Scottish Chaucerianism in Older Scots Literature, c.1424-1513: A Re-Evaluation

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Abstract

This thesis takes a fresh view of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Chaucerian literature in Scotland, tracing its development from its earliest beginnings into an independent poetic tradition. In overview, this account provides a broader understanding of this body of writing as cohesive and dynamic, increasingly growing in confidence as it matures and evolves along distinct lines and revealing an awareness of itself as a native tradition in its own right as the later poets of the period respond to the work of the earlier ones.

Chapter 1 begins with *The Kingis Quair* (c.1424) of James I of Scotland (1394-1437), arguing that James's poem undertakes the appropriation of an existing vernacular tradition represented by Chaucer. The *Quair*'s increasingly confident portrayal of the author as one who has access to Christian wisdom intersects with James's implicit vernacular self-assertion in establishing a Chaucer tradition in Scotland.

Chapter 2 focuses on the mid-fifteenth-century poem, Richard Holland's (d. in or after 1483) *Buke of the Howlat* (c.1448), which engages simultaneously with the *Parliament of Fowls* (c.1380-82) and *The House of Fame* (c.1375) as well as with the later fourteenth-century Scots poem John Barbour's *Bruce* (c.1375). Holland's narrative and thematic interest in the ugly owl relates to his sense of Scottishness as the *Howlat* indirectly proclaims the perspective of difference from which it answers the poetry of Chaucer.

Chapter 3 argues that a similar sense of alterity informs Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (c.1440-1550) where it is made to assume the form of an implicit vernacular self-assertion. Chapter 3 also undertakes an original reassessment of both Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, which it contends represents a reworking of the use of the mixed form in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, and the *Moral Fables*, which it argues consists of a response to the storytelling genre in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Chapter 4 of this thesis considers a selection of texts by William Dunbar (c.1460?-1513x1530) which demonstrate his awareness of an established Chaucer tradition in Scotland. Yet, Dunbar, while explicitly recognizing the existence of this native Scottish Chaucerianism, nevertheless stands at a subversive angle to this body of writing despite drawing on the earlier writers in this thesis in his poetry.

Gavin Douglas's self-conscious situating of himself within the Scottish Chaucerian tradition is the focus of Chapter 5, which examines the influence of *The Kingis Quair* on the *Palice of Honour* (c.1503), before turning to the parallels between his later vernacular translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Eneados* (c.1513), and the experimental framing of reading experience in the poetry of Robert Henryson.

Acknowledgements

To undertake a thesis on Scottish Chaucerianism is to find oneself following in the footsteps of the dreamy narrators of the poems contained therein: oftentimes ineducable, stumbling more than once, and occasionally subject to a pinch on the intellectual ear by wiser authority figures. Still, like these protagonists, I nonetheless find myself a little bit further along in this journey towards self-knowledge, in large part due to the support of those present from the beginning and those met with along the way.

I wish to begin by extending my thanks to the Rhodes Trust at the University of Oxford and the Prairies Selection Committee of 2011, whose confidence in my abilities first put me on the path to Oxford, and to Rhodes House, always a welcoming and stimulating space, as well as its perpetually good-humoured staff.

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This thesis brought one chapter of my life to a close at the same time as it saw the beginning of another: Christian, your joyous arrival into the world changed everything and gave me new motivation to finish.

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There are no words to express the extent of my lifelong debt to my parents, Pat and Darlene Kelly, steadfast in their loving concern and support from day one; this thesis is dedicated to them.

Finally, I remain as ever in awed gratitude to Him, this 'morning's minion,' 'my chevalier!'.

Conventions and Abbreviations

The format for all references is based on the rules and guidelines for the notes-bibliography system of citation. References other than those indicated using the abbreviations listed below will be provided in full at the start of every new chapter.

Quotations from Chaucer are from the 2008 edition of *The Riverside Chaucer*.

AA	*Anelida and Arcite*
Aeneid I	*Virgil's Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. David F. C. Coldwell, vol. 1, STS, First Series, 30 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1964)
Aeneid II	*Virgil's Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. David F. C. Coldwell, vol. 2, STS, First Series, 25 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1957)
Aeneid III	*Virgil's Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. David F. C. Coldwell, vol. 3, STS, First Series, 27 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1959)
Aeneid IV	*Virgil's Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. David F. C. Coldwell, vol. 4, STS, First Series, 28 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1960)
ASLS	The Association for Scottish Literary Studies
B.	Poem number in *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, 2 vols, ASLS, 27, 28 (Glasgow: ASLS, 1998)
BH	*The Buke of the Howlat*, in *Longer Scottish Poems, Vol. 1: 1375-1650*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Felicity Riddy (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987)
CA	*The Confessio Amantis*, in *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 2 vols, EETS, Extra Series, 81, 82 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1900-01)
CT	*The Canterbury Tales*
ChauR	*Chaucer Review*

Co. *The Consolation of Philosophy*, in *Boethius: The Theological Tractates*, trans. H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, and *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library, 74 (Cambridge, MA, and London, Eng.: Harvard University Press, 1973)

CR *Critical Review*

DOST *Dictionary of Older Scottish Tongue*, ed. William Craigie, A. J. Aitken, and James A. C. Stevenson, 12 vols (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937-2002) www.dsl.ac.uk.

