that layout governed the interpretation, use, and access of their contents, providing a different more subtle way into reading practice. I will consider some of these methods in the following chapter.

PART II: CHAPTER 3

Dividing the Text

Coloured, sometimes ornately decorated, inhabited, or historiated, initials at the opening of texts are quintessential to modern imaginings of medieval manuscripts. One copy of Layamon's *Brut* begins with a simple but pleasing example of just such an initial.[1] Here, a five-line bipartite, red and blue **a** opens the body of the text. Within the letter sits a tonsured figure wearing a blue cowl and an expression of extreme concentration. Presumably this writing monk represents either Layamon, whom the adjacent prologue introduces, the scribe who copied this text, or both.[2] Here, of course, the initial marks the beginning of the new text by increasing its visual status. Similarly, the primary role of paraphs in the important miscellany

[1] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 1r.

[2] See *Laȝamon: Brut*, v. 1, 2, l. 1: 'An preost wes on leoden: Laȝamon wes ihoten.' Both Frederic Madden, ed., *Laȝamon's Brut, or Chronicle of Britain*, v. 1 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1847, reprinted Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967), xxxv; and Rosamund Allen, ed. and trans., *Lawman: Brut* (London: Dent, 1993), xxi identify this figure as Layamon. Neil Cartlidge, 'The Composition and Social Context of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 (II) and London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A. ix', *Medium Ævum*, 66:2 (1997), 260 [250-69] prefers to read the image as a 'description of the process of writing history'. Meanwhile, Carole Weinberg, 'Marginal Illustration: a Clue to the Provenance of the Cotton Caligula Manuscript of Laȝamon's *Brut*?', *Laȝamon: Contexts, Language, and Interpretation*, ed. Rosamund Allen, Lucy Perry, and Jane Roberts (Exeter: CLAMS, 2002), 40 [39-52] associates the figure with the 'scribe and/or illuminator' of the manuscript. This is a common motif in manuscripts with illuminations: J. J. G. Alexander, 'Scribes as Artists: the Arabesque Initial in Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: essays presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. M. B. Parkes and A. G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), 87-116; J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1992), 4-34.

BL, MS Harley 2253, in which titles are used only sporadically after the first two booklets, is to mark the start of a new item.[3] Here, from the middle of the book onward the scribe has elevated the design of his paraphs to emphasise the status of the opening of the text, paralleling the large size and flourishing of initials like the one beginning the *Brut*. Thus, at the opening of the fabliau 'Les trois dames qui troverunt un vit', preceding the first letter of the text—**P**—a large **C**-shaped paraph, with a thick, filled bowl on to the left, an inner descender, and an extravagantly long upper stroke which extends across the top margin for several words overlapping the ascender from the **d** below it is found.[4] As established in the previous chapter, then, even when titles were not in use manuscript producers demonstrate a similar interest in using graphic signs to visually delineate the boundaries of the text.

However, the graphic devices in early Middle English works, even at the openings of texts, are rarely so ornate. Most are less elaborate and appear not just at the beginning of texts but distributed throughout. On the same folio as the historiated **a** described above, for instance, is a second smaller initial, only three lines in height with similar looping tracery.[5] Both here and elsewhere initials are usually coloured in a combination of red and green (especially up and into the thirteenth century) or red and blue (especially from the thirteenth century on). These minor capitals should be distinguished from *litterae notabiliores*, and coloured majuscules or washed letters, which are usually the same size as the text. In contrast,

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[3] Coloured initials, or spaces for them, appear at the beginning of the first two booklets in this volume: see BL, MS Harley 2253, ff. 1r-49r. All are written in red ink using variations upon Lombardic initials with no further flourishing or decoration. It might therefore be suggested that the impotus for producing coloured graphic signs in this book was economy, and that after the first 49 folios the minor initials were considered either too costly—in terms of labour, or more likely materials. Such basic capitals may have been produced on site by the copyist or an assistant rather than employing a specialist limner—and time.

[4] BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 110r; Fein, ed., *Complete Harley 2253*, v. 3, 110, l. 1.

[5] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 1r; *Laȝamon: Brut*, v. 1, 4, l. 36.

minor initials are often several lines in height and always begin against the left hand ruling. These necessarily break up the textblock, dividing the work into sections, their location refocusing the eye to the edge of the page where the new section begins. In their use of these graphic devices like minor initials and paraphs copyists demonstrate a parallel interest in subdividing single items into visually inscribed sections. Thus, Latin texts, especially long works, were regularly divided into books and chapters. Treatises and longer narratives were often copied with running headers which gave the book and chapter number at the top of every page.[6] The twelfth and thirteenth centuries also saw the introduction of the 'Paris' Bible format, with relatively consistent book and chapter divisions in the scriptures.[7] The practical purpose of dividing long works into smaller units seems obvious: smaller named or numbered sections allow for ease and accuracy when navigating the book, giving readers and commentators the ability to isolate and localise material and provide accurate cross references. Thus, book and chapter numbers could be given alongside authorship information in marginal references.[8] Such adaptations, commonplace in longer Latin texts after the twelfth century, therefore made possible a number of modes of non-linear reading.

Well-defined book and chapter divisions were less common in vernacular texts. In fact, *Ancrene Wisse*, which is explicitly divided into eight parts, might be considered unusual among

[6] Thus, in a copy of Augustine's *Homilies on St John* from the turn of the thirteenth century the left hand (verso) page of each opening has the word '.Om*elia*.' copied in red in the centre of the upper margin, while the right hand (recto) page features the homily number in a corresponding position, for instance, '.cxv.': BodL, MS Auct. D. 1. 10, f. 229r [ff. 12r-245r]. See Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page*, 33, and plates.

[7] de Hamel, *The Book*, 120-28; Light, 'The Bible and the Individual', 232-4; Light, 'French Bibles c. 1200–30', 155-6, 159-63. See also my discussions on 108-9, fn. 72.

[8] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 31-2; Colette Moore, *Quoting Speech in Early English* (CUP, 2011), 39-41.

thirteenth-century vernacular works.[9] Certainly one reason for this is that there are many fewer early Middle English texts long enough to support a series of chapters. Nevertheless, even those items long enough to be plausibly broken up in this way often are not. In fact, it is not until the late-fourteenth century, when the practice was adopted in the copying of authors such as Chaucer and Langland, that verbally distinguished chapter or book divisions became commonplace to vernacular poetry.[10] The lack of well-defined book and chapter divisions in post-Conquest vernacular items then might presuppose a practice of continuous linear reading. In some cases it is even possible that readers were expected to complete the text within a single sitting, for without these divisions the reader is apparently presented with a 'complete unitary text', cohesive and indivisible.[11] Alternatively, as Gérard Genette suggests, it may be that these texts were 'derived from an oral delivery…the very fact of oral performance' making it 'hard to indicate the presence of intertitles.'[12] However, the conclusion that named or numbered chapter divisions simply did not exist in vernacular poetry due to the primacy of oral delivery and composition, though possible in some cases, underestimates the role of written transmission in the vernacular.

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[9] In BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra C. vi, for instance, these part divisions are marked with Latin explanations in the margins written in the correcting hand: see, for instance, ff. 9r, 19v, 48r. Geneviève Hasenohr, 'VIII. Traductions et littérature en langue vulgaire', *Mise en Page et Mise en Texte du Livre Manuscript*, ed. Henri-Jean Martin and Jean Vezin (Paris: Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1990), 273 [230-352] testifies to a similar scarcity of verbal divisions in contemporary continental French vernacular verse, aside from a few elaborate examples, but nods to their more widespread use in 'grands romans en prose [large books in prose]'.

[10] For some examples see Parkes, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', 64-9; Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers', 207-26.

[11] Genette, *Paratexts*, 295.

[12] Genette, *Paratexts*, 295. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading* does not discuss the layout and copying of the text, but for more discussions of the duality of other features indicating oral delivery and/or individual reading, see, especially, 147-9.

In fact, many vernacular texts were already provided with subdivisions; these simply took subtler and less visually disruptive forms. Graphic devices that fulfil these roles are recorded in many manuscripts.[13] Coloured initials and paraphs are more or less ubiquitous even among relatively unadorned books.[14] But, as Joel Fredell observes, they tend to be largely ignored or silently removed in critical editions.[15] Similarly, though collective wisdom dictates that capitals and paraphs are inconsistent in the functions they perform—including marking 'shifts in episode or argument, dialogue, narratorial interjections, passages worthy of independent consideration and possible recitation to an appreciative circle of listeners'[16]—detailed consideration of their form and use has been limited to selected instances in specific

[13] Exceptions include isolated studies by Joel Fredell, 'The Lowly Paraf: Transmitting Manuscript Design in *The Canterbury Tales*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 22 (2000), 213-80; Sebastian J. Langdell, 'A Study of Speech-Markers in the Early- to Mid-Fifteenth Century Hocclevian Manuscript Tradition', *Notes and Queries*, 59:3 (2012), 323-31; Ruth Carroll, Risto Hiltunen, Matti Peikola, Hanna Salmi, Janne Skaffari and Mari-Liisa Varila, 'Pragmatics on the Page: Visual Text in Late Medieval English Books', *European Journal of English Studies*, 17:1 (2013), 54-71; Helen Marshall, 'What's in a Paraph? A New Methodology and its Implications for the Auchinleck Manuscript', *JEBS*, 13 (2010), 39-62; and Timothy Shonk, 'Paraphs, Piecework, and Presentation: The Production Methods of Auchinleck Revisited', *The Auchinleck Manuscript: New Perspectives*, ed. Susanna Fein (York Medieval Press, 2016), 176-94 on paraphs; and on intials, Sonia Patterson, 'Comparison of Minor Initial Decoration: A Possible Method of Showing the Place of Origin of Thirteenth-Century Manuscripts', *The Library*, 27:1 (1972), 23-30; Sonia Scott-Fleming, *The Analysis of Pen Flourishing in Thirteenth-Century Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 1989); and A. I. Doyle, 'Penwork Flourishing of Initials in England from c. 1380', *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott, English Medieval Manuscripts: Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2009), 65-72.

[14] Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, 44.

[15] Fredell, 'Lowly Paraf', 214, and especially 218-22.

[16] Fredell, 'Lowly Paraf', 213.

texts.[17] In these limited instances, critics are most often concerned with the use of graphic cues in relation to their textual implications. However, regardless of textual function, the ubiquity of capitals and paraphs demonstrates a sustained concern with dividing manuscripts into smaller sub-units: the need for division is simply being fulfilled in less invasive ways. As with named or numbered chapter divisions, then, these signs may hold specific implications for reading practices.

In order to assess the implications graphic subdivisions have for reading, this chapter will focus on some famous early Middle English miscellanies, which are not only subdivided into multiple texts but which also contain types of text subdivided in different ways. In particular, the chapter will take many of its examples from BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108 (La), a compilation containing several unique religious and secular vernacular items dated between the last quarter of the thirteenth and the first quarter of the fourteenth century,[18] in comparison with BL, MS Harley 2253, which is slightly later in date and makes a heavier use of paraphs

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[17] These discussions largely focus on canonical works from the later medieval period, such as *Piers Plowman*: Lawrence Clopper, 'Langland's Markings for the Structure of "Piers Plowman"', *Modern Philology*, 85:3 (1988), 245-55; Clopper, 'Response to Robert Adams', 141-6; Adams, 'Langland's *Ordinatio*', 51-84; or appear as asides in work focussed on other matters: Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 'Major Middle English Poets and Manuscript Studies, 1300-1450', *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary & Visual Approaches*, ed. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Maidie Hilmo and Linda Olson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2012), 53, 90 [45-94]; Tim William Machan, 'The Visual Pragmatics of Code-Switching in Late Middle English Literature', *Code-Switching in Early English*, ed. Herbert Schendl and Laura Wright (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011), 313 [303-33]; J. P. Gumbert, 'Points and Signposts: Whom do they Help?', *Scriptorium*, 63:2 (2009), 231 [231-7]; Huisman, 'Origin of the English Line', 117; Moore, *Quoting Speech*, 26; and Lucy Freeman Sandler, '*Omne bonum*: *Compilatio* and *Ordinatio* in an English Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Fourteenth Century', *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. L.L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), 189 [183-200]; Tschann, 'Layout of "Sir Thopas"', 2-4.

[18] For these parameters see *LAEMECat*, 136, but for a more detailed account of the debate surrounding the dating of the manuscript see Thomas R. Liszka, 'Talk in the Camps: On the Dating of the *South English Legendary*, *Havelok the Dane*, and *King Horn* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108', *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative*, eds. Kimberly K. Bell and Julie Nelson Couch (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 33-46, 48-9 [31-50].

than it does coloured initials. Additionally, it will focus on several longer works of the period, which are divided according to a number of logical frameworks. These include Layamon's *Brut* (discussed above) and the earliest iteration of the *South English Legendary*, both of which are long enough to sustain numerous textual divisions, as well as the romances of *Havelok* and *King Horn*, all of which are found in MS La, allowing for consideration of one scribe's practice across a range of material. These case studies will, of course, be supplemented with comparative material from the wider early Middle English corpus.

The chapter will cover features which are often discussed by various names but which here I shall call paraphs and minor initials. These terms are debatable. Muzerelle lists both paraph and paragraphus, as well as the Greek uppercase letter *gamma* (Γ), and the hooked '*crochet*', as forms that might be used to begin a new paragraph, or precede a chapter, heading or section of the text. [19] I shall not insist on Muzerelle's definitions as I believe that the roles played by each are overlapping and that the shape of the device employed in any given scenario is largely dictated by scribal choice and convention, rather than by a conscious distinction between the two.[20] In the chapter that follows I will consider how the imposition of these paraphs, as well as coloured minor initials directed and influenced reading practice.

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[19] Muzerelle, *Vocabulaire Codicologique*, 423.05, *Paraphe*; 421.08, *Gamma capitulaire* ('placé en tête d'une indication de chapitre ou de paragraphe [placed at the start of a chapter heading or of a paragraph.]'), 421.09, *Crochet alinéaire* ('introduit dans le texte pour signaler le passage d'une partie à la suivante [introduced in the text to signal the move from one part to the next.]'), 421.10, *Pied-de-mouche* ('parfois employée à des fins strictement décoratives [Rounded and large form of paragraph symbol sometimes employed for strictly decorative purposes.]'). See also Parkes, 'Layout and presentation', 69-72; Carroll et al, 'Pragmatics on the Page', 59-63; Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 27-30.

[20] The overlap is demonstrated by Muzerelle, *Vocabulaire Codicologique*, plates 129ab, 130ab, 130cd, 130e, 131abc.

Ensuring Legibility

Historically the use of many graphic signs has, as Muzarelle's glossary shows, been justified in pragmatic terms. Paraphs in particular are thought to preface separate extracts, label authorities and visually mark running headings, help navigate a densely written page, and distinguish 'the smallest units of a text one from the other' at one level up from the *punctus*.[21] Thus, in narrative texts such as *Havelok*, paraphs may be used to mark moments of direct address, providing a distinction between the voices of characters and that of the narrator, transitions that are not otherwise punctuated in this copy:

horn set at grounde
him þohte he wes ybounde
¶ he seide quene so hende
to me hydeward þou wende
þou shenh vs wiþ þe vurste
þe beggares bueþ afurste

[Horn sat on the ground,
it seemed that he was bound.
¶ He said, 'Queen, so wise,
turn towards me,
pour for us first,
the beggars are thirsty][22]

Here, the paraph visually notifies the reader of the change in speaker. Similar strategies are found in other English poems of the period.[23] In *The Owl and the Nightingale*, for instance, major changes of speaker heralding new arguments in the debate are marked with alternating

[21] Fredell, 'Lowly Paraf', 213-4, 220; Sandler, '*Omne bonum*', 189-90; Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 40.

[22] BL, MS Harley 2253, ff. 89v-90r; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 64, ll. 1115-20.

[23] Moore, *Quoting Speech*, 25-30 similarly notes the paraph's function in this position: 'Though these features are not dedicated markers of speech, the paraph marks, caesura marks and line spacing draw the reader's attention to conversational turn taking, and a reader of the manuscript can glance down the page and see in the center a line of *inquit* clauses organizing the reported speech' (26).

red and blue minor initials.[24] A parallel might be struck between these non-verbal marginal gestures and the verbal labels provided for changes in speakers in debate poems, like the copy of Chardri's *Petit Plet* found in the same manuscripts.[25] The graphic signs used in these cases, therefore, help map out the structure of the text for readers, flagging changes to the narrative frame, and acting pseudo-grammatically as a mode of punctuation in order to aid comprehension.

However, the distinction between voices in *Havelok* is also signalled textually by the word 'seide'. The paraph, then, simply provides a visual aid, rather than playing an essential role in decoding the narrative. For readers, therefore, paraphs are not essential to the initial parsing of the sense of the text; the poem itself allows for this basic level of comprehension. In fact, paraphs are not consistently applied in this position, even in the repertoire of this scribe. For instance, the continuation of the conversation immediately following this example is not visually flagged:

> hyre horn hue leyde doune
> ant fulde him of þe broune
> a bolle of a galoun
> hue wende he were a glotoun
> hue **seide** tac þe coppe
> ant drync þis ber al vppe
> ne seh y neuer y wene
> beggare so kene
> horn toc hit hise yfere
> 7 **seide** quene so dere
> no béér nullich ibite
> bote of coppe white…

[24] See, for instance, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 159r; Cartlidge, ed., *Owl and the Nightingale*, 11, l. 411. See also the copy in BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, ff. 233r-246r where larger minor initials are used in almost identical positions.

[25] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, ff. 244v-257v; BL, Cotton Caligula A. ix, ff. 249r-261v; Chardri, *Petit Plet*, ed. Brian S. Merrilees, ANTS (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970).

[her horn she laid down
and filled him from the brown vessel
a gallon cup,
she thought he was a glutton.
She said, "Take the cup
and drink this beer all up.
Never have I seen, I believe,
a beggar so keen."
Horn took it to his companions,
and said, "Queen so dear,
no beer will I partake of
but from a white cup…"'] [26]

In this exchange both speeches begin after the word 'seide', and are characterised by their use of the pronoun 'þou', first person 'ich', imperatives like 'tac' and 'drync', and by the intimate qualifiers Horn uses. The exchange in these verses is perfectly comprehensible, then, without a paraph to flag its presence. Perhaps the paraph above, marking Horn's first speech, was enough to signal the presence of the whole conversation. Once readers were alerted to the exchange they might be expected to apprehend the rest from the clues provided by the text. Visually, providing a paraph at every change of speaker may even have been thought too busy, if not outright confusing, by the manuscript's producer. Alternatively, it may be that, as is the case in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, only the major shifts in speaker discussed above were signalled by graphic interventions—in this case, coloured capitals—while shorter interchanges were left unmarked.[27] Certainly, the variability in the ways that paraphs are used demonstrates that, as has long been recognised, they are not part of a consistent and conventionalised punctuation system.

[26] BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 90r; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 64, ll. 1121-1132.

[27] See, for instance, the exchange between the Nightingale and the Wren at the end of the poem: Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, ff. 168r-v; BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 245v; Cartlidge, ed., *Owl and the Nightingale*, 42, ll. 1739-52.

In fact, if readers understood graphic signs to act in a pseudo-grammatical way to mark textual elements such as speech acts, then their positions might sometimes be visually misleading. Thus, in two copies of *King Horn*, the end of a speech by King Thurston, where the narration returns, is marked with a paraph: '¶ Athelbrus/Ailbrus ga/on lere/n [Aybrous taught.]'[28] Here, as with the example above, graphic priority has been given to signalling the coherence of the King's speech as a textual unit. However, in the L copy of the text, a minor initial has been placed on the first letter of Horn's name in the middle of this passage of direct speech instead:

> He bad clepen aybrous
> Þe heye stiward of his hous
> Stiward haue þou here
> Horn chil forto lere…
> Tech him of þe harpe
> Wit his nayles sharpe
> Biforn me forto harpen…
> **H**orn child þou vnder fonge
> Tech him of harpe and so*n*ge
>
> [He bid Aybrous be called,
> The high steward of his house.
> "Steward, here you have
> Horn child to teach…
> Teach him of the harp,
> With his nails sharp,
> In order to play in front of me…
> **T**ake Horn child under your tutelage,
> Teach him of harp and song."] [29]

This initial interrupts the King's petition to his steward to teach Horn all he knows, which suggests that it was prompted by some other feature of the text. Clearly, here, the visual matrix marks a different set of priorities. The producer seems to be more concerned with

[28] BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 84v; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 14, l. 247; CUL, MS Gg.iv.27.2, f. 7r; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 15, l. 241. See also the examples from Moore, *Quoting Speech*, 28.

[29] BodL, Laud Misc. 108, ff. 220v-221r; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 14, ll. 235-51.

marking particular aspects of the work's content rather than its structure. In this case, perhaps it emphasises the closing couplet of the King's appeal in order to reiterate the steward's central task, and the importance of guidance to Horn's development, and thereby ensures the reader has absorbed the "take-home" message from the incident. That is, the paraph aids reading not purely at the level of pseudo-grammatical parsing, but it also provides for evaluative interpretation.

Reading Thematically

The structurally disruptive initial above may be part of a wider interest on the part of this scribe in demarcating themes of kingship and figures of authority. In actuality, most of the minor initials in this copy of *King Horn* fall on the name of the protagonist.[30] Thus, over two thirds of the coloured capitals found in this copy of the text are on the letter **H**.[31] Four of the six other capitals are also located at lines that relate to high ranking people.[32] The positions of minor initials in the same scribe's copy of *Havelok* seem to conform to a similar logic. The first minor initial in the work appears at the mention of the idealised reign of King Athelwold: '**I**t was a king bi are dawes / þat i*n* his time were gode laws [It was a King in ancient times, that in

[30] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 220v, 221r, 221v, 222r, 223v, 224v, 225r, 225v, 226r, 226v; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 10-72, ll. 215, 251, 393, 479, 776, 958, 1042, 1104, 1196, 1264, 1286, 1304.

[31] Thirteen of the nineteen initials: see BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 219v-228r. The only **H** that does not begin King Horn's name is located on f. 219v, at the end of the prologue and beginning of the main narrative: '**H**it was i*n* one som*e*res day' (Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 4, l. 31.)

[32] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 220r, 220v, 222v, 224v (Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 6, l. 95: '**U**an bi spek him amyraud'; 10, l. 165: '**M**etten he with Aylmer king'; 28, l. 514: '**A**ylm*er* king þoute wel lo*n*ge'; 52, l. 934: '**Þ**e king cam hom to halle.').

his time were good laws.]'[33] Meanwhile, other minor initials appear against the character names '**G**odard', '**G**rim', and of course '**H**auelok', among others.[34] Visually, then, the convergence of minor initials on proper names situates them as reference points, allowing readers to navigate the text according to its characters. As we might expect, the regularity with which minor initials are found in this position suggests this scribe was working within a conventionalised system in which names often received graphic emphasis.

It is worth noting, though, that to some extent the position of minor initials on proper nouns simply conforms to grammatical logic. Proper names are regularly the grammatical subject of sense units describing the next action in the plot, and, in the subject-verb-object sequence of natural English word order, characters' names should begin a sense unit. Thus, the first mention of Havelok states, 'Hauelok was a ful god gome / He was ful god in eueri trome [Havelok was a completely good man, / He was the best in every army.]'[35] The grammatical placement of proper nouns is particularly important at points of narrative transition, when the plot changes direction or pace, as syntactically these require the use of a name to introduce who is doing what. In this case, then, it may be that the focus of minor initials on proper names is, in fact, simply a facet of attempts to mark other aspects of the text: changes in narrative voice, perspective, or focus. For instance, an initial beginning the name '**G**rim' may appear here because at this point the text turns its attention back to Grim after a short digression:

> **G**rim was fishere swiþe god,
> And mikel couþe on the flod—
> Mani god fish þer-i*n*ne he tok,
> Boþe with neth, and with hok

[33] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 204r-219v, see f. 204r; Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 1, l. 27.

[34] See BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108 ff. 206r, 206v, 207v, 209r; Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 14-30, ll. 398, 465, 692, 928.

[35] Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 1, ll. 7-8.

[Grim was a good fisherman,
and well known upon the sea,
many good fish therein he took
both with net, and with hook.][36]

So, though minor initials may appear to subdivide units that can be read independently of their context, often their presence actually points to textually significant changes in narrative direction and focus *within* the narrative whole. Thus, capitals seem to guide the reader through a number of often intertwining or inter-reliant narrative transitions, acting cumulatively to draw the plot towards its conclusion. Rather than facilitating discontinuous and fragmented reading practices, therefore, these minor initials highlight the potential for continuous, connected flows of reading.

Nevertheless, in other contexts minor initials seem to be positioned according to a similar textual logic with quite different results for the reader. In Layamon's *Brut* the initials divide the text into cohesive episodes rather than connecting it together, apparently preparing it for discontinuous reading. Thus, subdivisions imposed by minor initials in the later (O) copy of the text split the narrative according to the reigns of kings.[37] As Elizabeth Bryan has described, these initials usually fall at the opening of the syntactical unit that explains the transition between monarchs, or beginning a new king's reign.[38] One such transition begins with the minor initial **I**:

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[36] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 208r; Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 25, ll. 750-53.

[37] BL, Cotton MS Otho C. xiii. See Françoise H. M. Le Saux, *Layamon's* Brut*: The Poem and its Sources* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 10.

[38] Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 63-95 offers a much more detailed and prescient discussion of the placement of minor initials and the interests they mark in this copy of the text, as well as what they reveal regarding its textual transmission, than there is space for here. For initials marking regnal successions in particular, see, especially, 81-8.

> **I**n Scotlond was king Stater· in Logres was king Piner.
> and Gloden hafde Cornwale. Rudac hafde Norþ Wales.
> Ac Gloten hafde mest riht· to habbe alle þe riche
>
> [In Scotland was King Stater, in Logres was King Piner,
> and Gloden had Cornwall. Rudac had North Wales,
> And Cloten had most right, to have all the riches.][39]

This system, as well as emphasizing the 'catalogue'-like narrative structure, makes the work eminently searchable, allowing a reader to scan the divisions for the reign of the king they are interested in, as Bryan has noted.[40] A regular schema such as this, then, may be comparable to the 'mechanical' divisions Genette describes, which 'preclude the presence of titles.'[41] Here the subdivisions in the text follow a predictable pattern. Their minor initials provide visual emphasis to the information necessary to determining their subject, allowing for discontinuous reference to discrete sections. In both manuscripts this pattern is regularly supplemented by the marginal addition—by more than one reader—of the names of the kings covered by each section.[42] These readers have added their own marginal flags alongside several that were already supplied by the scribe, reinforcing the episodic divisions set up by the minor initials.[43] It seems, then, that the producer of this manuscript, along with some later readers, wanted to highlight the *Brut*'s potential to be read for historical reference over and above its romance-like

[39] BL, Cotton MS Otho C. xiii, f. 20r; *Laȝamon: Brut*, v. 1, 105-7, ll. 2024-6.

[40] Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 64, 77.

[41] Genette, *Paratexts*, 296.

[42] Elizabeth J. Bryan, 'The Two Manuscripts of Layamon's *Brut*: Some Readers in the Margins', *The Text and Tradition of Layamon's* Brut, ed. Françoise H. M. Le Saux (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 90-9 [89-102].

[43] Bryan, 'Readers in the Margins', 91, indicates that only five of the names from O are in the scribal hand.

narrative continuity.[44] In fact, readers' attempts to reinforce these divisions with further signposting suggest they felt minor initials did not offer significant enough divisions to facilitate their reading habits, revealing the selectivity of their own discontinuous practices. The resultant layout is analogous to that of some contemporary chronicles, such as Matthew Paris' *Chronica Maiora*, which is divided and flagged according to the reigns of Kings with their names provided as running titles across the top of the page.[45] A vernacular analogue might be found in *The Peterborough Chronicle*, where each entry is preceded by the year, set apart from the start of the line and written in red ink.[46] Thus, the chronological divisions seem to anticipate similar non-linear approaches to the text, setting it up as a work of historical reference for readers interested in the reigns of particular kings and the events that fell within them.

However, in the second *Brut* manuscript (C)—usually considered closer to the authorial version of the text[47] —minor initials mark far fewer of these subdivisions, perhaps suggesting a reduced expectation of selective reading. In fact, excluding the opening historiated initial, this

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[44] For more on the generic situation of Layamon's *Brut* between romance and chronicle, see, for instance, W. R. J. Barron and Françoise H. M. Le Saux, 'Two aspects of Laȝamon's Narrative Art', *Arthurian Literature*, 9 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 25-56 who describe the work as 'the nearest thing we have to an English national epic' (25); Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (London: Hutchinson, 1969, republished Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2000), 40-3; Christopher Cannon, 'The style and authorship of the Otho revision of Laȝamon's *Brut*', *Medium Ævum*, 62:2 (1993), 201-4 [187-209]. In contrast see Derek Pearsall, *Arthurian Romance: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 15-19 where Layamon is described as 'a historian, and not a romancer' (19).

[45] CCCC, MS 16II, ff. 1r-284v. Clopper, '*Ordinatio* and Rhetoric', 127 observes dates being used in the same way: see also Lawrence Clopper, 'The Form of Romance and the Resolution of Theological Issues', *Medievalia et Humanisticam*, 15 (1987), 119-46. Compare remarks on journals in Genette, *Paratexts*, 296 where divisions are 'authentic or fictive, whose rhythm is marked, theoretically, only by dates.'

[46] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 636, ff. 1r-91v.

[47] Le Saux, *Layamon's* Brut, 10. For more on the manuscript relations of the two copies see, Le Saux, *Layamon's* Brut, 10-13; Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 183-90.

copy contains only one other complete coloured capital,[48] and three unfilled spaces left on a further folio.[49] This complete initial marks the transition between the prologue and the narrative:

> **N**v seið mid loft-songe þe wes on leoden preost.
> al swa þe boc spekeð: þe he to bisne inom.
> þa Grickes hefden Troye: mid teone bi-wonen.
> ⁊ þat lond iwest: ⁊ þa leoden of-slawen
>
> [Now the priest says, with *high-song* that was in the native language,
> everything the book speaks, that he took as an example.
> The Greeks had Troy, with suffering dwelled there
> and knew that land, and slew the natives of that land.][50]

The initial, then, marks the start of the main narrative, giving visual emphasis to the rhetorical announcement '**N**v seið', which repositions the reader at the beginning of the material that makes up the subject of the text. The same line is singled out for a minor initial in the other copy of the text. Given that the producer of the O manuscript went on to provide many more minor initials, the subdivision may have been common to the 'extremely close' exemplars the manuscripts share.[51] Having copied the location of this first minor initial, though, the C scribe seems to have reconsidered the need for capitals in the rest of the manuscript, choosing not to include them hereafter—perhaps the inclusion of this one is simply a facet of the scribe "working in" to his practice. Certainly, the decision not to include any further initials in comparable places throughout C might reflect the scribe's anticipation of readers with significantly different reading practices. In fact, Rosamund Allen proposes that the reference to

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[48] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 1r.

[49] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, ff. 53r-v; *Laȝamon: Brut,* v. 1, 236, ll. 4521 and 4532. None of these gaps were ever filled.

[50] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 1r; *Laȝamon: Brut,* v. 1, 4, ll. 36-9.

[51] Le Saux, *Layamon's* Brut, 13. Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 188-90 demonstrates that, though closely related, 'There is…no indication in the manuscripts that the scribe of either La*ȝBrut*-Caligula [(C)] or La*ȝBrut*-Otho [(O)] had any direct access to the other' (188).

speech in this opening line suggests that the work was intended for oral delivery.[52] Though this is not necessarily the case—the text's references to spoken delivery, the metaphor of the speaking book ('swa þe boc spekeð') for instance, appear formulaic[53]—the continuous layout, where the visual field is unbroken by minor initials, may have prepared the text for some forms of linear reading. Here, further graphic division may have been deemed extraneous: rather, the layout of this copy enhances the continuity of the narrative, emphasising its status as part of a linear progression that drives inevitably towards the present.[54]

On the other hand, the divisions marked by gaps later in the C copy of the text *do* appear to reflect an interest in the regnal divisions within the manuscript. The sudden and brief introduction of these gaps on either side of a single folio may have a practical explanation. It is possible, for instance, that at the beginning of a new stint of copying the scribe lost track of his decided presentation, and began again to reproduce the position of the initials found in his exemplar.[55] Alternatively, it may be that, due to a defect in his main exemplar, the copyist was forced to substitute this section from an alternate source, and

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[52] Rosamund Allen, 'Counting Time and Time for Recounting: Narrative Sections in Laȝamon's *Brut*', *Orality and Literacy in Early Middle English*, ed. Herbert Pilch (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1996), 74-8 [71-91]. See, also, Rosamund Allen, 'The Implied Audience of Laȝamon's *Brut*', *The Text and Tradition of Layamon's* Brut, ed. Françoise H. M. Le Saux (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 121 [121-39]; and for more on the poetic form of the text, and its relation to oral delivery: Rosamund Allen, '"Nv seið mid loft-songe": a Re-appraisal of Lawman's Verse Form', *Laȝamon: Contexts, Language, and Interpretation*, ed. Rosamund Allen, Lucy Perry, and Jane Roberts (London: CLAMS, 2002), 251-82.

[53] See the underlying "fictive orality" described by Coleman, *Public Reading*, 56-8.

