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Article

'I'd *been* Chaucer for a week!': Forging the Medieval in Kipling's 'Dayspring Mishandled'

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Rudyard Kipling's 'Dayspring Mishandled' describes the creation of a Chaucerian forgery in immense detail. The short story, first published in 1928, revolves around two men: one, in an act of revenge, uses the other's expertise as a Chaucerian scholar to forge a 'new' fragment of *The Canterbury Tales* with the intention of planting the fragment and ruining the scholar's career. Much of the narrative is given over to the details of the fake, from the minutiae of a medieval ink recipe to the text's fraudulent transmission history and 'discovery'. In this essay I propose that Kipling's medieval details are not authentic, but rather authenticating: they approximate the medieval rather than representing the 'real' medieval world as we or Kipling knew it. The essay first introduces 'Dayspring' and Kipling's particular method of authenticating, while the second section investigates several aspects of the central Chaucerian forgery, including features of materiality, transmission, book history, and Middle English language as they are presented in the text. This 'fact-checking' approach is reassessed in the third section, which explores Kipling's idea of 'verified references', as well as the relationship between 'Dayspring', forgery theory, and medievalism. While 'Dayspring' might not represent a 'true' Middle Ages, then, it is highly revealing of Kipling's attitudes to the medieval period, ideas of authenticity, and his conception of himself as a writer.

I

> 'Something in those ghastly cuts touched off something in me – a sort of possession, I suppose. I was in love too. No wonder I got drunk that night. I'd *been* Chaucer for a week!'[1]

Upon being exposed as the mastermind of the Chaucerian forgery central to the narrative of 'Dayspring Mishandled', the man who had temporarily *been* Chaucer is unapologetic. Somehow, he is both boastful of his exploits and indifferent to the whole affair. 'It's not a bad couplet' (p. 514), he says of the Chaucerian verse he has spent years perfecting, and his confession to the narrator ends simply with 'That's all' (p. 515). The forger's stripped-back,

[1] Rudyard Kipling, 'Dayspring Mishandled', in *The Man Who Would Be King: Selected Stories of Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Jan Montefiore (London, 2011), 506–22 (514). All references are to this edition.

suppressed tone is typical of 'Dayspring', where sparseness of description, narration, and emotion is frequently at odds with elaborate, excessive details about the forgery itself. These paradoxical qualities in Rudyard Kipling's writing have been attested in criticism, with scholars observing not only a capacity for intensive editing and narrative suppression in his works, but also a penchant for specialized details.[2] The opacity of the narrative is clearly not accidental: Kipling is known for excising large amounts of material in the editing room, and Beatrix Hesse says of 'Dayspring' that 'Kipling sometimes performed the "operation" so rigorously that critics were (and still are) at a loss to describe what actually happens in the story'.[3] And yet in just 15-odd pages, a tremendous level of detail is afforded to the forgery itself, and it is that detail which is the focus of the present study.

Where other plot details in 'Dayspring' vanish in the editorial cut—notably, even the insult which prompts the forger to take his revenge—the medieval world is rich in concrete and technical detail. Medieval ink recipes, linguistic fidelity to a medieval Dutch scribe of Middle English verse, and even the curve of a 'g' letter-form feature. Again, Kipling's 'fondness for specialized knowledge and the jargon that accompanies it is well known', as one critic notes.[4] William B. Dillingham insists that 'Kipling always included detail in his works—authentic detail was his specialty'.[5] It is what Kipling himself might call 'verified references', a phrase which recurs throughout his autobiography, *Something of Myself*.[6] I argue that in 'Dayspring' these details are not authentic in the slightest, but rather *authenticating*. The ink recipe, the medieval language, the peculiar 'g': these, and other details I will discuss in this essay, approximate the medieval closely but inaccurately. Kipling creates the illusion of accuracy and thus the effect of authenticity throughout 'Dayspring', forging a vision of the medieval at an authorial level just as his characters are forging the medieval intradiegetically. 'Dayspring' becomes a valuable text for the recent turns in Medieval Studies towards medievalism and questions of authenticity: is there a 'real' Middle Ages which is recoverable, and what does it mean to depict the medieval in fiction? The tale takes its title from the forged Chaucerian couplet, in which 'Daiespringe mishandeelt cometh nat agayne' (p. 511): along with the central characters' youth (their 'dayspring'), the medieval in this unsettling story is mishandled in more ways than one.

First published in 1928 and one of Kipling's late compositions, 'Dayspring Mishandled' revolves around two men, Alured Castorley ('a mannered, bellied person', p. 506) and James Andrew Manallace ('a darkish, slow Northerner', p. 506), the two of whom meet in their youth as hack writers and whose lives become increasingly entangled.[7] Castorley becomes an academic expert on Chaucer—a pompous, disagreeable, unpleasant one—while Manallace continues writing pot-boilers. Both fall in love with a woman referred to only as 'the mother of Vidal Benzaguen' (p. 506); one fateful night during the Great War Castorley expresses a grave insult towards Vidal's mother, and Manallace swears privately that he will have his revenge.[8]

[2] On textual suppression in 'Dayspring', see Terry Caesar, 'Suppression, Textuality, Entanglement, and Revenge in Kipling's "Dayspring Mishandled"', *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, 29 (1986), 54–63.

[3] Beatrix Hesse, 'Somebody Else's Poem: Poetry and Fiction in Rudyard Kipling's "Wireless" and "Dayspring Mishandled"', *Connotations*, 24 (2014/2015), 169–86 (178). Hesse's 'operation' is referring to Kipling's own description of his authorial practices in his autobiography: 'a tale from which pieces have been raked out is like a fire that has been poked. One does not know that the operation has been performed, but everyone feels the effect'. Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself and Other Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Thomas Pinney (Cambridge, 1990), 121.

[4] Esther Kaufman, 'Kipling and the Technique of Action', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 6 (1951), 107–20 (110).

[5] William B. Dillingham, *Rudyard Kipling: Life, Love, and Art* (Michigan, 2013), 236, n. 72.

[6] Discussed in more detail in Part III below.

[7] Kipling began writing the story mid-December 1926, and had written just over half by 29 December of the same year: *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Thomas Pinney, vol. 5 (Basingstoke, 2004), 325–6. It was published in 1928 (by *MacLean's* in Canada, the *Strand* in Britain, and *McCall's* in the US), and was collected in 1932 in *Limits and Renewals* (London, 1932), 3–32. Kipling died on 18 January 1936.

[8] Vidal Benzaguen is a character in Kipling's 'The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat': *The Man Who Would Be King*, 377–406.

Combining Castorley's medieval knowledge with his own imitative skills, Manallace forges and plants a fragment of 'Chaucer' for Castorley to discover; Castorley duly falls into the trap and builds an academic career on the foundations of this discovery. Manallace plots to expose the forgery and thus ruin Castorley's reputation, but ultimately never does. It is a disconcerting and peculiar story, 'profound, obscure, and singularly unpleasant', as characterized by Charles Carrington—or in the words of Kipling himself in the weeks after writing it, 'simply beastly'.[9] Despite (or perhaps because of) such assessments, it is considered one of Kipling's best works, capturing 'the diseased personal and social relations which Kipling saw as characterizing the post-War years'.[10]

It is unsurprising to find Chaucer and the Middle Ages the target of imitation here, given the potency of the Middle Ages as a locus of inspiration for culture and literature—and as the target of forgeries, particularly from the nineteenth century onwards.[11] Richard Utz emphasizes 'the degree to which Victorian and early twentieth-century readers had projected their deep desire for their own linguistic and cultural origins onto the Middle Ages and, specifically, Geoffrey Chaucer'.[12] This is especially the case for Kipling, whose lifelong interest in medieval literature and culture is well-documented.[13] 'He came to Chaucer early, and liked him at once', as Ann M. Weygandt notes, his interest in Chaucer 'keen and lasting'.[14] Chaucer figures in *Kim* in its use of frame tales much like *The Canterbury Tales*; the Pardoner has been read in *The Second Jungle Book* and the Wife of Bath in 'The Wish House'; and in *Land and Sea Tales*, Chaucer is 'one of the earliest and greatest of our English poets'.[15] Kipling's engagement with Chaucer is not confined to *The Canterbury Tales*, and indeed he runs the gamut of Chaucer's minor works too: *Muse among the Motors* imitates Chaucer's *Boece* in 'The Consolations of Memory',[16] and in a speech on the value of literature entitled 'The Uses of Reading', Kipling cites the third verse of Chaucer's 'Truth' (noting that 'The whole thing absolutely covers the few facts in life that really matter').[17] Some of these works even see Kipling write *as* Chaucer: two 'additions' to the 'General Prologue' to *The Canterbury Tales* appear (in pentameter couplets, no less) as a 'Prologue to the Master-Cook's Tale' (in *Land and Sea Tales*) and 'The Justice's Tale' (in *Muse*).[18]