EETS *Early English Text Society*

EIC *Essays in Criticism*

ES *English Studies*

Fables *Moral Fables*, in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

FMLS *Forum for Modern Language Studies*

GT *The Goldyn Targe*, in *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, vol. 1, ASLS, 27 (Glasgow: ASLS, 1998)

HF *The House of Fame*

IMEV *Index of Middle English Verse*

IR *Innes Review*

JEGP *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*

KT *The Knight's Tale*

KQ *The Kingis Quair*, in *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology*, ed. Julia Boffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

LGW *The Legend of Good Women*

M&H *Medievalia et Humanistica*

MAE *Medium Aevum*

Meroure I *The Meroure of Wyssdome*, ed. Charles MacPherson, vol. 1, STS, Second Series, 19 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1926)

Meroure II *The Meroure of Wyssdome*, ed. Francis Quinn, vol. 2, STS, Fourth Series, 2 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1965)

Meroure III	*The Meroure of Wyssdome*, ed. Craig McDonald, vol. 3, STS, Fourth Series, 19 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990)

MLN — *Modern Language Notes*

MLQ — *Modern Language Quarterly*

MLR — *Modern Language Review*

MP — *Modern Philology*

N&Q — *Notes & Queries*

OE — *Orpheus and Eurydice*, in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

PF — *The Parliament of Fowls*

PH — *The Palice of Honour,* in *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, 2nd ed, STS, Fifth Series, 2. Edinburgh: STS, 2003

PLL — *Papers on Language and Literature*

PQ — *Philological Quarterly*

RES — *The Review of English Studies*

RM — *Robene and Makyne*, in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

SLJ — *Scottish Literary Journal*

SSL — Studies in Scottish Literature

STS — Scottish Text Society

TC — *Troilus and Criseyde*

Test. — *The Testament of Cresseid*, in *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, ed. Denton Fox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981)

TLS — *The Times Literary Supplement*

TR — *The Thrissill and the Rois*, in *The Poems of William Dunbar,* ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, vol. 1, ASLS, 27 (Glasgow: ASLS, 1998)

Tretis — *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo,* in *The Poems of William Dunbar,* ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, vol. 1, ASLS, 27 (Glasgow: ASLS, 1998)

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Introduction

In 1490, the Scottish diplomat, statesman, and theologian John Ireland (c.1440-1495) completed *The Meroure of Wyssdome*, a vernacular treatise dedicated to the newly crowned James IV of Scotland (1473-1513) offering political advice alongside a general introduction to the fundamentals of Christianity.[1] Ireland's decision to write in his native tongue suggests its growing importance at the time in Scotland,[2] and he shows an awareness of the significance of this choice by referring to it throughout the treatise.[3] In his closing apology for the deficiencies of his text, for example, he professes to lack that same facility in the vernacular as mastered over a century earlier by the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1340-1400):

> gif þi hienes acceppis þis laubour & werk þat has bene gret to me Considerand þat I was thretty ȝer nurist in fraunce and in the noble study of paris in latin toung and knew nocht the gret eloquens of chauceir na colouris þat men vsis in þis inglis metir þat gret clerkis makis na covnt of.[4]

Chaucer's 'eloquens' is at once the object of the author's praise and of his criticism of the use of verse, the limitations of which when writing about serious subjects are discussed at greater length earlier on in the *Meroure* in Chapter III of Book II of the treatise, where Ireland, again with reference to Chaucer, begins by expressing his admiration for the earlier poet's handling of the topic of divine foreknowledge 'in þe buk of troylus, & richt excedandly for a temporale man and clerk nocht greit in theologie.'[5] Yet,

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[1] Cf. James H. Burns, 'John Ireland and "The Meroure of Wyssdome,"' *IR* 6.2 (1955), pp.77-98 [87]; James H. Burns, 'John Ireland: Theology and Public Affairs in the Late Fifteenth Century,' *IR* 41.2 (1990), pp. 151-81 [156-57].
[2] Cf. Burns, 'John Ireland and "The Meroure of Wyssdome,"' pp.88-89.
[3] Cf. Sally Louise Mapstone, 'The Advice to Princes Tradition in Scottish Literature, 1450-1500' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1986), pp.370-71.
[4] *Meroure* III, p.164.
[5] *Meroure* I, p.74. Cf. Craig McDonald, 'John Ireland's *Meroure of Wyssdome* and Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee*,' *SSL* 21.1 (1986): pp.23-34 [23-24]; J. C. McDonald, 'John Ireland's Literary Sensibility: *The Meroure of Wyssdome*, Book 7,' in *Bryght Lanternis: Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. J. Derrick McClure and Michael R.G. Spiller (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), pp.324-36 [324-25].