[54] For more on the *Brut* as a teleological narrative of historical progress, and particularly the way this intersects with prophecy in the text, see Kelley M. Wickham-Crowley, *Writing the Future: Laȝamon's Prophetic History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), especially 100-42. A contrasting reading of the shape of the historical narrative can be found in Lesley Johnson, 'Reading the Past in Laȝamon's *Brut*', *The Text and Tradition of Layamon's* Brut, ed. Françoise H. M. Le Saux (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 158-9 [141-60].

[55] There is no conclusive evidence of a change of stint at this point, such as a notable change in ink colour or scale, but a slight alteration in the *ductus* of the hand might suggest that BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 53r, col. b marks the beginning of a new phase of copying.

replicated the layout he found there. Either way, the introduction of minor initials results in graphic divisions that suggest in this part of the narrative the reader may wish to consider these sections as discrete units. Thus, as with the regnal divisions in O, one of the gaps falls upon the name of King Cymbeline at the lines that summarise the quality and duration of his rule:

> [**K**]inbelin Bruttene king᷑ wes god mon þurh alle þing.
> ⁊ he luuede here᷑ twa ⁊ twenty ȝere
>
> [Cymbeline, Britain's king, was a good man through all things,
> and he lived here twenty two years.][56]

Interestingly, a comparable capital is not found at this line in the O manuscript. Rather, the minor initial falls eleven lines earlier, at the same position as another unfilled space in C:

> [**O**]n Kinbelines dæie᷑ þe king wes inne Bruttene.
> com a þissen middel-ærede᷑ anes maidenes sune.
> inboren wes in Beðleem᷑ of bezste alre burden.
> He is ihaten Iesu Crist᷑ þurh þene Halie Gost
>
> [In Cymbeline's day the King was in Britain.
> Come to this Earth, a maiden's son
> was born in Bethlehem, best of all burdens.
> He is called Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost.][57]

The introduction of these unfilled gaps in C, both falling within the same reign and not found elsewhere in the work, then, may indicate that another factor influenced their position.

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[56] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 53v; *Laȝamon: Brut,* v. 1, 236, ll. 4532-3.

[57] BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 53v; *Laȝamon: Brut,* v. 1, 236, ll. 4521-4. The same lines read slightly differently in the damaged O version (*Laȝamon: Brut,* v. 1, 237, ll. 4521-4):

> In Kinb[e]lynes daiȝe᷑ þat king was in Brutaine.
> co[m] a þisse middilhe[r]þe hone maidenes sone.
> hi-bore he was in Beth( ) of one swete ma[y]( )
> ( ) ihote Iesu Crist᷑ þo[rþ] ( ) Gost.

It is interesting to note that 'may', possibly originally 'mayden', is a synonym for the word 'woman', as is 'burd' found in the word 'burden' (above). It may be, then, that the change here was first prompted by a wish to modernise and lighten the alliteration in this line, and following that inspired by the archaic word the adaptation plays on, the use of the word 'burd' being 'largely confined to alliterative poetry and to allit[erative] phrases in riming verse' by the later medieval period. See *MED*, 'birde', sense 1; *MED*, 'mai', senses a, b.

Perhaps the copyist left a gap not to mark the beginning of Kinbelin's reign, but rather in response to the significant religious event the narrative states coincided with it: the birth of Christ. This event, and the six-line Trinitarian formula that follows it, may have struck the copyist as a significant devotional interlude worthy of being singled out, possibly to facilitate independent recitation. In which case, the position of the second initial, had it been completed, might mark the resumption of the narrative chronology, bracketing off the birth of Christ as a separate and significant incident and positioning it above the bounds of chronological, historical time. The two unfilled gaps for initials on this page, then, may have been intended to allow readers easy access to the description of this important religious event for separate, perhaps repeated, devotional reading.

However, minor initials, or the gaps left for them, are not the only systems of subdivision used in the C manuscript. The scribe also includes paraphs, virgules, and red slashing.[58] In fact, Elizabeth Bryan finds that 90% of the paraphs in the second half of manuscript C coincide with either minor initials or paraphs in manuscript O.[59] It seems, then, that the scribe does not perceive his readership to be wholly uninterested in the demarcation of regnal periods or the reigns of particular kings. Rather, he employs a more experimental approach to the methods of marking these features. This copyist was simply flexible in how and when he marked divisions. He occasionally included minor initials when prompted, but equally, he did not feel beholden to them. In fact, he was able to use more than one mode of graphic signification to mark different textual features. Perhaps, the copyist was trying to cater

[58] See, for example, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 157r, which displays all three. Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 77 offers brief comment on the extent of these differences and the effect they have on the reception of the text.

[59] Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 65. The same cannot be said for the first half, where 'there is hardly any such conformity between the manuscripts.'

to, and align, two variant—or even mutually incompatible—methods of reading the text within the single copy by, for the most part, avoiding the greater visual disturbance created by minor initials, while still implementing—albeit sporadically—some means of separating the reigns of different kings.[60] The possibility for reference reading is thereby retained intermittently, but required the reader to interrogate the page more closely in order to locate the start of the section he sought.[61] Here, then, graphic devices break the text into sections that could provide independent readings on particular subjects.

Setting a Time for Reading

The use of minor initials to separate the text into units for selective reading is sometimes explicitly tied to the terms of its use. In the earliest version of the *South English Legendary* minor initials are also used to mark the beginning of each saint's *vita*.[62] In most cases, this means that these coloured capitals also focus on names, as the majority of the *Lives* begin with the name of the relevant saint. For example, the *Life* of Saint Katherine commences with: '**S**einte katerine of noble kinne: cam be olde dawe [Saint Katherine came from noble kin in the days of old.]'[63] **S** is, therefore, by far the most common coloured capital, making up 62 out of 143 examples. On some occasions a rubricated marginal note is provided alongside the line with the initial, as in

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[60] See comments by Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning*, 77 on the understated appearance of paraphs and other paragraph marks in C compared to minor initials.

[61] In fact, the names of kings added in the margins by later readers show that readers had a continued interest in subdividing the work in this way. On BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix, f. 72r, large, roughly contemporary hand, which may be that of the scribe, has added the names 'Ethelbald' and 'Alfwald' in the margin alongside the text. See also Bryan, 'Readers in the Margins', 90-9.

[62] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 23r-198r.

[63] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 56r; Horstmann, ed., *Early SEL*, 93, l. 1.

the *Life of St Paul*.[64] However, the increased prominence of the names of the saints caused by these initials renders these marginal finding aids somewhat redundant, the name itself taking on the role. Thus, many of the *Lives* have not been—and perhaps did not need to be—equipped with titles; rather, the scribe often felt the need to provide marginal labels only when faced with instances where the saint's name did not begin the first line of the *vita*. For instance, in the case of the *Life* of Saint Sebastian, which opens, 'Telle ichulle of þe holi man; Seint Sebastian [I shall tell of the holy man, Saint Sebastian]', the scribe has added in the margin 'vita *sancti* sebastiani'.[65] Otherwise, particularly earlier in the volume, minor initials alone were thought to provide enough of a guide for readers who were interested in accessing a discrete *Life*.[66]

It is easy to imagine an audience for the *SEL* that would want to read the *Lives* discontinuously, as discrete narratives, perhaps to use as short didactic passages tied to particular devotional needs. Similar texts in Latin are known to have been read out as lections in commemoration of particular saints' days.[67] A short prologue found in this earliest copy of the *SEL* is explicit about just such an intended use:

> Al þis bok is imaked of holi dawes˙ and of holie mannes liues
> þat soffreden for ore louerdes loue˙ pinene manie and riue
> þat ne spareden for none ei3e˙ godes weorkes to wurche
> Of 3was liues 3wane heore feste fallez˙ men redez in holi churche
> þei ich of alle ne mouwe nou3t telle˙ ichulle telle of some
> ase euerech feste after oþur˙ In þe 3ere doth come

[64] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 93r; Horstmann, ed., *Early SEL*, 189, l. i.

[65] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 88v; Horstmann, ed., *Early SEL*, 179, l. 1. A similar marginal flag is found next to *The Life of St Thomas of Canterbury* (f. 61r), while later readers have added other labels next to *The Eleven Virgins* (f. 54r), and *The Life of St Matthew* (f. 50v), to name a few.

[66] It is notable, however, that a later reader has made an effort to add marginal headings to some of the earlier *Lives* that so not have scribal headings. See, for instance, BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 41v, 46v, 50v, 52r, 54v, 56r, 88r.

[67] On this practice, see the forthcoming publication of Teresa Webber, 'Reading at Collation: Monastic Ideals and the Practice of Public Reading', *Lyell Lectures* (University of Oxford, 19 May 2016).

> [All this book is made of holy days, and of the lives of holy people
> who suffered for our Lord's love great and many pains
> that were not spared of any fear, God's works to work.
> Of whose lives, when their feast falls, men read in holy church.
> I cannot tell more of all of them, I shall tell of some
> as every feast after the other falls throughout the year.][68]

This prologue connects the use of the book with the passing of the Church year, stating that the *Lives* follow the order of the liturgy—'euerech feste after oþur'—beginning with New Year's Day. In fact, this prologue prefigures a specifically devotional use, with each *Life* designed to comprise a reading 'in holi churche' on the feast day of the saint commemorated, presumably either as part of the Matins lections in place of the traditional Latin *vitae*, or as the basis of sermons. This use might be corroborated by the parallels Thomas Heffernan finds between the form of vernacular saints' lives and their Latin analogues in Legendaries and Breviaries, compilations that usually provided the readings for both the refectory and Matins.[69] As with the *vitae* in the *SEL*, the lives Heffernan describes are 'of comparable length' to those found in liturgical books, or if longer, are structured episodically to allow them to be divided over the course of three nocturns.[70] It seems, then, that the ability to locate and delimit each life was an important feature of its layout, and prepared the *SEL* for the predicted devotional reading in a practical, pragmatic way.

However, by employing minor initials rather than independently numbered or titled chapters, the manuscript's producer manages simultaneously to maintain the continuity of the work and its overarching shape. While it may provide independent readings to celebrate

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[68] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 88r-v; Horstmann, ed., *Early SEL*, 178, ll. 1-6.

[69] Görlach, *Linguistic History of English*, 6-7, 14-17; and especially, Thomas J. Heffernan, 'The Liturgy and the Literature of Saint's Lives', *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), 73-105.

[70] Heffernan, 'Liturgy and the Literature of Saint's Lives', 95-8; Görlach, *Linguistic History of English*, 16.

separate feast days, copies of the *SEL* remain a project of collection and proliferation where, as William Robins has shown, separate exemplars and groups of *Lives* were composed and brought together into single codices reflecting the interests and locales of their compilation.[71] The *Lives*, then, 'always are simultaneously, both coherent textual units in their own right and incomplete fragments of a larger enterprise.'[72] A later prologue found in two further copies of the *SEL* makes clear the importance of considering the collection as a whole:

> Men wilneþ muche to hure telle. of bataille of kynge
> And of kniȝtes þat hardy were. þat muchedel is lesynge
> Wo so wilneþ muche to hure. tales of such þinge
> Hardi batailles he may hure. here þat nis no lesinge
> Of apostles & martirs. þat hardy kniȝtes were…
> Telle ichelle bi reuwe of ham. as hare dai valþ in þe ȝere
> Verst begynneþ at ȝeres day. for þat is þe uerste feste
> And fram on to oþer so areng. þe wile þe ȝer wol leste
>
> [Men wish very much to hear tell of battles, of kings,
> and of knights that hardy were, much of that is lying.
> Who so really wishes to hear tales of such things,
> hardy battles he may hear here that are no lie,
> of apostles and martyrs that were hardy knights…
> I shall tell of them by row as their day falls in the year,
> first beginning at New Year's Day, for that is the first feast,
> And from one to the next so arranged as long as the year will last.][73]

Here the saints are compared to an order of crusading knights waging holy war, protagonists in their own spiritual romance.[74] It is, at least in part, the collective splendour of the 'apostles & martirs' arrayed together that makes such a comparison possible; a single knight may engage

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[71] Robins, 'Modular dynamics', 204-7, a conclusion that revises the perception of Beverly Boyd, 'The enigma of Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108 (ca. 1300)', *Manuscripta*, 39:2 (1995), 131-6 that the *SEL* should be considered only in terms of a number of separate units rather than a cohesive whole text.

[72] Robins, 'Modular dynamics', 205.

[73] D'Evelyn and Mill, eds., *SEL*, v. 1, 3; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Ruth Evans, Andrew Taylor, and Nicholas Watson, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: an Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), 198, ll. 59-68.

[74] See Diane Speed, 'The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance', *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 143-4 [135-57]; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al., eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular*, 195 for more on the *SEL*'s relationship to romance.

in fights or skirmishes, but 'hardi batailles' require multiple actors. The saints' lives are therefore arranged 'bi reuwe', 'fram on to oþer', emphasising the sequential nature of their appearance, which still purport to follow a particular order—again that of the liturgical year—but one that is necessarily reliant on their position in relation to the preceding and following lives: they are not independent but part of a structured whole to be read collectively in a cumulative order.[75]

In fact, the Church year is likely to have been conceived of in similar terms by contemporary readers. The liturgy does not function as a series of independent services but, rather, as 'four overlapping and interacting cycles' structuring the days (Divine Offices and Mass), weeks, annual liturgical seasons (Temporale), and feast-days (Sanctorale).[76] Especially within religious communities, then, the liturgy was a continuous experience where calendars built upon each other to create an overarching whole that not only governed the order and nature of official religious observances but also provided a means by which to navigate the time in-between. It might be questioned, then, whether those involved in religious observances really considered the different elements of the Office as separate or separable, or whether these too represented elements of a collected whole—the rite. The allusion to the liturgical year in both of the *SEL* prologues does not necessarily imply a conception of its lives as separable entities for specific days, but as a single prolonged and cyclical reading. Thus, though minor initials provide for the discontinuous selection of discrete readings, the choice to use only

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[75] Anne B. Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of Narrative in the* South English Legendary (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 123-4 in particular emphasizes the cohesion of the collection, especially as produced by this version of the prologue.

[76] John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 45-57. See, also, Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (University of Toronto Press, 1982), 3-4.

minor initials keeps the *Lives* in contact with each other, emphasising the scale of the hagiographical project. The prologues and layout might encourage reading in a continuous and always repeating order, provided by the liturgical year: a reading strategy that might be compared to the continuous 'sequential reading' of the Bible whereby each *lector* took up their stint from where the previous one left off.[77]

Nevertheless, despite the intentions of these two prologues, it has often been noted that the order and selection of *Lives* included in different volumes of the *SEL* is not stable and regularly diverges from the liturgical calendar.[78] In fact, the first of the two so-called prologues discussed here is actually located about a third of the way through the work, appearing mid-quire at the bottom of a page with no minor initial to identify its start.[79] It may be, then, that the scribe responsible for copying it did not conceive of it as a separate instructional prologue and did not expect his readers to do so either.[80] Some sections of the manuscript are organised chronologically, with sections following the Sarum use[81]—two such blocks appear before the

[77] Webber, 'Reading in the Refectory', 32-3, 39-40 (40).

[78] Görlach, *Linguistic History of English*, 7-9; Robins, 'Modular dynamics', 193, 205.

[79] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 88r-v.

[80] Thomas R. Liszka, 'MS Laud. Misc. 108 and the Early History of the *South English Legendary*', *Manuscripta*, 33:2 (1989), 79-81 [75-91].

[81] Thomas J. Heffernan, 'Additional Evidence for a More Precise Date of the 'South English Legendary', *Traditio*, 35 (1979), 347 [345-54].

prologue—but these are broken up by interpolated texts so that no 'overall system' emerges.[82] Other ordering principles also seem to be at work. Thus, Thomas Liszka finds a number of non-calendrical saints organised into hierarchical or national groupings: apostles, virgin martyrs, and English saints are all represented.[83] On top of this, it is worth considering whether readings in English would have been considered appropriate for use 'in holi churche.' Certainly it seems that sermons and religious instruction for lay people were conducted partly in English by the end of the twelfth century, as they were in part before the Norman Conquest.[84] However, the acceptability of the use of English within religious houses, and particularly in the readings associated with the Divine Office such as the lections at Matins, remains questionable. Given that the Matins readings are generally taken from scripture, chapters of patristic writing, or homilies attributed to Popes and Church Fathers respectively, it would be usual for them to be delivered in Latin.[85] Saints' lives came into use later for special readings on relevant feast days. These were either taken from extant sources or composed

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[82] Liszka, 'Laud Misc. 108', 75-8. For instance, BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 23r-41v runs from *The Discovery of the Cross* (May 3) to *The Life of St Edward the Elder* (October 13). The seven texts between these two appear in calendar order—save for the *Exaltation of the Cross* narrative (September 14) that has been paired with *The Discovery of the Cross*—as do the *Lives* between Saint Matthew (September 21) and Saint Thomas of Canterbury (December 29) (ff. 50v-88r). However, these runs of calendrically arranged *Lives* are not integrated despite the overlap in the dates that they cover, and several other dates have been inserted between them, for instance Saint Alban (June 22) on ff. 46v-47v. Liszka suggests that the apparent disorder of the chronological blocks within the manuscript may be the result of it being a first draft, which the compiler intended to reorder in a later copy according to the principles stated in the prologue. In which case, the apparent chronological blocks are the result of both the order in which he found his exemplars, and a number of experiments in ordering committed as he compiled them. On top of that, he suggests some of the quires may have been misbound further disrupting their order (78-84).

[83] Liszka, 'Laud Misc. 108', 82-3.

[84] See, for instance, the homiletic texts discussed by Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 48-90. Interest in the composition and collection of sermons in English is evinced by manuscripts such as TCC, MS B.1.45, TCC, MS B.14.52, and LPL, MS 487 (*LAEMECat*, 33-4, 37-8, and 111) and the ongoing copying of sermons in Old English preserved in compilations like BodL, MSS Hatton 113, 114, 115 and BodL, MS Bodley 343: See *LAEME*Cat, 134-5, and 125-6.

[85] Hughes, *Mass and Office*, 60-3; Harper, *Forms and Orders*, 87.

specifically for the purpose.[86] Readings from hagiography, particularly that of popular or local saints not present in the official liturgical cycle, were also delivered in the Chapter House and the Refectory in some institutions, but the only books that can be firmly connected with this use are Latin Legendaries and Passionals, the production of which became widespread in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[87] Coloured capitals in the *SEL* may not, in reality therefore, support the kind of discontinuous non-linear reading purported by their regular position and the written explanations accompanying them. Nevertheless, the layout and division of these lives does promote the reading of specific *vitae* at culturally determined reading times, allowing users to scan the complete work to find the text that aligns with the celebration of any given feast day. So, while, the use of the *SEL* may be unlikely in devotional practice within the Church, its use is quite possible in lay devotions. Meanwhile, the correspondence of the *Lives* with the cycle of the liturgical year enforces their participation in a cohesive collection where each life was read as part of a regular sequential cycle.

Organising Reading Time

In many cases the position of graphic divisions not only demarcates the occasion of reading, but also the time *spent* reading—that is, not only the occasion on which reading falls, but the moment during which it unfolds. The positions of minor initials in the manuscript of *Havelok*,

[86] Hughes, *Mass and Office*, 22.

[87] Webber, 'Reading in the Refectory', 41-6. The reading of hagiography in the refectory could vary dramatically from institution to institution, the thirteenth-century Fécamp ordinal, for instance, 'provides…a full calendar (from January to the end of December) of hagiographical readings and homilies for saints' and other feasts, with over 180 days in the year being assigned such readings' (26), while other documents make no such explicit provisions.

for instance, often coincide with temporally significant conjunctions: forty-four of the ninety-four initials in the manuscript fall on words—or occasionally clauses such as '**O**n þe morwen hwa*n* it was day'—designating a change in time. Over half of those instances occur on variants

Table 2: Words that take minor initials in the manuscript of Havelok in order of frequency

When (29)	Hwan (17)	Hwa*n* (6)	Qua*n*ne (3)	Quan (1)	But hwa*n* (1)
Proper Names (15)	Hauelok (6)	Other names (9)			
Then (8)	Þa*n*ne (6)	Þanne (2)			
After (4)	After (3)	Þer after			
Pronouns (8)	He (6)	Hise (1)	It (1)		
Articles (7)	Þe (7)				
Temporal Phrases (4)	Sawe nou (1)	Þet oþer day (1)	On þe nith (1)	On þe morwe*n* (1)	
Conjunctions (4)	Þus (1)	Also (1)	Þo (2)		
God (3)	Louerd (2)	Deus (1)			
Rhetorical flourishes (3)	Herknet (1)	Herkne (1)	Allas (1)		
Other (10)					

of the word *when*, such as, '**Q**uan'.[88] Similar concerns with defining temporal position are found in other narrative verse texts, suggesting this placement of minor initials may be a fairly conventional. Thus, in *King Horn*, which follows *Havelok* in this manuscript, the line '**H**it was i*n* one some*r*es day [It was on a summer's day]' takes a minor initial, as do two more lines that

[88] 'Qua*n*ne' (3), 'Quan' (1), 'Oa*n*ne' (1), 'hwan' (17), 'hwa*n*' (5), 'But hwa*n*' (1) are all represented. One further instance of the word 'hwan' as a division point may have been intended at line 1392 (BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 211v) where the copyist indented two lines to leave space for an initial to be added. When the minor initials came to be added their producer opted to fill this gap despite the mistake but took for the initial the first letter of the second indented line, producing the word '**G**grimes' (as opposed to 'grimes'), rather than the first, which remains as 'wan' when it should be '**H**wan'. Presumably, when the gap was left the scribe expected the first indented line to act as the point division, rather than the second, as is the case in all other instances in this manuscript. The maker of the initials, however, was not without reason, and in deciding between conflicting initial cues clearly opted for the character's name (Grim) rather than the temporal marker. Nevertheless, since the scribe's priority in this work seems to have been the temporal signifiers, this mistake may provide an apt model for the competing considerations at work in the placement of minor initials. In fact, aside from this example there are only 23 instances of 'hwan' located at the start of a verse line that do not coincide with a minor initial (BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, ff. 206v, 207r, 207v, 208v, 209r, 210r, 201v, 211v, 212r, 213r, 214r, 215v, 216r, 217r, 21r, 219r; Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 16-80, ll. 474, 496, 551, 657, 715, 864, 972, 1170, 1209, 1238, 1675, 1849, 2049, 2321, 2395, 2417, 2427, 2575, 2732, 2795, 2897, 2921, 2937.)

indicate changes in time.[89] Lawrence Clopper observes a similar trend in the layout of the fourteenth-century manuscript of *Cleanness*, where minor initials are not used at the points commonly held as narrative transitions, but instead are focussed particularly the word 'nou'.[90] It seems, then, that the use of temporal distinctions to cue minor initials was a common strategy in vernacular narrative verse. It may be, then, that these initials take on a similar significance as Clopper accords to 'seasonal headpieces', which 'mark[ ] the beginning of a narrative or indicate[ ] a turn in the narrative and so divide[ ] the narrative into episodes'.[91] The temporal indicators also divide the text into separate narrative incidents, showing where one plot point begins and the previous one ends, and thereby highlighting the episodic structure on the text and making its content easy to navigate and follow.

In the case of temporal conjunctions like those marked in *Havelok*, though, the phrases not only divide the narrative into separate episodes by noting the change in temporal frame, they also flag an element of continuity from one plot point to the next. The conjoining function of these words indicates that each new episode is connected to and reliant upon the one preceding it as part of a linear chronology. The implicit, unvoiced, correspondent to beginning a sentence 'when', for instance, is a reciprocal 'then': 'When x happened, then y followed.' By aligning minor initials with these words, the same function is visually inscribed. These letters, and the words they start, set the reader at the opening of a new plot point, but in so doing, also signal each episode's cohesion within the narrative whole. As such, minor initials may provide

[89] BodL, Laud Misc. 108, f. 219v; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 4, l. 31. See, also, ff. 220r, 223r, 224v; Hall, ed., *King Horn*, 6, l. 95; 36, l. 659.

[90] Clopper, '*Ordinatio* and Rhetoric', 127-32.

[91] Clopper, '*Ordinatio* and Rhetoric', 127.

a periodic visual means of refocusing attention for the continuous reader in anticipation of a forthcoming narrative shift.

Additionally, these temporal conjunctions hold a rhetorical function that may equip the work for expected oral performances. For, while in some cases temporal phrases ascribe a chronology to the events that follow relative to the rest of the narrative—'After x, y'—in others the relationship is not so straightforward. The word 'nou', for instance, not only relates to the time of narrative events, it also relates to the time of narrating. With the assertion '**N**ow…' the past tense events of the narrative are placed in a perpetual present, as if they were always happening within the reader's own timeframe. In these moments, then, the narrator seems to speak to the audience directly, and the conjunction takes on an extra-diegetic function, its temporal ascription relating not to the progress of the narrative but to the moment of reading. Comparison might be drawn with imperative interjections, such as '**H**erkneth' the opening word of *Havelok*, which also takes a minor initial.[92] Explicitly oral formulas like this, which make direct reference to the moment of performance, may suggest an expectation that the text would be read aloud to a listening audience. Graphically, then, the minor initials that mark these references to the time of reading, in adverbs and interjections, may help a reader perform the text aloud by keeping his place on the page and breaking up the visual field.

Other temporal conjunctions highlighted by minor initials similarly collapse the distinctions between narrative and narratorial time. The word 'when' sits above the time frame of the narrative; it signals that one episode has finished, but—until the events of the rest of the line unfold—the next is yet to begin. The action is momentarily suspended, for instance, in the lines, 'Hwan he wore parted alle samen, / Hauelok bilefte wit ioie and gamen / Jn Engelond

[92] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 108, f. 204r; Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 1, l. 1.

[When they set out all together / Havelok remained with joy and merriness / in England.]'[93] Here, the line following the temporal signifier, 'Hwan', simply summarises the previous events in the narrative and so introduces a reflective pause in the forward momentum of the text. The coloured capitals that begin these words, then, inhabit a liminal space in which the plot is momentarily suspended, creating a moment of potential from which any number of outcomes may arise. Minor initials are thereby endowed with the same 'actuality' described by George Kubler as 'arrested happening': 'the void between events.'[94] By giving such pauses graphic significance, the minor initials direct the reader's attention out of the narrative and on to the material form of the book. They make pauses in the narrative visible against the otherwise homogenous written page, providing readers with convenient stopping points that will not interrupt the plot. Thus, these minor initials act not only as cues to attract the attention of the reader in discontinuous reading (as is usually understood), but also as visible and sanctioned points at which readers and listeners may pause, exit, and re-enter the text—cues not to read at all, for a moment, but to look up from the book.

The temporal structures within *Havelok*'s narrative that often cue minor initials—'hwan', 'þanne', 'after'—are concomitant with both the pacing of the plot, and its consumption by the reader—including breaks in their consumption. This could have a practical application, for while minor initials govern the events of the story, they also manage the time readers spend with the manuscript. For, where coloured capitals are taken as entrance, exit, or pause points for reading, they divide the narrative into suitable lengths to occupy particular spans of

[93] Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 81, ll. 2962-4.

[94] George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1963), 19, 17.

time.[95] Some copies of later medieval works seem to show evidence of similar considerations. Thus, George Keiser demonstrates that works like Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* were reformatted at certain points in their transmission history to adjust the position of subdivisions so as to 'provide a manageable quantity of matter for devotional reading and meditation at a single sitting.'[96] However, this does not mean that every initial was expected to prompt a break in reading. Rosamund Allen's analysis of the subdivisions in Layamon's *Brut* suggests that sections used for oral performances were unlikely to exceed 600 lines, with the average section ranging between 450 and 500 lines.[97] The placement of her supposed sections might be debatable, as they do not accord with many of the graphic subdivisions found in the manuscripts.[98] Nevertheless, at 3001 lines *Havelok* appears too long to have been read comfortably in a single sitting, and by Allen's measure would merit between five and eight divisions. The manuscript, however, provides over ten times this number, with section lengths ranging between 4 and 176 lines.[99] But, of course, a reader need not have stopped at every initial. Rather, more regularly imposed minor initials allowed flexibility over how much of the

[95] Keiser, 'Serving the needs of readers', 207-26. See, also, Karen Stern, 'The London "Thornton" Miscellany', *Scriptorium*, 30 (1976), 32-3 [26-37, 201-18] on a number of gaps left in BL, MS Additional 31042, reiterated by Phillipa Hardman, 'Reading the Spaces: Pictorial Intentions in the Thornton MSS, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, and BL MS Add. 31042', *Medium Ævum*, 63:2 (1994), 257 [250-74]; Rose, 'Paratexts in the *Virtutes Apostolorum*', 384; and for Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, Linda Nix, 'Manuscript Layout and Re-production of the Text in Anglo-Saxon England: A Preliminary Examination', *Gazette du Livre Médiéval*, 25 (1994), 19-22 [17-23].

[96] Keiser, 'Serving the needs of readers', 214.

[97] Allen, 'Counting Time', 81-2, identifies thirty-five narrative sections within the *Brut* all between 315 and 630 lines in length. According to her own investigations a 600-line section takes approximately 55 minutes to perform.

[98] These section divisions have been selected for their thematic significance and narrative cues, rather than mapping onto either the capitals found in the O manuscript, or the paraphs and virgules in C: Allen, 'Counting Time', 83-88.

[99] Four-line sections are found at Smithers, ed., *Havelok*, 56, ll. 2052-5 and 62, ll. 2253-6; and the longest section is ll. 927-1102. On average the length between capitals is 28 lines. The lines between the minor initial at l. 1391 and that at l. 1641 have been discounted from this total as the manuscript wants ll. 1445-625.

text its reader chose to consume at any given time. The producer of this copy *Havelok* partook in a complex interaction between text and context. His coloured capitals act as graphic cues with both diegetical and extradiegetical temporal effects: the 'real-time' reading experience is directed by the graphic design of the page that results from specific narrative cues.[100]

Holding the Text Together

Nevertheless, while graphic devices do sub-divide texts in a number of ways, the visual coherence that a consistently implemented graphic schema imposes on the work also reinforces narrative continuity. Paraphs and other unobtrusive symbols and design features are crucial to this role. In fact, in the case of the paraph, part of its unifying ability is drawn from its use as a divider. It is regularly used, for instance, to preface discrete items in lists. Thus, towards the end of BL, MS Harley 2253 is a list describing the heraldry of different monarchs which begins:

> ¶ Cest la conisaunce de les armes des Roys
> ¶ Le Roy de Ier*usal*em porte lescu dasure ou crois e c*ruc*afix dor
> ¶ Roy despaygne porte escu q*ua*rt*r*one de goules e dargent ou deus chastiels dor e deus lyouns de sable
> ¶ Roy de ff*ra*unce porte lescu dasure poudre ou flur de lyls dor…
>
> [¶ Here are the emblems of the arms of Kings
> ¶ The King of Jerusalem carries the azure shield with a cross and a gold crucifix
> ¶ King of Spain carries arms quartered in red and silver with two gold castles and two sable lions
> ¶ King of France carries the blue shield decorated with gold fleur-de-lis…][101]

[100] For discussion of these terms, and the relation of a number of narrative temporalities, see Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 33-5, 215-62, especially 228.

[101] BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 131r; Fein, ed., *Complete Harley*, v. 3, 254, ll. 1-5.

The heading and each of the twenty-five coats of arms described is preceded by a red paraph. Many Latin lists share a comparable layout, for instance, the list of the books of the Bible—'¶ Nomina librorum bibliotece'—found several quires earlier in the same manuscript.[102] In these examples, paraphs appear to identify discrete entries on the list. Each item, the paraphs demonstrate, is subservient to the list's heading—it describes the arms of a king, for instance—but not necessarily directly related to, or conditional on, the rest of the entries. For readers, therefore, the paraphs provide a means of isolating specific information, allowing some items to be passed over without careful reading, while others were selected.

However, as well as subdividing the text, paraphs also play a crucial role in reinforcing its cohesion as a unified whole. Because each item is prefaced by a paraph, the appearance of the list itself is visually interconnected, indicating that all of the items belong together under the same heading as part of the same thematic category. Paraphs, though they may allow readers to skim material in search or what is relevant to their needs, also gather information together. The function of paraphs to hold material together and ensure internal cohesion is typified by their placement in prose texts at the beginning of run on lines found at the end of chapters or pages.[103] Here, the paraph signals that any extra words belong with the material above it, and prevent the loss or separation of textual material. In an early copy of *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, perhaps in order to economise on space, when the last line of a section of text overruns the ruling by only a few words, these words are copied at the end of the

[102] BL, MS Harley 2253, f. 105v; Fein, ed., *Complete Harley*, v. 3, 78, l. i.