Chaucer is a persistent feature in Kipling's life and writings—the examples above span his literary career—and so for one of Kipling's final works to revolve around a years-long mastering of Chaucerian mimicry seems somewhat inevitable. 'Dayspring' even memorably, and crucially imperfectly, parodies the Victorian academic field of Chaucer Studies. The end of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth was transformative for the study of

[9] Charles Carrington, *Rudyard Kipling: His Life and Work* (London, 1955), 475. The Kipling quotation is in a letter from 27–28 January 1927 (*Letters*, 336), and on this pronouncement see Dillingham, *Rudyard Kipling*, 144–5.

[10] *Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Daniel Karlin (Oxford, 1999), 639.

[11] See, for instance, Jack Lynch, 'Medieval Forgery', in J. Parker and C. Wagner (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism* (Oxford, 2020), 98–113.

[12] Richard Utz, 'Chaucer among the Victorians', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism*, 189–201 (200). See also David Matthews, 'The Reception of Chaucer from the Victorians to the Twenty-First Century', in Ian Johnson (ed.), *Geoffrey Chaucer in Context* (Cambridge, 2019), 429–35.

[13] See especially Ann M. Weygandt, *Kipling's Reading and Its Influence on His Poetry* (Philadelphia, 1939); and more recently, the work of Richard Utz, especially 'Writing, Men, Empire: Kipling's Medievalist Imagination', *Studies in Medievalism*, 31 (2023), 159–75.

[14] Weygandt, *Kipling's Reading*, 19, 23.

[15] On *Kim*, see Utz, 'Writing, Men, Empire', 164–5; on *The Second Jungle Book*, see D. Maureen Thum, 'Frame and Fictive Voice in Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale" and Kipling's "The King's Ankus"', *Philological Quarterly*, 710 (1992), 261–79. On 'The Wish House', see Weygandt, *Kipling's Reading*, 22. The quotation is from Rudyard Kipling, *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides* (London, 1923), 100.

[16] Rudyard Kipling, 'The Consolations of Memory', in *Poems 1886–1929*, vol. 2 (London, 1929), 112 (with the subtitle 'Done out of Boethius by Geoffrey Chaucer').

[17] Rudyard Kipling, 'The Uses of Reading', in *A Book of Words* (London, 1928), 77–96 (81).

[18] Kipling, *Land and Sea Tales*, 100–1; Kipling, 'The Justice's Tale', in *Poems 1886–1929*, 111.

Chaucer and perceptions of the Middle Ages. Utz characterizes 1871–1932 as 'The Age of *Chaucerphilologie*',[19] and 'Dayspring' amusingly reflects contemporary Chaucerian warfare:

> Castorley … looked for some speciality. Having found it (Chaucer was the prey), he consolidated his position before he occupied it … It followed that, when he published his first serious articles on Chaucer, all the world which is interested in Chaucer said: 'This is an authority'. But he was no imposter. He learned and knew the poet and his age; and in a month-long dog-fight in an austere literary weekly, met and mangled a recognised Chaucer expert of the day. (p. 508)

It is a world in which it is normal for there to be 'fresh scandal or heresy afoot in Chaucer circles' (p. 510). Castorley, meanwhile, 'set about to make himself Supreme Pontiff on Chaucer by methods not far removed from the employment of poison-gas' (p. 509). More curious is a mention of an 'English Pope', who is 'silent, through private griefs', and that 'influenza had carried off the learned Hun who claimed Continental allegiance' (p. 509).[20] Might this 'English Pope' and 'learned Hun' of Chaucer Studies be shadows of real scholars? F. J. Furnivall or W. W. Skeat are certainly contenders for the 'English Pope', both revolutionizing Chaucer Studies in the late nineteenth century.[21] There was no German more learned in this field than Bernhard ten Brink, the first Professor of English Philology on the continent. But Furnivall, Skeat, and ten Brink (alongside any other contenders such as Henry Bradshaw, Julius Zupitza, or Ewald Flügel) were all dead by 1918, when Castorley is supposedly in the midst of his dog-fights. It is, of course, not a sin for Kipling to evoke an age of Chaucerian fervour and displace it from one generation to the next, especially in a work of fiction. In its hyperspecificity, however (for instance, in the insistent detail that the German had died from influenza), it forms part of a pattern in 'Dayspring', in which aspects of the medieval are approximated but never traceable to an exact analogue in reality.

This imperfect picture of the Middle Ages, which culminates in the Chaucerian forgery itself, emerges in one other important aspect of 'Dayspring': a book entitled *Philippa's Queen*. Early on in the story a man named Graydon, the organizer of the hack group to which Castorley and Manallace belong, gives Manallace 'a sheaf of prints – torn from an extinct children's book called *Philippa's Queen*' (p. 507). It contains a very specific set of woodcuts:

> There was a castle in the series; a knight or so in armour; an old lady in a horned head-dress; a young ditto; a very obvious Hebrew; a clerk, with pen and inkhorn, checking wine-barrels on a wharf; and a Crusader. (p. 507)

[19] Richard Utz, *Chaucer and the Discourse of German Philology: A History of Reception and an Annotated Bibliography of Studies, 1793–1948* (Turnhout, 2002), 61–204.

[20] 'Hun' being a colloquial, and derogatory, term for Germans in the first half of the twentieth century: *OED*, s.v. 'Hun' (n.), 3.

[21] On the contributions of Furnivall and Skeat to Chaucer Studies, see Utz, 'Chaucer among the Victorians', 192–5; Utz, 'Enthusiast or Philologist? Professional Discourse and the Medievalism of Frederick James Furnivall', *Studies in Medievalism*, 11 (2001), 189–212. Intriguingly, both Furnivall and Skeat embody as intense an affinity with Chaucer as is expressed in 'Dayspring'. Much like Manallace declaring that he had '*been* Chaucer', Furnivall wrote in 1871 that '[I] have been for six weeks, and still am … among bluebells, honey-suckles, laburnums, cuckoos, and nightingales; Chaucer's daisies under my feet, his heavenly harmony of birds about me, and his bright old England all around': *Trial-Forewords to my Parallel-Text Edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems* (London, 1871), 91. I owe this reference to Elizabeth Liendo's excellent chapter 'Medievalism', in C. E. Bertolet and S. Nakley (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Global Chaucer* (London, 2024), 106–17 (109). And like Kipling, Skeat composed Chaucerian pastiche, writing a 'Dyers Prologue and Tale' in 1889 (see Utz, 'Chaucer among the Victorians', 195).

These are the cuts which will light the fire of forgery in Manallace ('Something in those ghastly cuts touched off something in me', p. 514), although while the knight and Crusader are kernels for the eventual forgery, there are no 'Hebrew' figures, wine-barrels, or castles. The book is insistently given a name. It seems entirely plausible that there is a book entitled *Philippa's Queen* which contains these woodcuts: this is, after all, the age of children's Chaucers.[22] Some nineteenth-century candidates include H. R. Haweis' *Chaucer for Children*;[23] Walter Crane's *Queen Summer or the Tourney of the Lily and the Rose*;[24] or, most promisingly named, Anne Manning's *Queen Philippa's Golden Booke* (1851).[25] And yet none of these are *quite* right—Haweis' and Crane's works contain illustrations and woodcuts, but none match, and Manning's text does not contain any images, nor any verses similar to the eventual forgery—and so these references form a simulacrum of the medieval, and a simulacrum of nineteenth-century medievalism. Having transformed from a real-life example of Chaucer for children to fictional representations, these cuts even transform over the course of 'Dayspring' from their initial description here to the moment where the narrator confronts Manallace. Tellingly, they become 'Chaucer cuts' (p. 513), although it is unclear whether their Chaucerian nature is omitted in their first mention or if the cuts and the forgery are conflated in the latter.