Ireland, despite his literary appreciation for that text, nevertheless presents an objection to it, for he goes on to observe that topics of a weighty nature are best dealt with in prose rather than verse as Chaucer himself appears to recognize in choosing the former when writing about 'sad and gret materis.'[6]

In the 1470s to the 1490s, not long before the completion of the *Meroure*, Robert Henryson (c.1460-1500) offers a response of his own to the 'buk of troylus' in his *The Testament of Cresseid*. Henryson refers admiringly to that work in heaping praise on its author, 'worthie Chaucer glorious,'[7] and the skill with which he renders the tragic reversal suffered by the ill-fated Troilus and Cresseid. Yet, Henryson is more permissive where the poetic treatment of serious theological concepts is concerned. Indeed, Chaucer's handling of free will and predestination informs his own interpretation of those topics.[8] However, Henryson, whose invention of a fictional source for his narrative is itself a playfully Chaucerian gesture,[9] nevertheless expresses a different point of view in tackling these larger themes,[10] while also departing from his stated source in narrating his own original version of the story of Cresseid. Thus, Henryson adopts a striking critical posture as he begins by articulating his glowing praise for Chaucer before mingling that applause with an equally forthright challenge to the earlier writer's poetic authority.[11] Nor do his comments provide the only example of this kind of directness as it applied to Chaucer[12] whose writing instead elicits a growing robustness in critical responses by the later fifteenth century in Scotland.

Henryson's confidence is characteristic of the work of the 'Scottish Chaucerians,' namely King James I of Scotland (1394-1437), Robert Henryson (c.1440-1500), William Dunbar (c.1460?-1513x1530), Gavin Douglas (c.1476-1522), as well as Sir David Lyndsay (c.1485-1555).[13] 'Scottish Chaucerian' as a

[6] *Meroure* I, p.74.
[7] *Test.,* l.41.
[8] Cf. Jill Mann, 'The Planetary Gods in Chaucer and Henryson,' in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.91-106 [95].
[9] Cf. *TC*, I, l.394; V, l.1653. See also Gregory C. Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.85.
[10] Ibid., p.96.
[11] Cf. *Test.*, ll.64-70.
[12] Cf. *Aeneid* II, pp.12-16 [ll.339-451].
[13] Cf. G. Gregory Smith, *The Transition Period*, Periods of European Literature, 4 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1900), pp.vii and 40.

label grew out of the earlier practice among eighteenth- and nineteenth- century anthologists and historians whose writings examine the work of these poets in relation to Chaucer's.[14] This critical tendency acquired a formal definition in the continued use of this term in the twentieth century where, in addition to serving as an identifier of these poets, it also points to a way of reading their texts, that is, by viewing them primarily as the followers and imitators of their master Chaucer, whose influence, moreover, is implicitly measured in terms of the references and allusions to his work in their own writing.[15]

Yet, as even its earliest users occasionally point out, 'Scottish Chaucerian' and 'Scottish Chaucerianism' as critical concepts have obvious limitations, not least in making Chaucer and his influence the dominant points of reference in the study of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Scottish texts.[16] Critics in the second half of the twentieth century are more vociferous in denouncing 'Scottish Chaucerianism,' arguing that it obscures the originality of this group of later medieval Scottish poets.[17] Yet, the result is a somewhat distorted portrait of the literary relations between England and Scotland, for this 'anti-Scottish Chaucerianism' effectively put a halt to research into Chaucer's Scottish reception.[18] Scottish Chaucerianism as a critical concept thus failed to benefit from a more sophisticated understanding

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[14] This tendency is apparent early on in the linking of Chaucer with the Scots in William Thynne's inclusion of *The Testament of Cresseid* as a kind of sixth book of *Troilus and Criseyde* in *The works of Geoffray Chaucer* (London, 1532). Cf. David Laing, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar, Now First Collected, with Notes, and a Memoir of his Life*, 2 Vols. (Edinburgh: Ballantyne & Co., 1834), I, p.49, II, pp.451-52.

[15] Cf., among others, Caroline Spurgeon, ed., *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion 1357-1900, vol. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), pp.xv-xvi, 34, 56, 65, 66, 68, 71-72; Harvey Wood, 'Robert Henryson,' in *Edinburgh Essays on Scots Literature*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1933), pp.1-26 [1]; R. M. Smith, ed., *Two Scottish Chaucerians* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1935); W. B. Inglis, 'The Rise of the Scottish Chaucerians,' (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 1930); H. S. Bennett, *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford History of English Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p.173.

[16] G. Gregory Smith, to whom the honour of the first recorded use of the phrase 'Scottish Chaucerians' has been accorded, notes the influence of a 'perfervid patriotism' on the nevertheless 'just' assessment of Chaucer's Scottish influence: *The Transition Period*, pp.35-36.

[17] Representative of this view is Florence H. Ridley, 'A Plea for the Middle Scots,' in *The Learned and the Lewed: Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, ed. Larry D. Benson, Harvard English Studies, 5 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp.175-96 [175-76]. Cf. also Denton Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), pp.164-200 [164-66]; Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.1-30; Douglas Gray, 'Some Chaucerian Themes in Scottish Writers,' in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.81-91 [81-82].

[18] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams, 'Poets "of this Natioun,"' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp.4-18 [13].

of Chaucer's later influence of the kind that came to inform studies of his influence in England.[19] Indeed, Scottish Chaucerianism's comparative suspension as an active field of enquiry is suggested from the fact that the most recent monograph dealing at length with the now somewhat vexed question of Chaucer's later reception in Scotland was published over four decades ago and is out of date.[20]