[103] This location seems to be reserved solely for paraphs. Unlike other locations where paraphs are sometimes used interchangeably with other graphic signs, this role never seems to be given to any other graphic devices.

following line, justified with the right edge of the textblock and preceded by a paraph. The beginning of the next section has then been copied to fill up the rest of the line:

> **S**chrift schal beo ꝑreiful. Bitter mid sorhe. Ihal. Naket. Ofte imaket. Hihful. Eadmod. Scheomeful. Hopeful. ꝑis. Soð. ⁊ ꝑilles. Ahne. ⁊ Studeuest. Biþoht biuore longe. Her beoð nu as þah hit ꝑeren sixtene stuchen þe beoð ifeit to schrift. Ant ꝑe of euchan sin ꝑord
> **S**hrift schal beo ꝑreiful. ¶ sunderliche seggen
> Mon schal beo ꝑreien him ischrift naꝑt ꝑerien him
>
> [Confession shall be accusing, bitter with sorrow, complete, naked, made often, prompt, humble, shameful, hopeful, wise, true and willing, individual and steadfast, thought out long beforehand. Here are now sixteen sections connected to confession, and we [shall] say some words about each separately.
>
> Confession shall be accusing. One must accuse himself in confessing, not defend himself.][104]

Here, then, the paraph is a graphic marker that acknowledges the overspill; it divides the line in order to indicate which words belong to each section, but also joins words together to ensure the completeness of the chapters, preventing content from being lost or the line becoming nonsensical. An extreme use of the paraph for its joining function may be found in a Latin copy of the Gradual and Penitential Psalms.[105] Here the scribe had limited space and has attempted to fit a verse of the psalm per line of his copy using paraphs to demarcate any overspill. However, the verse lines are regularly too long to fit within the textblock. Consequently, the scribe needed a paraph once every two to seven lines, sometimes with more than one paraph per line if several long lines follow each other. On top of this, if there was not space on the line below to accommodate the overspill, the paraph with the rest of the verse line that followed it might not appear until several lines further down the page. Implementing such

[104] CCCC, MS 402, f. 82v; Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, 115-16, ll. 65-71.

[105] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 62v-67v.

a layout must have taken a significant amount of planning, although in actuality, this extreme network of connections might be hard to follow without an intimate knowledge of the text.

The unifying function of graphic signs is enhanced when the same symbol is found periodically throughout the text block. Regularly imposed graphic features provide a unified design for the page giving the work an aesthetic coherence that identifies it as a single textual unit. In fact, the visual appearance of paraphs may at times have been as much part of their appeal as their organisational function: too few and the page appears spartan, too many and it becomes overcrowded. Thus, over the course of the L copy of *King Horn*, only two pages feature fewer than two paraphs, and just three have as many as four.[106] In addition, where four paraphs *do* appear on one page, the highest and lowest examples tend to be positioned closer to the top and bottom of the folio.[107] Though there is no stanzaic form to ensure that paraphs are evenly spaced, they are distributed—maybe not without forethought—with the appearance of balance and regularity.[108] This concern for a balanced aesthetic may partially account for instances in which potential textual prompts—character names, changes in place or time, and speech—are not marked. Perhaps these features only take paraphs when they appear at opportune intervals to sustain a visual balance. On top of this, paraphs grant the textblock flexibility. They let the text stretch into the margins—in the commentary tradition, for

[106] BL, MS Harley 2253, ff. 83r and 92v just have one paraph within the text of King Horn, but these pages fall at the start and the end of the item, meaning they feature just 9 and 12 lines of the item respectively. Four paraphs are found on ff. 87r, 91v, 92r.

[107] BL, MS Harley 2253, ff. 87r, 82r.

[108] The importance of the balance of the page in book design is advocated by Hugh Williamson, *Methods of Book Design: The Practice of an Industrial Craft*, second edition (London: OUP, 1966), 377.

example—and yet ensure that its wholeness is recognised.[109] Readers are reminded, even when they select just a section of the text for their reading, that each passage is a product of a continuous whole. Such visual coherence may sometimes have prompted continuous reading. However, even when it did not, it demanded an outward-looking awareness of the fact that what they were reading existed in relation to a larger whole.

Intuitive and Improvised Reading

Flexibility and adaptability, then, are crucial to the use of graphic signs and subdivisions in these high medieval vernacular works. Certainly, minor initials and paraphs both provide a means of introducing internal breaks, or subdivisions, into a text, for discontinuous reading. Most crucially this visual organisation provided a means by which scribes and readers could organise time: the ordering of historical or narrative time in the text; the times or occasions at which reading should take place; and the length or time spent with the manuscript on any one instance. In this sense, as will be shown elsewhere in this thesis, the graphic signs imposed on the page put readers' experiences of the book in dialogue with the outside world—mediating how reading fits into their wider experience. A parallel might be drawn, then, with seemingly more complex textual apparatus that directs readers to other sources, cites authorities, and points the reader away from *this* text toward a network of further reading outside of the book.

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[109] Indeed, paraphs appear to counteract a growing concern, observed by modern scholars and felt by contemporary scribes and readers, that the profusion of new marginal apparatus in Latin texts may overwhelm the body of the vernacular work. See, for modern vocalisations of this concern, Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 74, for instance. Comments from Sherman, *Used Books*, 41 on marginal apparatus and signs 'taking the text in hand' demonstrate a similar sense of domination from the margins.

However, these ubiquitous graphic signs for subdivisions are also self-referential. In many cases their presence shows an equal concern for preserving the integrity of the work: for setting even explicitly divided or episodic narratives within their wider narrative arch. In which case, there seems to be a sense in which—even when a reader intended to embark on only a discrete part of the text—an engagement with the continuous whole was important.

Crucially, the grammar of graphic signs in use in this period was unwaveringly flexible, their signal changing to fit the situation to which they were applied. What may emerge from this chapter, then, is the impression that readers engaging with the graphic features of high medieval vernacular texts needed a high degree of specialist knowledge in order to decode their meanings and functions. However, it is likely that the ubiquity of these categories of signs meant most readers coped with them more or less intuitively. This notion is reinforced by the regularity with which the graphic features of manuscripts—though copyists supplied space for them—remained blank.[110] Historically, the knee-jerk reaction to these un-rubricated manuscripts has been—as it has been for many materially "imperfect" manuscripts—to declare them unfinished.[111] Though this might be true of some examples, the presence of readers' marks, the wear and tear of use, and the fact they were bound into volumes rather than disposed of suggests that medieval users did not conceive of the unfinished book as an illegible book. Rather, the readers of these books seem to have been both willing and able to approach the text without a complete graphic program in place. Perhaps

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[110] For discussions of incomplete illustration schemes see, also, Hardman, 'Reading the Spaces', 250-74; Phillipa Hardman, 'Interpreting the Incomplete Scheme of Illustration in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 61', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 6 (1997), 52-69, and 'Windows into the Text: Unfilled Spaces in some Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts', *Texts and their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. John Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 44-70.

[111] Books that retain their pricking, for instance, or in which catchwords have been left at the bottom extremity of the page.

they could visualise the forms that were intended to fill the gaps using the knowledge they acquired from other books.

It is possible that the ability to use a book fluently without its system of graphic signs, each with multiple potential meanings, demonstrates an even higher level of familiarity with, and specialist knowledge of, these layouts. If the reader were able to construe the meaning of any given symbol simply from the location of the gap left for it, without the graphic cue itself to prompt him, he must have been very familiar with the conventions of its use and had a great deal of working knowledge on which to draw. However, the gaps left by unfilled initials and graphic devices still provide the visual breakdown of the space that a complete schema of rubrication would offer, allowing the reader to interpret the layout. Reading, then, was a process of improvisation that differed in each enactment: as Thomas Hahn observes, early Middle English literature gives the 'extraordinary impression that every act of writing requires a reinvention of vernacular literacy', so reading too necessitated invention.[112] However, the inventiveness and creativity in reading practice drew on well-established and remembered traditions. The extent to which reading involved creative engagement with the manuscript will be demonstrated in the final section of this thesis, which focuses on evidence of the interactions later readers had with their books.

[112] Thomas Hahn, 'Early Middle English', *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (CUP, 1999), 85 [61-91].

PART III

Consuming

PART III

Introduction

Having begun by intentionally turning away from the margins as the primary location for evidence of early Middle English reading practices in order to focus on the practices of scribes—how they read, and how they prepared the text for future reading—the thesis now looks back to the margins and beyond to the material form of the book itself. It looks at these parts of the book in order to expand the range of material that might be taken as evidence of reading. It is my intention in this part of the thesis then, to foreground the practices of the contemporary readers of these twelfth- and thirteenth-century multilingual books. In so doing the following chapters will consider the ways readers responded to the practices set out for them by scribes using cues such as titles and graphic signs. In addition it will demonstrate the ways in which readers sought to adapt the form of the book to their own reading practice, be that in line with, or contradictory to, the use that scribes anticipated. It will thereby emphasize the physical, embodied nature of vernacular reading practice.

For the most part, book use is not overtly marked. Rather, it is encoded in more workaday marks, tears, and stains. It is a truism that, as Roger Stoddard says, 'rough hands will sunder books, and even gentle hands over time will pull books apart,' and it is in the ways

a codex has diverged from its pristine, newly-written form that the attentions of its readers is most clearly preserved.[1] As such, it is the pages adorned with spills and stains that seem most promising if we wish to reconstruct the image of the book laid open in use. Some such dirt certainly relates to identifiable practices. For instance, four inky fingerprints on the lower edge a folio record the touch of one writer,[2] while drops of candle wax conjure up a reader hunched over the page into the evening.[3] However, most stains are less easily interpreted.[4] Certainly, as Kate Rudy is showing, areas of dirt or wear on particular images and texts seem like compelling evidence of contemporary devotional touching.[5] But often they could as easily be attributed to later users, or to the damage inflicted by Reformation zeal.[6]

Many of these physical traces of reading appear impenetrable. This might explain why written annotations are the only seam of marginal evidence that has been subject to detailed investigation: in particular, the types of written marginalia Heather Jackson describes as

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[1] Stoddard, *Marks in Books*, 1.

[2] BodL, MS Ashmole 1285, f. 72v.

[3] Webber, 'Reading at Collation'. See, for instance, BodL, MS Rawlinson G. 99, f. 83r; BodL, MS Hatton 28, f. 92v; BodL, MS Digby 69, f. 127r and others. Similarly, Linne R. Mooney, 'Manuscript Evidence for the Use of Medieval English Scientific and Utilitarian Texts', *Interstices: Studies in Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A.G. Rigg*, ed. Richard Firth Green and Linne R. Mooney (University of Toronto Press, 2004), 193-9 [184-202] observes instances of organic material wedged in the gutter of a recipe book that corresponds with the ingredients required by recipes on the page, and in a section on bloodletting, some rust coloured finger prints.

[4] The sources and dating of more of this material may by revealed by the forthcoming 'Library of Stains': Alberto Campagnolo, Erin Connelly and Heather Wacha, eds., *Labeculae Vivae: Stains Alive* (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017), <https://labeculaevivae.wordpress.com/>.

[5] Borland, 'Unruly Reading', 99; Rudy, 'Kissing Images', 1-56; Rudy, 'Dirty Books', 1-26. Rudy is also currently assembling a typology of various modes of devotional touching found in books.

[6] For the reformation defacement of service books see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-c. 1580*, second edition (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2005), 372-3, 400, 487; Dunstan Roberts, 'The Expurgation of Traditional Prayer Books (c. 1535-1600)', *Reformation*, 15:1 (2010), 23-49; Brian Cummings, 'Iconoclasm and Bibliophobia in the English Reformations, 1521-1558', *Images, Idolatry, and Iconoclasm in Late Medieval England: Textuality and the Visual Image*, eds. Jeremy Dimmick, James Simpson and Nicolette Zeeman (OUP, 2002), 198-206 [185-206]. As Rudy warns: 'How do I know the dirt is from original […] users? The answer is I don't' (Rudy, 'Dirty Books', 1-26).

'glosses, rubrics and *scholia*.'[7] Many of these studies focus on practices in the later medieval, and especially Early Modern periods, when marginal evidence is more plenteous.[8] Written marginalia from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in comparison, are rare and where present are often attributable to scribes rather than readers. Alternatively, they are occasionally the work of identified scholastic figures, such as the Tremulous Hand of Worcester, who actively engaged in a program of annotating older manuscripts.[9] So, while this part of the thesis does not actively turn away from the margins as a source of evidence, it seeks a broader range of marginal spaces and of things put in them.

The margins of twelfth- and thirteenth-century books play host to a vast range of other marks. In fact, the majority of marks added by readers in the margins of books in this period consist of apparently insubstantial, but entirely pervasive, signs and symbols.[10] These ubiquitous marks have often been taken for granted, and their reception and use is rarely considered.[11] In fact, William Sherman warns that such signs are 'peculiarly difficult to locate, decipher and interpret.'[12] Yet it is these marks that preponderate in the margins of books. Chapter four will analyse the most common marks produced by readers and demonstrate that

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[7] Jackson, *Marginalia*, 45. See, for instance, Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities*; Sherman, *Used Books*; Jackson, *Romantic Readers*.

[8] Jackson, *Marginalia*, 99; Slights, *Managing Readers*, 10-2; Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers', 434; and William Sherman, 'What did Renaissance Readers Write in their Books?', *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, ed. Jennifer Anderson and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 130-3 [119-37]; William Sherman, 'The Social Life of Books', *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, v. 1, ed. Christine Bold, Joad Raymond, and Gary Kelly (OUP, 2011), 169-70 [164-71]. For a more detailed appraisal of the critical makeup of the field see my General Introduction, 8-17.

[9] See Franzen, *Tremulous Hand of Worcester*.

[10] Sherman, Used Books, 29 begins to identify such marks: 'asterisks, trefoils, ticks, "treaks," crosses, brackets, running commentaries, and endless *nota benes*.'

[11] Exceptions include Sandler, 'Scribe, Corrector, Reader', 111-31; and K. S. Whetter, 'Ink and Hands and Fingers in the Manuscript of Malory's Morte Darthur', *Speculum*, 92:2 (2017), 429-46.

[12] Sherman, *Used Books*, xiii.

these signs in the margins are not simply instances of unthinking "doodling" but represent significant moments of specific engagement by the reader. In particular, in this chapter I will focus my attention on three of the most ubiquitous non-verbal or semi-verbal marks: crosses, manicules, and *nota bene* marks. Other symbols, though less commonplace, might also have been relevant, but for reasons of time and space this chapter will keep to those with the most consistent formal precedents. These non-verbal signs demonstrate that readers sought to intervene in their books, inserting their bodies into the text through gestural mark-making, and in so doing revealing the physicality of reading practices.

The physical engagement in reading practices like these tends to result in a creative act. Reading thereby leads to the generation of new material (that is, material new to that book; the new material is often, in itself, taken from elsewhere). In chapter five this material takes the form of lyrics, prayers, and proverbs in early Middle English that have been added into books by their later readers. In adding this material to their books readers have taken advantage of the adaptability of the material form of the codex, which was, in some senses, constructed to be expandable. Such adaptation requires not just reading and writing, but also cutting and sticking—both literal and metaphorical. These actions of cutting and sticking put the manuscript page into conversation with the world outside of the book. The additions that readers made to their books had to come from somewhere: they are cut from a wider poetic culture. Thus, their entry into these books will show that reading and using books drew on external reference points.

PART III: CHAPTER 4

Mark-Making in the Margins

The use of non-verbal symbols to annotate the margins of books has a history as long as that of the codex itself. Some are for completing the text: marks of omission, insertion, or correction—among others—have been needed since the very earliest days of writing.[1] Others are the marks of readers. Robert Grosseteste (c.1175-1253), for instance, employed a vast schema of symbols to mark up his books. A key to these symbols is found in the front of a Latin Bible owned by Grosseteste.[2] It lists 440 topics, distributed across nine categories, each of which was assigned a unique symbol.[3] Grosseteste then employed these symbols in the margins of his books to

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[1] E. A. Lowe, 'The Oldest Omission Signs in Latin Manuscripts: Their Origin and Significance', *Palaeographical Papers 1907-1965*, ed. Ludwig Bieler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 379-80 [349-80]. See, for more on the form and range of these marks, W. M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae: An Account of Abbreviation in Latin MSS. of the Early Miniscule Period (c. 700-850)* (CUP, 1915), 495-500; Mildred Budny, 'Assembly Marks in the Vivian Bible and Scribal, Editorial, and Organizational Marks in Medieval Books', *Making the Medieval Book: Techniques of Production*, ed. Linda L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace, 1995), 199-200 [199-240].

[2] Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 414, ff. 17r-32v; Robert Grosseteste, 'Tabula', ed. P. W. Rosemann and James McEvoy, *Corpus Christianorum*, 130 (1995), 233-320.

[3] For more on Grosseteste's system see Sherman, *Used Books*, 25-7; and especially R. W. Hunt, 'Manuscripts Containing the Indexing Symbols of Robert Grosseteste', *Bodleian Library Record*, 4:5 (1953), 242 [241-55]; Dennis Duncan, 'Robert Grosseteste's Symbolic Search Engine', *Table of Discontents: A History of the English Book Index* (Oxford: 2016), <https://indexhistory.wordpress.com/2016/04/13/robert-grossetestes-symbolic-search-engine/>.

categorise each passage according to its themes and content. However, without the key to this non-verbal glossing practice the marks Grosseteste left in the margins of his library might be considered impenetrable to all but the best cryptographers. For this reason verbal annotation, glossing, and commentary have more often been the subject of scholarly attention, both in the high medieval period and beyond, than have such inscrutable non-verbal marks as Grosseteste's—to say nothing of the marks made by less distinguished, anonymous readers.

Similarly, the twelfth- and thirteenth-century commentary tradition is extensive. The beginning of the twelfth century saw the establishment of the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which was quickly superseded by Lombard's commentary on the Psalms, and gave rise to page layouts that allowed for the increasingly complex integration of commentary and text.[4] Glossing was also widespread, particularly in the schoolroom. As such, many grammatical treatises are provided—by scribes or by later users—with alternative Latin, French, and occasionally English interlinear glosses throughout.[5] Many of the verbal additions in twelfth- and thirteenth-century books, then, even those glosses that are in the vernacular, come from a specific institutional context, and seem to be related to reading practices in monastic and scholastic settings. Analysis of this material by Suzanne Reynolds, Tony Hunt, and others has begun to show how reading was taught, practised, and valued within those contexts.[6] Nevertheless, such additions are less pertinent to the questions this thesis asks about other kinds of reading, particularly the reading of the vernacular. Certainly, the types of revealing personal response described by Heather Jackson in her studies of eighteenth-century

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[4] See Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page*, 41-6; Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria*, 93-137.

[5] See Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin*, v. 2 for a comprehensive index of thirteenth-century manuscripts glossed in the vernacular.

[6] Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*, 28-41; Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin*.

annotation are not often found in the annotations of twelfth- and thirteenth-century readers.[7] Moreover, in the main corpus of multilingual manuscripts taken for this thesis extensive verbal annotation is uncommon. Some texts are supplied with occasional glosses, such as the six interlinear glosses that give English translations for terms in a set of recipes beginning 'Hic incipiunt experimencia bona et optima'; while in other cases readers have added to the scribe's marginal signposting, as in the copies of the *SEL* and Layamon's *Brut* discussed in Chapter Three.[8] The section of *The Peterborough Chronicle* to which thirteenth-century commentary has been added in French in the margins of the extended English text is particularly interesting.[9] But, these are unusual examples sometimes introduced by the scribes of the text rather than the readers; and the majority of the texts found here, particularly those in the vernacular, have no such verbal additions.

Instead, the margins of these books are populated by a wide range of non-verbal marks, or marks of just one word 'nota', which—due in part to the recalcitrance of the evidence they might provide—have not yet been the subject of critical consideration.[10] However, though Grosseteste's key may be anomalously extensive and complex, it demonstrates the potential for meaning among such non-verbal signs. Given that most marginal marks are significantly more commonplace than Grosseteste's—which are unusual and immediately identifiable with him and his students—it is possible that their use conformed to a recognised set of meanings and

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[7] Jackson, *Marginalia*, 243-58.

[8] For glosses see, for instance, BodL, Digby 86, f. 47r-v. For the addition marginal labels see BodL, Laud Misc. 108, f. 38v, for example; or BL, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, f. 72r.

[9] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 636, ff. 86v-90v. The layout of these additions clearly takes a queue from Biblical commentaries as described by Smith, *Masters of the Sacred Page*, 41-6, above.

[10] Some work has been done on some of these signs in later periods, most significantly by Sherman, *Used Books*, 1-52.

conventions. Alternatively, it may be, as Juliet Fleming suggests of non-verbal elements of the typed page, that these signs present 'cognitive responses to writing' that enact certain unconscious 'psychic, somatic' behaviours.[11] It is worth interrogating what more ubiquitous, and regularly overlooked signs, can reveal about reading practices. In so doing this chapter will demonstrate that the production of non-verbal marks was valuable for readers, just as more explicitly meaningful written annotations might be, facilitating a reading practice that was both bodily and socially involved.

This chapter, then, will take as its focus three of the most ubiquitous marginal-marks found in the manuscripts in my corpus—and also in medieval manuscripts more widely: crosses, manicules, and *nota bene* marks. The categorisation of the *nota* mark here as a 'non-verbal' sign may be a cause for skepticism; certainly, as it is a word, this mark has the potential to provide verbal commentary on the text. However, I will suggest in this chapter that its use in the margins of vernacular material, where it often appears without other written notes, operated less like a word than a symbol. Here, readers tend to abbreviate and elaborate on the *nota* mark, emphasising its function as a visual sign over and above, and sometimes to the detriment of, its verbal signification. I will take my evidence for this chapter from a broader corpus than I have examined previously, although most key examples will be drawn from my main corpus of twelfth- and thirteenth-century multilingual manuscripts. I do so in order to place the use of these signs in those books within a wider context of mark-making, demonstrating their ubiquity across a variety of texts and among a range of users, and thereby to explore their position within social conventions of reading.

[11] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 85.

How can we use Marginal Marks?

The most common non-verbal marginal mark found in twelfth- and thirteenth-century multilingual manuscripts—and, I would suggest, most medieval books—is the simple cross. Tiny crosses, between 3 and 15 millimetres in diameter, sitting square (+) or at an angle (x) to the text block, populate the margins of almost every text regardless of genre or format. Marginal crosses then, must have been familiar to medieval readers. However, these common signs do not submit easily to analysis. As such, they have rarely been the subject of scholarship. They suffer from being hard to see and harder to date. It is not unusual to find crosses drawn in plummet, crayon, or even scratched into the margin. In the outer margin of a

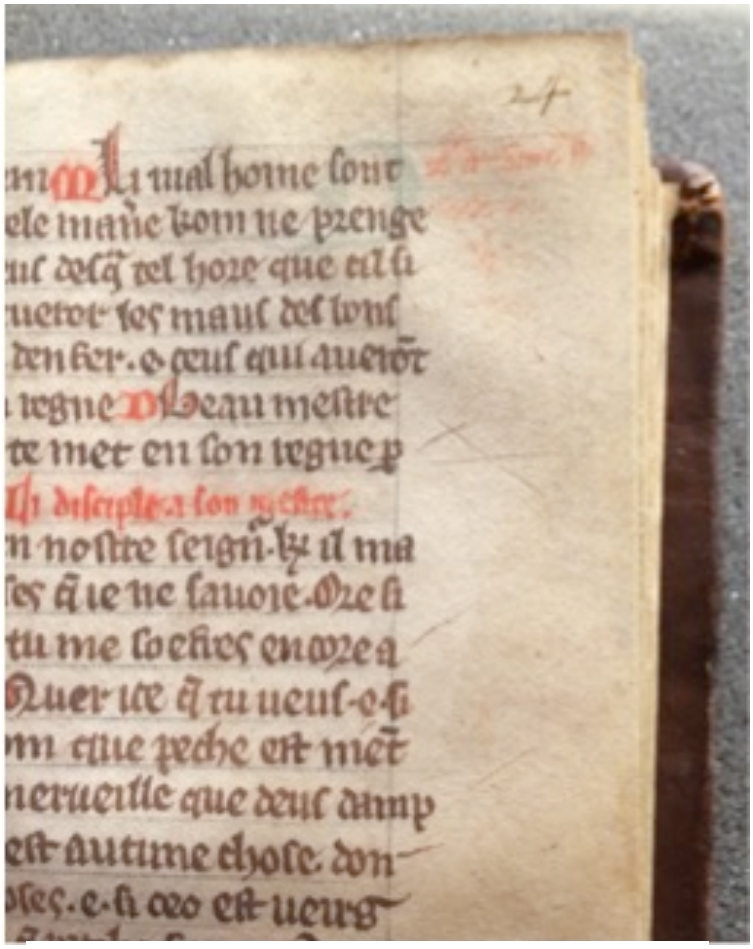


Fig. 2: BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 24r, a scratched cross, , reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

French translation of the *Elucidarium* of Honorius of Autun, for example, a cross is scratched into the surface of the page (Fig. 2).[12] The larger, less even form of this cross suggests it was made without a precise instrument, unlike the smaller ink counterparts in other places. The intersection of the two arms is distinctly off-centre, so that both are longer on the outer side. Moreover, the cross's construction, scratched rather than ink or lead, renders it almost invisible to anyone not searching for it. Not only are crosses ubiquitous enough to be taken for granted therefore; many are simply not seen—and would have been known to be difficult to see by their makers.

But who were their makers? Dating these signs presents a considerable problem to any discussion of their use by readers. However, the few material clues that might date specific iterations are prone to be circumstantial. Sometimes the construction of crosses might provide a rough dating. The majority of crosses, when compared to the texts they adorn, are drawn in a familiar shade of pale brown ink. They contrast, then, with the darker ink of marginalia added by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century collectors. These darker inks are likely to be iron-gall based. Iron-gall inks were used throughout Antiquity, but their use diminished in the Carolingian period and did not return until later in the thirteenth century. The paler brown crosses in my corpus then, are more likely to be drawn in carbon- or vegetable-based inks, which were outmoded by the end of the thirteenth century.[13] It is possible, therefore, to at least speculate on a medieval, and probably near-contemporary, date of inscription in the majority of cases.

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[12] BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 24r.

[13] See Monique Bat-Yehouda Zerdoun, *Les Encres Noires au Moyen Age* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1983), 146; Christopher de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators* (London: British Museum, 1992), 33. However, without spectroscopic analysis of the corpus, certainty on the make-up of inks is not possible to attain, and other factors may also be at work in these differences in colouration.

Some crosses are more closely linked to datable writing. If crosses are accompanied by verbal annotations in the same hand then reference to these comments may make dating possible. Thus, several crosses in the margins of a late thirteenth century version of the *Canons of Arzachel* have annotations associated with them.[14] These crosses frame the notes in pairs, with one in a medial position beside the note itself, and the other in line with the section of the text block to which the note refers. In this case, the notes are in the proto-gothic handwriting of the scribe, which has several transitional features including both 'teardrop' and hooked **a**, round and occasionally straight-backed **d**, and a crossed form of tironian ***et***. These features suggest the text was written at some point in the early thirteenth century, certainly before 1250, and that the crosses were produced at the same time. In other cases, a rough production date might be assigned through analysis of the stylistic features of the cross itself. An additional

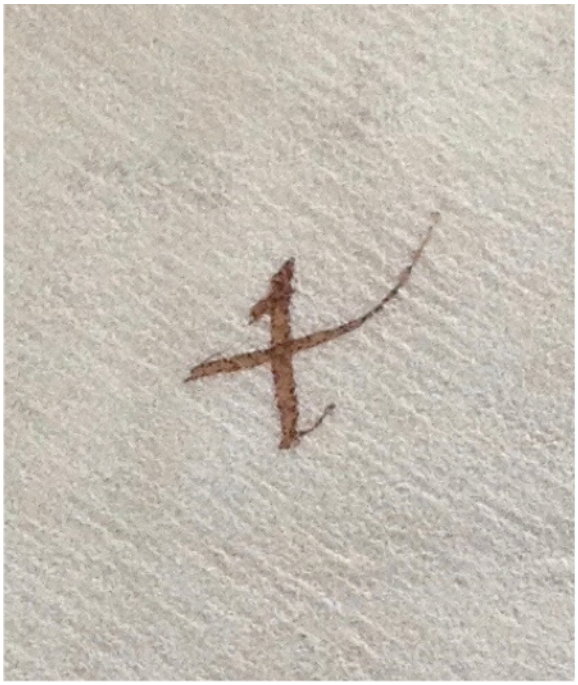


Fig. 3: BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 17v, a cross with potentially datable features, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

[14] BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 17v.

stroke has been used to add a small bifurcation to the ascender of a square cross in the outer margin of a scientific treatise, for instance (Fig, 3).[15] The resultant form is reminiscent of the split in the top of serifed ascenders in early Anglicana scripts, which would go on to develop into the characteristic 'umbrella' ascenders of the early fourteenth century.[16] In fact, the practice of adding a stroke to ascenders in order to achieve this appearance was not unusual and can be seen in hands from the same period. The producer of this cross then, seems to have been at least semiconscious, in adding his extra stroke, about engaging with an aesthetic ideal based upon the written word. In which case it might be possible to date this particular cross to the closing decades of the thirteenth or early fourteenth century, broadly in keeping with the proposed date of the manuscript's production. The form of another cross, in the outer margin of a thirteenth-century work on philosophy, may also allow for dating on stylistic grounds. The single looping line is comparable to the current combination of thick and hairline strokes found in early fourteenth-century Anglicana scripts.[17] However, although these features may provide evidence for a potential dating, the pool of data such small marks provide is too limited for definite conclusions to be drawn. Rather, we must rely, on the whole, on a loose contextual dating to say that the majority of these marginal crosses seem to have been constructed by readers shortly after the manuscript's production. This chapter will ask why readers produced these marks as the read or failed to read?

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[15] BodL, MS Auct. F. 1. 9, f. 60v.

[16] Compare, for instance, Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, xv, 1, 1 (i); L. C. Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents* (London: Edward Arnold, 1958) 53, 69, V (a), 70, VI (a); or Pierre Chaplais, *English Royal Documents, King John – Henry VI, 1199-1461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 56, 3 *b*, 57, 4 *a*.

[17] BodL, MS Digby 2, f. 41r. Compare Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands*, xiv-xv, 1, 1 (ii); and especially the ductus used to form the crosses on Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, 67, 14 *a*, 68, 15 *b*; and the hairlines on Hector, *Handwriting of English Documents*, 74, X (a).

The practical purpose of such marginal crosses may often be similarly opaque. Certainly, in some cases, crosses are used to mark salient information, such as key lines and passages of text, for a range of reasons. A selection of crosses added to the calendar of one collection align with specific dates: the feast of 's*ancti* nicholai ep*iscop*i *et confessoris* [Saint Nicholas, Bishop and Confessor]', for example.[18] In this context it might be supposed that the dates marked have particular significance—perhaps these crosses commemorate specific events, or the feasts of saints important to the reader and their home institution. In other cases, though, crosses might be used to cause a reader to consider a passage more closely, and ensure he had absorbed its meaning; show where he excerpted material from the text for use in a Florilegium; or mark a point of interest to return to later.[19] There is no reason to suppose that these and other applications of marginal crosses observed by scholars in analyses of particular textual situations are incorrect. Rather, it seems that in different locations, and at different times, crosses might prompt a range of responses: a fact that only adds to their inscrutability and fascination.

Some crosses might have other quite practical functions in the process of making and using books. For instance, small crosses are used in the margins of *The Peterborough Chronicle* to

[18] BodL, MS Digby 2, ff. 8r-13v (f. 13v).

[19] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 215; Sherman, *Used Books*, 48. For other identifications of particular uses see also Kathleen L. Scott, 'Limning and Book-producing Terms and Signs *in situ* in Late-Medieval English Manuscripts: a First Listing', *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: Scolar Press, 1995), 156 [142-88]; Don C. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2006), 94-6; Stock, *Implication of Literacy*, 47-8; Willoughby, '*Secundo Folio* and its Uses', 241; Mark Jonathan Faulkner, *The Uses of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts c. 1066-1200* (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2008), 137.

correct erroneous words in the text block. Beneath one such marginal cross its maker has written in a significantly later hand, 'namon [no-one]', which is cued to the text with a matching cross above the word in need of correction, in this case, 'non [none]'.[20] Another cross, in the copy of the *Elucidarium* discussed above, acts as a *signe-de-renvoie*, flagging the point where several lines need adding to the text.[21] These pragmatic, and sometimes systematically repeated, uses for crosses may suggest that their significance for reading practice was relatively low: that in fact they were a conventional sign used in the production of the text, making it *legible* for future readers, rather than a facet of reading itself. In fact, such uses call into the question the usefulness of treating crosses as a sign of reading at all, for doing so puts us at risk of finding responsive annotation in what were in fact pragmatic aspects of the production process. In addition, the locations of crosses are often divorced from the texts that they mark, with no clear connection to be made between the position of a cross and any given facet of the work. A striking example of this disassociation between the margin and the text is found in a miscellany containing a number of Anglo-Norman devotional lyrics, where a large brown ink cross has been inscribed in the lower margin between the two ruled columns.[22] This cross lines up with only blank space: its position between the columns prevents it from being connected firmly with either written area. Similarly, the crosses in some sections of a thirteenth-century priest's handbook are drawn at such a remove from the textblock that they

[20] BodL, MS Laud Misc. 636, f. 26v; Susan Irvine, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, v. 7 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 41. For other instances of crosses marking the need for correction see Wakelin, 'When Scribes Won't Write', 271; Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 36, 94-7.

[21] BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 22v.

[22] BodL, MS Douce 137, f. 62r.

lie beyond the pricking of the folio.[23] In these cases the position of the crosses prevents them from acting as textual pinpoints. Such marks do not seem to be directly associated with the content of the work. Rather they act as relics of less textually specific interactions with the book; or, as seems to be the case in some of these examples, the making of the book.