All this is not to argue that Kipling is careless or ignorant in his handling of the medieval. It is, rather, to expose a persistent pattern in 'Dayspring' of an uncanny parallel universe of the medieval, in the extremity of its detailing nearly but never quite right. The section which follows traces this pattern through the central Chaucerian forgery, following which I explore Kipling's own approaches to 'verified references' and approximating knowledge.

II

The Chaucerian forgery emerges, over the course of 'Dayspring', in three overlapping layers of narrative: the preparation, where Manallace is described taking some action later revealed to be preparation for the forgery; the discovery, where Castorley describes his findings and his expert tests on the discovered manuscript; and the confession, where Manallace admits his guilt and explains his workings. These sediments accumulate throughout the text, very often repeating the same technical details from each new perspective. In this way the forgery adheres to a pattern already observed in 'Dayspring' by J. M. S. Tompkins, that 'The writing is of that "infolded" sort which, at first reading, may seem to present a crumpled mass, but which gradually fills and spreads and tightens with the fullness and tension of its meanings'.[26] In this section I 'fact-check' many of the medieval detailing as presented in the 'Dayspring' forgery, focusing firstly on the 'external details', namely details of materiality and transmission, and secondly on 'internal details', namely the language of the forged poetry.

[22] See Matthews, 'The Reception of Chaucer', 431; Lucy Fleming, 'K-I-S-S-I-N-G: Transforming Obscenity in Children's Adaptations of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*', *The Chaucer Review*, 60 (2025), 225–50.

[23] H. R. Haweis, *Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key* (London, 1877).

[24] Walter Crane, *Queen Summer or the Tourney of the Lily and the Rose* (London, 1891). This text bears most resemblance to the pseudo-Chaucerian *Floure and the Leafe*, long believed to be Chaucerian but expunged from the Chaucerian canon by nineteenth-century scholars (on Chaucer Studies, see below).

[25] Anne Manning, *Queen Philippa's Golden Booke* (London, 1851). Of the poems included in Manning's book, 'Geoffrey Rudel' (29–57) is perhaps the closest to Manallace's woodcuts and eventual forgery, being most like a medieval romance—but it does not include key elements which would connect it substantially with 'Dayspring' (such as a young woman and her parents, or two male suitors). I am nevertheless very grateful to Lucy Fleming for suggesting *Queen Philippa's Golden Booke* as an analogue to Kipling's book.

[26] J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Art of Rudyard Kipling* (London, 1959), 147.

An elaborate description of the material environment of the forgery is presented. At the preparation stage, the narrator describes how:

> He [Castorley] would tell us charmingly of copyists of the fifteenth century in England and the Low Countries, who had multiplied the Chaucer MSS, of which there remained – he gave us the exact number – and how each scribe could by him (and, he implied, by him alone) be distinguished from every other by some peculiarity of letter-formation, spacing or like trick of pen-work; and how he could fix the dates of their work within five years. (p. 509)

One might note an immediate tension between specificity ('he gave us the exact number') and omission (the reader is not told the number). Manallace, meanwhile, is travelling, and writing what the narrator calls a '"Low Countries" novel' (p. 510). The discovery soon follows:

> New York cabled that a fragment of a hitherto unknown Canterbury Tale lay safe in the steel-walled vaults of the seven-million-dollar Sunnapia Collection …

> Yes, he [Castorley] said, it was all true … There had been found one hundred and seven new lines of Chaucer tacked on to an abridged end of *The Persone's Tale*, the whole the work of Abraham Mentzius, better known as Mentzel of Antwerp (1388–1438/9) – I might remember he had talked about him – whose distinguishing peculiarities were a certain Byzantine formation of his *g*'s, the use of a 'sickle-slanted' reed-pen, which cut into the vellum at certain letters; and, above all, a tendency to spell English words on Dutch lines. (p. 510)

Finally, the confession from Manallace:

> 'Castorley gave me Mentzel complete. He put me on to an MS in the British Museum which he said was the finest sample of his work. I copied his "Byzantine *g*'s" for months.'

> 'And what's a "sickle-slanted" pen?' I asked.

> 'You nick one edge of your reed till it drags and scratches on the curves of the letters. Castorley told me about Mentzel's spacing and margining. I only had to get the hang of his script.' (p. 514)

These three interlinked passages present a wealth of specific details, many of which sound plausible but do not withstand close inspection. For instance, New York is a real geographical location, and it is even reasonable for the US to host a Chaucerian manuscript: there was business in selling Chaucerian manuscripts to the US in the late 1910s and 1920s.[27] But the 'Sunnapia' is not a real collection, even if Kipling is drawing on an emerging UK-US channel of manuscript trade. The Low Countries and Antwerp are also real locations, and indeed the Low Countries was home to significant scribal activity in the fifteenth century.[28] However,

[27] See A. S. G. Edwards, 'Selling Middle English Manuscripts to North America up to 1945', in L. Cleaver, D. Magnusson, H. Morcos, and A. Rais (eds), *The Pre-Modern Manuscript Trade and its Consequences, ca. 1890–1945* (Leeds, 2024), 31–9. Karlin notes that here Kipling must have in mind 'the great American collectors of his time such as John D. Rockefeller or J. Pierpont Morgan': *Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Karlin, 641.

[28] Eltjo Buringh finds that the fifteenth century saw an 'enormous' level of manuscript production in the Low Countries, especially in comparison to the fourteenth century: *Medieval Manuscript Production in the Latin West: Explorations with a Global Database* (Leiden, 2011), 376–83 (quotation at 376). With thanks to J. R. Mattison for discussions of medieval English manuscripts on the Continent.

Chaucer was not copied or even translated on the continent (or, at least, there are no extant copies), and that aforementioned scribal activity was by and large not in or translated from Middle English.[29] Mentzel of Antwerp, furnished with a Latinate *and* vernacular name as well as exact biographical dates, does not appear to exist. And why would this late-medieval Low Countries scribe have been using a reed pen rather than a quill?[30]

Finally, what is a 'Byzantine *g*'? Medieval scribal contexts, and sometimes even scribes themselves, might indeed by identifiable by their formation of certain letters.[31] Yet while letter-formation is a palaeographical tool, 'Byzantine' is not a palaeographical term, although it certainly *sounds* like one, especially capitalized (as it is in *Limits and Renewals*). 'Byzantine' as an adjective meaning 'intricate, complicated; inflexible, rigid, unyielding' is only attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary* from 1937, a decade after Kipling wrote 'Dayspring'.[32] If a technical term, there would be no instance in which a letter-form would be formed in a Byzantine manner, that is, in Greek, if the sample is Middle English. Perhaps the scribe wrote his *g*s like the Greek *gamma* (γ), or the Middle English *yogh* (ȝ): if one were to search for a term for a *yogh* which resembles a *gamma*, one might coin the 'Byzantine *g*', but palaeographers have not yet done so.[33] Or perhaps the term, in keeping with my suggestion throughout this essay, is a plausible-sounding approximation of the medieval.