That 'Scottish Chaucerianism' and 'Scottish Chaucerians' as terms continue to be deployed today (albeit not without the usual provisos cautioning against an overdetermined sense of Chaucer's influence) serves as an expressive indication of their critical usefulness and evidence that these labels should not be discarded altogether but rather subject to revaluation in light of new research on Chaucer's reception.[21] This thesis proposes to undertake a reassessment of this nature in examining in the first instance how Chaucer comes to represent an exemplary figure of authorship for later vernacular poets in Scotland, whose writing suggests their self-consciousness in working within a received Chaucerianism.[22] The Scottish authors examined in this thesis also undertake an implicit appropriation of the Chaucerian tradition, participating in a complex process of assimilation centered around the authorizing figure of Chaucer to the extent that one can identify an underlying practice or system in the term 'Scottish Chaucerianism,' as the '-ism' based around self-consciously writing like Chaucer: being 'Chaucerian.'[23]

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[19] I am thinking in particular of the idea of reception introduced by Seth Lerer in *Chaucer and his Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (1993) and the studies subsequent to it. For a useful overview, cf. Seth Lerer, 'Receptions, Medieval, Tudor, Modern,' in *Chaucer: Contemporary Approaches,* ed. Susanna Fein and David Raybin (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), pp.83-95 [84]. Cf. also Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp.74-108; Stephanie Trigg, 'Chaucer's Influence and Reception,' in *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven, CT, and London, UK: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.297-333; Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline, eds., *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1999).

[20] Cf. Gregory C. Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[21] Of 'Scottish Chaucerians' as a phrase, Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams note that it 'is a curious phenomenon: little loved, yet still widely current, it has long had its critics, English as well as Scottish': 'Poets "of this Natioun,"' p.13.

[22] Cf. Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages,* 2nd ed., The Middle Ages (1984; Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp.211-17; Lois Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln, NB, and London, UK: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp.1-18; Jane Griffiths, 'The Author,' in *A Concise Companion to Middle English Literature*, ed. Marilyn Corrie (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp.120-41 [121-26].

[23] Cf. Louise O. Fradenburg, 'The Scottish Chaucer,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance) (University of Stirling*, *2-7 July 1981)*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow,

Chaucer thus represents an important starting point in the development of a poetic tradition in Scotland, one, due to that country's intrinsic linguistic, cultural, and political differences from fifteenth-century England, reflecting a distinctiveness by comparison to so-called English Chaucerian writing in the same period. Indeed, this thesis argues that, while initially revolving primarily around Chaucer, Scottish Chaucerianism acquires an internal momentum by the end of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, to the extent that Scots authors increasingly draw on one another's 'Chaucerian' texts. By engaging with a new albeit by then established repertoire of writing in the vernacular that is native to Scotland, the Scottish poets limit Chaucer's direct influence as they respond increasingly to a native poetic tradition.

This thesis therefore departs from the now standard way of thinking about Chaucer's Scottish reception, an approach which is in many ways still represented by Gregory Kratzmann's *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (1980), a foundational study that seeks to redefine Scottish Chaucerianism, the usefulness of which as a critical term Kratzmann acknowledges even as he identifies its limitations.[24] Kratzmann's 'Introduction' presents new ways of thinking about Scottish Chaucerian writing, in particular noting that Chaucer's Scottish reception is the result of a creative assimilation on the part of Scots poets seeking to achieve in their own native vernacular that which Chaucer had done in 'sudron.'[25] Yet, Kratzmann's chapters limit their interpretation of that process to a fairly literal reading of the way that Scottish poets undertake an original and independent conceptual reworking of specific poems by Chaucer. Indeed, Kratzmann's study inadvertently produces a fragmented portrait of Scottish Chaucerianism, which, rather than being treated as a cohesive tradition, is represented by individual responses to Chaucer. Kratzmann's book, moreover, while mainly engaging with the question of Chaucer's Scottish influence, is not presented as a dedicated reassessment of the special problem of Scottish Chaucerianism; rather, as

1981), pp.177-90 [169-71]; Louise O. Fradenburg, 'Chaucer and the Middle Scots Poets: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Reception' (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1982), pp.51-71.

[24] Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550*, pp.21-23.

[25] Ibid, p.24.

its title suggests, it offers a broader and dynamic reconsideration of the English influence on Scots poetry, arguing for signs of indebtedness to the latter on the part of early sixteenth-century English writers.[26]

Completed in 1982, two years after the publication of Kratzmann's *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, Louise Olga Fradenburg's doctoral thesis entitled 'Chaucer and the Middle Scots Poets: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Reception' likewise undertakes a reassessment of Scottish Chaucerianism, presenting a nuanced understanding of the way that, via their engagement with Chaucer's verse, the Scots poets effectively rewrite their literary past, creating a new poetic tradition in doing so.[27] Fradenburg, however, in addition to framing her analysis in terms of cultural psychology, also limits her study of Chaucer's reception to only three poets, namely James I, Henryson, and Dunbar, whereas this thesis reflects a broader scope in its inclusion of Douglas, as well as the Orkney poet Richard Holland. This thesis builds on Fradenburg by undertaking a more up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of the way Scots poets display a self-awareness in writing at the beginning of a new poetic tradition in Scotland. Scottish texts are examined for the way that their response to individual poems by Chaucer fit within the self-conscious development of a comparable but alternative tradition of writing in Scotland. Scottish Chaucerianism is thus by definition characterized by its sense of difference relative to Chaucer, and an implicit assertion of this difference fundamentally informs the work of the poets under study.