It may be that crosses served a mechanical, rather than a textual, purpose. Crosses on the periphery of the page, or in visually significant positions like between two columns of text, could provide a navigational aid, flagging certain pages for readers flicking through the book. However, as finding systems go, crosses have many disadvantages. Crosses tend to be small, rarely more than 5 millimetres across, and many are not easily visible.[24] They would not, therefore, stand out to a reader moving around the manuscript at pace. Nor is it easy to distinguish between one cross and another: crosses usually retain a uniform shape and style throughout a manuscript, so they cannot be used to differentiate between various marked passages. On top of this, in some manuscripts crosses appear as often as two or three times on a page.[25] Using crosses to identify a specific page, then, seems—at best—impractical. Additionally, crosses are found with almost equal regularity in the inner margin and gutter as they are on the outer edge of the page; as is the case in a short computational treatise bound into one miscellany, where looping crosses are buried deep in the seam of the quire.[26] Before such crosses could be used for navigation, then, the reader would have to find the finding aid.

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[23] BodL, MS Ashmole 1280, ff. 101r-102r. See also BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 65r, where twelve crosses sit in line with the pricking.

[24] See the fine hairline strokes of crosses in BodL, MS Digby 69; BodL, MS Bodley 652; or BodL, MS Ashmole 1285.

[25] See, for example, three larger crosses located in the outer margin of BodL, MS Digby 86, f. 46r.

[26] BodL, MS Ashmole 1285, f. 112r.

Given the seemingly opaque nature of their use, it might be worth asking whether these marks were ever intended to be *read*? Perhaps we should consider these marks ephemera, particular to a given user, with no expectation that they would be returned to. This would explain the scratched or hairline construction that rendered many crosses barely visible. On top of this, dry point crosses tend to be more haphazard in appearance than their ink counterparts: both notably larger and less evenly centred. The apparent roughness of these scratched efforts then, may suggest that such crosses represent one-off interactions not intended to attract attention later, or from others. However, the disordered nature of scratched crosses might also be explained by the technology involved in creating them. First, extra pressure would be needed to create permanent indentations in parchment, which is itself a resilient material. This leaves less possibility for small precision movements. Second, it is possible, perhaps even probable, that scratched crosses were employed when their creator did not have a pen and ink, or other technologies of writing, to hand. A fingernail seems a particularly suitable size and shape to have created many of the scratched crosses in this corpus.[27] Unlike most other materials, access to this technology is guaranteed for almost all readers. Moreover, in terms of object permanence scratched crosses, though they are not highly visual, have a stronger presence than ink ever can. While an ink cross may be scraped away from parchment more or less completely, removing a scratched marker is rarely possible. In such cases the cross is etched into the very surface of the page, meaning that, in order to get rid

[27] For example, BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 24r; BodL, MS Digby 4, f. 19r; BodL, MS Digby 86, f. 15v; BL, MS Arundel 292, f. 49r.

of it the parchment must be flattened, pushing the scratches out.[28] So, though the presence of ink may give the impression that some marks were of greater value or importance to their makers, scratched crosses were anything but ephemeral, their shapes remaining permanently engraved into the page for posterity.[29] The object permanence of scratched crosses may be epitomised by the cross cut into the front board inside the contemporary binding of a thirteenth-century manuscript containing the works of John Cassian.[30]

The fact that so many ink crosses also survive, having not been removed by later readers, suggests that these marks were not intended to be temporary ephemera for deletion either. Rather, though largely neither textually "useful" nor necessarily reusable, crosses seem to have been an accepted, and expected, feature of the manuscript page. However, though pre-existing marks are preserved, their repetition by another reader in their own hand seems to have been of greater value. Hence, single codices are marked with the marginal crosses of multiple users. A single folio of a collection of poetic and rhetorical texts, for instance, features at least five sets of marks including diagonal, brown ink crosses; faint soft point crosses partially scratched into the surface; a dark ink eye-shaped symbol; extended zetoid brackets; and two elaborate scribal *nota bene* marks, one red and the other brown.[31] In fact, the wide variety of crosses and related marginal signs scattered throughout the manuscript point

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[28] Some Victorian restorers would disbind manuscripts and use a hand press to straighten out the crinkled pages, pushing out any scratches in an attempt to reconstruct the unused folio: Roger Stoddard, 'Looking at Marks in Books', *A Library Keeper's Business*, ed. Carol Z. Rothkopf (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll, 2002), 167-9 [163-82]; Stoddard, *Marks in Books*, 2. However, BodL, MS Fairfax 27, f. 84v shows the difficulty of removing scratched-in marks. Here, a user has attempted to remove several circular diagrams, and though most of the ink has been successfully scraped away, the neat compass drawn circles remain etched into the surface of the page.

[29] For discussion of the page 'in three dimensions', which may be 'punched into', see Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 129.

[30] BodL, MS Bodley 730.

[31] BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 44r.

towards six or seven separate mark makers. Often these marks line up one behind the other in the margin, ostensibly marking the same place on the page.[32] Clearly, for these readers, then, what was significant to their reading practice was the process of producing the sign as much as its visual presence.

In this case, perhaps the production of crosses should be formulated in terms of their participation in practices of 'affective reading', defined by Mark Amsler as, 'emotional, somatic, activity-based relationships with texts.'[33] It may have more akin to visceral interactions with the page such as touching, kissing, or stroking, than it does with verbal annotation.[34] The embodied physicality of this reading practice aided apprehension, created an emotional bond with the content, and led to sensory memorisation.[35] In fact, we might figure physically engaged reading in the same way Robertson considers prayer: as 'an extension of the body.'[36] In affective reading the book must be physically *used* in order to be properly read. In addition, the reader's physical engagement with the material of the text may function to increase the efficacy of its content. For scribes, writing was a devotional act, and the work of copying text had spiritual efficacy.[37] Physically engaged reading, especially reading that

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[32] See, for instance, the top line of f. 44r, where a zetoid mark is followed immediately by a much darker eye-shaped sign; or the soft point and small ink crosses which appear next to both of the red ink *nota* marks.

[33] Mark Amsler, 'Affective Literacy: Gestures of Reading in the Later Middle Ages', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18 (2001), 83 [83-109].

[34] Helen Solterer, 'Seeing, Hearing, Tasting Woman: Medieval Sense of Reading', *Comparative Literature*, 46 (1994), 130-1 [129-45]; Robertson, '"This Living Hand"', 31-2.

[35] Amsler, 'Affective Literacy', 91.

[36] Elizabeth Robertson, 'Savoring "Scientia": the Medieval Anchoress Reads *Ancrene Wisse*', *A Companion to* Ancrene Wisse, ed. Yoko Wada (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 130 [113-44].

[37] Catherine Brown, 'Remember the Hand: Bodies and Bookmaking in Early Medieval Spain', *Word & Image*, 27:3 (2011), 262, 265-6 [262-78] in particular theorises this relationship in terms of the intellectual engagement of the body.

involved mark-making, might be similarly conceived. By demonstrating their participation in the text, and historicising the act of reading through the production of marginal marks, readers add to the spiritual power of its content: the mark-making effectively registers the devotional act.

If crosses did make up part of an 'affective reading' practice then their form may be of particular significance in identifying exactly what that marking practice entailed. *Ancrene Wisse* describes in some detail how its readers should mark their prayers by performing the sign of the cross:[38]

> *Christus vincit* ✢, *Christus regnat* ✢, *Christus imperat* ✢, wið þreo creoiz wið þe þume upo þe forheaued, ant þenne, *Ecce Crucem Domini, fugite, partes aduerse; vicit leo de tribu Iuda, radix Dauið, Alleluia.* A large creoiz, as ed *Deus, in adiutorium,* wið *Ecce Crucem Domini,* ant tenne fowr creoiz o fowr half wið þeose fowre efterwarde clauses
>
> [*Christ conquers* ✢, *Christ reigns* ✢, *Christ rules* ✢, with three crosses with the thumb on the forehead, and then: *See the cross of the Lord! Flee, evil parties! The Lion of the Tribe of Juda, root of David, has conquered! Hallelujah!* A large cross, as: *Deus, in adiutorium* (the versicle said before each Hour)[39], with, *See the cross of the Lord!* and then four crosses on the forehead with the four following clauses.][40]

It may be, as Elizabeth Robertson suggests, that marginal crosses—particularly beside devotional works like this—also acted as prompts to perform these gestures when reading.[41] However, especially in less didactic theological works it seems unlikely that the reader physically performed the sign of the cross at every instance that such marks appear.

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[38] Robertson, 'Savoring "Scientia"', 130; Amsler, 'Affective Literacy', 90. Indeed the anchoresses addressed by the *Ancrene Wisse* are directed to many affective behaviours, including physical movements and bodily gestures of many types, by their reading: see Amsler, 'Affective Literacy', 88-92.

[39] Hughes, *Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, 53.

[40] Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, 18, ll. 419-23.

[41] Robertson, 'Savoring "Scientia"', 130.

Rather, crosses might present an alternative or additional means of fulfilling gestural interactions: a means of inscribing, prompting, and historicising an embodied reaction. This gesture need not necessarily be devotional in nature. Dictionaries record the words *cross* in English, and *croizer* in French, as a sign used to mark up books from at least 1400.[42] Meanwhile, crosses are found in manuscripts as a mode of ratifying documents long before the eleventh century. The cross that appears next to the name of each testator in Anglo-Saxon writs or charters is known as a *hondseten*, as in the phrase, 'Her is seo hondseten [Here is the *hondseten*.]'[43] The named testator would literally set his hand upon this mark in a pledge of fealty. In these situations such cross acts as an endorsement of the charter's power, a testament to the truth of the text. In fact, the inscription of these crosses is likely to have been accompanied by a set of further movements, including setting ones hand to the mark, and also performing the sign of the cross upon the body.[44] The legal contract enshrined in the charter was therefore sanctified before God through the gestural routines that accompanied the mark of the cross. Crosses found inscribed on the walls of churches by the *Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey* might similarly mark the occasion and location of ceremonies in which contracts were drawn up and oaths were sworn.[45] Thus, in the *Life of Christina of Markyate*, when Christina first visits St Albans as a child, and expresses her intention to join the religious life, 'illa signum cruces uno unguium suorum scripsit in porta scilicet quod in illo specialiter monasterio suum recondidisset affectum [she wrote a sign of the cross on the door with one of her fingernails to

[42] *MED*, 'cros (n.)', sense 3; *AND*, 'croizer (v.a.)', sense 5.

[43] This and similar formulae can be found in numerous charters, a simple search of the *DOE*, *Corpus* yields thirteen examples.

[44] Mark Atherton, personal conversation (11 February 2015)

[45] Matthew Champion, *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England's Churches* (London: Penguin, 2015), 68-9.

show that in this particular monastery she had placed her affection.]'[46] For Christina this moment is as good as a contractual obligation, presenting the start of her devotion to the Lord and prefiguring the official religious vow she will take later in life. Crosses, then, were often made to bear witness to these binding occasions. The cross and the range of devotional gestures it may prompt, or stand in for, act as visual symbols of assent to the bond that has been created, legitimising it and thereby consolidating its power.

By enshrining physical gestures on the page marginal crosses reveal the embodied labour involved in thirteenth-century vernacular reading practices. Despite Amsler's assertion that pen and ink marking cannot be equated to an 'affective gesture', which requires a deeper level of somatic engagement, it could be argued that the very process of visually marking these moments of action increased the *e*ffectiveness of the gestures.[47] Like the Anglo-Saxon *hondseten*, the marginal cross testifies to a performance, and in doing so both corroborates that it was done—intensifying it as it does so by elaborating upon it, making the performance longer through the additional movement needed to create the mark—and thereby adds to its efficacy by giving it a concrete form upon the page. Meanwhile, in less devotional settings cross creation provided a formulaic gesture by which the creator of the cross may break from the textual form in order to acknowledge gestural expression, putting aside his reading to allow time for his intellectual response and a physical reaction. It signals a moment of increased interaction with the text and the page, be that negative or positive, functional or purely symbolic. It is, therefore, intellectual stimulation expressed as bodily reaction. Reading then, as

[46] C. H. Talbot, ed., *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 38.

[47] Amsler, 'Affective Literacy', 96.

an intellectual pursuit, often entailed the physical bodily participation of the reader: an act of 'embodied intellectual labour.'[48]

☞ *'Taking the Text in Hand'*[49]

While crosses may represent the physical deployment of embodied reading, it is manicules—the small, usually-bodiless hand, index finger raised and pointing—that visualise the body on the page.[50] While the cross is distanced from the text by its marginal position, the raised finger of the manicule generally points inward towards the textblock, captured in the act of touching the words on the page. So the parallels between cross and hand break down. The producers of manicules seem to express a desire to interact with the text: to worry at its borders, pinpointing specific features of the written space. The impression of specificity is heightened by the idiosyncrasies of the sign's form. Manicules produced by different readers were distinctive, and were often embellished with patterns, arms, sleeves, and sometimes even bodies, making them identifiable with individual users and their personal reading practices. The apparent individuality of the sign is only intensified on occasions when it can be associated with a

[48] Brown, 'Manuscript is the New Digital'.

[49] Sherman, *Used Books*, 41.

[50] Manicules have also been known by other names, including hand, pointer, digit, fist, mutton fist, bishop's fist, index, indicator, and indicule, some of which are simply descriptions of their form, while others have longer pedigrees in the history of print and typography (Sherman, *Used Books*, 33). Here I follow William Sherman in favouring the term 'manicule', which has been used in palaeographical scholarship for some time and is adopted by most recent scholarship: Helen Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', *Transporting Chaucer* (Manchester UP, 2014), 82-139; Kerby-Fulton and Despres, ed., *Iconography and the Professional Reader*, 102, 145; and increasingly in popular histories of the subject, such as, Keith Houston, *Shady Characters: Ampersands, Interrobangs and other Typographical Curiosities* (London: Penguin, 2015), 167-86.

named reader, such as John Dee, as some early modern examples can.[51] The idiosyncratic, anthropomorphic, and sometimes personalised, form of these signs then, seems to promise an insight into the particular reading habits of individual readers.

It may be the romantic appeal of being able to trace the reading habits of a single individual, who appears to express his personality through his marginal marks, that has drawn more scholarly attention to manicules than to the other non-verbal marks that surround them—though even this is limited to a few key discussions.[52] However, as most discussion has been of early modern examples, manicules remain largely unexplored before their use in the fifteenth century. There are repeated assertions that the earliest example is found in *Great Domesday*, though this suggestion seems to stem from one nineteenth-century commentator, and I have not been able to locate the manicule referred to.[53] Though commentators assert that the use of manicules rapidly increased from c. 1200 most iterations from this period seem to be one-off productions, perhaps made by readers or scribes who felt—for whatever reason—that the information they were marking needed to be signaled with something special.[54] In fact, while most twelfth- and thirteenth-century multilingual books contain at least one manicule, very few have more than two or three, especially in the case of the larger, more elaborate or decorative versions of the sign that attract most scholarly interest. Thus, of the thirty-three

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[51] Sherman, *Used Books*, 31.

[52] See Sherman, *Used Books*, 25-52; Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', 82-139; Jackson, *Marginalia,* 14; Nicola Masciandaro, 'The Severed Hand: Commentary and Ecstasy', *English Language Notes*, 50:2 (2012), 95 [89-98]; Lucy Freeman Sandler, 'Scribe, Corrector, Reader: The Marginal Drawings of the Morgan Library *Lumere as lais* and their Maker', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 17 (2012), 111 [107-39]; and Stoddard, *Marks in Books*, 1. In fact, many of the historical timelines for the development of the manicule sign are provided by scholars of modern typography: Charles Hasler, 'A Show of Hands', *Typographica*, 8 (1953), 4-11; Houston, 'The Manicule', *Shady Characters*, 167-86.

[53] Sherman, *Used Books*, 29, and Houston, *Shady Characters*, 172, direct us back to John Johnson, *Typographia*, v. 2 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1824), 257.

[54] Sherman, *Used Books*, 40; Houston, 172-3.

manuscripts that make up the main corpus of this study, eighteen contain manicules (55%), and of these most contain only a single iteration, or several iterations all made by different users.[55] The one-off nature of such marks, then, may imply that rather than subscribing to an established convention of use, they are imposed according to more varied protocols, and mark particularly personal aspects of the text.

The ability of manicules to reveal particularly personal reading patterns might also be

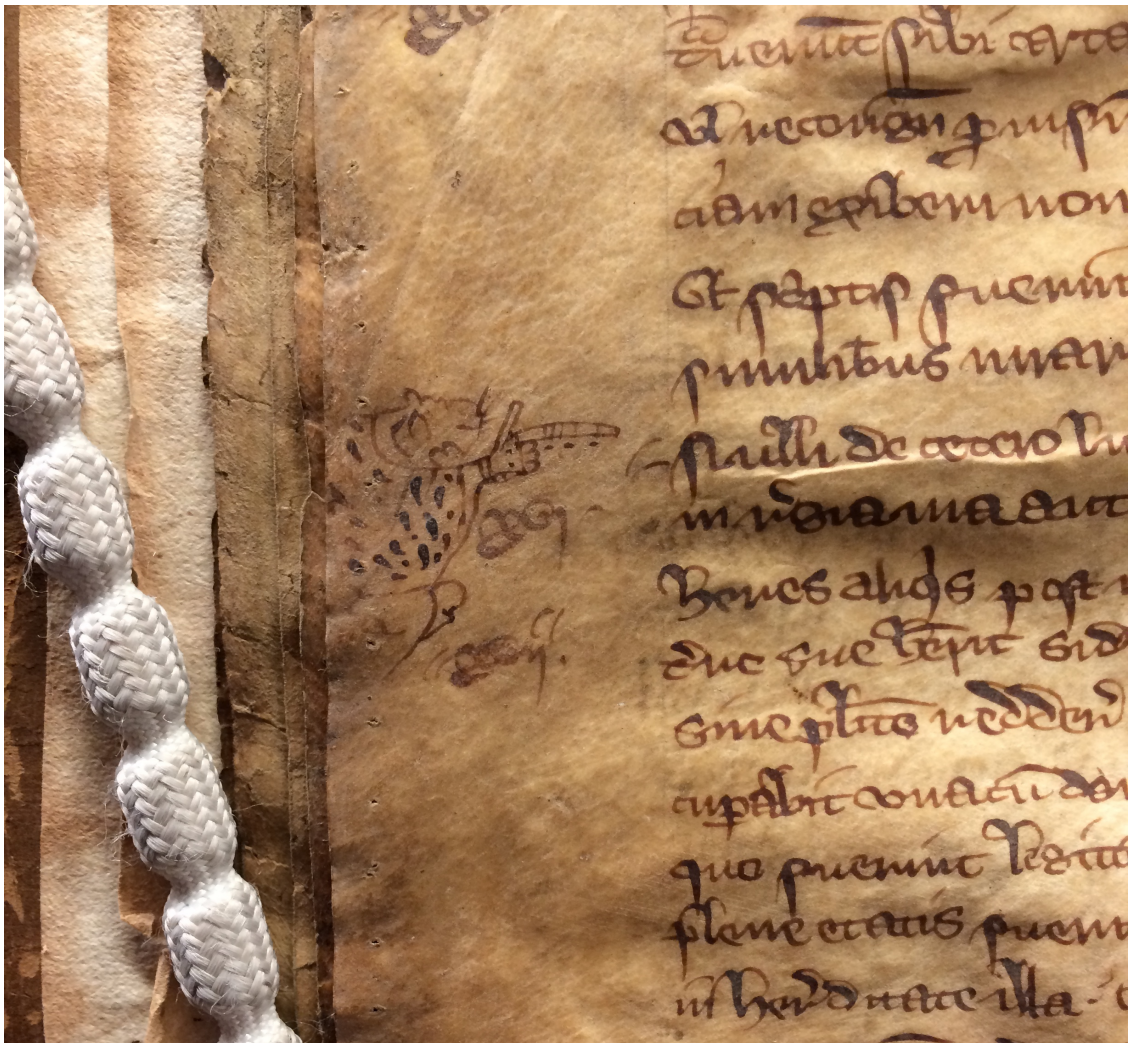


Fig. 4: BodL, MS Hatton 28, f. 9v, manicule attached to a feathered body, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

[55] Those containing paraphs are: GCC, MS 512/543; Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 258; SJC, MS E.8; TCC, MS B.14.39; CUL, MS Ff.vi.15; CUL, MS Gg.i.1; BL, MS Additional 11579; BL, MS Arundel 292; BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. ix; BL, MS Cotton Claudius D. iii; BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii; BL, MS Sloane 146; LPL, MS 499; Maidstone Museum, MS A.13; BodL, MS Bodley 652; BodL, MS Digby 2; BodL, MS Digby 86; BodL, MS Laud Misc. 471; BodL, MS Laud Misc. 636.

suggested by the idiosyncratic, potentially individualised, design of some of these marks. In a copy of the *Statutes of England* dating to the turn of the fourteenth-century, for instance, a snaking arm reaches in from the outer edge of the page, its length embellished with patterns.[56] The pointing finger is open at the end, framing the final letter of the line. The manicule was drawn swiftly and the lines often do not join up completely, creating a *laissez-faire* aspect; yet the addition of patterns and flourishes indicates that the reader had aesthetic considerations too. Indeed, it might be stranger for a user to choose such a figural mark—chosen surely, in part, for its anthropomorphism—and then not give its design such consideration. The other three manicules that adorn this text present different takes on the same theme: all feature current lines, a snaking arm, a long pointing finger, and a range of decorative flourishes. However, they all have significant visual differences, such as stylised sleeves, or—in one case—a body (Fig. 4).[57] The visual distinction between the marks, even across the repertoire of a single reader, may suggest that manicules represent a device that, in the thirteenth century, was always idiosyncratic, never reaching a conventional form. Instead users reinvented the sign each time it was produced. Perhaps, manicules did not hold enough of a widespread appeal to reach a conventional standardised form? Instead, it seems they were held in reserve by their users to be employed only for very particular engagements with the text.[58]

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[56] BodL, MS Hatton 28, f. 32r. *SumCat*, v. 2, 823 dates this text to the early fourteenth century, however I suggest the dating of the booklet be pushed back marginally to the end of the thirteenth century due to a few key features: namely, the weight of the 45 degree strokes; the exuberance of the umbrella bifurcations on the ascenders of **l**, and **h**; the open hook of the **a**, which rarely joins to form the two compartment **a** of later Anglicana hands; and the open formation of round **s**, which has not yet morphed into a teardrop shape.

[57] BodL, MS Hatton 28, ff. 3r, 9v, 32r, 33r.

[58] In fact, Houston, *Shady Characters*, 177 speculates that perhaps the specialist status of manicules presents one reason the mark developed no single, commonly recognised, name.

The singular nature of some manicules, however, may also be related to their use. By allowing readers to create unique designs manicules represent better personal *aide memoires* than crosses or other repeatable, ubiquitous marks. Manicules could 'make the page distinct and memorable', which is necessary, Mary Carruthers states, to forming a visual memory of its contents.[59] A single manicule with rubricated decoration and a spot and stripe patterned sleeve in the outer margin of the copy of Honorius of Autun discussed above certainly distinguishes the page from those surrounding it.[60] In this case, the use of rubrication to highlight certain decorative features of the manicule, and the fact the sign underneath appears to be drawn in the same ink as the text, suggest it was part of the design of this page. Arguably, its position picks out the salient message of the *Elucidarium*:

> de eus est escrit q*ue* il descendent en enfern tut [a] estaent
> [of them it is written that they all will go down into hell.][61]

Here the poem explains who will be saved, and who damned. This manicule focuses readers' attention in on this key line by using the visual significance of the coloured decoration first to draw the eye to the margin and from there to direct it back in to the text block. By designing this manicule, and thereby this page, in a way that individualises it in the reader's memory its producer has memorialised the key theme of the work for his reader. The manicule, here, points inward towards the text in order that the reader can draw information out of it. The scribe has used the design of the manicule to create a 'distinctive page' that aids the mnemonic abilities of the reader. Yet it is not only the mind of a later reader that would be stimulated by seeing the manicule; the mind of the (scribal) reader who drew it would be stimulated by its

[59] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 323.

[60] BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 30v.

[61] BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 30v.

creation also. Making a manicule took thought, consideration, and attention to detail. The fluent execution of its lines suggests that it also took practice. At some point its creator had to pause in order to change ink colour and add embellishments to the sleeve. As well as distinguishing the page for future reading, therefore, the elaborate design of this manicule turns the initial reading, and act of creation, into an act of memorisation: the act of producing the manicule itself distinguished the page for its maker.

Hands have long been the tools of teaching, learning, and memorisation. Metaphorically when we remember something well we might "know it like the back of our hand", while if we forget we could make something up "off the cuff."[62] Since classical times orators have been advised on the use of hand gestures to articulate their message, while images depict the act of speaking through the gesture of a raised hand.[63] Hand movements can act as an aid to explanation, both by helping the speaker to select the words she needs within her head before she speaks, and by providing the listener with visual directions that supplement the verbal content.[64] The form of the hand has also been employed as an aid to understanding, due to the fact that most people have hands they can refer to, and that the shape divides easily in a number of ways, providing different subsections on which information can be imposed: Aristotle declared, the hand is the 'instrument of instruments.'[65] The functionality of the hand as a tool of memory and cognition is reflected by the ways hands

[62] Indeed, Sherman, *Used Books*, 41 refers to how the manicule may 'take the text in hand', indicating too the linguistic aptness of the hand as a marker to navigate the use of books in particular.

[63] See Sherman, *Used Books*, 50; Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', 85.

[64] See, for example, Frances H. Rauscher, Robert M. Krauss and Yihsiu Chen, 'Gesture, Speech, and Lexical Access: The Role of Lexical Movement in Speech Production', *Psychological Science*, 7:4 (1996), 226-31.

[65] Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter from the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford UP, 1990), 86.

are used in medieval literature and material culture. In Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*, for instance, the devil's fingers stand in for the five species of gluttony on one hand, and lechery on the other.[66] In *Piers Plowman* the relation of fingers, palm, and fist explain the relationship of the holy trinity.[67] As Helen Barr demonstrates, many other later medieval works used hands in similarly illustrative ways.[68] This diagrammatic mode of thinking about hands is likely to have been familiar to medieval readers. Diagrams of hands were regularly used to convey information, presupposing the mnemonic strategies that might be employed by readers to remember it. Thus, in one compendium a hand with its palm raised is drawn at the bottom of a treatise attributed to Alexandro de Villa Dei.[69] Here the thumb is split into sections at the knuckles, and parts of the text, labelled i, ix, and xix, assigned to each section. Hands, then, which are used as memorial devices in other contexts, may be the natural symbol for readers to adopt when marking up their texts, independent of the need for an established convention.[70]

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[66] 'The Parson's Tale', *Riverside Chaucer*, 317-8, ll. 828-62.

[67] William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, ed. A. V. C. Schmidt, second edition (London: Dent, 2011), 296, ll. 138-160. See Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', 90.

[68] Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', 84-98.

[69] BodL, MS Ashmole 1285, f. 96v. In another miscellany numbers are assigned to each digit of a sleeved hand with a beaded cuff (BodL, MS Digby 2, f. 98r). Other hand-diagrams are found in BodL, MS Canon. Liturg. 216, f. 168v; BL, MS Harley 273, f. 111r; and New Haven, Yale Univerversity, Beinecke Library, MS Marston 30, ff. 45v-46r.

[70] For more on the manifold—and often contradictory—associations of the hand in relation to many spheres of learning and experience, primarily in the Early Modern period, see: Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, 85-86; Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', 82-89; Sherman, *Used Books*, 47-50; and Claire Richter Sherman ed., *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2000).

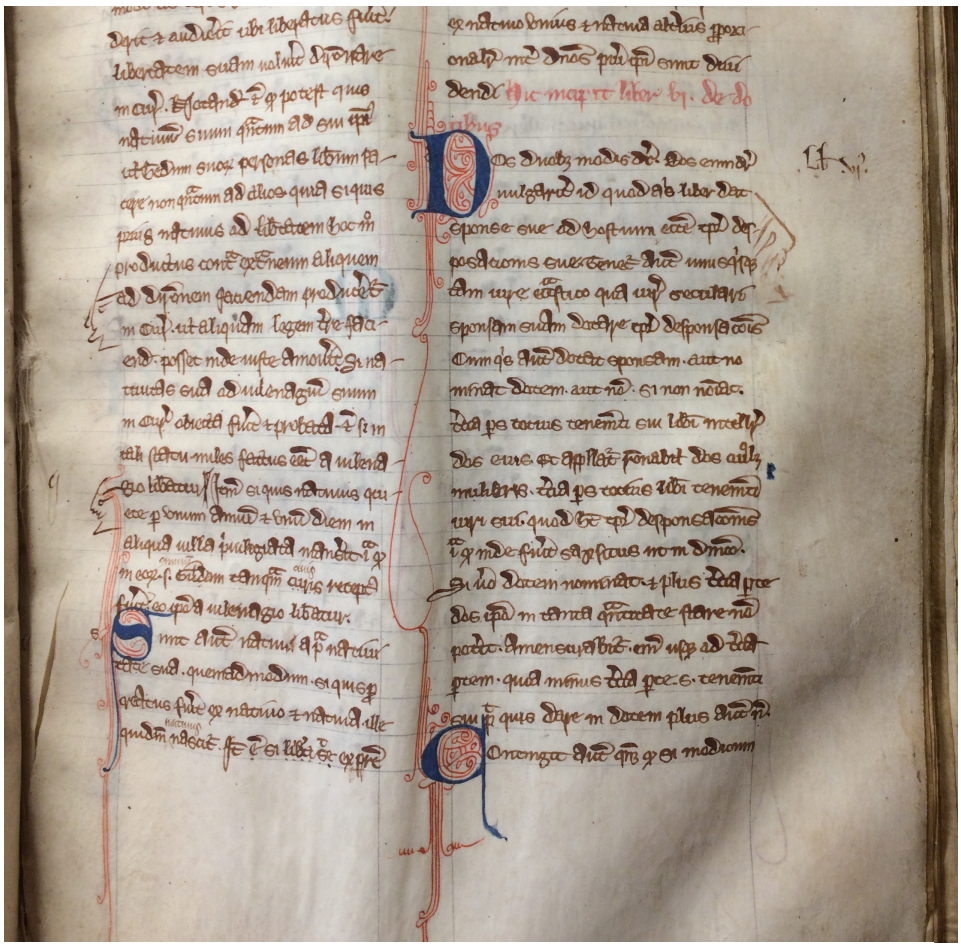


Fig. 5: BodL, MS Douce 137, f. 60r, three face-shaped brackets, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

However, manicules are not the only thinkable option for readers seeking anthropomorphic intervention into the text: other signs were available. In the inner margin of a folio also in the copy of the *Elucidarium* discussed above, for instance, three lines of text are bracketed by a stylised face.[71] The reader of a copy of a legal collection uses similar profiles of faces as a means of bracketing varying numbers of lines.[72] In fact, the faces in the margins of these Anglo-Saxon law codes become standardised through frequent use, so that by the end of the text they are recognisable as profiles only through reference to earlier examples. Here, then, heads have been normalised into the reader's schema for marking up the text (Fig. 5). In fact,

[71] BodL, MS Bodley 652, f. 24r.

[72] BodL, MS Douce 137, f. 60r.

profiles might be considered better suited to bracketing chunks of text than manicules are; with their open edge they are adjustable, meaning that can be reshaped and characterised in order to mark up a variable number of lines. Arguably, the head might also present a more obvious choice of mnemonic trigger than the hand. Carruthers, for instance, observes its suitability as an image to attach to text, the head being the 'seat of memory.' In addition, heads might be better suited to personalisation. There are a range of differentiating features – hair, headdress, expression, the size and shape of facial features—the producer may work with to create a singular mark.[73]

Nevertheless, although these alternatives are occasionally found, manicules are more common. In fact, although they could not be considered commonplace within any one of the books considered in this thesis, their repeated and consistent use across a range of manuscripts indicates that they were widely known, if not widespread. Despite the singularity of individual iterations, then, there was a standard of sorts, and the readers who produced them were operating under some degree of shared understanding. The conventionalisation of the sign is most apparent when plainer examples are considered. In fact, the examples given above are anomalously decorative. Many of the manicules found in this corpus are relatively plain and more easily replicable. In fact, many are so small and pale in colour that they are relatively hard to spot.[74] Two sets of manicules appear in a series of late thirteenth-century moral and theological treatises, for instance. Both are distributed evenly across consecutive pages. The first are found in twos and threes throughout the story of Adam and Eve, and the start of the

[73] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 324.

[74] The examples in BodL, MS Ashmole 1285, ff. 116r, 208v, for instance, are rendered in a soft, red-brown crayon. They are narrow and unobtrusive, sitting in the outer edge of the margin, and no more than a few lines tall. Thus, though a mark can be detected, it registers as barely more than a smudge without greater investigation.

Gospel of Nicodemus. These manicules are armless, although they sometimes receive a sleeve, and are usually drawn with a single line, the tail of which extends from the tip of the pointing finger to touch the text. In some the stroke has been performed so rapidly that the sign is almost too small and ill formed to see. A particularly minute, two-fingered specimen located halfway down one page, for example, is only identifiable through comparison with others.[75] The second group of manicules are similar but more densely packed. These feature a separate sleeve that, in its hasty production, tends to have a roughly circular appearance.[76] Such marks enliven the page but they do not make it stand out, if anything, they appear intentionally discrete. Their brevity and simplicity suggests familiarity: to these readers the manicule was not just an available option, but made up a consistent part of their system of textual mark-up.[77]

However, though the consistent and dense use of manicules may suggest readers with an established protocol for annotating the page, these sets of manicules do not appear in conjunction with other personally recognisable marks or written commentary. As such, rather than making the page unique in appearance these manicules are facets of its homogeneity. They might be part of a standardised system where text was marked up according to a particular set of conventions, be those related to textual features, or aesthetic choices. One explanation for this regularised appearance is that in some cases manicules were the work of one of the so-called 'professional readers' identified by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo, 'someone whose job description […] allows him to filter the text for presentation to the

[75] BodL, MS Selden Supra 74, ff. 16v-8v.