A similar thread found throughout the story revolves around ink. The narrator stumbles upon Manallace one weekend making ink:

> I found him, for instance, one week-end, in his toolshed-scullery, boiling a brew of slimy barks which were, if mixed with oak-galls, vitriol and wine, to become an ink-powder. We boiled it till the Monday, and it turned into an adhesive stronger than birdlime, and entangled us both. (p. 509)

Compare with Castorley describing the results of his test on the manuscript:

> 'I took a wash, for analysis, from a blot in one corner … and I got the actual *ink* of the period! It's a practically eternal stuff compounded on – I've forgotten his name for the minute – the scribe at Bury St Edmunds, of course! – hawthorn bark and wine. Anyhow, on *his* formula.' (p. 511)

And Manallace's confession:

> 'D'you remember my birdlime experiments, and the stuff on our hands? I'd been trying to get that ink for more than a year. Castorley told me where I'd find the formula.' (p. 514)

[29] On insular medieval copyists of Chaucer, see Linne R. Mooney, 'Vernacular Literary Manuscripts and their Scribes', in A. Gillespie and D. Wakelin (eds), *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500* (Cambridge, 2011), 192–211. Aisling Byrne states that 'There are no translations of the works of Chaucer' before 1550, and lists just eight possible texts which may have been translated into Dutch from Middle English before 1550: 'From Hólar to Lisbon: Middle English Literature in Medieval Translation, *c.*1286–c.1550', *RES*, 71 (2020), 433–59 (quotation at 449, list at 458–9). Naturally this does not mean that Chaucerian manuscripts never moved out of England: a prominent fifteenth-century example is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fonds anglais 39, a copy of *The Canterbury Tales* written for Jean d'Angoulême (brother of Charles d'Orleans) while he was held hostage in England between 1412 and 1445, and taken to France with him upon his release. See M. C. Seymour, *A Catalogue of Chaucer Manuscripts*, vol. 2 (Aldershot, 1997), 213–16; and see further David Rundle, 'English Books and the Continent', in *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500*, 276–91.

[30] As Sara J. Charles notes, 'By the early medieval period (and probably earlier) quills had superseded the use of reed pens in the Christian West': *The Medieval Scriptorium: Making Books in the Middle Ages* (London, 2024), 185 (and see 63–4 for Isidore on the difference between the two instruments).

[31] As in the work of scholars such as Sebastian Sobecki: see, for instance, his 'The Handwriting of Fifteenth-Century Privy Seal and Council Clerks', *RES*, 72 (2021), 253–79.

[32] *OED*, s.v. 'Byzantine' (adj.), 2. It is possible that the term had been circulating for a decade prior to it being committed to print, or that there is an earlier extant reference not yet identified by the *OED*.

[33] With thanks to Colleen Curran for discussions on the *g*-form in medieval manuscripts.

Critics have made much of the interpersonal relations on display here, especially the admission, pointing almost to complicity, that the narrator and Manallace are 'entangled'.[34] I am more interested in the authenticity of the details. What the narrator describes creating with Manallace does broadly follow medieval recipes for inks, the most popular of which were based on the use of oak galls, vitriol, wine, and bark (or gum arabic) boiled into an adhesive.[35] Castorley's analysis is on shakier footing: hawthorn is an almost-unattested and highly unusual ingredient for ink production, and I can find no tangible connection to Bury St Edmunds beyond it being an important site of manuscript production in the Middle Ages.[36] Nevertheless, the *texture* of the medieval is there.

The textual transmission of the forgery, and the description of the book itself, relays even more information. What Manallace has constructed is a 'secondary forgery', which uses real materials from the period being forged.[37] The preparatory phase of this aspect is especially mischievous: Manallace shows the narrator 'a battered and mutilated Vulgate of 1485, patched up the back with bits of legal parchments' (p. 510), which is surely the specific book used for the forgery, although this is never confirmed.

Castorley's discovery is lengthy. I have already quoted some of this information, but produce it in full here to demonstrate the overwhelming effect of this barrage of information.

> 'It was what is called a "spoil" – a page Mentzel had spoiled with his Dutch spelling – I expect he had had the English dictated to him – then had evidently used the vellum for trying out his reeds; and then, I suppose, had put it away. The "spoil" had been doubled, pasted together, and slipped in as stiffening to the old book-cover. I had it steamed open, and analysed the wash. It gave the flour-grains in the paste – coarse, because of the old millstone – and there were traces of the grit itself. What? Oh, possibly a handmill of Mentzel's own time. He may have doubled the spoilt page and used it for part of a pad to steady wood-cuts on. It may have knocked about his workshop for years. That, indeed, is practically certain because a beginner from the Low Countries has tried his reed on a few lines of some monkish hymn – not a bad lilt tho' – which must have been common form. Oh yes, the page may have been used in other books before it was used for the Vulgate. That doesn't matter, but *this* does. Listen! I took a wash, for analysis, from a blot in one corner – that would be after Mentzel had given up trying to make a possible page of it, and had grown careless – and I got the actual *ink* of the period! It's a practically eternal stuff compounded on – I've forgotten his name for the minute – the scribe at Bury St Edmunds, of course! – hawthorn bark and wine. Anyhow, on *his* formula. *That* wouldn't interest you either, but, taken with all the other testimony, it clinches the thing. (You'll see it all in my Statement to the Press on Monday.) Overwhelming, isn't it?' (p. 511)

'"Overwhelming," I said, with sincerity' (p. 512), replies the narrator. Manallace's shorter confession reveals that:

[34] Dillingham, for instance, states that in his fascination the narrator 'becomes a kind of coconspirator in the execution of an absurd revenge': *Rudyard Kipling*, 152.

[35] See Charles, *The Medieval Scriptorium*, 178–85. My sincere thanks to Sara J. Charles for many fruitful conversations on medieval ink, and for making an experimental batch of hawthorn ink, noting that it simply forms 'a diluted version of iron gall ink', with a 'greenish tinge to it initially that soon faded to a grey/black' (private correspondence).

[36] The twelfth-century monk Theophilus records one example of a medieval ink recipe using hawthorn, which Charles considers potentially unique (private correspondence). See Theophilus, *On Divers Arts*, tr. J. G. Hawthorne and C. S. Smith (Chicago, IL, 1963), 42. And only one recipe in the *Mappae clavicula* mentions hawthorn: the recipe for green ink (190) recommends adding hawthorn gum as a coagulant. Cyril Stanley Smith and John G. Hawthorne, 'Mappae Clavicula: A Little Key to the World of Medieval Techniques', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 64 (1974), 54.

[37] On secondary forgeries, see John North Hopkins and Scott McGill, 'Introduction', in J. N. Hopkins and S. McGill (eds), *Forgery Beyond Deceit: Fabrication, Value, and the Desire for Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 2023), 1–10 (5–6).

> The actual vellum was an Antwerp find, and its introduction into the cover of the Vulgate was begun after a long course of amateur bookbinding. At last, he bedded it under pieces of an old deed, and a printed page (1686) of Horace's *Odes*, legitimately used for repairs by different owners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (pp. 514–15)

The details of textual transmission here are far more plausible than we have hitherto seen. A Vulgate with annotations, pen trials, and other scribbles might well be the vehicle for a Chaucerian fragment, and legal documents, print, and classical texts were recycled in bindings.[38] These details are interspersed with the material features that are not accurate, such as the use of a reed pen, the hawthorn ink found to match a recipe from a Bury St Edmunds codex, and the fictitious Mentzel.

It is worth pausing here to assess the effect of the threefold narrative approach, of details presented at what I have called moments of preparation, discovery, and confession, especially since the technique is followed most insistently in these details of materiality and transmission and not in the linguistic details of the forgery. Because these details are provided alternately by Manallace, Castorley, and the narrator, they form a confusing and tantalizing mix of knowledge provided by the expert, exploited by the forger, and relayed by the narrator. Manallace follows an accurate medieval ink recipe, but Castorley misidentifies it. The Sunnapia is either misremembered by the narrator or fabricated by Kipling. Where does the fault of inaccuracy lie? With the forger or the critic or, at a higher narrative level, with the narrator, or even with Kipling himself? I return to the issue of fictional forgeries in Part III.