Imitation and allusion as concepts have been the subject of much critical thought and energy, including such classical interventions as Thomas M. Greene's *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (1982), wherein Greene identifies a fourfold typology of imitation in examining how Renaissance humanists imaginatively reconstruct a cultural history with the texts of the past.[28] More recently, the topics of imitation and allusion have been addressed by both Colin Burrow and Raphael Lyne. The former, in analysing the theory and practice of *imitatio* in *Imitating Authors: Plato to Futurity*

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[26] Ibid., p.3.
[27] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Chaucer and the Middle Scots Poets: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Reception,' p.5ff.
[28] Cf. Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*, The Elizabethan Club Series, 7 (New Haven, CT, and London, UK: Yale University Press, 1982), pp.37-48.

(2019), presents a revised understanding of it as not simply a matter of borrowing or alluding to an earlier text, but rather as a dynamic process through which new styles come to be created and literary change enacted.[29] Lyne by comparison, in his chapter on poetic memory in *Memory and Intertextuality in Renaissance Literature* (2016), outlines a new approach to allusion and intertextuality, each respectively corresponding to explicit and implicit memory in the manner with which it engages the earlier text.[30]

In addition, and particularly significant in shaping this thesis's reconceptualization of Scottish Chaucerianism is the comparatively older and foundational approach to imitation and allusion laid out in Terence Cave's influential *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (1979) Cave's study, while focused on the reception of classical texts on the part of sixteenth-century authors in France, provides an important reference point for this thesis's conceptualization of how the Scots read Chaucer. Cave redefines the process of imitation not as a passive copying or following of an earlier text; rather, Renaissance authors according to his study engage in a self-conscious reading and writing.[31] For Cave, 'the production of any discourse is conditioned by pre-existing instances of discourse'[32]; thus, the so-called imitator is necessarily understood as a rewriter, whose desire for originality and authenticity is achieved by working within an existing discourse, by taking it apart and reconstructing it as opposed to seeking to create a new one. Cave's study thus presents an understanding of imitation as dynamic, with later writers re-interpreting an earlier discourse and in so doing carving a space for themselves within it.

In Scottish Chaucerian texts, this process of imitation is evident in the reworking of Chaucer and the Chaucerian discourse within which the writers examined in this thesis operate. The Scots poets, furthermore, reveal a desire both to appropriate and to naturalize the Chaucerian tradition.[33] Where

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[29] Colin Burrow, *Imitating Authors: Plato to Futurity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp.1-34.
[30] Raphael Lyne, *Memory and Intertextuality in Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp.21-42.
[31] Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp.35-36.
[32] Ibid., p.76.
[33] Ibid., p.35.

Chaucer's influence and the later references and allusions to his writing are referred to in this thesis, therefore, these concepts must be understood to function within this larger critical frame, with the Scottish poets in question actively reading and writing within an established and authoritative Chaucerian discourse, one which, moreover, they implicitly seek to claim as their own in the process. Scottish Chaucerian texts therefore involve a process of imitation such as that which is defined by Cave, for, while Chaucer on the one hand establishes the parameters within which the poets in this thesis write, the Scots nevertheless subject him to reinterpretation by dismembering and reconstructing the Chaucerian.

This thesis argues that Scottish poets writing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries respond to an idea of Chaucer: yet, Seth Lerer, in examining how his reputation is constructed by his later imitators in England, excludes the Scots from consideration by observing that their writing is instead 'grounded in a distinctive social context and with governing political and patronage concerns far different from those of the south.'[34] Thus, Lerer, while rightly observing the differences in social and political situation defining Scotland in this period, locates Chaucer's posthumous reception within a context which is exclusively English when Scottish poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also engage in their own construction of Chaucer. Yet, their Scottishness of necessity means that this process is one of appropriation and assimilation,[35] thereby contributing, within the alternative social, political, linguistic, and cultural contexts of Scottish Chaucerian writing, to its distinctiveness from later medieval responses to Chaucer in England.

[34] Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, p.5.

[35] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' pp.179-82; Fradenburg, 'Chaucer and the Middle Scots Poets: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Reception,' pp.1-86; Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550*, p.21; Carolyn Ives and David Parkinson, 'Scottish Chaucer, Misogynist Chaucer,' in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602*, ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp.196-202 [188]; John M. Bowers, 'Three Readings of the Knight's Tale: Sir John Clanvowe, Geoffrey Chaucer, and James I of Scotland,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34.2 (2004), pp.279-307 [279]; Elizabeth Elliott, 'Scottish Writing,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English,* ed. Elaine Treharne, Greg Walker, and William Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.574-93 [587]; Chelsea Honeyman, 'Literary and Political Governance in Scottish Reception of Chaucer,' (PhD. diss., McGill University, 2010), pp.17-21.