[76] BodL, MS Selden Supra 74, ff. 103r-4r.

[77] The user of MS Rawlinson G. 96 is the most consistent and prolific manicule users found in these manuscripts, with around 152 separate iterations littering the margins of this single text.

patron or reading community.'[78] Either way, these series of manicules constitute significant examples of a reading community with a shared system of textual mark-up. The possibility of such signs being produced within a community of people who shared conventions for them calls into question the physicality of the relationship between the user and the book. In such cases, the text is being mediated—*manipulated*—by a third influence: social convention, outside of both the scribe's and the reader's control.

The manicule, then, not only provides a unique means of incorporating the user's body into the book as crosses do, it transforms the book into a shared social space, producing contact between bodies. In constructing a manicule its anthropomorphic form may supplement the physical presence of the reader, allowing them to figuratively touch, push, and tease at the boundaries of the text. Manicules allow readers to be part of their own books, crossing the border between the marginal and the textual: commenting, twisting, and subverting. Manicules demonstrate that engaging with the book was a tactile experience where mental and physical interactions met on the page; the book was something to be touched. However, the manicule does not just reveal a reading space populated by bodies, it demonstrates that this space was shared: a social space subject to conventions—of appearance, expectation, and interaction. It illustrates the understanding of the book not as a personal possession but as a perpetual entity that will outlast the individual and be passed on to others.

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[78] Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 'Introduction: The Medieval Professional Reader and Reception History, 1292-1641', *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe, and Gower*, ed. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (Victoria, BC: English Literary Studies, 2001), 8 [7-13].

An uncommon hybrid between a pictorial manicule and a verbal annotation is found in the inner margin of a thirteenth century copy of Ovid's *Heroides*: a single long finger points to the text, the rest of the hand reduced to a notched oval with a triangular cuff, but from the tip of the index finger hangs the abbreviated word 'No*t*a.'[79] The letters are neatly constructed, with the initial up stroke of the **N** merged into the hand above it. This combination of manicule and *nota* mark represents a considered design: an unrepeated hybrid, performing a dual function from its place in the margin.[80] In this case the reader decided that the manicule's presence was not enough, he sought to give his metonymic hand a voice.

The word 'n*ota*' appears to have a straightforward meaning, a brief verbal annotation that can be categorised alongside one-word citations and glosses. It is, as has often been noted, the singular, imperative form of the verb *notare* (to note), a command for the reader's attention.[81] Giving the mark its full designation—*nota bene*—reinforces this message: 'note well' it instructs, read carefully and pay attention.[82] These directives from the margins, then, seem to act as a reminder, or a call for later readers, to take extra care. In which case they are also value judgments, signaling that this text is worthy of being read and responded to. That judgment is

[79] BodL, MS Rawlinson G. 99, f. 40r

[80] Evina Steinova, '*Psalmos, Notas, Cantus*: On the Meanings of *Nota* in the Carolingian Period', *Speculum*, 90:2 (2015), 437 [424-56], charts the use of the word *nota* to identify many modes of annotation, from the use of 'critical signs and other similar symbols, to Tyronian notes, and to abbreviation signs.' However, I will treat these other marginal forms with greater specificity and use the term *nota* only to refer to the word '*nota*' itself, along with all abbreviated forms of that word or of the phrase '*nota bene*', and, as this section will go on to discuss, more symbolic iterations of these words.

[81] Wakelin, *Humanism*, 17; Carruthers, *Book of Memory,* 136.

[82] Although Collier, *Tremulous Worcester Scribe,* 12, notes that the first use of the term *nota bene*, listed in the *OED* in this sense, is not documented until 1721, so that alternative readings may be more relevant to the medieval period, that definition refers only to the term as adopted unequivocally into English, rather than the Latin use of the phrase. In the period in question, such marginal annotations remain predominantly in Latin, and thus, *nota bene* seems a fair reading in most cases.

clear in another recorded sense of 'nota': according to Wendy Collier, for example, the Tremulous Hand used the word *nota* as a shortening for the phrase *nota bona*, a good point.[83] His additions therefore act as a marginal commentary upon the text, rather than, or as well as, instructions to its later readers. Superficially the sense remains the same—this point is worth noting—and it seems likely that these notes would similarly adorn passages that were considered particularly important, or interesting.[84] In many instances, however, even this level of value judgment is hard to establish. Within the high medieval multilingual corpus, the word *bene* (or *bona*) is rarely—if ever—employed.[85] Rather, margins are dotted with a single, impassive '*nota*', or a variety of abbreviated versions of this word. Such short, un-affecting responses might be considered 'terse', although they could also be thought of as functional.[86] In these cases the *nota* mark is not intended to comment on the substance of the text; instead, it is a verbal flag, simply registering or drawing attention: 'note.'

Nota marks are used to pick out information that is interesting or salient, not necessarily content that is considered *good*.[87] As such, they might be considered more as functional flags than as responsive commentary: they show which aspects of the text were of interest, but not *why* they were of interest (because they were logically sound, ethically

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[83] Collier, *Tremulous Worcester Scribe*, 12.

[84] See Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 80 for an impression of how nota marks may be used to determine the interests of the Tremulous Hand.

[85] Whereas, the command 'no*t*a bene' is common in the margins of the fifteenth century booklet that makes up Part I of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 (ff. 1r-143v).

[86] See comments by Nicole Eddy, *Marginal Annotation in Medieval Romance Manuscripts: Understanding the Contemporary Reception of the Genre* (PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 2012), 109.

[87] This may not be the case in later, or continental, material: Sylvia Huot, 'Drama and Exemplarity in the Narrative Text: Reader Responses to a Passage in the *Roman de la Rose*', "Aufführung" *und* "Schrift" *in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Jan-Dirk Müller (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), 504 [494-507], observes *nota* marks in 'most' of the extant manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose*, which follow different patterns of interest, but often highlight anti-feminist verses.

laudible, or particularly well-written, for example.) For instance, the only *nota* mark found among the contents of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, feature on a single page of one of the few non-fiction items, *Le Doctrinal Sauvage*.[88] The first of these *nota* marks—the full word with a flourished box majuscule **N**—is found in the outer margin, alongside the first line of a four-line stanza:

> De tuz les gyus vileyne. a nieuz uus gardez.
> Si ke par mau talent. a nul lyu ne juwez.
> E a gabs. e a decertes. si bel uus meyntenez.
> Ke par dreyt ne seez. hay ne blamez.
>
> [Of all the villainous games guard yourself from annoyance,
> That in anger at none of them you play.
> And in jest, and for certain, if you maintain virtue,
> That in truth you know not hatred, nor reproach.][89]

The second instance, an abbreviated form of the sign made up of a bifurcated box **N** in the same hand, followed by the <ta> suspension, is located below it, next to the first line of the following stanza:

> De uaunt la gent estraunge. ne deuez pas tencer.
> Ne a uostre meyue. ne a uostre muyller.
> Si il funt .v. dient chose. ke uus deyue enuer.
> Sagement les deuez. a cunsayl chastyer.
> E de uostre parole. durement esmayer.
> Si il uus ayment e creyent. ceo les fra targer.
>
> [Before strangers you must not scold,
> Neither your household, nor your wife;
> If they do or say things that make you angry.
> Wisely you must punish them in private
> And express great dismay with your word,
> If they love and respect you this will halt them.][90]

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[88] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 204r; *ANL*, 244.

[89] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 204r; Aimo Sakari, ed., *Doctrinal Sauvage* (Jyväskyä: Jyväskylän Yliopisto, 1967), 97, ll. 20-3. In this case, the orthographic and textual variants in this manuscript sometimes diverge considerably from those of the edition. I have retained those found in the manuscript and provided the edition simply for reference.

The content of these marked stanzas is notably pragmatic. It appears that the producer of these *nota* marks was interested in passages related to household management, one element of its moralising on courtly matters. These passages represent some of the more practical, and less aspirational, topics covered by the text. Such considerations seem to aptly reflect the *nota* mark's similarly practical purpose. The passages are not *good* in abstract critical terms; rather they hold good *advice* for future reference, which the *nota* marks would allow the reader to locate rapidly on future returns to the text.[91]

In actuality, it is fairly unusual to find even the word 'nota' written out in full in this period.[92] More commonly the verbal command is abbreviated, so that it is more like an abstract sign than a word. There was no standardised form for this *nota* mark; many variations were in use, including, but not limited to, majuscule and minuscule forms of **n** either alone or with a tilde, suspension mark, or <ta> abbreviation.[93] The construction of this mark seems to have been subject to the same flexibility of form and application as paraph marks (discussed in the previous chapter), crosses, or manicules.[94] Thus, the annotator of one sermon collection uses a number of differently formed *nota* marks. Some are simply a single minuscule **n** with a **u**

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[90] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 204r; Sakari, ed., *Doctrinal*, 97-8, ll. 24-9.

[91] For more on the ambivalence of *nota* marks see Barr, 'Chaucer's Hands', 110.

[92] For a rare example see the inner margin of BodL, MS Douce 139, f. 49r.

[93] Neither the *nota* mark in any of its variant forms, nor the relevant "ta" suspension, are to be found in Lindsay, *Notae Latinae*, the overarching survey of Latin abbreviations for the period c.700-850. This could suggest that the abbreviation was not used before the ninth century. However, it is also omitted from the list of key suspensions and contractions provided by Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*. Rather, suprascript **a** was a standard suspension of the final syllable 'ta', and the other variation a matter of the personal choice on the part of the user. For this suspension see Lindsay, *Notae Latinae*, 495-496; Derolez, *Paleography of Gothic Manuscript Books*, 97; Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, xxii-xxxv.

[94] See, Chapter 3, 149-53.

shaped suprascript suspension,[95] while others are written out in full, and still more take the form of a majuscule box **N,** sometimes partially or entirely rubricated.[96] The consistent variation in form, alongside the regular use of abbreviated forms draws the focus away from the word itself, using the *nota* mark instead as a visual sign. The oscillation between forms suggests that the design of the mark was flexible, allowing for a variety of scribal habits, the use of different scripts as models, or more aesthetic considerations, and showing that different styles were considered appropriate for different moments. In fact, some *nota* marks are decidedly more pictorial than they are verbal. Thus, in the outer margin of a copy of a letter from Bishop Cesar to his monks is a double-barred majuscule **N** that takes up almost the entire width of the margin (Fig. 6).[97] It has wedges and bifurcations at the tops of the ascenders, as well as hairline tails on the ends of the descenders, while a decorative circle breaks the middle of the bar. The <ta> suspension associated with the letter is not found in

[95] The **u** shaped suspension may relate to one of several forms of abbreviation. Although the suprascript letter **a** is usually found closed, the Lombardic or Merovingian open *a* resembling *u* or *cc*…[is] occasionally found in the 13th century' despite being 'rare after 1200.' However, it is possible that this suspension represents the scribe's interpretation of a macron, which sometimes also takes a cup- or **u**-shaped form, and could be used to represent the syllable <us>. If so, this abbreviated 'no' might stand not for 'nota' but for 'notus' (known, recognized, or understood), an expression of agreement or assent—of acknowledgement and corroboration—rather than an instruction: Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, 3-4; *Notae Latinae*, 391.

[96] The form of the majuscule **N** used in *nota* marks provides fair evidence for the dating of these marks. The boxed—or barred—capital was predominantly in use from the twelfth to the thirteenth century, declining after this. Meanwhile, the increasingly elaborate bifurcated ascenders are suggestive of the latter end of this period, probably the last quarter of the thirteenth century: see Johnson and Jenkinson *English Court Hand*, 33.

[97] BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 80v.

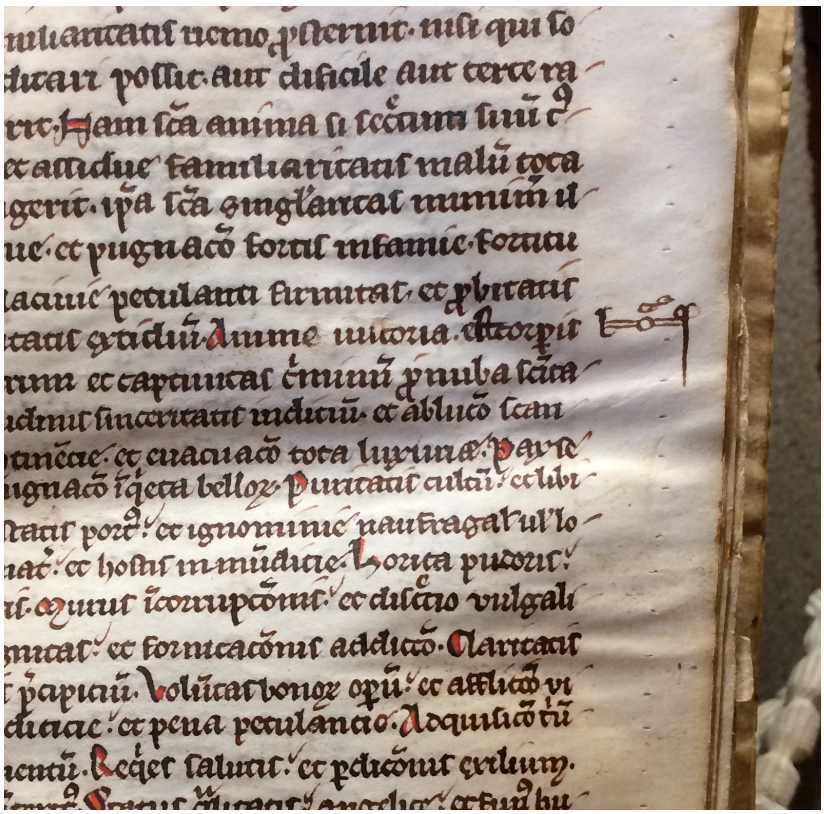


Fig. 6: BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 81r, nota design, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

the usual position to its right, but sits directly above the crossbar, between the ascenders. Here, then, the form of the mark has been prioritised over its legible sense as a word. The constituent parts have been superimposed on top of each other, preventing it from being read left to right in the standard way. Rather, the mark takes on the qualities of a monogram with a relationship to reading practice closer to that of the graphic signs discussed above than that of written marginal commentary.

When is a Nota *Not a* Nota*?*

If such annotations were not intended to provide verbal commentary on the text, then the creation of *nota* marks might be taken as evidence of similar embodied reading gestures on the

part of their producers. The way some readers transformed their *nota* marks from legible words into more abstract symbols may mean that these signs were perceived in the same way Malcolm Parkes suggests that highly abbreviated script was read: 'as a graphic unit conveying…information' rather than as a series of letters equated to a comprehensible unit of sound.[98] When framed as a 'graphic unit' the *nota* mark is shown to be far closer to manicules and crosses; it too represents a figural gesture through which readers may express their embodied reaction to the text. That said, the visual nature of these marks should not be equated with a loss of verbal sense. Though the mark may not, in isolation, be regarded as legible, the conventions that such signs draw on mean they remain recognisable in sense despite variance in form. In fact, the ability to adapt the design of this mark without altering its overall meaning allowed readers to use it with varied levels of effort, and varied kinds of expressiveness (Fig. 7). Such graphic iterations might therefore be conceived of as a better indication of personal responses to reading than the ambivalent word *nota* that they represent:

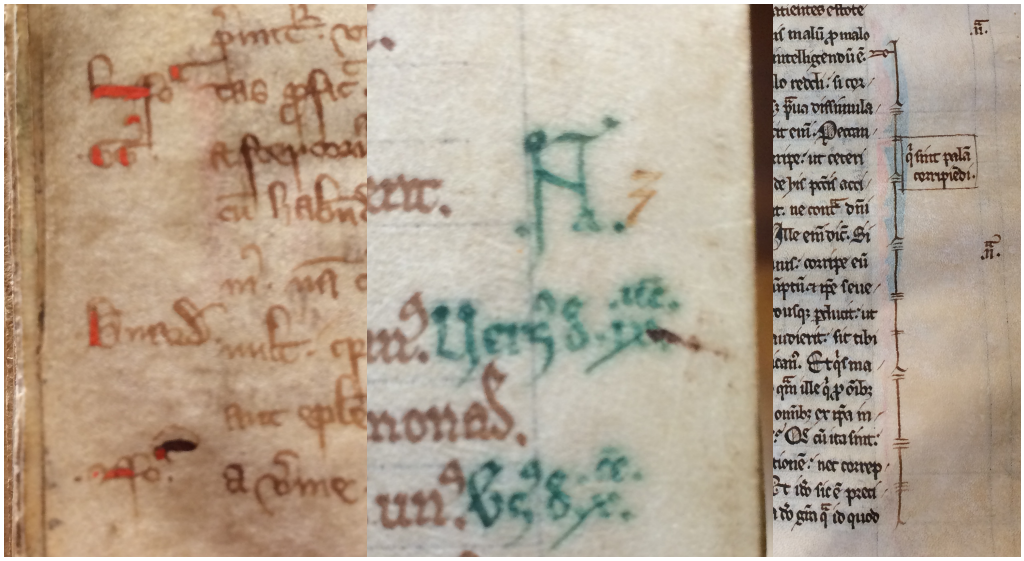


Fig. 7: Varied designs of nota mark in BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 161v; BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 35r; BodL, MS Bodley 132, f. 226r, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

[98] Parkes, 'Tachygraphy in the Middle Ages', 26.

commentaries made through visual rather than verbal signs.

In this case the design of *nota* marks and other graphic signs should be regarded as one aspect of their function: the marking process might be as important for the cognitive process of reading as the meaning of the finished sign. Just as with the decorated manicules discussed above, formulating an ornate *nota* mark took consideration on the part of its maker—if not always prolonged amounts of time. The fact that readers did not establish a fixed form for the *nota* mark—which, as a "verbal" annotation, lends itself so easily to standardisation—suggests that for some readers the process of design, and the movement towards idiosyncrasy, was preferable. (Indeed, in some ways *nota* marks may be considered more visually elaborated than manicules, simply due to the ease by which they *could* have been standardised.) This mark, then, demonstrates the value that readers found in mark-making as part of their engagement with the text. Here the visual reconnects with the verbal: the mnemonic force of what might otherwise be no more than an unthinking jotting is reinforced through the effort of variegated design. As Carruthers comments on mental notes, they are more 'mnemonically advantageous' if 'each individual makes up his own system of *notulae*' which will be more distinctive and so more memorable. Here this effect is sought by drawing *nota* marks on the page in distinct forms.[99]

This mnemonic effect means that the form of *nota* marks is of greater significance than purely being a space for readers' creativity. Consider, for instance, the three *nota* marks on the

[99] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 108. However, it is worth noting that the density of *nota* marks on some texts could militate against this effect. Though in low quantities such extravagant *nota* marks can draw the reader's attention and focus it on the passage they adorn, in large numbers – just as the effort of creating such marks reduces as familiarity and muscle memory take over – their impact is reduced, and they are more easily skimmed over. BodL, MS Ashmole 1285 may present an example of just that; particularly when coupled with the soft-point rendering of the *nota* marks in question, which at least at this temporal remove has left the marks faint, and easy to overlook.

outer edge of one page of a confessional: they comprise of a flourished majuscule **n**, and minuscule **o**, with the suprascript <ta> abbreviation (Fig. 7, lhs).[100] Such iterations may seem straightforward and innocuous. However, the extended horizontal bar across the top compartment of the suprascript **a**, which represents the crossbar of the **t** suspension, sometimes extends towards the text more than twice the width of the preceding letters. In the upper example (above), in fact, this line is extended to such a degree that it actually touches the first letter of the textblock, outstretched and motioning towards the text. These gesticulating pointers, then, bear comparison to the form of the manicule. Perhaps the most striking example is the *nota* mark pointing to the final line of this folio (lower). In this case all but the second ascender of the **N** is vertically compressed. The umbrella bifurcation of this ascender balloons over the letter to produce a cuff-like division between the "sleeve" of the **N** and the "knuckle" of the **o**. Most striking is the crossbar representing the **t** suspension, which folds back on itself in the style reminiscent of an Anglicana looped-**d**, making the abbreviation distinctly digit-like. As well as an intellectual engagement then—assessment, judgement, or commentary—*nota* marks also represent physical engagement, allowing readers to metonymically handle the text on which they are remarking. Even this apparently verbal annotation, then, was useful to readers less as a word than as a process of drawing; for that process allowed them to cognitively dwell on the act of marking and the passage being marked. Rather than offering verbal commentary on the text, *nota* marks were more like other symbols, the production of which provided readers with an outlet for their embodied interactions with the book.

[100] BodL, MS Digby 20, f. 161v.

What brings together the marks discussed in this chapter, then, is that the process of their production, which might look like simply a form of unthinking "doodling", was as important for the readers who used them as their meaning. The proliferation of non-verbal, or partly-verbal, signs in the margins of manuscripts (not just in this corpus but also more widely) demonstrates the value readers found in making them. Mark-making engaged readers in a physical interaction with the page, the physicality of which might be considered a form of embodied reading practice. Reading in this way was characterised by physical responses—of which mark-making is one example. In some cases these responses may be considered more gestural than they are planned, not flagging up an element of the text but rather reflecting the 'embodied intellectual labour' going into the reading process.[101] In other cases such marginal-symbols may still point to particular textual features, identifying the interests of the reader. Nevertheless, it is by making a marginal-mark by such features that the reader may assimilate their presence into his memory of the work. Might it be suggested then, that in some cases even verbal annotations held more value to readers in the act of embodied production, than they did as notes to be reread? In the chapter that follows I extend this question to consider how written additions to manuscripts might widen their use beyond the body, and interact with the world outside the book.

[101] Brown, 'Manuscript is the New Digital'.

PART III: CHAPTER 5

Reading Creatively

The marking—both figurative and physical—of books undertaken by readers has revealed reading practices that are both adaptive and creative. It is these means of adapting the book that allowed readers to subject their books to further uses beyond the reading of the text. Again, some considerations from early modernists may prove useful when thinking about the ways reading practice in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries made way for wider use: particularly useful is Juliet Fleming's 2010 thought experiment in which she conceptualises the act of reading as an act of 'cutting'. 'As a metaphor for reading', she says, 'cutting acknowledges the unexpected openings and connections that reading makes possible.'[1] Cutting allows for a reading practice that is productive: the clippings may be laid out, turned over, rearranged, the gaps left behind filled with other things, and each offcut subjected to further trimming. Reading by cutting is both interpretive and generative. By 'pruning' their text the reader allows it to flower again. Moreover, the metaphor of cutting allows us to

[1] Fleming, 'Afterword', 552. Fleming's metaphor supplants the metaphor of 'reading as poaching' given by Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 174, in recent studies in the field.

imagine uses of the book that go beyond reading by re-contextualising the text outside of the book.[2]

Cutting to Read

The twenty-first-century metaphor of pruning nicely echoes the composition of *florilegia*, which emerged in the opening decades of the twelfth century.[3] Here students were trained to select only the most important points from their reading: the most exquisite flowers of knowledge. These extracts were metaphorically cut from the text and copied into the reader's notebook, where they were stored while the rest of the text was discarded from the memory.[4] In this context the careful trim of the cut became a mode of anthologising, storing, and learning information, a means of archiving what was read. The French term for this style of gathering—*dépouiller*, to excerpt—imagines a much more violent process of 'mining a text.'[5] However, the result is a curated collection of literary flowers, the "flowers of rhetoric" or medieval Latin *flores*. Compiling *florilegia* made good on the advice in the prologue of the thirteenth-century Winchester Chronicle: 'qui soletis in Scripturis magis sensui quam verbis incumbere, fructui potius quam foliis inhaerere [You should make a habit in reading books to attend more to the

[2] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 87.

[3] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 4. The earliest encyclopaedic manuscript we know of arranged in a 'rudimentary' alphabetical order is James le Palmer's fourteenth-century *Omne Bonum*, although "encyclopaedias" of varying length and breadth had existed before this: see Sandler, '*Omne bonum*', 183-200.

[4] Blair, *Too Much To Know*, 35-7, 65-7.

[5] Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 41-2.

sense than to the words, to concentrate on the fruit rather than the leaves].'[6] The alignment of the leaves of the plant and the leaves of the book under the term 'foliis [leaves]', is apt, raising the rhetorical flowers of the text above the material context of the book. It is not unusual for readers to mark the passages they had selected for excerption in their source text; either so that they could return to copy them out later, or for future reference as a form of basic citation.[7] One of the symbols used to do this, a hand-drawn precursor to the typographical fleuron or hedera (❦), was similarly floral. See, for instance, the clover-like symbols in the margins of a Latin verse treatise on the 'Colores in rethorica', which are drawn next to passages of particular interest (Fig. 8).[8] Anthologising, then, constituted a type of reading that cut as it read, pruning the text and simultaneously harvesting its bounty—all the while leaving in its wake a series of tiny flowers.

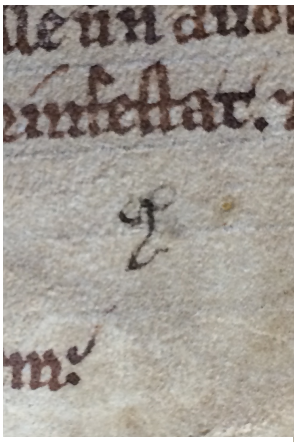


Fig. 8: BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 35r, fleuron, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

The metaphor of pruning and harvesting extends to the language of reading. The Latin *lego*, I read, and its romance language derivatives, such as the French *lirer* (to read), come from the verb's original sense: to gather, pluck, select, or glean.[9] So, while some medieval readers may have physically cut out the fruits (and flowers) of their labour, gathering them into *florilegia*, all readers harvested as

[6] Marc Drogin, *Anathema! Medieval Scribes and the History of Book Curses* (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun, 1983), xx; H. R. Luard, ed., *Annales Monastici*, v. 4 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864-9), 355.

[7] See crosses used for this purpose in Chapter 4, 168-9.

[8] BodL, MS Digby 53, f. 35r.

[9] *DMLBS*, 'legere', senses 1, 2, 3. See Fleming, 'Afterword', 545; Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 97. In fact, as Randall Ingram, 'Lego Ego: Reading Seventeenth-Century Books of Epigrams', *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 167-71 [160-76] establishes, some seventeenth-century authors imagined 'a process of reading indistinguishable from a process of selection' (169).

they read. Nor, as Juliet Fleming notes, need the idea of reading as cutting be purely metaphorical. Rather, cutting appears to have been an orthodox and anticipated aspect of the early modern reading experience. 'A culture of cutting' manifested not only in the practice of individuals, some of whom cut up books to arrange into commonplace books, but in the recommendations of authors and producers.[10] Cut up texts could then be pinned to the walls of the home and stuck to other possessions, as well as moved into other books.[11] Cutting allowed texts to be resituated, and thereby to take on a radically different interpretation, reading, or use.

This chapter will examine Fleming's conception of reading as a process of cutting in relation to thirteenth-century manuscript material. It will demonstrate how this theoretical model relates to the embodied reading processes established in Chapter Four and in so doing show that vernacular reading opened the manuscript to other further uses. To do this the chapter will focus on a sub-corpus of manuscripts that have otherwise received minimal treatment in the thesis: manuscripts containing early Middle English lyrics. Previously I have avoided discussion of these books as the lyrics, which are usually fragmentary snippets added

[10] Smyth, '"Shreds of holinesse", 481; Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (CUP, 2010), 40; Adam Smyth, '"Rend and teare in peeces": Textual Fragmentation in Seventeenth-Century England', *The Seventeenth Century*, 19:1 (2004), 36-52; Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 101-4. For other examples of cutting in Early Modern reading culture, see Fleming, 'Afterword', 546; Ann Blair, 'Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64:1 (2003), 25-7 [11-28]; Blair, *Too Much To Know*, 213-29; Mary Carpenter Erler, 'Pasted-in Embellishments in English Manuscripts and Printed Books c. 1480-1533', *The Library*, 14:3 (1992), 188-202 [185-206]; Whitney Anne Trettien, *Cut/Copy/Paste: Composing Devotion at Little Gidding* (PhD Thesis: Duke University, 2015); Adam Smyth, 'Little Clippings: Cutting and Pasting Bibles in the 1630s', *JMEMS*, 45:3 (2015), 595-614; Paul Dyck, '"A New Kind of Printing": Cutting and Pasting a Book for a King at Little Gidding', *The Library*, 9:3 (2008), 306-33; Paul Dyck, '"So rare a use": Scissors, Reading, and Devotion at Little Gidding', *George Herbert Journal*, 27:1/2 (2003/2004), 67-81; and the essays in the 2015 special edition of *JMEMS*, 45:3 (2015): 'The Renaissance Collage: Toward a New History of Reading'.

[11] See the patterns provided by Thomas Tusser, which were designed to be copied or cut out and stuck on to the walls: Smyth, '"Shreds of holinesse"', 457; Fleming, *Graffiti and the Writing Arts*, 43, 60.

by later readers, are often the only vernacular texts in the volume, meaning the manuscript as it was produced by the scribe was originally a monolingual Latin—or occasionally bilingual (Latin and French)—volume. It is only with the addition of the English lyrics that the book became multilingual, complicating my rationale for their inclusion in the study. However, in this chapter the addition of the English is taken to be key evidence for how readers encountered and responded to texts both within and outside of their books, and for the aspirations they had for those volumes.

Post-Conquest Cut and Paste Books

But before we turn to lyrics metaphorically cut and pasted, it is useful to remember that cutting of all kinds was widespread in manuscripts, long before the age of print. As Fleming points out, written manuscripts are also 'the product of techniques of cutting and assemblage.'[12] A manuscript could not be formed without the cutting of parchment, leather, quill, and thread. Cutting was also an aspect of finishing the page for copying. Scribes were often portrayed holding a knife as well as a pen.[13] Sometimes imperfections and stitched

[12] Fleming, 'Afterword', 546; see, also, Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 97-8.

[13] Scribes often seem to have worked with a pen in their right hand (usually) and a knife in their left. It is a mode of working represented in a significant number of contemporary images: Kathleen L. Scott, 'Representations of Scribal Activity in English Manuscripts c. 1400–c. 1490: A Mirror of the Craft?', *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons and Tools*, ed. Michael Gullick (Walkern: Red Gull Press, 2006), 131-2 [115-49]; see, also, reproductions in Joyce Irene Whalley, *Writing Implements and Accessories from the Roman Stylus to the Typewriter* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1975), 14-17, 31. Knives had to be on hand to facilitate the construction of the manuscript and shaping of the pen, and having them *in* hand meant they could also be used to hold the parchment still and to scrape away and correct errors: see de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators*, 37-9; Wakelin, *Scribal Correction*, 102; Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2007), 18; Whalley, *Writing Implements*, 33-5; Michael Finlay, *Western Writing Implements in the Age of the Quill Pen* (Carlisle: Plains Books, 1990), 13-16.

repairs were cut out of the pages of twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts before the parchment was prepared for writing.[14] These cut out holes might then be incorporated into the design of the page. For instance, on one leaf of Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* a square hole in the middle of the text block has been built into the ruling pattern, and on the verso given a double border in red ink.[15] Here, the scribe not only acknowledges the hole's presence in a visual aside to the reader, but turns it into a positive reflection of his own skill. Rather than ignore the flaw in his writing surface he has embraced the inevitable disturbance to the page. By ruling around the hole the scribe refuses to abandon his planned layout and succeeds in retaining the uniformity of both columns; while the addition of the rubricated frame on the verso suggests that he wished to incorporate this procedure for dealing with holes into the textual apparatus of the volume, using the hole to signal the care and sophistication with which the text was produced. Cutting, then, participates in the material expectations placed on the book and was thereby endorsed as a valid mode of interacting with the manuscript.

Most of the multilingual books in this corpus therefore contain some evidence of cutting that might be indicative of their wider use: commonly this takes the form of the stubs of whole pages remaining in the volume after a folio has been cut out. Such stubs occur in at least half of the thirty-three volumes that make up my main corpus. However, there is rarely any means of telling when in a volume's life pages were removed—whether as part of its

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[14] Some examples of parchment where imperfections, probably in the form of stitched repairs to the skin made during the parchment making process, have been cut out, either in an even rectangle shape or along the form of the original repair, include: BodL, MS Ashmole 1285, ff. 13, 40, 142; BodL, MS Bodley 399, ff. 103, 109; Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, ff. 48, 90, 187; Oxford, New College, MS 88, ff. 109, 190, 474; BL, MS Harley 3221, ff. 24, 180; Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 27, ff. 107, 181.