Kipling's (or Manallace's, or Castorley's) medieval language is similarly medievalizing. The infelicity of the forgery's language necessitates a different set of considerations than appraising inauthentic details relating to the book or its history. In the medium of writing one could describe a real book, location, or scribe, but in order to relate medieval poetry Kipling would have to either plagiarize real medieval poetry or himself forge new Chaucerian lines. He opts for the latter, and so 'Dayspring' includes four 'medieval' couplets: eight lines of the 107 discovered by Castorley, and presumably all forged by Manallace. Castorley finds in the manuscript:

> a tendency to spell English words on Dutch lines, whereof the manuscript carried one convincing proof. For instance (he wrote it out for me), a girl praying against an undesired marriage says:
>
> 'Ah! Jesu-Moder, pitie my oe paine.
> Daiespringe mishandeelt cometh nat agayne.'
>
> Would I, please, note the spelling of 'mishandeelt'? Stark Dutch and Mentzel's besetting sin!
>
> … 'The freshness, the fun, the humanity, the fragrance of it all, cries – no, shouts – itself as Dan's work.[39] Why "Daiespringe mishandled" alone stamps it from Dan's mint. Plangent as doom, my dear boy – plangent as doom!' (510–11, 512)

The central two lines are an English couplet written in the 1920s by Kipling, as though composed by Manallace in the 1900s–1910s (he notes that he worked on them for years until 1914 (p. 514)) to resemble English words composed by Chaucer and copied by a Low Countries

[38] On the practice of recycling manuscript and print in bindings, see Tamara Atkin, 'The Material and Textual Value of Manuscript and Print Binding Waste', *Renaissance Studies* (Early View), 1–25.

[39] 'Dan' is 'Dan Chaucer', as in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (Book IV, Canto II, Line 23). It is ironic for Castorley to be alluding to Chaucer's 'well of English undefiled', as the Spenserian line goes, since the attribution of these lines does 'defile' the text and legacy of Chaucer.

scribe; within the Chaucerian Canterbury Tale they are part of a lamenting lyric ('plangent as doom!') voiced by a young woman.[40] They are subsequently copied out by Castorley, shown to the narrator, who relays them such that they reach, via Kipling, us as audience. Were such a palimpsestic transmission history to be traced in a real-life fragment of Chaucer one would be hard-pressed to claim any kind of pure authenticity (and indeed Castorley himself notes such textual issues, in the spelling of 'mishandeelt'). Moving between fictional and real elements, and layers within those, complicates matters even further.

Nevertheless we can recognize in these lines that pattern of an almost-authentic Middle Ages. The Marian invocation of the first line would not be out of place in genuinely medieval verse: take the exemplary medieval couplet 'Mary moder of grace we cry to þe / moder of mercy & of pite', whose two-line, *aa* rhyme scheme and evocation of 'Mary moder' and 'pite' make it highly reminiscent of the 'Dayspring' couplet, as well as representative of Marian lyrics of the Middle Ages.[41] Even more specifically, it resembles Chaucer's own 'An ABC', an abecedarian praise of the Virgin which addresses Mary as the mother in whom pity for mankind is in abundance.[42] Familiar cracks, however, emerge: 'oe' is neither Chaucerian nor medieval, even accounting for the 'Dutchicising'. 'Mishandeelt' is identified within the narrative as a scribal corruption towards his native tongue, but there are scant attestations of any variation of 'mishandled' in Middle English. The *Middle English Dictionary* lists just two: Chaucer's contemporary John Gower uses 'mishandlinge' in his *Confessio Amantis*, in the modern sense, of 'improper handling or treatment'; and 'mishandlen' is attested as 'myshandelyd' in a version of *Saint Brendon's Confession* from *c*.1500.[43] Far from Castorley's enthusiastic claim that '"Daiespringe mishandled" alone stamps it from Dan's mint', 'mishandle' or a Middle English equivalent does not appear in the Chaucerian corpus. Even beyond the intradiegetic textual issues, the couplet is not 'authentically' medieval, in that it was neither composed in the Middle Ages, nor could it conceivably have been composed in the Middle Ages on linguistic grounds.

And yet the forged lines do have a distinctly Chaucerian cadence: the three other couplets included in 'Dayspring' capture the flavour of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* even if they are not attested medieval words or spellings.

> 'And if perchance thou fall into his honde,
> By God, how canstow ride to Holilonde?'
>
> ,
> 'Lat all men change as Fortune may send,
> But Knighthood beareth service to the end,'
>
> and
>
> 'For what his woman willeth to be don
> Her manne must or wauken Hell anon.' (p. 512)

Both Manallace and Kipling are adept at what K. K. Ruthven calls thickening one's diction, that is, appropriating the language of their targets.[44] (Thomas Chatterton, notorious and

[40] The lyric is titled 'Gertrude's Prayer', and thus the young woman is given a name outside of the narrative of 'Dayspring': see below.

[41] DIMEV 3428, a translation of Anselm's *Admonitio morienti*: https://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=3428. Date accessed 20 August 2025.

[42] For instance, 'Redresse me, mooder, and me chastise … For evere in you is pitee haboundinge': Geoffrey Chaucer, 'An ABC', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford, 2008), ll. 129, 135, p. 639.

[43] *MED*, s.v. 'mishandlinge' (ger.); 'mishandlen' (v.).

precocious forger of the medieval, archaized words to achieve a medievalizing effect—painting as 'peyncteynge', for instance—while William Henry Ireland spelt 'perpendicular' as 'perrepennedycularelye'.)[45] The narrator of 'Dayspring' shares that Manallace, who with Castorley had made his living imitating the style of pot-boilers, can write a line expressing 'the jocundly-sentimental Wardour Street brand of adventure' (p. 508), where 'Wardour Street' means 'sham antique'; and he describes his writing as consisting of 'gadzooking and vitalstapping' (p. 509), similarly meaning 'writing full of sham archaisms'.[46] Hesse notes that 'the pastiche is to some extent defined by being deficient: it is *not quite* Chaucer' (my emphasis), reading the forged lines as both Kipling 'showing off' and a reflection of Manallace's situation.[47] *Not quite* captures the spirit of the forgery's deficiency, authenticating in both the text and outside of it until it is revealed to be inauthentic.

Nevertheless these *Canterbury Tales* couplets are rather Chaucerian. 'With a judicious pronunciation of final "e"s', says Weygandt, 'they scan properly, and two of them have true Chaucerian sententiousness'.[48] But which Canterbury Tale? Recall that the lines are discovered 'tacked on to an abridged end of *The Persone's Tale*' (p. 510), seemingly an alternate medieval spelling for 'Parson'—and indeed there is a 'Parson's Tale' which concludes the tale-telling contest as far as Chaucer managed.[49] The tale represented here, however, is patently not related to the Parson or his tale, given the tale's intensely religious and penitential content. It is, as has been pointed out elsewhere, related to the Knight.[50] The fragment, as Castorley says, 'deals with a girl whose parents wish her to marry an elderly suitor. The mother isn't so keen on it, but the father, an old Knight, is. The girl, of course, is in love with a younger and a poorer man' (p. 512). The father is sent on Crusade (at which point, the influence of the cuts from the *Philippa's Queen* book become apparent). Castorley later asserts that 'Chaucer was the prototype of the "verray parfit, gentil Knyght" of the British Empire so far as that then existed' (p. 515), quoting the description of the Knight from the 'General Prologue' of the *Tales*.[51] Manallace soon confides that if he were to reveal the forgery, 'Castorley might go off his verray parfit, gentil nut' (p. 516), compounding the importance of the Knight to the narrative. Crucially, here 'Dayspring' draws heavily on the *figure* of the Knight—the pilgrim who is described in the 'General Prologue', tells his tale, and who interacts with the other pilgrims—but not the tale he tells. 'The Knight's Tale' is about a woman (Emelye) and two potential suitors (Palamon and Arcite), but the suitors are cousins and both knights, rather than age-mismatched men, nor is one chosen by Emelye's parents. The fragment, then, seems more like the second Tale the Knight might have told (had Chaucer written the 'return' tales promised in the pilgrimage competition's frame), albeit one uncomfortably repetitive of the tale he has already told.[52] More likely than Manallace drawing on the wellspring of Chaucerian

[44] K. K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge, 2001), 19.
[45] See Ruthven, *Faking Literature*, 19.
[46] On 'Wardour Street', see the notes to 'The Finest Story in the World' in Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King*, 560, n. 28; on 'gadzooking and vitalstapping', see also Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King*, 572, n. 11.
[47] Hesse, 'Somebody Else's Poem', 181.
[48] Weygandt, *Kipling's Reading*, 20, the two bearing true Chaucerian sententiousness being the couplets beginning 'Lat all' and 'For what'.
[49] The correspondence between 'Parson' and 'Persone's' is noted in *Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Karlin, 642. My thanks to an astute anonymous reader, who suggested that 'Persone's Tale' might be a play on the French 'personne', meaning 'nobody', speaking to Kipling's fondness for linguistic games and ambiguity.
[50] Utz, 'Writing, Men, Empire', 163. Recently, Ben Parsons has noted the presence of 'The Knight's Tale' in military college examinations of the late nineteenth century; one examination question for Cavalry and Infantry (December 1874) even asks candidates to assess the truth of the Spenserian line I have already discussed ('Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled'). 'Unmilitary and Perverted: Chaucer in Zululand in the 1870s and 80s', paper delivered at the fifth *Middle Ages in the Modern World* (*MAMO*) conference, June 2025.
[51] Chaucer, 'General Prologue', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, l. 72, p. 24.
[52] See Chaucer, 'The Knight's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 37–66.

knowledge is that Kipling is creating the *sense* of 'The Knight's Tale' and invoking the potent image of the Knight, adding depth to the forgery and his text.