English Chaucerian poetry in this period, for instance, speaks to a more fraught negotiation with authority, displaying patterns of subjection and infantilization in the presence of 'Father Chaucer.'[36] The perceived dullness and incompetence of English poets are a function of their own self-fashioning, poses struck as part of a quietly self-assertive negotiation of their status as the followers of Chaucer.[37] Chaucer's creative reception among his later medieval followers in the fifteenth century in England relates, furthermore, to their comparatively more direct engagement with the realm of political power, with Chaucer providing an authoritative precedent for their own activities as effective public poets.[38] Indeed, Chaucer himself is strategically constructed as the nation's canonical poet by members of the Lancastrian regime, who, aided by the religious orders, make him the voice of a political and religious orthodoxy.[39] Despite the absence of a formal system of courtly patronage in the later medieval period in England, English poets nevertheless assume the role as advisors or affiliates to the court in their own writing, while, in reflecting on the commissioning process behind their poems, connecting themselves to the monarch.[40] Yet, the (often royal) patronage enjoyed by early fifteenth-century poets in England is also connected to the oblique and oftentimes restrained quality of their verse, as well as its apparent conventionality, qualities themselves correlated with their closeness as poets to the centres of political power and control.[41]

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[36] A. C. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.92**;** Daniel T. Kline, 'Father Chaucer and the *Siege of Thebes*: Literary Paternity, Aggressive Deference, and the Prologue to Lydgate's Oedipal Canterbury Tale,' *ChR* 34.2 (1999), pp.217-35 [217-18]; Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers,* pp.85-91.

[37] Cf. Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, p.4.

[38] Ibid, pp.5-6; cf. also Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.1-11.

[39] Cf. John M. Bowers, *Chaucer and Langland: The Antagonistic Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[40] Cf. Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp.168-211**; ;** Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medeva*l England, The Middle Ages (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp.15-38; Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998); Paul Strohm, *Politique: Languages of Statecraft between Chaucer and Shakespeare* (Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Jenni Nuttall, *the Creation of Lancastrian Kingship: Literature, Language and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[41] Representative of this reading is David Lawton's seminal essay 'Dullness and the Fifteenth Century,' *ELH* 54.4 (1987), pp.761-99.

The Scottish Chaucerians by contrast are often singled out for the originality of their writing: A. C. Spearing, for instance, notes that they are distinguished from their English counterparts by virtue of their technical skill and the greater independence with which they adopt their 'Chaucerian inheritance.'[42] Spearing's observation is representative in glossing over the possible reasons for that inventiveness. Yet, Scotland constitutes something of a case apart in the fifteenth century by virtue of its decentralization, with the ongoing conflicts between an ambitious crown and opposing magnates causing a power vacuum, one further contributed to in the decades of minority rule that define the Stewart regime in this period.[43] Thus, Scotland's distinctiveness in sociopolitical terms and related lack of a court literature until James IV (and even this, as Sally Mapstone notes in a seminal essay, remained slow to grow well into the sixteenth century)[44] afford the writers of the period with a greater freedom of literary expression, providing them with a space within which to forego dullness and engage in poetic experimentation and allowing those on the periphery more easily to take up an oppositional stance to centres of authority.[45]

The Scots poets also benefit from a greater distance in language, place, and time from Chaucer, one that contributes to the originality of their writing and further sets them apart from the English Chaucerians. Notably absent are the claims to friendship made by Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate, for example, or more significantly the paternal metaphors by which they connect themselves to Chaucer. To the Scots, Chaucer is first and foremost held up as a model of literary style,[46] praised for the rhetorical excellence through which he was able to transform and elevate writing in the vernacular.[47] Indeed, the

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[42] Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry*, p.164.
[43] Cf. Jennifer M. Brown, 'The exercise of power,' in *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*, edited by Jennifer M. Brown (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), pp.33-65; Jennifer M. Brown, *Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland 1470-1625*, The New History of Scotland, 4 (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), pp.3-55.
[44] Sally Mapstone, 'Was there a Court Literature in Fifteenth-Century Scotland?' *SSL* 26.1 (1991), pp.410-22 [422]. Cf. also Sally Mapstone, 'Introduction: Older Scots and the Fifteenth Century,' in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Sally Mapstone. For a contrasting view, see Antony J. Hasler, *Court Poetry in Late Medieval England and Scotland: Allegories of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.12.
[45] Cf. David Parkinson, 'Centres, Peripheries and Networks: the flourishing of Older Scots literature, *c.*1400-*c.*1500,' in *The Cambridge History of Scottish Literature*, ed. Ian Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
[46] Cf. *Test.,* ll.57-63.; *Troy Book*, III 553, II 4697-700
[47] Cf. *Test*., GT, ll.253-61; *Aeneid* II, ll.339-43.

prevalence of this stylistic emphasis points to the importance of that achievement in providing Scottish poets with a dignified literary past whose source they find in the authorizing figure of Chaucer.[48] Thus the Scots, eschewing references to friendship or to filial ties of the kind often found in English Chaucerian texts, instead, in focusing on his literary prowess, on, for instance, the 'eloquens' praised by Ireland, demonstrate their greater preoccupation with the need to create a dignified poetic tradition of their own.

Less often considered is the effect which this distance has on Scottish Chaucerian poetry itself, for the Scots enjoy a freedom from constraint that underpins their boldly inventive response to Chaucer. This aspect of their writing is reflected in the relative brevity of their work compared to his and that of the 'English Chaucerians'. The Scots, as critics have increasingly and persuasively shown, were familiar with longer texts by Gower, Lydgate, and Hoccleve,[49] yet they do not write poems on nearly the same scale: Douglas's *Palice of Honour* remains the longest of the texts in this thesis that are truly 'Chaucerian' (the *Eneados* is significantly longer but this is due to the fact that it consists of a full translation of the *Aeneid*). In English Chaucerian texts, prolixity has rightly been seen as a function of a strategic dullness,[50] and, where Chaucer is concerned, part of the author's efforts to outdo and go beyond their poetic forefather.[51]

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[48] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' pp.181-82.