[15] Oxford, Merton College, MS 120, f. 53; a well-known example of the embellishment or decoration of holes in the manuscript page is found in a fourteenth-century book from the library of Vadstena Abbey, Sweden discussed by Augusta Strand, 'The Examination and Conservation of a Medieval Manuscript with Embroidered Repairs', *Care and Conservation of Manuscripts*, 8 (2005), 113-14 [113-22].

production, by its early users, or several hundred years after that. Without such evidence it may not be possible to build a substantial picture of cutting as a mode of high medieval book use.[16] Without knowing *where* the material cut out of manuscripts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries ended up, all that remains is the ghostly 'trace' of the knife scored into the pages left behind; and while such traces may 'archive' the cut through the absence they inscribe on the page, they provide no constructive means of identifying the use of what is missing.[17]

The cutting out of whole pages is often assumed to have taken place as part of the production process,[18] but in some cases it is clear that the pages were not removed until after the book was bound, or at least until after the quires were stitched into gatherings. For instance, the removal of part of a leaf from a collection of preaching materials has damaged the two pages following it, the knife tracing a ghost of the cut into the surface below.[19] In many places it is probable that the removed leaves—or part-leaves—were blank and were taken to be reused elsewhere.[20] Here, the motivation to cut may well be driven by economic and pragmatic concerns, which saw unused or unwanted manuscript material participating in a 'a dynamic

[16] In fact, modern antiquarian collectors are also known to have trimmed strips from the margins of their books in order to remove unsightly dirt or marginal notes, with cutting actually functioning to obscure the uses medieval readers put the volume to: see, especially, Sherman, *Used Books*, 163-6.

[17] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 55. For Derrida's discussion of the '*trace*' as a 'mark of the absence of a presence, an always-already absent present', see: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, fourth edition (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2016), xvii, 61-5; and Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (New York, NY: Routledge, 1978) 196-231.

[18] For the difficulty in dating when material was removed from manuscripts see de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators*, 8.

[19] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, ff. 18-20.

[20] It is likely, for instance, that the leaves removed from BodL, MS Digby 53; BodL, MS Selden Supra 74; BodL, MS Bodley 652; BodL, MS Bodley 343 were all blank folios left over at the end of quires.

ecology of use and reuse.'[21] This cut is not about extracting meaning but betrays a non-readerly, value-driven process that nevertheless sends pieces of the book outward to participate in the world. Blank singletons and smaller scraps like this may have gone on, as the cut-off edges of treated skins did, to produce *schedulae*, writing surfaces for 'brief textual compositions, such as letters, charters and registers.'[22] The act of cutting imbues these unused pieces of the volume with the potential to be transformed into innumerable other documents—and, indeed, any number of other non-written items—that will be circulated, transformed, and subjected to a plethora of alternate uses.

In other cases the leaves cut from books were clearly already written on. At least one side of the part-leaf cut from the preacher's notebook mentioned above contained a column of notes prefaced by a paraph, which remains on the edge of the page left behind.[23] In other places stubs show traces of writing that indicate that the whole leaf had been copied before it was excised. Some stubs, for instance, clearly retain the traces of a decorated initials and writing.[24] On some occasions these instances of cutting are similarly attributable to the production process: for instance, if the scribe or some person overseeing production was unhappy with the work on a given page at a suitable stage in the copying process the whole

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[21] Sherman, *Used Books*, 6. See, also, the comments of Partington and Smyth, 'Introduction', 8-10. Erik Kwakkel, 'Discarded Parchment as Writing Support in English Manuscript Culture', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 17 (2012), 238 [238-61] lays these relationships out in economic terms, while Hannah Ryley, 'Waste Not, Want Not: the Sustainability of Medieval Manuscripts', *Green Letters*, 19:1 (2015), 71-2 [63-74] formulates them in the context of a culture of sustainability.

[22] Erik Kwakkel, 'Discarded Parchment', 241. Material evidence of letters written on scraps is found in the surviving letters of Bishop Herman of Munster, which date to as early as 1188. Indeed, the eleventh and twelfth centuries have been characterised as a 'Golden Age of medieval epistolography', suggesting letter writing may be a likely candidate for the use of off-cut writing surfaces (Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976), 31). For the use of scraps in letter writing see also Leclerq, *Love of Learning*, 177.

[23] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 18r.

[24]BodL, MS Digby 86, before f. 48; Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, before f. 157.

page could be removed and recopied on the following folio, or its content moved and inserted elsewhere in the volume. Hypothetically, these occurrences should be discernable when the text continues seamlessly across the stub. The waste-leaves that these removals generated—already covered in writing—could be used in manuscript production in a number of other ways. It is well documented that in later periods waste-leaves and books provided parchment for sewing supports, pastedowns, flyleaves, and padding or end guards within the binding structure. For instance, the tag used to seal a charter from the reign of Henry II is made out of another charter.[25] Leaves that had already been written on could also be salvaged as writing supports, their content being scraped off to allow them to be used again. Thus larger folios or complete bifolia might be incorporated into the quires of further books, while leaves from smaller volumes—like most in this corpus—could provide writing supports for the same ephemeral purposes listed above.[26] Even the incorporation of leaves into the structure of another book—as flyleaves, pastedowns, or sewing supports—pays service to *a* text. Thus, when cutting occurs it not only marks textual interactions, but can also point away from the book as its content disperses outward to participate in the production of other written

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[25] Nicholas Vincent, 'William Marshal, King Henry II and the Honour of Châteauroux', *Archives*, 25:102 (2000), especially 1-4 [1-15]. For more examples from fifteenth-century books, see Ryley, 'Waste Not, Want Not', 67-71. For more details on the use of written fragments in bindings after the Middle Ages, see, crucially, N. R. Ker, *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings* (Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1954), and David Pearson, *Oxford Bookbinding 1500-1640 including a Supplement to Neil Ker's* Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings (Oxford Bibliographical Society, 2000), 139-200.

[26] Ryley, 'Waste Not, Want Not', 67-70. The last membrane of the roll BodL, MS Additional E. 6, for instance, is a palimpsest. Other Insular examples from the period include BodL, MS Fairfax 27; BodL, MS Barlow 45; and BodL, MS Bodley 514. C. W. Russell, 'Palimpsest Literature, and its Editor, Cardinal Angelo Mai', *The Afternoon Lectures on Literature and Art*, v. 4 (London: Bell and Daldy, 1867), 99-104 [97-132] suggests that letters, in particular, were often written on parchment that was palimpsested several times, with each correspondent deleting the previous letter to write their reply on the same piece of parchment. Whalley, *Writing Implements*, 15 also relates a culture where 'any material on which people wrote was very costly, so that even the smallest scrap of papyrus, paper, or vellum was carefully used – and perhaps even used again.'

materials. As a mode of reading and use therefore, cutting may be as much constructive and productive—generating new volumes, texts, and interpretations—as it is destructive.

However, though it did occur, evidence of cutting in twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts is hard to find and date. This corpus of multilingual manuscripts provides relatively few examples, though these few may be but the tip of the iceberg. Nevertheless, Fleming's focus on cutting remains a profitable starting point. For cutting forms one side of a relationship, the other side of which is attachment. Recently, Kathryn Rudy's work has demonstrated how attachment is an applicable mode of use in devotional material from the later Middle Ages.[27] Here, the insertion of 'single leaves…[and] small objects', as well as more substantial amounts of material, into fifteenth-century Netherlandish prayerbooks and Books of Hours constituted a mode of personal devotion.[28] High medieval readers may also stick or stitch material into a book post-production to add to its contents, adapt it for on-going use, or participate creatively in the interpretation of the volume. From as early as the fourteenth century, decorated initials and miniatures taken from other manuscripts were used to embellish the pages and supplement the decoration of luxury books. The Alphonso Psalter, for example, was decorated for Elizabeth de Bohun in around 1315 using a series of eighteen mid-thirteenth-century miniatures cut from a Passion sequence.[29]

Nevertheless, explicitly accretive acts of sticking or stitching in material are unusual in this period, especially in these multilingual volumes—which are rarely overtly decorative. Rather, as with cutting, most identifiable examples have a practical aspect. Indeed, some of

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[27] Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*; Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment*.

[28] Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 11.

[29] Christopher de Hamel, *Cutting up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit* (Charlottesville, VA: Book Arts Press, 1996), 6-7.

these additions may also date to the manuscript's production, while others may be the work of later users seeking to satisfy a desire for a "complete" and "correct" text. A strip of parchment stuck to the outer edge of a half-width folio in a book of sermons and sermon notes from c. 1300 appears to have been added after some bits of the page were already written in order to accommodate further notes.[30] Here, writing in the inner column of the verso side is slightly covered by the edge of the additional parchment, while notes in the same hand on the recto of the addition overlap the join, having not been written until after it was stuck down. This addition, then, is not part of an isolated production campaign, nor is it entirely a product of the book's later use. Rather, it demonstrates that—in keeping with its function as a notebook—this volume was subjected to an on going process of revision and accretion over an extended period as subjects were revisited alongside and as part of the book's use. The addition of extra parchment to this leaf allowed for consumption and production to intertwine in the scribe/reader's—scribal reader's—use of the manuscript, with more material adding to and supplementing the notes that were already in place.[31] The same leaf has then attracted written additions in a further hand, which fill the blank spaces left on the extra parchment. The producer of this addition, then, has employed methods used in manuscript production to productively intervene in the material form of his book. Via this example, then, we move from manuscripts physically cut and pasted, to those expanded through the accretion of written additions.

[30] Oxford, New College, MS 88, f. 140.

[31] The scribal reader who produced the majority of this volume may have been its owner Thomas Cranley, the Archbishop of Dublin, who died in 1417: see Siegfried Wenzel, 'A Dominican Preacher's Book from Oxford', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 68 (1998), 177-203.

Lyrical Reading

Writing is the most widely attested form of addition to books in this period, and it is on this metaphorical 'pasting', and the cutting that preceded it, that the rest of this chapter will focus. While the non-verbal marks discussed in the previous chapter were prompted by works already in the book, these written additions were a means of bringing in totally new texts. Of course, some written marginalia responded to and existed in a dynamic with the work: glosses and textual apparatus, for instance. Other forms of written addition, though, might be considered more definitively extra-textual and more closely related to the broadening use of a volume. Ownership marks or mottos, and pen trials in the form of jottings and doodles, although they surely impact a reader's impression of a book, rarely have any bearing on the content of the text. By contrast, additional texts, such as recipes and theological notes, though they may be related to the subject or theme of a volume, can also function as stand-alone items that point towards its further use.

These extra-textual written additions are not only found in the margins, but can occupy any blank space within the volume, collecting upon the flyleaves and filling up blank folios between texts or at the end of quires. Such locations present one of the places that thirteenth-century English lyrics and proverbs are preserved. As such, though it is possible to contend that their brief, often fragmentary nature, and marginal positions brands such texts as nothing more than irrelevant jottings—transient thoughts of an inattentive reader—they represent

important witnesses to a "textual" tradition that is only sporadically observed.[32] In addition, it is often only their placement in the volume that allows us to classify it as multilingual or bilingual book. These short snippets, then, provide important insights into the reading of early Middle English in this period.

It may be reasonable to expect that the lyrics copied into the margins of other items would be most closely keyed to the content of the text. Of all the locations in which written additions are found these have the most potential for being directly triggered by reading, presenting the immediate response of a reader with pen and ink to hand—a kind of reading resulting in inter-textuality. In one copy of *Ancrene Wisse*, for instance, a direct relationship can be drawn between verse and text. Here, underlining shows where a Latin prayer written in the

[32] An overview of the manuscripts is given by Emma Gorst, 'Middle English Lyrics: Lyric Manuscripts 1200-1400 and Chaucer's Lyric' (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 2013). Important studies of this material include, crucially, Ardis Butterfield, 'Why Medieval Lyric?', *ELH*, 82:2 (2015), 319-43. For more work on thirteenth-century lyrics in their manuscript contexts see Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach, 'Songs, Scattered and Gathered', *Manuscripts and Medieval Song: Inscription, Performance, Context*, ed. Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach (CUP, 2015), 271-85; Helen Deeming, 'An English Monastic Miscellany: the Reading Manuscript of *Sumer is icumen in*', *Manuscripts and Medieval Song: Inscription, Performance, Context*, ed. Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach (CUP, 2015), 116-40; Helen Deeming, 'Preserving and Recycling: Functional Multiplicity and Shifting Priorities in the Compilation and Continued Use of London, British Library, Egerton 274', *Manuscripts and Medieval Song: Inscription, Performance, Context*, ed. Helen Deeming and Elizabeth Eva Leach (CUP, 2015), 141-62; and on notated verse in particular Ardis Butterfield and Helen Deeming, 'Editing Insular Song across the Disciplines: Worldes Blis', *Probable Truth: Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Anne Hudson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), especially 152-4 [151-66]; Ardis Butterfield, 'Lyrics', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100-1500*, ed. Larry Scanlon (CUP, 2009), 96-101 [95-102]; as well as Merle Fifield, 'Thirteenth-Century Lyrics and the Alliterative Tradition', *JEGP*, 62 (1963), 111-18. A large part of the corpus of thirteenth-century lyrics are found embedded in sermons. On these see Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons*; Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton UP, 1986); Christopher Callahan, 'The Evolution of the Lyric Insertion in Thirteenth-Century Narrative', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 7 (1990), 29-40; Ralph Hanna, 'Editing Middle English Lyrics: the Case of *Candet Nudatum Pectus*', *Medium Ævum*, 80:2 (2011), 189-200; Ralph Hanna, 'Verses in Sermons Again: Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q.A.13', *Studies in Bibliography*, 57 (2004-5), 63-83. For further considerations of the manuscript context of these works, with a closer focus on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985); Julia Boffey, 'Middle English Lyrics and Manuscripts', *Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. Thomas G. Duncan (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 1-18.

lower margin relates to the body of the work.[33] The prayer, a dedication to Christ copied in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, seems to extend or replace a section of the text on a similar theme. The pre-existing text—beginning 'Adoramus te *Christe* ⁊ benedicimus t*ibi* quia p*er* s*anct*am crucem [We adore you Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy cross…]'—is underlined in brown ink that appears to match the colour of the addition. It seems, then, that the same user added both the extra text and the internal mark up.[34] The added prayer reads:

> Domine Iesu *Christe* fili dei viui. qui es versus ⁊ omnipotens deus splendor ⁊ ymago pat*ris* ⁊ vita eterna… Am*en*
>
> [Our Lord Jesus Christ son the living God, who is eternal and omnipotent God the Light and the image of the Father and the life eternal… Amen.]

It appears directly below the text block, suggesting that the writer expected it to be performed at this point as part of the sequence of 'vif gretinges. In þe muneginge of þe vif punden of gode [five greeting in remembrance of the five wounds of God.]'[35] The addition makes contextual sense then; following from prayers dedicated to the holy cross and the five wounds of Christ it extends the sequence to take in the redemption and salvation of the world through Christ's blood: 'es redimere precioso sanguine tuo saluator mundi [you are to pay with your precious blood, saviour of the world.]'[36] Similar marginal additions in both this and a second annotating hand are found throughout the volume, some of which also appear in later versions of the text, as Bella Millett has noted.[37] In these cases it is hard to determine whether scribes incorporated

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[33] BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra C. vi, f. 9v; Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, 8, ll. 37-55.

[34] This mark up continues, however, for several pages. In this part of the text Latin passages and intrusions are underlined from ff. 9r-12r. The same hand may be responsible for the occasional vertical slashes found at major elements of punctuation. The same section demonstrates at least one further layer of mark up, in a different hand and darker ink, which seems to correct and add to the main text, as well as putting in diacritical strokes—particularly to the letter e—to aid construal or pronunciation.

[35] BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra C. vi, f. 9v; Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, 8, ll. 35-6.

[36] BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra C. vi, f. 9v.

[37] Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, xiv.

similar additions found in their exemplars into the main text of later copies, or if the annotator of *this* copy had access to another version of the work that already contained some of the extra content. In either case, the addition of this material suggests that the reader felt it improved the volume and adapted it for on-going use.

Most vernacular verse additions, however, seem to be prompted by the forging of more spontaneous textual connections. For example, two thematically related early Middle English verses were added to a page of a copy of Nicole Bozon's *Les Proverbes de Bon Enseignement* soon after it was copied in the late thirteenth century. The main text is arranged in three columns, with the poem—made up of rhymed proverbs in French—taking the wide central column. The left column provides the sources for the proverbs where known—'¶Senek', '¶Iepte', '¶Abimelek'— and the right gives Latin analogues for some of the verses. The English additions are written in spaces in the right hand column making use of the pre-existing ruling. Thematically, the English additions riff on the parallel French text, which discusses the importance of forethought and responding to the council of those around you:

> ¶ Si vne pensee v*us* saut en quor.
> Ne seez pas p*ri*mes sauter.
> De fere ov dire ce ke pensez.
> Ta*n*t ke seez meus auisez.
>
> [If a thought jumps into your heart
> be not the first to jump
> to do or say what you think
> so that you are better advised.][38]

Seemingly, then, the English additions were prompted by French advice: thus, a couplet—'¶ Er þu do eny þing / þenk one þe ending [Before you do anything / think on the ending]'—is

[38] BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 107r; Nicole Bozon, *Les Proverbes de Bon Enseignement*, ed. Anders Christopher Thorn (Lund: Gleerup, 1921), 9, col. b, proverb 20. The proverb is attributed in other copies of the text to 'Sirak' (BodL, MS Selden Supra 74), 'Serafyn' (BodL, MS Eng. poet. A 1), or 'Seneka' (BL, MS Harley 957; BodL, MS Bodley 761). However, Thorn finds no extant source.

followed by the phrase also found in *The Proverbs of Hendyng*, 'Betere his red þan res [Better to be prudent than rash.]'[39] Tendentiously, it might be noted that the same aphorism could be translated 'Better is reading than rashness', begging the question: is writing in the book a sign of thoughtful reading, or a rash action?[40] Either way, it seems that the concerns these English phrases share with the French proverbial verse caused an early user to recall them, and seeing that the French had no Latin counterpart, he or she added them to the appropriate space on the page. A couple of folios later the same reader has added a six-line verse, also from *The Proverbs of Hendyng*, into the lower margin below a copy of poem titled 'Ici come*n*ce la derreine partie des *Christ*us ves [Here begins the final part of Christ's life].' The poem itself takes a similar a form to *Les Proverbes de Bon Enseignement*, in which each rhyming eight-line stanza is attributed to a figure of theological authority: 'aug*ustine*', 'ec*les*east*us*', 'salo*mon*'. The addition here has no clear spatial relationship to any single stanza from the poem, being divided into two columns of three lines each in the bottom margin. However, it clearly advises that the reader look to the state of their soul:

> Riche and pouere ȝong and eld.
> Þere whiles þou hauest þi wil a weld.
> Sek þi sowle bote.
> Ofte wan man weneþ best.
> Lif and hale þo and rest.
> Seþ is at his fote

[39] BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 107r. For gloss see *MED*, 'red (n.(1))', senses 6(a), 8; 'res (n.)', sense 1(b).

[40] See *OED*, 'read, v.', Form. See also Parkes, 'Ræden, Areccan Smeagan', 1-22.

[Rich and poor, young and old,
There while you have the power
Seek deliverance for your soul.
Often when man believes best,
Life and health, peace and rest,
Truth is at his foot.][41]

Such advice reflects similar concerns found in several of the French verses on this page, which counsel following the path of 'dreit e equite [right and fairness]', and repeat the need for repentance ('se repent [repent yourself]') in order to reach the peace of heaven.[42] This addition, therefore, also seems to be prompted by the recognition of a common theme, leading the writer to supplement the French verses with an English equivalent.

Beyond observing the thematic connection, an additional project seems to be at work in the addition of these texts. By adding further aphoristic phrases to the margins of a volume that already contained proverbial advice the reader shapes the book's potential use. These additions increase the status of proverbial wisdom within the volume. The apparent formality with which the additions have been made contributes to this impression: these are not throwaway jottings, but considered additions. Though neither relies on the provision of additional rulings, unlike the Latin prayer discussed above, the English phrases use the original ruling patterns where possible making them participatory in the pre-existing page design (Fig. 9). On top of this, the majuscules of both sets of additions have been touched with red ink in a second campaign of rubrication, with paraphs used to bring the English phrases in line with their Latin counterparts. The fact that this occurred as

[41] BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 109r; *DIMEV*, 4475; Carleton Brown, ed., *A Register of Middle English Religious & Didactic Verse*, 1 (Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1916), 362. Brown suggests that 'þo' in line 5 may be a mistranscription, and that the line ought to read 'pes'.

[42] BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 109r.

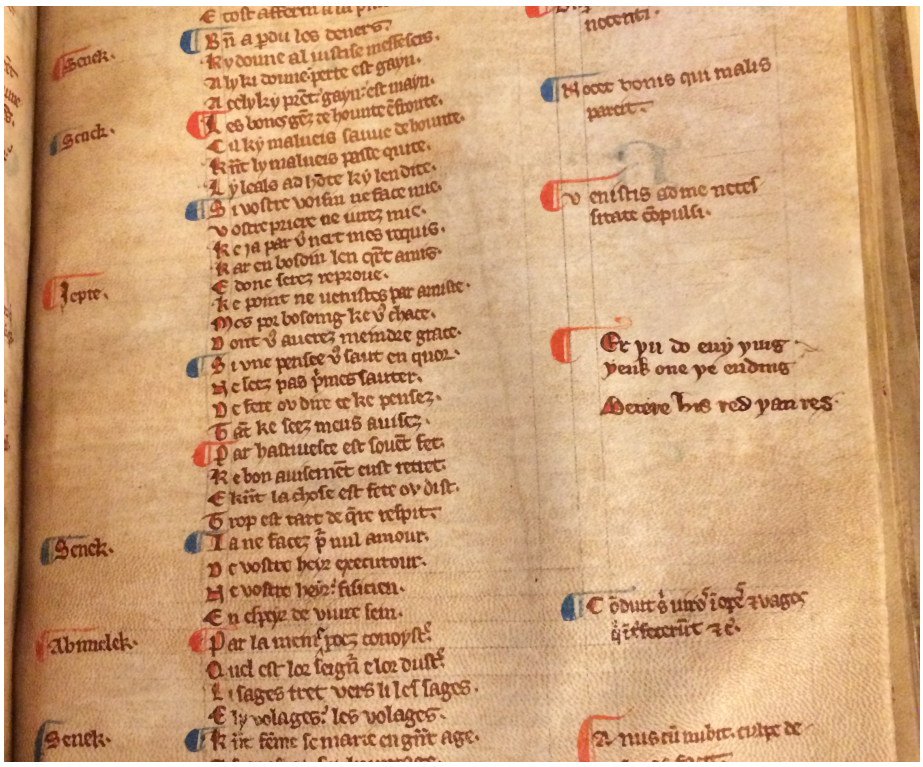


Fig. 9: © British Library Board, BL, MS Royal 8. E. xvii, f. 107r, English verses added on empty ruling, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

a separate rubricating campaign is most clearly demonstrated by the appearance of the paraph that precedes, 'Er þu do eny þing.' The tail of this mark is unlike those of the other paraphs on the page, curling upward and back on itself to form a hook. Closer inspection also reveals that the writing of the second set of verses overlaps some of the flourishing on the minor initial **C** located in the textblock above it. In fact, more generally, the red ink used on these additions appears to be a dark shade, and applied with a slightly heavier technique, than that used in the original text. Attention, therefore, has gone into formalising these additions as part of the book. Nevertheless, the phrases added into the right hand column of *Les Proverbes* do not follow exactly the layout of the Latin analogues that share the space: the initial letters are not set apart in a separate column and the design of the paraph is different. It does not seem, therefore, that these additions were planned in the manner of the prayer accompanying *Ancrene Wisse* to be

integrated completely into the main text; but neither were they jotted down without thought or attention as a fanciful aside. Rather, the English phrases deliberately supplement the French and Latin texts. In doing so they are both a record of the thematic mental connections made by a reader or readers, and also a resource for further users of the book.

In other cases, the addition of English phrases may have been made, first and foremost, as an aspect of the volume's use, with a secondary role given to thematic connections of sense. Different formulations of a couplet found in *Poema Morale*—'spines brede is spiþe spete so is of þilde dure / Al to dure he it a bihþ: þe sith þar fore is spere [swines meat is very sweet, so is [that] of wild beasts/deer / All too dear he buys it, who gives therefore his neck]'—have been written in spare spaces in one preaching miscellany on three separate occasions all dating to around the year 1300.[43] In one case the couplet is written in a space at the right hand side of a page of theological notes. It falls among a section of notes under the title 'Cont*ra* Raptores ⁊ calu[m]pniatores [Against robbers and slanderers]'.[44] The unusual lineation of this addition demonstrates the writer's need to fit the verses into the limited space available beside the original text in the column, which otherwise lists relevant biblical and patristic references:

> swithe swete is
> ~~swete is of~~ swines bredre so
> is of wilde dore . Al to dure
> þe brede he buth þe ~~birth~~ þift midt
> his sowere

[43] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, ff. 46v, 93r, 253r; *DIMEV*, 5090; Laing, *Catalogue*, 120; Betty Hill, 'A Couplet from the Conduct of Life in Maidstone MS A 13', *Notes and Queries*, 50:4 (2003), 377. See Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische '*Poema Morale', 180, ll. 145-6.

[44] Hill, 'Couplet', 377 seems to argue that the English verse is in the same hand as the Latin. I think she is likely to be correct, however, with so small a sample of writing it is difficult to distinguish definitively either way. The English is certainly larger and looser, seemingly having been written with greater rapidity, and has been rendered rather uneven due to the curve of the page and its proximity to the margin. As such, it is clear it was added at a later date than the rest of the text, which it had to be fitted around. The most distinguishing feature of the sample, the curved anglicana **w**, of course cannot act as a point of comparison.

[very sweet is
swines meat, so
is [that] of wild deer. All too dear
he buys the meat, who acquires (steals) it with
his neck][45]

While it is possible that, as with the previous examples, a thematic connection encouraged this addition, these lines are usually associated with the high cost of luxuries.[46] It is the emendation of the line, from 'birth [buys]' to 'þift [acquires or steals]' that shapes its sense to fit the context of the heading. The phrase 'with his neck' might, then, alludes to hanging as a punishment, which could be dispensed for stealing or theft. The context of the list may explain why the addition was placed here, and these changes to its wording made: this section of the manuscript provides a conspectus of references to authorities arranged under different subject headings probably for use in sermon composition.[47] The verses may therefore be written here because their writer considered them appropriate preaching material and wished to incorporate them into a sermon—or have someone else do so.

Certainly, a further iteration of the same couplet later in the volume demonstrates more explicitly its suitability for inclusion in sermons, for a similar hand has added an abbreviated form of the couplet—'Swiþe swete is ~~swete~~ swines brede ⁊*cetera*'—to the end of a sermon on *luxuria* along with some concluding phrases.[48] These final lines seem to have been copied in a different stint to the rest of the Latin text. The ink is a different shade and the script, though probably belonging to the same hand, features bigger loops on the ascenders, particularly long

[45] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 46v; deletions not included in translation.

[46] See *DIMEV*, 5090.

[47] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, ff. 12r-91v; see Hill, 'Couplet', 377. For more on the intended use of these sorts of reference works, see Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 7-8.

[48] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 253r.

s and **l**. Since the same writer goes on to copy the sermon below this one, it seems that the English verse was added as an afterthought when the scribe returned to the page and reread his previous work, rather than being slotted in by a later user. As Betty Hill contends then, the volume is a testament to the 'progressive incorporation [of an English verse] into a Latin sermon.'[49] The suitability of the couplet for this sermonic use seems to have prompted its addition throughout the book. A third version of the couplet is found in the lower margin of a leaf containing *The Proverbs of Alfred*.[50] This copy is in a very similar—if not the same—hand as the other two. Here the impetus for the addition may be more closely associated with its formal and thematic connections to the text; as with the examples discussed above, the phrase adds a further line to the text's store of proverbial wit. In this volume the collection of English proverbs may also have provided a resource of phrases suited to inclusion in sermons. Each iteration of this couplet, therefore, integrates it further into the use of the collection, increasing the likelihood that it was later included in oral preaching.

Archived Readings

In many cases though, the relationship between the English lyrics and phrases added to volumes and the content or use of those volumes is less explicit. Even on occasions where English is found in the margins of other texts, as in copy of *Sawles Warde* where the phrase 'ly þow me ner lemmon i*n* þy narmus [lie near me beloved in your arms]' is written in the upper margin, it is sometimes not possible to identify any connection with the content or use of the

[49] Hill, 'Couplet', 377.

[50] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 93r.

work.[51] The term 'lemmon' is familiar in texts for religious women and anchorites, where Christ is often addressed as 'mi deorewurðe leofmon [me darling beloved]', a lover whom the celebrant marries and gives herself completely [52] So, although this line may initially give the impression of drawing from a bawdy love lyric, textually the lyric's content is orthodox to feminine devotional writing in the twelfth-century.[53] Nevertheless, the section of the text on this page seems to be at odds with this type of discourse. Here, the allegorical figure of Fear gives a graphic description of the torments of Hell, before Vigilance responds asserting God's ability to provide safe passage to heaven. Fear's description is characterised by a crescendoing alliterative list of synonyms for hell:

> wununge of wanunge. of grure ant of granunge. heatel ham. ⁊ heard wan. of alle wontreaðes. buri of bale. ⁊ bold of eauer-euch bitternesse. þu laðest lont of alle. þu dorc stude ifullet of alle dreorinesses
>
> [home of wailing, of fright, and of groaning; hateful home and hard, home of untruths, city of sorrow and house of every bitterness, you most loathsome land of all, you dark place full of all drearinesses.][54]

Meanwhile Vigilance's response, though it advises that we guard ourselves 'under Godes wengen [under Gods wings]', is measured and unemotional in its tone.[55] The added lyric, then, does not appear to take its cue directly from the text on the page. Rather, it seems to have been

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[51] BodL, MS Bodley 34, f. 75v. This line is not legible on the microfilm or in the new print-on-demand reprints of the facsimile as it is very faint. It can be seen, however, in first print run of the manuscript facsimile: N. R. Ker, ed., *Facsimile of MS Bodley 34: St. Katherine, St. Margaret, St. Juliana, Hali Meiðhad, Sawles Warde*, EETS, OS 247 (London: OUP, 1960).

[52] Eugen Einenkel, ed., *The Life of Saint Katherine*, EETS, OS 80 (London: Trübner, 1884), 93, l. 1894.

[53] See, for instance, Elizabeth Robertson, 'An Anchorhold of Her Own: Female Anchoritic Literature in Thirteenth Century England', *Equally in God's Image: Women in the Middle Ages* (London: Peter Lang, 1990), 180 [170-83].

[54] S. T. R. O. D'Ardenne, ed., *The Katherine Group edited from MS Bodley 34* (Paris: Société d'Edition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1977), 173, ll. 24-8.

[55] D'Ardenne, ed., *Katherine Group*, 174, ll. 18-19.

added by a later reader for reasons less related to the main text already on the page when the addition was made.

This may be especially true of cases where added material is not juxtaposed with nearby content. The most well documented situation in which this occurs is on manuscript flyleaves. These—typically—blank leaves at the beginning and end of volumes were regularly used by later owners as a space to record a range of material, from claims of ownership, to drafts of poetic compositions. While removing material from books distributes it outward, re-contextualising it within the wider world and thereby opening it to alternate interpretations, adding material to books reverses the process, recording and archiving otherwise mutable material within the book. Here, then, the flyleaves become a storage system for other texts. The most well-known example of the use of written additions to archive important information is the longstanding practice of copying legal documents and letters into liturgical manuscripts as a means of recording their content for posterity.[56] On a flyleaf in a ninth-century gospel book, for instance, a twelfth-century hand has copied the Latin text and English translation of a writ from King Aethelred granting lands in Kent to Christ Church, Canterbury.[57] The inclusion of an English translation of the whole writ—not just the usual English boundary clause—suggests that the copyist was not just interested in preserving the wording of the original document, but wished to make it accessible for future reference to those with or without Latin literacy. The document, then, was not simply added to the manuscript for want of a placeholder, but was written with the potential that it may have a dynamic existence within the volume. As with many such examples the religious character of the 'container' manuscript gives 'the documents

[56] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 156-8.

[57] Oxford, St John's College, MS 194, ff. 2r-v; *ESawyer*, S 1636, also found in English in BodL, MS Ballard 67, f. 47v.

greater gravitas and a more binding character' by associating them with the undisputable word of God.[58] The folio facing this writ, in fact, contains a tenth-century image of Saint John penning his gospel.[59] Thus, when the book is closed the twelfth-century writ comes into direct contact with the evangelist and the scripture he is producing: 'In principio erat verbum ⁊ v*er*bu*m* erat ap*ud* d*eu*m ⁊ d*eu*s erat v*er*bum [In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.]' The significance of this verse, and its conflation of writing and divine truth, reflects also upon the words of the writ touching it. By reinforcing the presence of scripture contact with the image effectively makes God a witness to the limits set out in the document.

Equally, the addition of legal documents extends the function of liturgical manuscripts beyond their religious purposes. The book's preservation of the legal record gives it, at least on a symbolic level, the 'terrestrial power' of the King, which may make it suitable for use in further legal contexts.[60] Certainly, the attraction of writing in books went beyond an aspiration to permanence. Though this may have provided the initial prompt to add texts to the flyleaves, once there these items interfere with and adapt the use of the volume, and are themselves changed by their new context: the book becomes an archive, an object of historical record, and a witness to celestial and terrestrial power.

Might English verses and phrases be subject to a similar archival urge? Might that archival urge explain why these lyrics are added to flyleaves? In many cases these fragments of English—whether recorded for later reference or not—are the only remaining record of the tradition from which they derive. The possibility that such texts were copied in order to

[58] Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 70.

[59] Oxford, St John's College, MS 194, f. 1v.