Somewhat exceptionally, Manallace's forgery is not confined to the boundaries of Kipling's short story form. From the beginning, 'Dayspring' was collected with a further Chaucerian verse entitled 'Gertrude's Prayer (Modernised from the "Chaucer" of Manallace)'.[53] At 18 lines, divided into three stanzas of three couplets each, 'Gertrude's Prayer' concludes each stanza with 'Dayspring mishandled cometh not againe', the final iteration of the couplet conjoined with the preceding 'Ah! Jesu-Moder, pitie my oe paine', and the lyric thus ends on the same couplet as found in 'Dayspring'. Hesse has analysed 'Gertrude's Prayer', noting many pertinent parallels between the poem and the story (particularly its references to 'oake's rind' and 'some gall' which 'vividly recall Manallace's boiling', discussed above).[54] I therefore leave it aside here except to note that it follows the same approach of authentication as the 'original' couplet as found in 'Dayspring'. It features many approximations of medieval language (centrally, the proverbial sentiment that a misjudged youth cannot be recovered or relived), and is something *like* a Chaucerian form—but as Weygandt notes,

> 'Gertrude's Prayer' … is written in a rhyme scheme that Chaucer never used. It is true that a stanza of pentameter lines, rhyming ababcc, produces an effect very like that of rhyme royal, but rhyme royal it is not … Refrain, inversions, intensitive 'to' as in 'To-bruized' all have the right flavor, but the stanzaic form was a fatal error.[55]

Gertrude's Prayer' thus expands and embellishes the pocket of the pseudo-Chaucerian canon contained in 'Dayspring', and as a paratext it can be read as both inside and outside of the central narrative. The forgery, and Kipling's approximating of the medieval, is spreading beyond the boundaries of the text.

III

How might we best understand what Kipling is doing with Chaucer and the medieval in 'Dayspring'? I propose two avenues for reflection. Firstly, the wealth of information provided by Kipling himself brings his attitude towards knowledge and authenticity into sharp relief. While one fractious reviewer commented that his autobiography *Something of Myself*, written at the end of Kipling's life, ought to have been titled *Hardly Anything of Myself*,[56] it is full of Kipling's reflections on his approach to references, work, knowledge, accuracy, and authenticity. In fact, the sheer volume of authorial self-examination available to us as critics is telling, and *Something of Myself* in particular reveals an author who is interested both in his own authorial processes and in the means by which knowledge is produced and imitated. Secondly, the fundamentals of forgery theory prove illuminating when held against the mechanisms of the forgery in 'Dayspring'. From the desire inherent to all aspects of forgeries, to the ouroboros of forger and critic, and beyond the text to the peculiarities of forgeries in fiction, 'Dayspring' benefits from a theoretical reading. These two avenues, I hope, will inform our interpretation of Kipling's medievalism.

There is something very *knowing* to Kipling's writing, an insistent attention to facts, knowledge, and attention to detail. As John Coates explores in his book on the topic of 'knowingness', Kipling's 'superior knowledge' and 'knowing tone' permeate his writings.[57] This is borne

[53] Kipling, *Limits and Renewals*, 33. Karlin notes that 'Gertrude's Prayer' 'was published with the story from the beginning': *Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Karlin, 639.
[54] Hesse, 'Somebody Else's Poem', 182.
[55] Weygandt, *Kipling's Reading*, 20.
[56] See Thomas Pinney's introduction in *Something of Myself*, vii.

out in the autobiographical record, too: in *Something of Myself* Kipling describes testing acquaintances in literary circles:

> I would ask simple questions, misquote or misattribute my quotations; or (once or twice) invent an author. The result did not increase my reverence. Had they been newspaper men in a hurry, I should have understood; but the gentlemen were presented to me as Priests and Pontiffs.[58]

How like Castorley these men seem in Kipling's eyes! Note, even, their assignment as Pontiffs, and Castorley's underhanded journey to becoming 'Supreme Pontiff' (p. 509) on Chaucer. Shortly afterwards Kipling similarly describes testing a plagiarist's knowledge, and relates an exchange with a reviewer about Chaucer and the Wife of Bath.[59] The latter is riddled with approximate knowledge: both congratulate the other on their knowledge of Chaucer even though, as Weygandt has pointed out, neither get the facts quite right.[60] So committed to knowledge was Kipling that he even went about forging a manuscript in real life, presenting a supposedly seventeenth-century manuscript to the librarian of the Athenaeum Club in London.[61] The predilection towards writing pastiches, especially medieval, is evident throughout his life and works: in *Something of Myself* he describes his discovery of literary forms as a schoolboy, writing his own version of Dante's *Inferno* ('into which I put, under appropriate torture, all my friends and most of the masters').[62] The prevalence of literary pastiches throughout his writings, most obvious in *Muse Among the Motors*, speaks to an author with a sustained interest in imitations. Coates' approach to Kipling's 'superior knowledge' and 'knowingness' is based on the assumption that Kipling is correct or accurate in that knowledge. 'Where it could be checked', he argues, 'his knowledge proved to be accurate', and on 'Dayspring' he suggests that 'We are to see Castorley as … achieving accuracy in detail'.[63] While I follow Coates closely in arguing that facts and knowledge are actively important to Kipling's perception of himself as a writer and in his engagement of the medieval, in my view Kipling's knowledge simply does not need to be accurate (whether or not Kipling is aware of its inauthenticity).

Kipling's persistent use of the term 'verified references' in *Something of Myself* is highly revealing of this fact. The section which focuses most on Kipling's authorial practices is replete in mentions of 'verifying', or 'verified references', a phrase which Kipling never quite explains or concretely defines.[64] He writes, for instance, about his unsuccessful attempts to write a 'tale told by Daniel Defoe in a brickyard': 'It turned out a painstaken and meritorious piece of work, overloaded with verified references, with about as much feeling to it as a walking-stick. So it also was discarded'.[65] Here 'verified references' seem to weigh down his writing. His drafts of *Rewards and Fairies* are described in a similar manner: 'Stories a plenty I had to tell, but how

[57] John Coates, *Kipling the Trickster: Knowingness, Practical Jokes and the Use of Superior Knowledge in Kipling's Short Stories* (Oxford, 2021), 2.
[58] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 123.
[59] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 128 ('Occasionally one could test a plagiarist'), 123–4 (on the Wife of Bath).
[60] Weygandt, *Kipling's Reading*, 22.
[61] Although this reads as an apocryphal tale, it is apparently true. The poem 'To a Librarian' was published in *The Library Association Record*, 17 (London, 1915), 217, under the name 'T. Coryatt'; and see further 'Editorial', *The Kipling Journal*, 60 (1986), 8–9; Andrew Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* (London, 1999), 483–4.
[62] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 22.
[63] Coates, *Kipling the Trickster*, 3, 262. Despite this general assumption of Kipling's accuracy, Coates' astute characterization of details in 'Dayspring' is especially relevant to my argument: 'It is partly the details themselves, partly the enthusiasm with which they are presented, but mainly the concrete technicality of the processes that win the reader's attention. There is nothing vague and abstruse or esoteric about Chaucer scholarship in "Dayspring Mishandled"'. *Kipling the Trickster*, 265.
[64] See the phrase in Kipling, *Something of Myself*, at, for instance, 109, 111, 126.
[65] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 109.

many would be authentic and how many due to "induction"?', a conundrum which is resolved by Kipling '[loading] the book up with allegories and allusions, and verified references'.[66] Where the Defoe story fails under the weight of its verified references, however, *Rewards* seems to flourish with them—Kipling reflects that 'It was glorious fun'.[67] Most revealing of the stages of the authorial process is his description of writing his medieval and Roman tales. 'I had put a well into the wall of Pevensey Castle *circa* A.D. 1100, because I needed it there … The first shot was based on honest "research"; the second was legitimate inference'.[68] Hyperspecific details are invented for the purposes of the narrative, very similar in tone to the entire approach of 'Dayspring'. 'Legitimate inference' is the closest to a confession on Kipling's part that critics will get: a justification of forgery (and what is a writer but a forger?).[69]

What I am terming 'approximating the medieval', or 'authenticating details', then, Kipling might himself have called 'verified references'. It seems to me that the term refers to details which add depth and texture, verifiable in that they authenticate the text internally rather than being provable or accurate externally.