[49] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'English Books and Scottish Readers in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,' *Review of Scottish Culture* 14 (2002), pp.1-12 [7-8]; Priscilla Bawcutt, 'The Boston Public Library Manuscript of John Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*: Its Scottish Owners and Inscriptions,' *MAE* 70.1 (2001), pp.80-94 [89, 94]; W. H. E. Sweet, 'The Influence of Lydgate and his *Isopes Fabules* on Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*,' in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland,* ed. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp.31-45 [31]; W. H. E. Sweet, 'The Scottish Lydgateans,' in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master: Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations,* ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.23-45 [32-39]; W. H. E. Sweet, 'Lydgate Manuscripts and Prints in Late Medieval Scotland,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp.141-59 [141]; W. H. E. Sweet, 'The "Vther Quair" as the *Troy Book*: The Influence of Lydgate on Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,' in *Premodern Scotland: Literature and Governance 1420-1587*, ed. Joanna Martin and Emily Wingfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.57-73 [57]; Joanna Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540* (Aldershot, Eng., and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp.3-4; Joanna Martin, 'The Translations of Fortune: James I's *Kingis Quair* and the Rereading of Lancastrian Poetry,' in *Langage Cleir Illumynate: Scottish Poetry from Barbour to Drummond, 1375-1630*, ed. Nicola Royan, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 10 (Amsterdam, NL, and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2007), pp.43-60 [43-44].

[50] Cf. Lawton, 'Dullness and the Fifteenth Century,' pp.762-64.

[51] Cf. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century*, pp.12-15; Derek Pearsall, 'Chaucer and Lydgate,' in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer,* ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1990), pp.39-53 [47-52]; Philippa Hardman, 'Lydgate's Uneasy Syntax,' in John Lydgate: Poetry,

Scottish Chaucerian texts on the other hand are notably shorter, a difference in length related to the fact that the Scots do not exhibit that sense of rivalry that might otherwise lead them to try to surpass Chaucer.

Rather, Scottish claims to participate in a shared tradition in eulogies invariably headed by Chaucer[52] remain free of the pressure to compete with or to outdo a direct literary predecessor, reflecting instead a more fundamental revisionism inherent in the creation of a sophisticated vernacular tradition.[53] Scottish Chaucerianism's distinctive positioning informs the nature of its poetic response to Chaucer, which is characterized less by expansion and addition but rather outright reworking and revision. Indeed, the Scots poets examined in this thesis display a tendency towards interruption and redirection that I would argue reflects the way in which they are breaking in on a tradition of writing which they make their own. Of further significance in this regard is the relative prominence accorded to marginal figures in their texts,[54] a taking over of the centre by the periphery which is itself related to their underlying poetics, for Scottish Chaucerian writers are themselves situated at the verge of an authoritative literary tradition. Thus, this relative positioning informs the inventiveness of their verse while their experimentation with formal and generic contrasts represents a form of resistance to 'centralising (not least) anglicising tendencies.'[55]

The radical revision of Chaucer by fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Scottish poets is evident in the way later writers in this thesis come to draw on the work of the earlier ones, an aspect of Scottish Chaucerian literature that has received little by way of critical attention despite its providing significant persuasive evidence in support of the distinctiveness and independence of that tradition.[56] Chaucer, whose poetry represents the first point of literary engagement in his initial reception in Scotland, is thus

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Culture and Lancastrian England, ed. Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp.12-35 [13-15, 21].

[52] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1372-79; *Test.*, ll.41-42; *GT*, ll.253-70; *Aeneid* II, pp.14-16 [ll.401-49].

[53] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' p.189.

[54] Cf. Mapstone, 'Introduction: Older Scots and the Fifteenth Century,' p.10.

[55] Parkinson, 'Centres, Peripheries and Networks: the flourishing of Older Scots literature, c.1400-c.1500.' Cf. also Sandra Hordis, 'Metatextual Resistance in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,' in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations,* ed. Kathleen A. Bishop with a Foreword by David Matthews (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.47, 49; Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' pp.168-69.

[56] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'Serving Venus: Attitudes to Authority in *The House of Fame*, *The Kingis Quair*, and *The Palice of Honoure*,' *The Mediaeval Journal* 10.1 (2020), pp.81-104.

increasingly made to give way to the mediating influence of his earliest Scottish readers. Thus, the Chaucerian canon comes to be subject by the later fifteenth century to a bold 'Scotticization,' as the Scots poets add to the literary repertoire which at its outset was more exclusively represented by Chaucer.[57] In doing so they effectively put into practice the literary ideal evoked in later medieval Scottish praise of Chaucer, who is portrayed as the first among vernacular poets, closely followed by Gower and Lydgate. Yet, the Scottish poets alongside them speak by virtue of that inclusion to an independent vernacular Scots tradition, one, as the extensiveness of such lists indicates, that begins with but also goes beyond Chaucer.

Chaucer's unvarying primacy in these groupings nevertheless points to his significance for Scottish poets, not least in representing an idea of writing which they then appropriate in their own work. His importance also extends beyond the foundation he provides for vernacular identity in Scotland, for Chaucer's own questioning of authorship supplies them with a mode for reflecting on their roles as poets. Thus, Chaucer, in addition to functioning as a catalyst in the development of larger poetic tradition in Scotland, one which is based on the processes of appropriation and remaking outlined above, also represents a first point of contact for the writers in this thesis as they think through their ideas of poetry. This thesis therefore does not abandon the categories of influence and allusion altogether; rather, it reframes them, using them both as critical starting points in assessing Chaucer's Scottish reception, evaluating how Scottish poets engage with his verse in creating an independent poetic tradition and responding to his challenging treatment of authorship as they formulate their own views of that topic.