[60] Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 71.

preserve them for later use is most compelling in the case of lyrics with musical notation.[61] The first intact folio of a psalter dated to c. 1200, for instance, preserves the only known copy of the song 'Mirie it is while sumer ilast' accompanied by notation on a four-line stave.[62] Alongside the English lyrics are parts of two French songs also with notation. All of the items are copied in the same early thirteenth-century hand in two continuous columns.[63] Given the scarcity of surviving early English notated song, much has been made of the five lines preserved here, which have been used as a basis for textual analysis, musical reconstruction, and performance.[64] However, how the songs came to be in this volume, and the extent to which we can consider them complete, is not clear. Previously, it was supposed that this leaf, along with the preceding one which is now wanting, entered the volume as flyleaves taken from a pre-existing songbook perhaps as late as its most recent rebinding in the eighteenth century.[65] However, I contest that a codicological examination of the first quire of the manuscript establishes that these lyrics were, in fact, written on the formerly blank pages at the beginning of the psalter. Since then, the first leaf, preceding the surviving lyrics, and three leaves following them, with some more lyrics perhaps, and then the start of the Psalter, have been removed (Fig. 10). In its present condition the lyrics therefore survive on a single, seemingly isolated, leaf. It is clear that the first of the three songs is incomplete; presumably it began on

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[61] See, also, 'Foweles in the Frith' (BodL, MS Douce 139, f. 5r; *DIMEV*, 1442; most recently E. J. Dobson and F. Ll. Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 142), which is copied in a very spacious layout taking up a full page in what is otherwise a legal manuscript.

[62] BodL, MS Rawlinson G. 22, f. 1v; *DIMEV*, 3486.5; Dobson and Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs*, 121-2.

[63] BodL, MS Rawlinson G. 22, ff. 1r-v.

[64] See, for instance, Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou, *'I Have a Yong Suster': Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 41-3; Thomas G. Duncan, 'Two Middle English Penitential Lyrics: Sound and Scansion', *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. Alastair Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 55-65.

[65] Elizabeth Solopova, *Latin Liturgical Psalters in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2013), 51.

the previous folio, but without the following pages it is impossible to determine the extent to which 'Mirie it is' was considered a full text. The bottom inch of the folio is missing and the remaining edge has been significantly nibbled by mice, so that the bottom of the extant text is already damaged; but if the English song took the same form as the French we might expect the notated section that remains to be followed by several further un-notated verses.

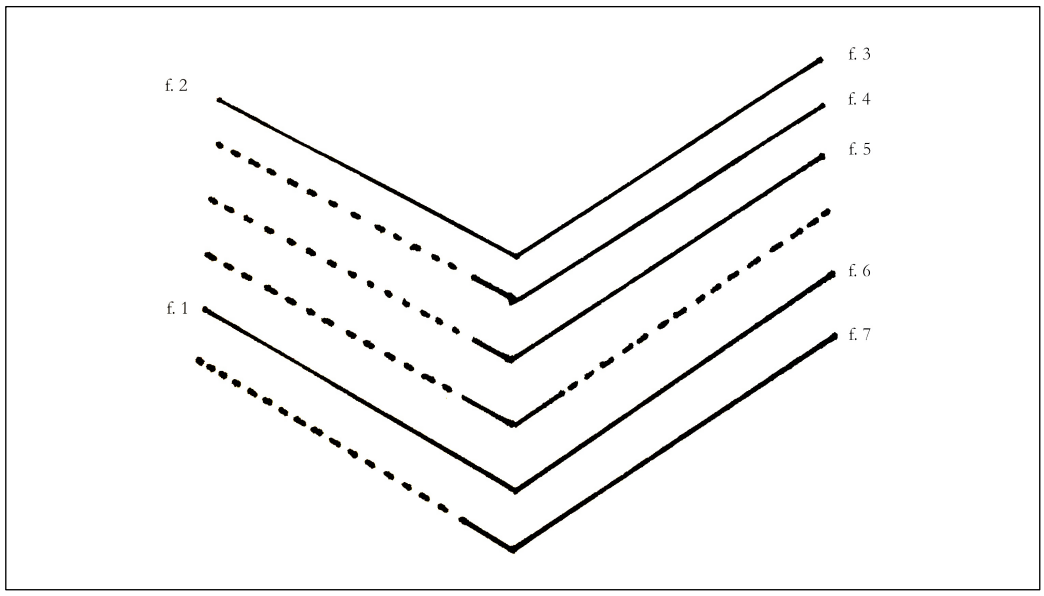


Fig. 10: A quire diagram demonstrating the codicology of the first quire of BodL, MS Rawlinson G 22, where the English lyric 'Mirie it is…' falls on the verso of f. 1, and the eleventh-century Psalter begins imperfectly on f. 2.

By projecting backwards from the now imperfect start of the psalter text, which begins part way through Psalm 6—'ossa mea; Et a*nim*a mea turbata est ualde: & tu d*omi*ne usquequo [my bones; And my soul is exceedingly troubled, and you Lord, how long?]'—we may be able to determine where the lyric section of the manuscript ended.[66] Certainly the last two of the three stubs, folios 1b and c, also retain traces of the psalter text, but, given that the scribe manages to fit between eleven and thirteen verses on the extant pages of the first quire of his psalter it is

[66] BodL, MS Rawlinson G. 22, f. 2r; Ps 6:2-3.

possible that, if the opening 'Beatus' was not highly decorative, only two of the three removed pages need have been taken up by the start of the Psalms.[67] In which case there may have been more of the English lyric on the following page when it was copied into the manuscript flyleaves in the thirteenth century. Either way, a deliberate choice has been made to archive these parts of the French and English songs within the volume.[68] The introduction of the lyrics in this space and their selective preservation there has ensured (notwithstanding the accidents of later history which have since seen leaves get lost and nibbled) the song's survival and provided the potential for on-going use.

This adding of lyrics might look like 'pasting', but does it have anything to do with cutting? It does. These fragments only exist because they have been copied, and thus metaphorically cut (according to Fleming's schema), from somewhere else.[69] In the case of written additions to books the question is: where have these fragments been cut from? From what contexts have they been torn? For phrases that recur in several places it may be possible to posit some—at least partial—suggestions. Some lyrics clearly circulated as independent units, at least among certain audiences. However, the couplet mentioned above added in several places within a set of distinctiones, 'spines brede is spiþe spete so is of pilde dure / Al to dure he it a bihþ: þe sith þar fore is spere', which also appears imbedded in a sermon in a

[67] Given that this scribe appears to exclude the first, positional, verse of each psalm there are 47 verses missing from the start of the psalter, which would fit onto four pages if the scribe copied them at a rate of just under 12 lines to a page.

[68] Or did he cut the rest of the leaves as he read them, taking them away to sing elsewhere, and leave this one folio out of indifference? In fact, the removal might well be later if the initial **B** for 'Beatus' was illuminated, even a little.

[69] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 105.

manuscript now in Durham, comes from the longer *Poema Morale*.[70] Similarly, variations on the English line 'Er þu do eny þing / þenk one þe ending' are found in later copies of *The South English Legendary*, and recur in many situations until at least the mid-sixteenth century.[71] In both of these cases the couplets seem to derive from longer texts, but extracted from these contexts the genre and purpose of the lines is reframed, transforming them into pithy gobbets of proverbial wisdom. No longer is the *Poema Morale* couplet reinforcing the need to avoid hell at all cost; now it makes an argument of its own: for temperance, the denial of luxuries, and against the dangers of theft. Here, we realise, that 'to preserve is to change'.[72]

A more dramatic transformation occurs in the addition of material with no written precedents. Short snippets of lyrics that can only be presumed to have originated from longer songs, brief snatches of a wider oral culture taken down from memory or performance, are stilled once committed to the page. In particular, what is lost with lyrics is their reliance on orality: by writing them down, the power of speech and memory is doubted. The musical soundscape is silenced as it is committed to writing. And yet, these crystalline English additions themselves reveal both the dynamism of the mass of non-textual discourse from whence they came, and the outward-looking wider use of the books to which they were added. Almost all of the lyrics and epithets added to the flyleaves of manuscripts in the thirteenth century are different; of the incipits to English lyrics listed in Laing's *Catalogue of Sources for a*

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[70] Durham, Durham University Library, MS Cosin V.III.2, f. 127v; Marcus, ed., *Das Frühmittelenglische* 'Poema Morale', 180, ll. 145-6.

[71] Bartlett Jere Whiting, with Helen Wescott Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases From English Writings Mainly Before 1500* (London: OUP, 1968) E84, 155-6. Whiting cites an instance of the lines in the *SEL* that predates their appearance in this MS; however, the phrase is not in fact found in the early *SEL* manuscript, and does not seem to be incorporated into the *SEL* until later.

[72] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 105.

Linguistic Atlas of Early Medieval English very few appear more than once.[73] Texts that are more likely to have been copied from written sources sometimes appear with greater frequency. For instance, the verse *Three Sorrowful Things* added to the lower margin of a sermon collection in the late thirteenth century is also found among the English prayers at the start of a contemporary devotional miscellany, and in another manuscript written around the same time at Stanlaw Abbey in Berkshire.[74] Meanwhile, the devotional poem *Candet Nudatem Pectus* survives in a range of different forms, with and without a Latin analogue, both as part of the original text of the manuscripts and as a later addition.[75] The heterogeneity among lyrics, in particular, suggests that an even greater degree of diversity existed within popular oral culture, because for every song from which couplets were extracted many more must never have been transcribed.[76] The intrusion of proverb and song into other types of narrative reveals this popularity. Siegfried Wenzel shows how preachers incorporated verses from vernacular lyrics into their sermons in the hope of appealing to the tastes of a secular audience.[77] Similarly, *The Owl and the Nightingale* is peppered with proverbial content: 'For hit seide þe King Alfred: /

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[73] *LAEMECat*, 165-79. The verse, 'Men them bemoanen of little truth / It is dede and þat is ruth [Men, they complain of little truth / it is dead and that is regretful]' (*DIMEV*, 3471) is copied on the flyleaf of BodL, MS Hatton 107, f. 1v and in the main textblock in Oxford, Balliol College, MS 227, f. 258r; Oxford, Merton College, MS 248, f. 166v; and Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 258, f. 136r with and without its Latin counterpart. The A-version of *Erthe upon Erthe* (*DIMEV*, 6292) appears twice, as does the *Spring Song on the Passion* (*DIMEV*, 6334), though in both cases one iteration falls within the lyric section of BL, MS Harley 2253. Several other texts that might be considered lyrics are repeated more than once, but these are transmitted within manuscripts, rather than as marginal or fly-leaf additions, for instance, 'I syke when y singe' (*DIMEV*, 2279).

[74] Oxford, New College, MS 88, f. 32r; *DIMEV*, 6341; also found in BL, MS Arundel 292, f. 3v; and LPL, MS 499, f. 125v (*LAEMECat*, 164).

[75] It is found in SJC, MS A.15, f. 120v; BL, MS Additional 11579, ff. 35v-36r, and BodL, MS Bodley 42, f. 250r; BodL, MS Digby 55, f. 49r; and BodL, MS Rawlinson C. 317, f. 89v; as well as having been added to Durham Cathedral, Dean and Chapter Library, MS A.III.12 on a scrap of parchment. See, particularly, Hanna, 'Editing Middle English Lyrics', 189-200.

[76] See, especially, Wilson, *Lost Literature*.

[77] Wenzel, *Verse in Sermons*, 73-5, 95-7; Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets*, 205.

"Selde erendeð wel þe loþe / An selde plaideð wel þe wroþe [For, King Alfred said: "Seldom does the hated man intercede well, and seldom does the angry man plead well."]'[78] Proverbs mark the speech patterns of its characters in a manner that suggests that aphoristic formulations were a common convention of spoken rhetoric. Indeed, guides to the poetic arts recommend that 'If a still more brilliant beginning is desired (while leaving the sequence of the material unchanged) make use of a proverb.'[79] In *The Owl and the Nightingale* it seems to matter less that the proverbs are unrelated to the *written* source from which they purport to derive—*The Proverbs of Alfred*—than that they are present to indicate the wit and vitality of the *oral* sparring the birds engage in. The manner in which lyrics and proverbs pervaded other areas of discourse, in the theological as well as the secular sphere, then, appears to be indicative of the vivacity of the oral tradition being excerpted. While educated writers may have included these figures to appeal to popular audiences, it is likely that the proverbial figures had also permeated their consciousness from the outside world, reflecting their significance within the soundscape. The presence of English lyrics and proverbs on flyleaves, then, shows that readers' interactions with books were outward looking, reflecting on oral discourse beyond the binding.[80] At the same time, in 'cutting' these texts from their oral context the writer '*read*' her own spoken culture. As such, these written additions present a double reading both of the book and of its oral background. The reader situates her volume within a wider culture, using the book to produce an archive of both.

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[78] Cartlidge, ed., *Owl and the Nightingale*, 23, ll. 942-4.

[79] Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova*, 22-3.

[80] From the perspective of the modern scholar, the book may even be said to stand in for its oral, non-textual counterpart as it provides the only record of this lost mass of cultural discourse.

Comparison might be made between these English jottings that point to oral culture and the more bookish addition of charms and book curses.[81] These curses put the book under divine protection, turning it into a channel for God's will in the service of its own preservation. Thus, in a thirteenth-century copy of the works of Augustine a contemporary cursive hand writes, 'Liber Sancto Marie de Ponte Roberti. Qui eum abstulerit. Aut uendiderit. uel quolibet modo ab hac domo alienauerit. uel q*ua*m libet eius partem absciderit: Sit Anathema. Maranatha. Amen [This book belongs to Saint Mary of Robert's Bridge: whosoever shall steal it, or sell it, or in any way alienate it from this house or mutilate it, let him be anathema-maranatha (subject

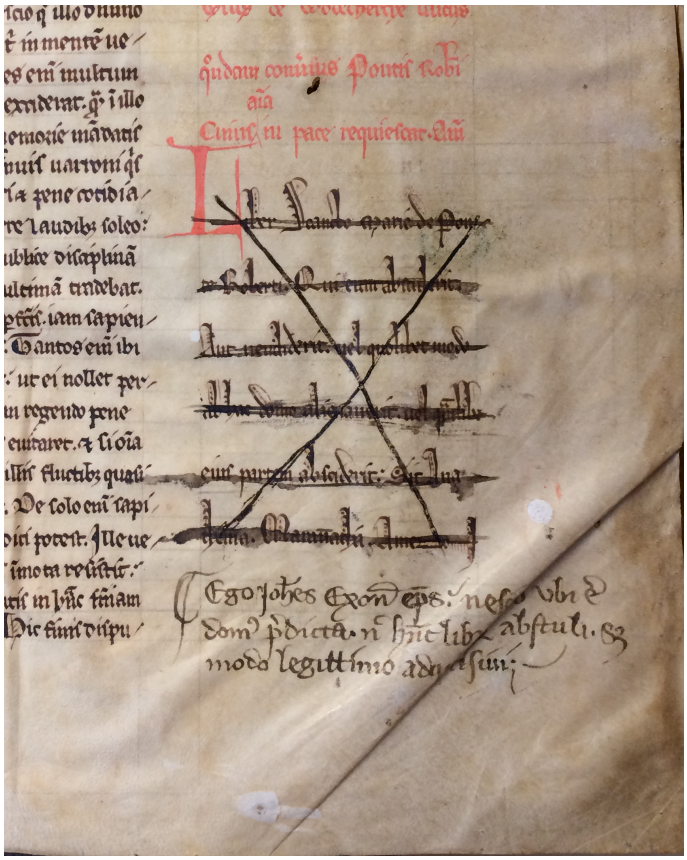


Fig. 11: BodL, MS Bodley 132, f. 228r, a reader's response to a book curse, reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

[81] For examples of these see Drogin, *Anathema!*, 65-104.

to divine punishment). Amen.]'[82] Literally, in this addition, the reader warns those who follow *not* to cut bits from the book: the verb *abscidere* is more usually used to refer to the amputation or mutilation of bodies or plants.[83] The use of the book by another person then, is figured as a violent act—reading, when it does not respect the text may be a form of cutting that damages as well as preserves. Ironically, or perhaps very earnestly, at some point in the mid-fourteenth century a later user has crossed out—deleted if not cut—this inscription, noting below it: 'Ego Joh*ann*es Exon*iensis* ep*iscopus*: nescio vbi e*st* dom*us* p*re*dicta. n*ec* hu*n*c librum abstuli. s*et* modo legittimo adquisiui [I, John Bishop of Exeter, do not know where the aforesaid house is, nor did I take this book away from there, but obtained it in a lawful manner]' (Fig. 11). Nevertheless, in the cases of book curses like this the writer not only looks out to the world beyond the book, but seeks to alter the book's position in that world by endowing the manuscript with a power of its own.

It seems that some thirteenth-century readers writing in the vernacular sought a similar type of protection—for their books and their souls—from the additions they made.[84] Most suggestive of this use is the addition of prayers and devotional texts. Items such as the Creed, Ten Commandments or Pater Noster were often written on spare blank spaces within manuscripts. Thus, on the last of the front flyleaves in a homiletic manuscript, the Tremulous

[82] BodL, MS Bodley 132, f. 228r.

[83] *DMLBS*, 'abscidere', sense 1.

[84] In the fourteenth century, the front flyleaves of Dan Michel's *Ayenbite of Inwit* (BL, MS Arundel 57, ff. 2r-11r) usefully represent the sort of material typically added in this position. Here a glossed thirteenth-century quire of Aristotle's *De Anima* has provided the flyleaves for the start of the book. After the first leaf all the available blank space, particularly the half-page lower margins, has been filled. Some of these additions are longer texts, these follow a page with several shorter additions including Dan Michel's *ex libris*; several prayers; a more personal invocation; and a shelfmark (CC) assigned under Michel's personal system: Pamela Gradon, ed., *Dan Michel's Ayenbit of Inwyt*, v. 2, EETS, OS 278 (OUP, 1979), 13. See BL, MS Arundel 57, f. 2r; Michel, *Ayenbyt of Inwyt*, 1. Dan Michel's shelfmark system is decoded by Bruce C. Barker-Benfield: *CBMLC*, BA1.1536.

Hand of Worcester has written out a long version of the Creed in English.[85] There are several reasons why these texts in particular may have made popular additions by the users of books. As with the lyrics and proverbs discussed above, the copying of prayers could be a reflection of the oral culture surrounding the book. Equally, texts from the articles of faith may have been useful items for copying practice or pen trials, as ostensibly everyone could recite them from memory.[86] English versions of the Creed and other important texts may have been used as teaching aids or memoranda among lay learners, providing a key to the Latin prayers.

However, this does not undermine the possibility that the very process of adding short religious texts into the flyleaves of books was regarded as an efficacious devotional act, increasing the manuscript's religious significance. Writing out these items could be considered a pious practice in itself—an inscribed recitation of the key tenets of faith. On top of which, the visual prompt provided by the added verses or prayers might go on to provoke further recitations by each user who visited the page thereafter. On a rear flyleaf of a Latin and French compilation that may have been intended for parish priests is a prayer to ease childbirth:

> Hail be þow holie crowche blesfolle. hail be þow holie crowche dereworþe aze wesleche are owre lord ih*esus* Christ his holie bodi fowchece sauf as he wolde and aze hem likede and seþene his holie bodi a down lyȝte aze þi swete wille was are weis lech ich þe crie merci iesu crist fader ant sone ant holi gost deleuere me of mine childe aze wes aze þi moder milde was deleuered of þe deleuere me iesu p*er* charite. þe costes . iii . pat*er* nostirs. and. thre. aue marries
>
> [Hail to you blissful holy Church. Hail to you beloved holy Church. So wisely our Lord Jesus Christ [and] his holy body vouchsafes compassion as he wants and as he likes, and since this holy body descends through your sweet will so wisely I beg you mercy. Jesus Christ, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, deliver

[85] BodL, MS Junius 121, f. vir; Norfolk, Blickling Hall, MS 6864, f. 35r.

[86] The extent to which this assertion is true may be questionable given the continued concern for teaching the key tenets shown by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and again by John Peckham in his Constitutions of 1281: see my discussion, 71-2.

> me of my child as wise as your mother mild was delivered of you. Deliver me Jesus for charity. The cost, three paternosters and three hail marys.][87]

The first person viewpoint of this prayer might suggest that it was intended for a female reader to recite during labour. Certainly, the 'cost' of the protection requested in the prayer—three Pater Nosters and three Ave Marias—explicitly directs the reader towards further observances, placing the text within a sequence of devotions. Similarly, the two-line cross that prefaces the prayer signals a devotional mode and may prompt the reader to perform the gesture or to make physical contact with the page.[88] This might explain the wear to the letter in the first quadrant of the cross, which may have been touched during the recitation of the prayer.[89] Prayers like this one, often on rolls or folded parchment pages but sometimes in small books or *libelli*, could act as 'textual amulets' employed by women during childbirth. In these cases the texts may be recited over the labouring mother, whispered into her ears, or laid across the body.[90] The letters in each quadrant of the cross that accompanies this prayer spell out the monogram 'agla', a Latin transliteration of the Hebrew 'Atha Gebri Leilan Adonai [You, O Lord, are mighty forever]', which draws on Hebrew Kabbalistic literature.[91] The *AGLA* monogram frequently occurs in thirteenth-century amuletic contexts: for instance, on the Esopus Roll it is combined with crosses alongside apotropaic charms, prayers, and length relics

[87] BodL, MS Ashmole 1280, f. 192v; *IPMEP*, 277; the text has been edited with minor omissions by Mary P. Richards, 'A Middle English Prayer to Ease Childbirth', *Notes and Queries*, 27:4 (1980), 292.

[88] See my discussion of crosses in the previous chapter, 164-77.

[89] Borland, 'Unruly Reading', 114; Rudy, 'Dirty Books', 1-2.

[90] Skemer, *Binding Words*, especially 236-78.

[91] Don C. Skemer, 'Magic Writ: Textual Amulets Worn on the Body for Protection', *Schriftträger – Textträger*, ed. Annette Kehnel and Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 143 [127-49].

to form what might be 'one of the earliest English birth girdles'.[92] Given its visual nature—as a symbolic acronym standing in for words—the presence of the *AGLA* monogram suggests that this prayer required at least some interaction on the part of the person seeking to benefit from it, who would need to look at the page in order to profit from every part of its protective qualities. That said, it was also perfectly possible for an amuletic text to be used without being read, the contact might be potent enough.[93] The presence of the book itself would ensure a safe birth. And even if this text was not subject to such direct physical involvement in the rituals of birth, it prompts a specific devotional routine with an apotropaic aim in mind. Prayers added to manuscripts, even those that are already religious in content, add further steps to and reflect the growth of their readers' devotional habits.[94] By adding devotional material to the book then, even if only to reflect the devotional landscape and routines around them, its user gave the volume a participatory role in their devotional practice, incorporating it—however sporadically—into their religious life. Readers thereby increased the spiritual significance of the book as an object, transforming it into a sort of textual amulet, the reading and use of which constituted a devotional act.[95]

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[92] Mary A. Edsall, 'Arma Christi Rolls or Textual Amulets?: The Narrow Roll Format Manuscripts of "O Vernicle"', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 9:2 (2014), 183 [178-209]. Other examples of the amuletic use of *agla* include its inscription on pendants ('2002,0305.1', *British Museum Collection Database* (London: British Museum, 2017) <www.britishmuseum.org/collection>) or rings (O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Finger Rings, Early Christian, Byzantine, Teutonic, Medieval and Later* (London: British Museum, 1912), 135-6). See also Rikke Steenholt Olesen, 'Runic Amulets from Medieval Denmark', *Futhark*, 1 (2010), 171-2 [161-76].

[93] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 133-8.

[94] Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 13 characterises medieval devotional practice as 'a series of habits, [that] was never finished.' People added to these habits over time accruing more and more steps in their devotional routine, and adding to manuscripts provided just one way that these gestures could accrete.

[95] A parallel may be drawn with readers of sixteenth-century prayerbooks who added indulgenced prayers to their books to 'transform[ ] the manuscript…[in]to a vehicle for purgatorial remission': Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 203.

Other English additions to the flyleaves of a manuscript could also be interpreted as an act of personalisation. In these cases, a short verse may have had a personal significance to the book's user that caused them to write it at the beginning of their books as a variant on an *ex libris* or motto. It has been suggested, for instance, that the poem *Erthe upon Erthe*, which was copied on to 'the spare leaves at the beginning or the end' of many volumes later in the middle ages, provided an apt 'epigraph' due to its preoccupation with mortality, 'recall[ing] for readers the transience of a dead predecessor.'[96] The verse 'ic am nout for þisse þinge þo [I am not for this thing woeful]', written by the Tremulous Hand of Worcester on final blank flyleaf of twelfth-century volume of Old English homilies, may constitute a similar personal intervention.[97] Following Rudolph Vleeskruyer, Christine Franzen describes this line as a 'snatch of a lyric', but the use of the personal pronoun and the value judgement expressed may suggest that it presents an actual expression of personal response. Though the Tremulous Hand was undoubtedly an active reader—and an avid glossator—it is unusual for him to make written additions exhibiting wider interests without a specific devotional function.[98] So this tag seems to provide an unprecedented insight into this scribe's reflections upon his own reading. Perhaps he wished to register his approval of the volume for future readers or for himself rereading it later. Certainly, as with many of the books he glossed, the Tremulous Hand returned to this manuscript on a number of occasions, some of which have been shown to

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[96] Boffey, *English Courtly Love Lyrics*, 29. See Hilda M. R. Murray, ed., *Erthe upon Erthe*, EETS, OS 141 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1911), ix, xxxv.

[97] BodL, MS Hatton 116, p. 398; *DIMEV*, 2123: *DIMEV* catalogues this line as 'I am not for this thing tho', but thorn and wynn can be easily distinguished in this hand. Other notes in his hand, possibly made at a number of different times include two lines of music without lyrics (136), and several other Latin and English epithets in ink and lead (397-8): see Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 47.

[98] Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 47. He does add devotional texts such as the Creed in English (BodL, MS Junius 121) or instructional lines on 'what it means to pray in the name of Jesus' (BodL, MS Hatton 115, f. 154; Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 43).

postdate this addition.[99] Alternatively, it may be that Franzen is right, and this line is simply an example, unusual for this scribe, of a fragment of song heard or remembered and archived for posterity. Indeed, both motivations may be at work. For why add this half remembered line and not that one? The selection of verses that users added to their manuscripts must constitute, on some level, an assertion of personal taste—whether that be for the words themselves, their form and style, or their textual content.

Adapting Books for Personal Use

Some attempts to personalise a manuscript to its user interfered more substantially in the structure of the volume. The addition of English texts to blank, unwritten leaves, though it often involved similar texts and performed many of the same functions identified above, makes concrete the connection between the physical cutting and sewing of books and the metaphorical cut performed by the written addition. Commonly, blank leaves fall at the end of quires, usually where the text planned for that quire has not filled the whole unit. See, for instance, two blank folios, one of them ruled, following a Latin and French sermon at the end of the fourth quire of a devotional miscellany with a Norwich pressmark.[100] As Ralph Hanna notes, there are several reasons a copyist may chose to leave blanks rather than copy items directly one after the other: 'some scribes may seek the neatness of beginning, where possible,

[99] Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 44-8.

[100] BL, MS Arundel 292, ff. 39 and 39b (unfoliated), on the rear of the second folio is the quire mark 'IIII'. Further blanks are found in this volume at f. 86v, and ff. 113-5 at the end of the book were formerly blank, and are now covered in additional texts and notes.

new major works at the tops of blank rectos or at the head of blank quires'.[101] In some cases these blank spaces—and the short 'quire fillers' that regularly get added to them—suggest a form of booklet-based manuscript production that anticipated and gave users the option to adapt and augment their books.[102] Certainly, in manuscript compilations that house several 'parts' written at different times by different hands it is likely that each section of the book at some point circulated independently or existed as a self-sufficient unit in a larger volume that has since been broken up.[103] The combination of independent booklets like this into one binding demonstrates how owners could stitch together a book made up of constituent parts according to their interests and use. A volume mainly containing grammatical and moral treatise in a variety of hands, for instance, suggests a scholastic user or a schoolmaster who compiled the items for teaching purposes.[104] Nevertheless, without contemporary notes on the contents in the manuscript itself or continuous datable annotations or foliation throughout the volume, it can be hard to know when the booklets were brought together, and many may not have been compiled until they reached the libraries of seventeenth century antiquarian

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[101] Ralph Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 110 [100-111].

[102] These terms have been contested in the last decade having been established by P. R. Robinson, 'Self-Contained Units in Composite Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Period', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 7 (1978), 231-8. Hanna's terms 'booklet as purchased' and 'booklet as produced' loosely equate to what Kwakkel calls 'usage unit' and 'production unit' respectively, see Alexandra Gillespie, 'Medieval Books, Their Booklets, and Booklet Theory', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 16 (2011), 22 [1-29].

[103] Gillespie, 'Booklet Theory', 4 worries that this poses a flaw in Robinson's definition, because 'sometimes new booklets were made from old books' that were not intentionally constructed by the booklet method, such as those booklets circulating independently, either unbound or in limp parchment wrappers (which might be one meaning of the phrase '*in pergameno*' in medieval library catalogues).

[104] See Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 59. The respective parts of this manuscript seem to have come together early in its history. An inscription recording the donation of the volume to Lanthony Priory (f. 3r) suggests that this manuscript is the same as a book recorded in the mid fourteenth-century library catalogue: *CBMLC*, A.16.

collectors.[105] Several of the miscellanies in the Digby classmark at the Bodleian Library, for example, show no evidence of having been bound together prior to entering Kenelm Digby's collection, when they were bound in their recognisable bindings and sometimes marked up throughout with his own symbolic key.[106]

More convincing evidence for the thirteenth-century engagement with booklets as a model for adapting or personalising a book to the owner's use might be sought in manuscripts where booklets were used as 'a single mode of production' for a larger volume.[107] Parkes and Tschann's analysis of BodL, MS Digby 86, a large miscellany as it now stands, suggests that its quires were kept unsewn and unbound for some time, and that 'the unbound gatherings originated as two separate sections to receive different types of text' along with a further 'separate booklet' of four leaves.[108] They deduce from this that the 'two sections were originally regarded as two discrete but complementary collections.'[109] Later the scribe produced a 'bridge' section that joined the two main gatherings, and in-filled the remaining blank spaces between them to produce a cohesive volume.[110] As well as making it easy for the scribe to separate out his texts thematically and linguistically, producing his volume as several booklets

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[105] Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts', 101-2; Gillespie, 'Booklet Theory', 22-5; and especially Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 1-84. In the case of early print *Sammelbände* Alexandra Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*', *HLQ*, 67:2 (2004), 195-6 [189-214] notes how many Tudor *Sammelbände* were disbound and broken up into their constituent booklets in the nineteenth century, further disrupting scholarly efforts to reconstruct the "original" form of the material.

[106] In this corpus see, for example, BodL, MS Digby 2; BodL, MS Digby 4.

[107] Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts', 102.

[108] Parkes and Tschann, *Digby 86*, i, xliii.

[109] Parkes and Tschann, *Digby 86*, xliv.

[110] Parkes and Tschann, *Digby 86*, xlv-xlvii. Their collation formula for this volume, adapted to show the breaks between booklets (||) and 'bridge' section (|), is as follows: iii + [Quire missing] i^8; ii^8 + one after 7; iii^8; iv^8; [Quire missing]; v^8; vi^8 wants 8; vii^8; $viii^8$; | ix^8; x^8; xi^8; xii^8; $xiii^8$; xiv^8; [Quires missing]; | xv^8; xvi^{12}; $xvii^8$; $xviii^8$; xix^8; xx^8; || xxi^4; || $xxii^8$; $xxiii^8$; $xxiv^8$; xxv^8; $xxvi^6$ wants 2; || xxvii two singleton leaves + iii (see xli-xlii).

allowed him to 'forestall[ ] or delay[ ]…any…absolute decisions about the form of the final product', and accrue further texts related to the major interests of each of the main gatherings—practical prose and secular verse—as the exemplars became available.[111] Here, then, the scribe—who, as Parkes and Tschann have showed, was seemingly also the first user of the manuscript[112]—has employed booklets as a mode of production in order that he may retain the flexibility of his collection, augmenting the early material with further texts to create subject specific sections and juxtapositions. In fact, it seems that even once the order of the quires was set and marked, with quire signatures running from A-Y across the current quires ix-xxvi, the book remained unbound.[113] Significant wear on the outer leaves of several quires, especially those towards the end of the current volume, suggests they existed outside of a binding for a considerable amount of time. Some quires even appear to have been folded across the diameter and carried separately.[114] This allowed further infill texts to be added easily, making full use of page space. Thus, most of the first seven pages of the small four folio booklet (quire xxi) are taken up with the English fabliau of *Dame Siriþ*, which left twelve lines of the second column of the final recto, and the whole of the final verso of the booklet blank.[115] The scribe has then returned in two separate stints to add material into the remaining space.

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[111] Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts', 103.

[112] Parkes and Tschann, *Digby 86*, lvii. There is more than one scribe active in this volume; a second hand known as Scribe B copied two quires, ff. 81-96. However, since his work is purely supplementary to the volume, and Scribe A provided the headings, corrections, and decoration throughout (xxxix), it is reasonable to suspect that these quires came into his possession as part of a part-finished copy, or were appropriated 'from his exemplar', sparing him the need to copy the whole item himself (xlv). Scribe A has been convincingly identified as one Richard de Grimhill II, a member of the Worcestershire gentry (lvii-lx).

[113] Parkes and Tschann, *Digby 86*, xlii, xlvii.