Forgery theory, influenced especially by the scholarship of Anthony Grafton and now a popular area of literary study, observes that forgeries often follow similar patterns.[70] These might be shared themes—the motives of forging, for instance, are typically desire, revenge, profit, or playfulness—or commonalities in textual history, such as a fraudulent 'origin story' for the forgery as a new work 'discovered' in the depths of an archive or in a far-off tomb. There is moreover a consanguinity between forgeries and the medieval, most usefully expressed through the concept of 'medievalism', another popular critical topic: the Middle Ages is a particular target for inspiration which bleeds into imitation.[71] As a form of medievalism, Kipling's 'Dayspring' is useful in challenging the idea that there is a stable or 'real' Middle Ages which could be imitated in the first place, and Kipling's approach in the text follows several patterns familiar from forgery theory.

Perhaps the centremost pillar of forgery theory, and notably present in recent scholarship, is the concept of desire.[72] Forgeries are borne of the desires of their makers, not only the desire to deceive or create but also to fill in some kind of *lacuna*. The forgery in 'Dayspring' is only possible or plausible because Castorley desires it so much, and because there is a gap for it in the market (and on the manuscript leaf). Manallace knows well that Castorley 'looked for some speciality', ultimately deciding that 'Chaucer was the prey' (p. 508): the medieval has long been a target of desire, and Manallace obliges in supplying that demand.[73] His efforts are rewarded in this respect when Lady Castorley (whom Manallace comes to believe suspects the discovery is a forgery) declares that the Chaucer find had 'anticipated the wants of humanity' (p. 521). It is fitting for the desires which result in forgeries to rear their heads in 'Dayspring', a text overrun with corrupt desires: after all, it is the mutual love of Vidal's mother, debased by some unspoken insult, which is the spark for Manallace's revenge. Terry Caesar

[66] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 111.
[67] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 111.
[68] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 110.
[69] Indeed, in *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer has his Parson denounce writers as liars, who 'forge a long tale and peynten it with alle circumstaunces, where al the ground of the tale is fals': 'The Parson's Tale', in *The Riverside Chaucer*, l. 610, p. 308.
[70] Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton, NJ, 1990). On forgery theory see especially Ruthven, *Faking Literature*, and *Forgery Beyond Deceit*.
[71] Modernity's attraction to the Middle Ages is expressed most famously in the works of Umberto Eco: see, for instance, 'The Return of the Middle Ages', in *Travels in Hyperreality* (London, 1986), 59–85. On medievalism, see primarily E. Emery and R. Utz (eds), *Medievalism: Key Critical Terms* (Cambridge, 2014): most relevant to this study are the chapters by Matthew Fisher ('Archive', 11–18), Pam Clements ('Authenticity', 19–26), Gwendolyn Morgan ('Authority', 27–34), Kevin Moberly and Brent Moberly ('Play', 173–80), and Lauryn S. Mayer ('Simulacrum', 223–30).
[72] As in the 2023 volume *Forgery Beyond Deceit*.
[73] See especially Eco, 'The Return of the Middle Ages'.

observes that by the end of the text, 'Manallace's devotion to Castorley is yoked inseparably with his original desire for his destruction', while Daniel Karlin describes the entire landscape of 'Dayspring' as a locus of desire and loss: 'it is no Eden, or rather it is all too truly Eden'.[74]

The relationship between the central two figures of the text, Castorley and Manallace, can also be read through the lens of forgery theory. Both characters become wrapped up in the forgery—Manallace knowingly so, with his obsession and experiments that also entangle the narrator, but even Castorley, whose face, by the end of the story, 'came to look like old vellum' (p. 520). They also become wrapped up in one another, thus highly resembling Anthony Grafton's seminal characterization of the forger and the critic, 'entangled through time like Laocoon and his serpents'.[75] Castorley is the expert from whom Manallace has been extracting information about Chaucer and medieval manuscripts: in a way he *is* the forger, unwittingly commenting on his own forgery in his role as the critic. And by the end, the two become almost indistinguishable academically, since Manallace begins to assist Castorley in collecting information about the Chaucerian find, and the narrator notes that 'The two practically collaborated' (p. 517).

Forgeries, in the instance that they are exposed, are often identifiable as fraudulent due to some kind of 'tell'. The paradox of forgeries is that the best are never discovered, and so the best forgers never have their expertise acknowledged, despite the fact that, as Kenneth Lapatin says, 'The heroes of most stories of forgery are … the forgers themselves, who, even if temporarily, have bested the experts'.[76] And so forgers, needing their cleverness to be witnessed somewhere in the work, leave a fingerprint or clue of some kind. This precise situation unfolds in 'Dayspring':

> … to meet Castorley's theory that spoiled pages were used in workshops by beginners, he [Manallace] had written a few Latin words in fifteenth century script … across an open part of the fragment. The thing ran: '*Illa alma Mater ecca, secum afferens me acceptum. Nicolaus Atrib.*' (p. 515)

The text has been given the moniker 'Monkish Hymn' (p. 517), and the narrator comments that it has been seized upon by scholars ('There's quite a literature about it already' (p. 517)). But Manallace confides to the narrator that the first letter of each word, followed by the second letter of each word (as a doubled-up acrostic) forms IAMES/A/MANALLACE/FECIT, *James A Manallace fecit*. *Fecit* is a bilingual pun, either translating from Latin as 'made it' or in English sounds similar to 'faked it'.[77] Acrostics in literature are a relatively common technique, including in medieval literature, and as a literary device predicated on hidden knowledge—which nevertheless is available to those looking closely enough—it is the natural bedfellow of the forgery.[78]

Finally, as I have noted throughout, the central forgery in 'Dayspring' is embedded within its own sediment of forgery: the fictional mode in which Kipling is writing. A forgery in the 'real world' needs to be as accurate as possible in order to resemble real fragments of literary, documentary, and cultural history. How accurate need a forgery in fiction be? The

[74] Caesar, 'Suppression', 57; *Rudyard Kipling*, ed. Karlin, 640.
[75] Grafton, *Forgers and Critics*, 6.
[76] Kenneth Lapatin, 'Prologue: Ideas of Forgery', in *Forgery Beyond Deceit*, 11–43 (43).
[77] These details are noted in Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King*, 572, n. 19.
[78] See, for instance, Grafton's account of Dionysus' forged tragedy *Parthenopaeus*, where an acrostic embeds the name of his boyfriend: *Forgers and Critics*, 3–4. On acrostics in medieval literature, see Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Middle English Verse Acrostics: A Survey', in J. Jahner and I. Nelson (eds), *Gender, Poetry, and the Form of Thought in Later Medieval Literature* (Bethlehem, PA, 2022), 113–36.

phenomenon is what Sean Alexander Gurd has termed a 'pseudo-forgery', or a 'made-up fake', which 'indicate the line between history and aesthetics'.[79] Gurd poses a valuable question in his discussion of Armand Schwerner's twentieth-century masterpiece *The Tablets*: 'I *know* I am reading fictional translations, but who is responsible for the fiction: Schwerner or his Scholar/Translator?'[80] Or in the case of 'Dayspring': Kipling, Manallace, Castorley (or even the narrator)? The literary technique of fictional forgeries remains understudied; its layered complexity and reflexivity lends the mode especially to postmodern readings (a salient example is Nabakov's *Pale Fire*). Moreover, the question of how accurate fictional forgeries should be parallels current questions in Medievalism Studies. The recent volume *Authentically Medieval*, for instance, is an example of a concerted effort in the field to explore how attentive authors are in their reception and presentation of the Middle Ages, finding a great deal of variety in the attentiveness of each particular respondent to the medieval.[81]

While several other parallels might be made between forgery theory and the contents of 'Dayspring'—for instance, nowhere is the 'erudition effect' more present than in the world of 'Dayspring', a technique where 'deep study and the application of the trappings of scholarship make forgeries more palatable'—the examples above are the most sustained instances.[82] The lens of forgery theory therefore resolves many oddities of 'Dayspring', while Kipling's idiosyncratic approach to knowledge and 'verified references' go some way in explaining why details are so overwhelming, and have such a vexed relationship with the truth, in the text.