[114] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 65-207. Robinson, 'The Format of Books', 41 identifies this treatment as typical in booklet productions.

[115] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 165r-168r; *DIMEV*, 594.

The Names of a Hare in English begins in a slightly more compact script, directly below *Dame Siriþ* filling the column and continuing on the other side of the page.[116] 'Les dolerous iours del an' then completes the page, extending into the margin, in a script that is more tightly packed and current again.[117] Both of these later additions by the scribe finish too close to the manuscript's gutter to have been written after the book had been bound, rather they seem to have been added to fill up the space while the gathering was still loose. By constructing his books in this way the scribal-reader 'opened the manuscript up to possibility and to change' from its very inception, equipping it to be augmented and shaped towards its users changing needs and allowing the reader to determine the relationship between its constituent parts or to interact with one part at a time.[118] As a reader, this scribe was constantly adapting his volume by adding to and developing its unfixed constituent parts.

[116] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 168r-v; *DIMEV*, 5389.

[117] BodL, MS Digby 86, ff. 168v.

[118] Gillespie, 'Booklet Theory', 24.

The retention of blank quires at the end of booklets allowed users to further adapt and personalise their volumes after the gatherings had been brought together. Short anomalous texts found at the end of quires like this were often selected by scribes to fill out left over space. But, owners also added them at later dates.[119] Thus, on a blank folio left in a collection probably

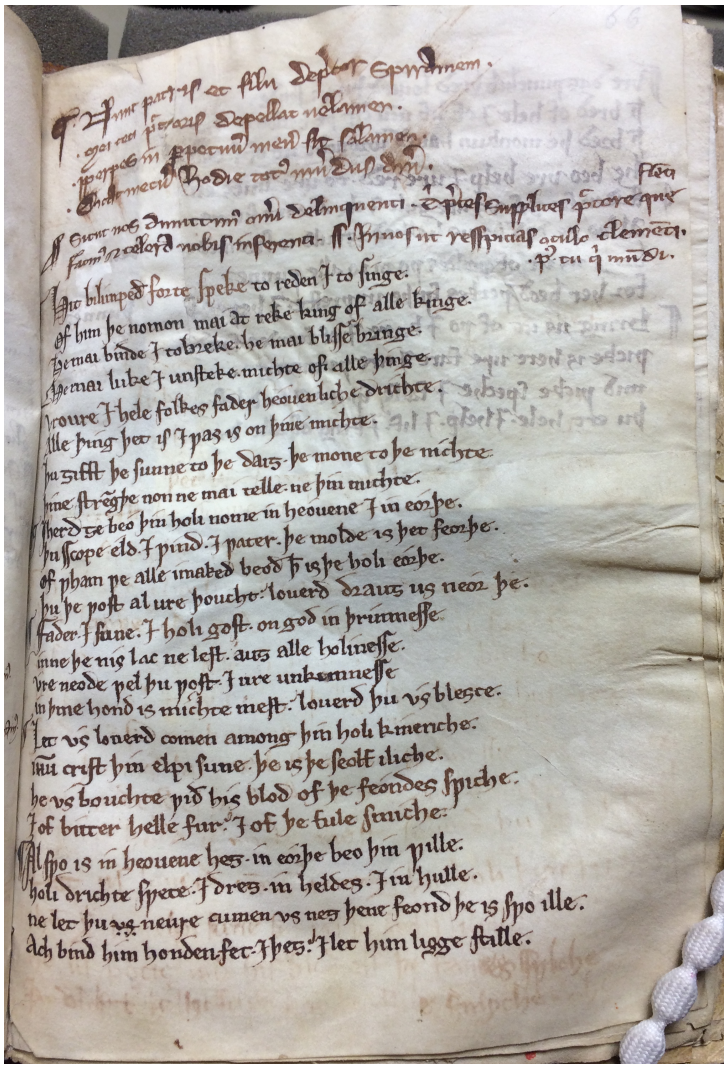


Fig. 12: Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 59, f. 66r, English verses written over a crayon draft. Reproduced with permission of the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

[119] Rudy, *Piety in Pieces* provides many examples. The lyric 'Foweles in þe frith', preserved by itself with spacious musical notation on what otherwise might be a blank folio of BodL, MS Douce 139, f. 5r, may be an example of a quire filler added by a user of the manuscript, but the codicological examination proved inconclusive.

used as a teaching book in the monastery at Llanthony a reader has first drafted an English devotional verse in lead, and then made a neat copy over it in pen (Fig. 12).[120] It has been a commonplace in the teaching of codicology to state that when the scribe did not complete a gathering the blank leaves were removed and reused as writing supports elsewhere. Certainly removal occurred with some frequency (as discussed in the opening of this chapter). However, in this corpus there is little to support the idea that this removal was a conventional practice; rather it seems that blank leaves at the end of quires were regularly left within the volume with the expectation that they would be used at a later date. For instance, extra text has been added to the blank leaves throughout an eleventh-century Worcester Breviary, including on the recto of the final folio of a quire in the space below the end of the text, some short instructions in English on the best days for blood-letting:

> þreo dapes beoþ on tþeolf moneþ. þ( ) / beoþ spuþe unhalepende monne oþer / nutene. blod on to forletene. oþer drnc to / drinkene. þet is þe æftemeste monan dai
>
> [Three days there are in twelve months th[at] are very unlucky for man on any night to let blood, or drink drinks, that is on the following Monday.][121]

The same text is also found earlier in the volume, but here it has been copied at the end of a quire containing Old English prognostics.[122] It seems this reader felt that the information more useful when displayed with other items intended to aid planning for and predicting the future. By adding the text here then, the reader recontextualises the item, allowing it to be used as a

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[120] Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 59, ff. 66r-v. For more on the manuscript's provenance see R. M. Thompson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Oxford* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), 31; Carleton Brown, 'A Thirteenth-Century Manuscript from Llanthony Priory', *Speculum*, 3 (1928), 587-95; Margaret Gibson and Nigel Palmer, 'Manuscripts of Alan of Lille, "Anticlaudianus" in the British Isles', *Studi Medievali*, 28:3 (1987), 991-2 [905-1001].

[121] CCCC, MS 391, p. 721; Max Förster, 'Die Altenglischen Traumlunare', *Englische Studien*, 60 (1925–6), 77 [58-93]. The scribe who wrote these instructions is identified as the Tremulous Hand, but if so this represents a larger and less immediately striking example of his script (Franzen, *Tremulous Hand*, 69).

[122] CCCC, MS 391, p. 718.

reference text by readers seeking to prepare themselves for the future, while also placing it in a practical location at the end of the volume for quick and easy location. Meanwhile, on the final folio of a quire from a late twelfth-century collection of Latin verses, a hand of a similar period has written a macaronic formula for the visitation of the sick.[123] Here, each language is copied in a different colour, switching between black, green, and red. Though the languages are not colour-coded—English is written first in green and later red—the changes in colour clarify the distinctions between them, allowing the reader, or perhaps readers, to identify the separate parts easily. Similarly, a blank leaf at the end of a quire in a booklet from the beginning of the fourteenth-century containing a Latin treatise attributed to 'Magistri Guidonis', which is now bound into a composite volume, has been used by a hand of a similar date to copy out the English prologue to a now lost dramatic work.[124] Both of these items, then, might be referred to as prompts for performance, one providing the cues to a religious rite and the other prompts for an actor beginning a play. In these cases, written additions are facilitated by the retention of blank folios, which allow the book to be adapted to the needs of their readers who used them as part of an interaction with the wider world.

Could it be the case that manuscript producers retained blanks with this practice in mind? It is my contention that the provision of blank space might sometimes have been deliberate: that rather than being fortuitously left and used by readers, blank leaves were recognised by the producers of books as available for the use of readers, eliciting writing purposefully. Certain types of text are clearly laid out to provide space for users to make additions to them. In a notebook from the thirteenth century sizable gaps have been left

[123] BL, MS Cotton Titus D. xxiv, f. 156.

[124] CUL, MS Mm.I.18, f. 62r; Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, EETS, SS 1 (OUP, 1970), 114-5.

between the topics covered by a series of thirteenth-century *distinctiones* for the inclusion of additional references, and additions are found in a number of hands from later in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The couplet from *Poema Morale* discussed above is just one example; on another folio, under the heading 'Cont*ra* Luxuriam', several additional biblical references have been noted in cursive scripts along with the English, '¶Wyles þat hi wohe goldt is an mi gloue whanne ihc haue mi wille ydon soþes goldt nis þar non [While I woo I am free with my money, when I have done my will, true gold there is none.]'[125] Indeed, in some cases the gaps between headings in this notebook have been almost entirely filled, resulting in pages featuring five or more hands; while in others almost an entire double page spread has been left blank and devoid of additions.[126] In these examples, the material added to the books not only responds to and furthers the intended use of the texts—collecting more examples of recipes, or theological *distinctiones*—and thereby demonstrates their on-going relevance; these additions are also documenting the interaction between the book and the culture surrounding it. Here, the book's owners make connections between the content of their book and information they had heard, read, or recognised elsewhere—they look outwards from the page, putting their book into dialogue with a network of other sources. Additions could also turn books outward, putting their content into dialogue with the outside world, for instance as preaching materials, protective charms, legal proofs, or archives of popular culture. In this way books became personalised to the reader's own knowledge and interests, accruing material that was relevant to this particular user at this particular time. It seems that, in the production

[125] Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, f. 54r: see *MED*, 'gold (n.)', sense 8.

[126] Compare Maidstone, Maidstone Museum, MS A.13, ff. 56v-57r with 65v-66r.

of manuscript compilations, accretive text collections such as notebooks provided a model for approaching the codex as a whole.

Within such book use, blank leaves were retained at the end of production units with the expectation that later users would want to make additions to their books, and would use the space to insert further texts and images to adapt the volume to their own tastes and needs. Leaves that were left blank after already having been ruled might be the best evidence of such an expectation.[127] All parchment has undergone significant preparation to make it ready to receive writing, but the ruled page visually flags its own preparedness.[128] To those familiar with the manuscript page a ruled folio acts out its blankness, framing the space where writing is not, and thereby showing where it could be. Even when quires were pre-ruled in a single operation scribes or readers would have realised the additional potential produced by the ruled, but unwritten, page. Ruled blanks, then, may appeal more strongly to the 'urge to fill' than other empty leaves, their prior preparation apparently saving the writer time while also ensuring neatness. However, the behaviour of medieval book users does not suggest they shared our modern hesitation over marking 'the pristine writing surface'.[129] Indeed, blank leaves attract not just verses, phrases, and texts, but all sorts of non-textual material: pen trials, sketches, and other extraneous marks. The final blank verso of a singleton inserted into BodL, MS Digby 86, for instance, has been filled with a drawing of a piper.[130] The intensive preparation process and high value of parchment may even have meant that if blanks were not

[127] For instance, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, f. 155v; BodL, MS Laud Misc. 471, ff. 183-6; CUL, MS Ff.vi.15, ff. 55v-57r.

[128] For good descriptions of parchment preparation see de Hamel, *Scribes and Illuminators*, 8-13, 17-25; or Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, 8-11.

[129] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 129.

[130] BodL, MS Digby 86, f. 16v.

to be removed *from* the volume then it became a pressing requirement to use them *in* the volume.[131] The potential of blank pages did not escape manuscript producers who knowingly left them within volumes. Rather, the choice to retain blank leaves demonstrates an acknowledgement of the generative ways readers engaged with their books, and how they cut and stitched material from within and without the volume in order to shape it to their own use.

Reading early Middle English then, was a process of adaptation and production. Without the taught, institutionally regulated practices of Latin reading, vernacular reading was necessarily makeshift, with each engagement requiring a new act of cutting and sticking by the reader. Creative reading practices were also unavoidably physically engaged—they required the reader's intervention into the material form of the book. Indeed, it seems books were designed with an awareness of this. The material vernacular readers generated needed to go somewhere, and the blank spaces left within books by their produces invited these additions. Generative reading, then, led to growing manuscripts.

[131] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 130.

CONCLUSION

Creative Reading in Practice

Various under-used seams of evidence have (we have seen) put pressure on the types of reading practice available to high medieval readers of English literature. The many and various modes of reading this evidence has revealed might accurately be gathered together under the designation 'creative reading'. In contrast to institutionalised practices of Latin reading taught within schools, monasteries, and universities, reading early Middle English was by necessity a creative process.[1] Whereas studies of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin reading have tended to emphasize the dichotomy between continuous, monastic *lectio* and developing scholastic practices of selective reference reading, vernacular reading was governed by no such established methodologies. As such, reading in early Middle English was various and non-binary in nature. Though it may sometimes entail either continuous or discontinuous aspects, it could be continuous and/or discontinuous in a number of ways.[2] The act of reading in early Middle English therefore constituted a destabilisation of learned reading practice, decentralising taught Latin practices in favour of a more anarchic approach.

[1] See my comparison to comments by Hahn, 'Early Middle English', 85 on writing: 155.

[2] For a similar point about later materials, see Sawyer, 'Navigation by Tab and Thread', 114.

Consistent, though, is the improvised nature of the process. Reading in early Middle English required, from both scribes and readers, an engagement with the text that was unmet by established vernacular conventions. Such practices might be figured as creative in three main ways.

Creative Reading Practices

Creativity in reading practices takes many forms. Perhaps the most apparent example is that of the scribe reading his exemplar, which is identifiable only because it results in the creation of a new copy of the text. The copying process itself required the scribe to perform at least some level of reading—be it concentrated, nugatory, or memorialised—in order to transfer the text of the exemplar onto the new page. Thus, scribes are probably the only readers who we can assert engaged with texts all the way through, allowing for the temporal pauses and multiple phases associated with the copying process.[3] Indeed, the difficulty of proving continuous reading may, to some degree, account for the current critical interest in discontinuous reading: short of checking off every letter, readers' marks and annotations will only ever be fragmentary.[4] Even continuous reading did not necessarily occur by a single method or in a linear fashion, rather it was inflected by temporal breaks, external influences, and partial re-reading. Nevertheless, scribes provide a model for the range of practices and responses that

[3] See, on later book production, Wakelin, 'Writing the Words', 35-8.

[4] A hypothetical exception might be a reader, like the one described by James Strachey, 'Some Unconcious Factors in Reading', *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 11 (1930), 323 [322-31] who was compelled to tick off every page as he read, or when reading something important, every word.

may have been available to less-traceable readers. Chiefly, this thesis has identified a number of specific practices that function at several levels within the work:

1. Surface level scanning that occurred semi-automatically or unconsciously, often with little regard for the sense of the text. This practice is revealed by disruptions like homeographic errors, by which scribes substituted one word with another similar looking word; or by disruptions in word or line order, caused by the scribes' failure to accurately decipher or remember the series they had read. Surface level reading, then, might entail rapid construal or nugatory memorisation of short sections of the text.
2. Fragmentary word-by-word or letter-by-letter focus used to decipher passages that disrupted the scribe's reading fluency. Such practices might be revealed by nonsensical errors of orthography caused by the scribe's attempt to construe each letter individually.
3. Engaged in-depth reading, which was invested in the form and content of the text, and made an effort to relate this to the audience. Such practices may not always be materially visible, for instance, if the scribe's primary objective was to transmit the work accurately from his exemplar. However, some scribes were active in their efforts to modernise, adapt, or shape the text to their own, and their future readers', needs.

Other scribal reading practices are less easily categorised. Frequently, the level or type of engagement scribes had with their exemplar was triggered by particular textual or formal features, and the logic behind these decisions may be less immediately apparent. Furthermore, most scribes employed several reading practices in parallel, with certain practices coming to the fore in response to particular textual cues. Each copy produced by scribal reading, then, was its own *Mischsprachen* of practices as much as of dialects. Reading early Middle English was not a case of either/or, but of both/and.[5]

Scribal readers were also responsible for setting up the text for the users who followed them. The design of the page, including decisions to copy, omit, or introduce new graphic elements, was often itself a process of creative invention. Textual apparatus and features of

[5] See Liuzza, 'Scribal Habit', especially 149.

layout that became commonplace in Latin, and increasingly in French, texts by the end of the twelfth century were not conventional to written English.[6] Each iteration of the English manuscript page, then, constituted a process of (re)invention. Not only did scribes *create* their own copy of a pre-existing text, but they also often *re*created the graphic elements with which it travelled. Scribal reading practice was therefore 'creative' in the fullest sense of the word. The sources of inspiration for scribes' graphic interventions might be subjected to further exploration. Contemporary Latin and French material—which, significantly in this corpus of multilingual manuscripts, was often found within the same binding and copied by the same scribe as the English text—may be one analogue, as it was for subject and form.[7] These works surely influenced the layouts and graphic features employed by twelfth- and thirteenth-century copyists working in English. Thus, in Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, which provides the focus for Chapter Two, it seems that one of the scribe's predecessors found titles on some of his Latin and French exemplars and undertook to provide them for the remaining texts in his volume as well.[8] In some cases, then, scribes and readers were forced to refer to their other reading experiences in order to understand the protocols at work on the page before them. Writing in English was intertextual, asking readers to approach the page openly, to read widely, and to make connections between the works that they encountered.

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[6] Parkes, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', 35-70; Parkes, 'Layout and Presentation', 55-74; Rouse and Rouse, '*Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* Revisited', 113-34; Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons*, 7-39; and Martin and Vezin, *Mise en Page et Mise en Texte*.

[7] Cannon, *Grounds*, 11. For work on the analogues and continuities from earlier English material see also Weiskott, *English Alliterative Verse*; Thomas Bredehoft, *Early English Metre* (University of Toronto Press, 2005), 99-120; Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*; or Treharne and Swan, eds., *Rewriting Old English in the Twelfth Century*.

[8] Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, ff. 144r-257v; see my discussion, 102-4.

Readers, like scribes, had to take an improvisational approach to the graphic conventions of the page, adapting their reading practice to accommodate the changing use of space. As Chapter Three demonstrated, graphic signs—like paraphs—that signified one thing in one place might mean something quite different in another. Here, the visual significance of coloured initials and other graphic signs might signal to readers that some aspect of the text was important, but not what the importance of it was. The layout of the page could only aid readers' comprehension of the work if they were able to interpret it creatively.

Evidence of the creative interactions readers had with the text is often found in the physical interventions that readers made into the material form of their books. Such interventions are reflective of the psychological and physiological process creative reading entailed.[9] Reading, here, was a form of embodied labour that required a physical outlet.[10] In the case of mark-making this outlet might entail gestural or responsive drawing in ink, soft point, or sometimes with the edge of a fingernail. Drawn responses could be highly involved, as with the detailed coloured manicules that touch the start of each of a set of three Latin verses copied with their English equivalents in a poetic volume.[11] The process of design that accompanied such decorative responses, and the unique appearance they gave the page, provided an *aide-memoire* by which readers might recall or locate the passage marked. Other, more ubiquitous marks—like crosses—may be made for a number of unexceptional reasons, serving multiple practical purposes, such as flagging items of interest, mistakes in need of correction, or

[9] Processes that might also include the kinds of affective gestures described by Amsler, 'Affective Literacy', 88-92; Solterer, 'Seeing, Hearing, Tasting Woman', 130-1; Robertson, '"This Living Hand"', 31-2.

[10] Ideas regarding the 'embodied physical labour' of reading are currently being developed by Catherine Brown: Brown, 'Manuscript is the New Digital'.

[11] TCC, MS B.14.39, ff. 83v-84r.

passages for extraction into commonplace books. Despite the significant differences in their forms, though, the commonality between these non-verbal signs, as well as apparently more verbal symbols such as *nota* marks, is the way in which they bring the reader's hand, and with it their body, into the book.

Similarly, readers who cut and stick in their books show physically engaged reading practices. In fact, as Juliet Fleming has shown, cutting and sticking may themselves be regarded and modes of reading.[12] Thus, early Middle English additions to the flyleaves of books can be described as acts of reading, both because they entail 'cutting' from an unwritten textual culture, and because the passages cut are 'woven' into the textual context of the book. To read by cutting and pasting, then whether literally or metaphorically, is unavoidably physically involved. It requires tools—knife, pen, hand, eye, needle, and thread. The physicality of such reading practices therefore results in the improvised generation of new material. Physical interventions are creative, whether the material created be additional marks in the margins, snippets of English song, or cuts from the manuscript page. In creative reading practice, the book grows as it is read.

Reading Outside of the Book

A consistent feature of creative reading, which has recurred throughout the thesis, is the way in which readers use features of the material text to put their reading into dialogue with the wider world—physically, textually, and temporally. This feature of reading is demonstrated most clearly by readers described in Chapter Five, who added proverbs, lyrics, and other

[12] Fleming, 'Afterword', 552; see also Smyth, '"Shreds of Holinesse", 481.

snippets of early Middle English verse to the blank space within their books. In these cases readers reveal that they are drawing on a vast, predominantly unwritten, repository of English text. That this unwritten material might be copied into books shows it too was available to be read, memorised, archived, or discarded: actions that could be literalised once their copying gave the unwritten corpus a material form.[13] Meanwhile, locating such snippets within the book makes the book participatory in these wider textual networks also. Sometimes this means putting the book's pre-existing content into dialogue with other—orally circulating—material, such as prayers or proverbs. These could be used to respond to, extend, or adapt, the already-written text: for instance, the addition of English proverbs to collections of Latin or French wisdom.[14] In other cases, it may mean—more abstractly—that the texts within the book were assimilated into the reader's wider textual experience: as marked by the blending of written and unwritten textuality recorded on its pages.

The application of titles to vernacular works may, in fact, suggest that the written text was always already present beyond the pages of the book. While it may be that Latin and French material provided pre-existing written precedents for scribes seeking to add textual apparatus to their copies, the wording of the titles themselves was reliant on scribes' wider textual experiences. Chapter Two has shown that widely circulated titles, such as 'Manuel de Pechiez', may have been drawn from the shared knowledge that allowed readers to discuss works easily—whether they had read them or not—outside of the book, and perhaps outside of written experience. In some senses, therefore, the application of titles by scribes as part of their copying practice, and the addition of short texts to the margins of manuscripts by later

[13] Butterfield, 'Why Medieval Lyric?', 331-4.

[14] See, 211-17.

readers, are part of the same interplay between the book and the textual world beyond its covers. Due to their immaterial nature, the small snippets copied into books in the form of lyrics, proverbs in the margins, or lines incorporated into sermons, are some of the few records of the existence of such a 'cultural repository'.[15] These additions provided a means of archiving a small quantity—intentionally or not—of the available circulating oral material. A wider survey of the form and content of thirteenth-century English marginal additions and textual inserts may therefore reveal some of this 'lost literature' with 'the potential of broadening our literary canons as well as complicating our models for oral and written literacies.'[16] Such additions, therefore, demonstrate that what we might think of as a stable corpus of texts available to readers was actually a much more porous and transient assemblage of written and unwritten material.

Smaller graphic devices may be equally reflective of an outward-looking reading practice that occurred beyond the pages of the book. The bodily involvement that accompanied the generation of non-verbal, as well as verbal, marks (as noted above) may have been just one of a set of gestural responses to the content of the text or the act of reading itself. Responses that we may speculate continued outside of the volume in the form of devotional gestures or poses, prayers, nervous ticks, or simply the vocalisation of their reading. Such acts situated reading practice within, and were determined by, the surrounding environment. Reading that involved the performance of devotional gestures, for instance, might occur at a particular time

[15] See, for instance, Butterfield, 'Why Medieval Lyric?', 327-36; MacDonald, 'Cultural Repertory of Middle Scots Lyric', 59-85.

[16] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Competing Archives, Competing Histories: French and Its Cultural Locations in Late-Medieval England: 3. "Invisible Archives?" Later Medieval French in England', *Speculum*, 90:3 (2015), 673 [653-73].

and in a particular space.[17] At the same time, reading that involved performances like this, or the singing of lyrics recorded with music on the flyleaves of books, became part of the space around them, contributing to the movement and the soundscape.[18] By practising embodied reading, then, the reader incorporated the book into the time and space beyond its covers.

Creative Reading as Use

When the book is opened up to the world around it, practices of reading may move towards use.[19] By incorporating gesture—however small—into their reading, for instance, users began to involve the book in practices beyond those that we might now recognise as reading: reading and touching, reading and moving, reading and speaking. By establishing a physically involved relationship with the book these interactions provide a precedent for more divergent uses of the book. For example, the written crosses discussed above, which prompted readers to make the sign of the cross during their prayers—as in some copies of *Ancrene Wisse*—involve the book in the reader's devotional habits.[20] In this way the book may become associated with

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[17] For spatially determined reading, see, for instance Ryan Perry and Lawrence Tuck, '"[W]heþyr þu redist er herist redyng, I wil be plesyd wyth þe": Margery Kempe and the Locations for Middle English Devotional Reading and Hearing', *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 133-48; Mary Flannery, 'Privy Reading', *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 149-64.

[18] See, for instance the lyric 'Mirie it is while sumer ilast' on BodL, Rawlinson G. 22, f. 1v. Kim, '"Playing the Medieval Lyric"' and others have begun to consider the implications of such soundscapes to the history of reading.

[19] Such findings dovetail with recent scholarship in other periods that focuses on use, rather than reading. For instance, Sherman, *Book Use*; Price, *How to…*; Price, 'History of a Book to a "History of the Book"', 123-7; and Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory: 1500-1700* (University of Chicago Library, 2005), especially 40-61.

[20] Robertson, 'Savoring "Scientia"', 130-1.

the act of devotion, its presence providing a prompt to the actions of prayer more so than the words on the page—which a reader who performed them regularly would no doubt know without recourse to the text.

Similarly, by adding to and altering the content of their books readers might purposefully adapt them for other uses. For instance, the birthing prayer discussed in Chapter Five, which was added to the flyleaves of one book, seems to indicate that the volume was used during childbirth.[21] While this prayer may have little impact on how the rest of the volume was read, since it has been added in a blank space at the back, it points to the possibility that the book also participated in the rituals surrounding birth as a protective token. In the fifteenth century, texts of this sort are found written on birth girdles that were read over, laid across, or wrapped around the mother during labour.[22] It might be that books in this period could be laid on or touched to the body in a similar way, the potency of the prayer providing protection without the need for reading.[23] Other applications in medicine and devotion might see books taking on a similar ritualised role, the knowledge they contained being transferred by touch instead of, or as well as, reading. Reading, then, was not the clean silent practice we might associate with the verb today; reading was an action that took place in the world and stretched far beyond the boundaries of the book.

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[21] BodL, MS Ashmole 1280, f. 192v; Richards, 'Middle English Prayer to Ease Childbirth', 292. See my discussion, 229-31.

[22] Skemer, *Binding Words*, 259-68.

[23] For suggestions of this practice in other contexts see, for instance, Edsall, '*Arma Christi* Rolls', 184; Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 203; Rudy, 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls'.

The Book as Support for Creative Reading

In my discussion of the use of booklets for constructing compilation manuscripts in Chapter Five, I hinted at the possibility that the material form of the book specifically facilitates practices of creative, outward-looking, and bodily-involved reading.[24] In the final paragraphs of this thesis I want to revisit that proposition and briefly indicate what other kinds of evidence might be used. Such ideas draw on and inflect a major theme in the study of manuscript production, that of booklet construction.[25] Alexandra Gillespie is right to point out that, since all books were constructed out of quires, whether these were copied as independent units or not, 'every book was potentially a set of booklets, or a space to which new booklets could be added.'[26] Indeed, since a heavily used binding was unlikely to survive for longer than a generation—limiting the evidence of original bindings—subsequent owners might take the necessity of rebinding their volumes as an opportunity to change, reorder, supplement, and otherwise adapt their volumes.[27] However, without detailed records from an institutional library, it can be difficult to know when a book was rebound, how often, or by whom: previous bindings and the materials that accompanied them—end papers, flyleaves, fixtures, and fittings—were usually discarded or reused (without thought to the whims of future scholars in the history of the book), and evidence of their existence retained by the bookblock may well be

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[24] A similar suggestion is made by Gillespie, 'Booklet Theory', 19.

[25] Crucial to discussions of this idea are Robinson, 'Self-Contained Units', 231-8; Hanna, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts', 100-111; Robinson, 'The Format of Books', 41-54; Gillespie, 'Booklet Theory', 1-29.

[26] Gillespie, 'Booklet Theory', 19-21.

[27] See Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 122. In fact, Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 155, n. 42 goes as far as to suggest that the anthology might be viewed 'As an invitation, if possible, to rebind, to reread.'

hidden.[28] That said, the construction of medieval bindings, including those of the late twelfth-, thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts that have been the focus of this thesis, also allowed for significant adaptation of the bookblock without the need for disbinding. Thus, in one collection of theological tracts, several narrow strips of parchment with additional notes have been added by tucking the middle of the strip around the end of a quire below the stitching that attaches it to the final sewing support.[29] In other cases, slightly wider strips may have been pushed through the centre of the quire between the stitching to provide slightly more space for additions.[30] Meanwhile, larger pieces of parchment might be stitched to pre-existing folios; thus a scrap was used to add additional notes, including English verses, to a miscellaneous collection made up of booklets from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.[31] The durability of manuscripts' material form, then, allowed readers to perform significant interventions into the structure of their books without breaking them. In fact, as quires were stitched round, rather than through, their sewing supports the structure was designed to retain a small amount of give—enough to accommodate the insertion of small amounts of additional material.

However, the structure of the book might also allow for less interventionist modes of creative reading. In the thirteenth-century books investigated for this study three types of bookmark are found in almost equal numbers: straws and organic material; cut-and-fold, stitched, or glued on fixed-tabs; and purpose-made unfixed bookmarks.[32] Each of these types

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[28] Stoddard, *Marks in Books*, 2.

[29] BodL, MS Digby 20, ff. 14b, and 18b (unfoliated).

[30] This may be how a scrap of parchment, with hair still attached to one edge, was added to Durham Cathedral Library, MS A.III.12, ff. 35-6. See Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, 10 for a description of similar practices.

[31] St John's College, Oxford, MS 190, f. 237r.

[32] For a survey of these types see Sawyer, 'Navigation by Tab and Thread', 100-102.

of bookmark takes advantage of the material properties of the book, and the environment around it, in order to intervene in its form and adapt it to meet certain reading needs. A series of three tags made from different coloured knotted threads stitched through the edge of the pages of one theological compilation, for example, seem to comprise a rudimentary programme of finding aids.[33] On initial observation these tags, all made with different colour threads in different styles, may appear idiosyncratic.[34] However, closer inspection shows that they mark key navigational points in the book: an index to the major works it contains, the only English language item 'When I o the Rode see',[35] and the start of Walter Map's *Apocalypse*, another of the major works in the volume.[36] These improvised permanent markers seem to have superimposed onto the book several layers of reading programs. In some cases this adaptability was built into the structure of the book itself. Between the leaves of a large volume in a twelfth-century binding is a long, plaited thong, divided into two lengths at the middle where it loops around a carved wooden toggle.[37] It is likely that this toggle was designed to allow the bookmark to be affixed to the binding through a 'hole pierced in the centre of the tab' at its head.[38] The marker was, therefore, both fixed and unfixed—it could be moved around

[33] BodL, MS Bodley 57, ff. 28, 102, and 188; further stitched tags are to be found in BodL, MSS Hatton 28, f. 61, and Digby 86, f. 192.

[34] Two of these tags are sewn in blue thread, which Alexandra Gillespie, 'Bookbinding', *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (CUP, 2011), 167-8 [150-72] suggests may indicate 'home-made' production, adding to the sense that these tags may have been constructed by different users over the course of the book's lifetime.

[35] See *LAEMECat*, 125; BodL, MS Bodley 57, f. 102v; *DIMEV*, 6331.

[36] BodL, MS Bodley 57, f. 188r. Many other tabs also appear to be marking new texts. For instance, the tab stuck into BodL, MS Douce 139, a codex of English statutes, marks the beginning of a copy of *Magna Carta* (f. 98); and another in BodL, MS Digby 20, is found marking a tract on confession and penance (f. 104).

[37] BodL, MS Auct. D.1.10.

[38] Graham Pollard, 'The Construction of English Twelfth-Century Bindings', *The Library*, 17:1 (1962), 16 [1-22].

within the volume, allowing readers to use it as a temporary or permanent means of setting up a reading program; or it might be removed from the volume altogether and carried away. Its use was physically involved, requiring the reader to move it from page to page, to button it and unbutton it from the tab, following the reader in her outward-looking, outward-moving reading habits as it was moved from book to book alongside her.

Practising Creative Reading

Further evidence such as quiring or bookmarks might allow us to extend this thesis's materially engaged analysis of some specific—if unusual—features of early Middle English texts. Such work would continue this thesis's declaredly eclectic methodology, governed not by the likeness of the evidence I discussed or the tools I used to interrogate it, but by the attention to materials that have previously been considered obscure or impenetrable, and overlooked in favour of more overt displays of readership. Such obscure evidence of reading requires 'radical patience', as well as sympathy, creativity, and openness to speculation, in order to reveal the reading practices that produced them.[39] I hope that such a methodology can be said to have paid off. Certainly, by pulling on the end of what may, at first, have seemed a short and unyielding thread this thesis has revealed a rich tapestry of embodied and materially involved reading practices. The reading of the material evidence undertaken here, then, and the attitude in which it was done, may itself be considered generative. From a near-invisible scratched cross in the margins of a vernacular poem has come an account of the embodied,

[39] Fleming, *Cultural Graphology*, 141.

intellectual, labour of an otherwise silent reader.[40] The thesis itself, then, becomes a model for the act of creative reading.

[40] See, 171-2.

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