IV

In 'Dayspring Mishandled', then, the medieval is subject to a very particular kind of mishandling. As Caesar aptly summarizes, 'The energies of the fraudulent *spread* in Kipling's text', at the precise rate at which the medieval permeates 'Dayspring'.[83] In the central Chaucerian forgery, in *Philippa's Queen*, or even in Alured Castorley's name,[84] the medieval is ever-present and hyper-precise—but at the same time allusive and not quite correct. In this way 'Dayspring' is reminiscent of how Jan Montefiore describes Kipling's later stories as a whole, offering 'not a total vision but a multitude of intensely perceived provisional truths and local effects'.[85] These fraudulent energies, or provisional truths, or indeed verified references, begin to spread *beyond* the text too, most notably in the continued medievalism of 'Gertrude's Prayer'. I have already discussed Kipling's lifelong engagement with the medieval, from schoolboy *imitatio* to the medieval sources reverberating throughout his works. At this juncture I would like to highlight how the particular method of 'authenticating details' which I have argued for in this essay appears in other writings by Kipling. It is visible in 'Wireless', where a character produces a

[79] Sean Alexander Gurd, 'Fictional Forgeries and the Twilight of the Self: The Tablets of Armand Schwerner and Pascal Quignard', in *Forgery Beyond Deceit*, 334–54 (quotations at 335, 338, 354).

[80] Gurd, 'Fictional Forgeries', 338.

[81] D. E. Best, E. L. Rambo, and P. H. Ward (eds), *Authentically Medieval: Authors and Scholars on Depicting the Middle Ages in Fiction* (Jefferson, NC, 2024).

[82] Lapatin, 'Prologue: Ideas of Forgery', 18. The 'erudition-effect' is similar in nature to the 'authenticity-effect', which describes methods by which the forgery comes to be considered authentic. Caesar argues that in 'Dayspring' the 'forgery is authenticated by being so "spoiled"': 'Suppression', 57.

[83] Caesar, 'Suppression', 58.

[84] The forename Alured has hitherto-unnoticed medieval significance, being a medieval spelling of the name Alfred. For instance, the twelfth- or thirteenth-century *Owl and the Nightingale*—a debate poem of increasingly *ad hominem* attacks under the guise of scholarly wisdom—refers often to 'Alured King' as the dispenser of wisdom. See Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, 'alured king', fol. 157v (in the first line of the second column, l. 235 of the poem). Dillingham links Alured to 'allured' (*Rudyard Kipling*, 149), capturing the mysterious attractions and desires inherent to the text; meanwhile Coates reads 'cast-off' or even 'castrated' in the surname Castorley (*Kipling the Trickster*, 252).

[85] Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King*, xxi.

version of Keats' 'The Eve of St Agnes'.[86] Much like Manallace having *been* Chaucer for the week, in 'Wireless' Shaynor 'at least temporarily was a minor Keats'.[87] Even more reminiscent of 'Dayspring' is 'The Eye of Allah', which is set in a medieval scriptorium and is replete with the minutiae of medieval details that cannot be traced definitively.[88]

I conclude with a story where real and fictional forgeries become remarkably consanguine in Kipling's life and writing, playing out on the pages of *Something of Myself*.[89] A distorted version of 'Dayspring' occurs: verses allegedly by Kipling were published in *The Times* in 1918 under his name. Furious to see such fraudulent work attributed to his name, Kipling moved to protect his authentic corpus. It is fascinating to read Kipling's description of the forgery, so like 'Dayspring': all the trappings of detail are included, followed by a meticulous debunking. In describing the forgery—sent by Sunday mail 'with some sort of faked postmark … they were written on an absolutely straight margin, which is beyond my powers, and in an un-European fist'—Kipling eerily parallels Manallace's forgerly attentions to medieval spacing, margining, and even script (p. 514).[90] Kipling contacts *his* version of Castorley, an expert who has been accused as the forger, and who:

> happened to be an old friend of mine, and when I told him of his magnified 'characteristic' letters, and the betraying slopes at which they lay—*his*, as I pointed out, 'very C's and U's and T's', he was wrath and, being a poet, swore a good deal that if he could not have done a better parody of my 'stuff' with his left hand he would retire from business.[91]

We can hear the echoes here of our medieval scribe Mentzel, 'whose distinguishing peculiarities were a certain Byzantine formation of his *g*'s, the use of a "sickle-slanted" reed-pen, which cut into the vellum at certain letters' (p. 510). So Kipling plays the part of 'Dan Chaucer' and his scribes, in a version where the *auctor* is alive to investigate and avenge his own forgeries. Throughout *Something of Myself* he comes to resemble all of the characters in 'Dayspring', at times a slightly pompous Castorley, at others a brooding Manallace, and here Chaucer himself, who is the spectre hovering over everything fraudulent in the text.

Kipling presents a version of the medieval in 'Dayspring' which appears authentic, the short story overladen with 'verified references'. These details, as I have shown, are less authentic than authenticating, paralleling core principles of forgery theory in many ways and illuminating new avenues for understanding Kipling's authorial process. True to his abiding love of the medieval, Kipling seems to be subscribing more to a medieval and far more flexible version of 'truth' than modern conceptions. In the Isidorean distinction there are different kinds of

[86] 'Wireless', in Kipling, *The Man Who Would Be King*, 361–76. Keats' 'Eve of St Agnes' is itself indebted to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, and Keats even wrote his own kind of 'fictional forgery': the sonnet 'Written on a Blank Space at the End of Chaucer's Tale of *The Floure and the Leafe*'.

[87] Hesse, 'Somebody Else's Poem', 170.

[88] Some details of medieval manuscript production included in 'The Eye of Allah' include 'A lump of richest lazuli, a bar of orange-hearted vermilion, and a small packet of dried beetles' for medieval ink, and a monk 'burnishing a tiny boss of gold in his miniature of the Annunciation for his Gospel of St. Luke'. Rudyard Kipling, 'The Eye of Allah', in *Debits and Credits* (London, 1926), 365–94 (quotations at 370, 365, respectively). As in 'Dayspring', particular manuscript illuminations are entirely plausible, but do not appear to correspond with any exact codex or coalesce into a precise geographical or chronological tradition. See further John Coates, 'Memories of Mansura: The "Tints and Textures" of Kipling's Late Art in "The Eye of Allah"', *Modern Language Review*, 85 (1990), 555–69.

[89] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 130–32.

[90] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 130.

[91] Kipling, *Something of Myself*, 131. I am grateful to an anonymous reader for noting that the hoaxer was Max Beerbohm, caricaturist, writer, and lifelong enemy of Kipling, as revealed by John Felstiner in *The Lies of Art: Max Beerbohm's Parody and Caricature* (London, 1973), 160.

history: *historia*, *fabula*, and *argumentum*. *Historiae* are 'true deeds that have happened', and *fabulae* are 'things that have not happened and cannot happen'; but *argumenta* are 'plausible narrations' that could happen even if they have not actually occurred, and so 'Dayspring' might just be a very medieval version of the medieval which Kipling has created.[92]

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[92] Isidore, *Etymologies* 1.44. Translation from *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, tr. S. A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and O. Berghof (Cambridge, 2006), 67.