Chaucer's poetry as the place of departure for the later innovations of his Scottish followers is reflected in the structure of the individual chapters of this thesis, all of which begin by first identifying those Chaucerian texts most influential in the work of the specific Scottish poet under study. As this thesis remains equally concerned with the tradition of writing emerging out of that engagement with Chaucer,

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[57] Cf. 'I that in heill wes and gladness,' in *The Poems of William Dunbar,* ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, Vol. 1, ASLS, 27 (Glasgow: ASLS, 1988), pp.94-97 [[ll.53-89]; *PH*, ll.916-24; *The Testament and Complaynt of our Soverane Lordis Papyngo*, in *Sir David Lyndsay, Selected Poems*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams, ASLS, 30 (Glasgow: ASLS, 2000), pp.58-97 [ll.12-24].

its earlier chapters in particular conclude by examining how this initial reception of his verse establishes a number of important currents in the readings of his poetry by the later Scottish Chaucerians. The chapters of this thesis are therefore structured to consider this dual aspect of Scottish Chaucerianism. On the one hand, Scottish Chaucerianism looks backward in its appropriation and adaptation of Chaucerian writing. On the other, however, this retrospective posture is by virtue of its very literary ambitions one that also implicitly looks forward to the future development of a comparable tradition of writing in Scotland. The earlier chapters of this thesis therefore have what is best described as a diptych structure, with James, Holland, and Henryson laying the groundwork for the poetry of Dunbar and Douglas. In thus illustrating how the earlier writers of the period establish new and influential ways of responding to Chaucer, readings for which evidence is to be found in the work of their later Scottish followers, this thesis thereby gives Scottish Chaucerianism new life by situating it not just in relation to Chaucer but also to itself.

How exactly Chaucer's poems circulated in the first half of the fifteenth century in Scotland is unclear: James I is usually held to have brought copies of them with him on his return to Edinburgh in 1424,[58] and Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat* suggests his access to the *Parliament of Fowls* and *House of Fame*.[59] That Chaucer's works were already available by the third quarter of the century is suggested from their influence on Blind Hary's *Wallace* (c.1471-79) and the Prologue to *Lancelot of the Laik* (c.1460-79).[60] The extensiveness and explicitness of the borrowings from him towards the end of the fifteenth century in Scotland, together with, for example, the direct references to him as an author not just

[58] Cf. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: The Genesis and Evolution of a Scottish Poetical Anthology,' in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2005), pp.14-29 [24]; Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and the '"Scotticization of Middle English Verse,"' in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602*, ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp.166-85 [181]; Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations,* pp.35-36.
[59] For early discussions of the transmission of Chaucer's works in Scotland, see Ethel Seaton, '"That Scotch Copy of Chaucer,"' *JEGP* 47 (1948), pp.352-56; John Durkan and Anthony Ross, *Early Scottish Libraries* (Glasgow: John Burns, 1961), p.7; J. A. W. Bennett, 'Those Scotch Copies of Chaucer,' *RES*, New Series 32.172 (1981), pp.294-96.
[60] Cf. Douglas Gray, 'Some Chaucerian Themes in Scottish Writers,' in *Chaucer Traditions*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.81-90 [89-90]; Walter Scheps, 'Chaucer and the Middle Scots Poets,' *SSL* 22 (1987), pp.44-59 [53-59]

by the Scottish Chaucerians[61] but also by vernacular prose writers of the period such as John Ireland,[62] indicate that Chaucer was being read widely before the turn of the century, both in manuscript form, a medium frequently evoked by the poets in this thesis,[63] and, in the case of some works, in print as well.[64]

Strongest textual evidence for his later medieval Scottish transmission is provide by Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24., the only surviving Chaucerian manuscript anthology from Scotland.[65] The Selden MS was produced over a protracted period for Henry, third Lord Sinclair (c.1460-1513) – from 1489, the year in which the arms appearing on f.118^{v} were awarded to Sinclair, to 1505[66] – and provides a further indication of the circulation of Chaucer's texts in later fifteenth-century Scotland, reflecting in its contents an affiliation to the so-called 'Oxford group' of Chaucerian manuscripts.[67] Yet, the *Troilus*'s notable inclusion within the manuscript marks a deviation from the Oxford-group texts, pointing to the possibility that the scribe had access to more than one Chaucerian exemplar.[68] Moreover, the Selden MS includes a small handful of texts that are spuriously ascribed to Chaucer and do not appear in the Oxford group, some of which reflect a distinctive circulation as Chaucer texts in Scotland,[69] while the Selden *Troilus* represents an amalgamation of two different strands in that poem's transmission.[70] As

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[61] Cf. *Test.*, ll.39-70; *GT*, ll.253-61; *PH*, l.919; *Aeneid* II, p.12 [ll.339-46].

[62] Cf. Bennett, 'Those Scotch Copies of Chaucer,' pp.295-96; McDonald, 'John Ireland's *Meroure of Wyssdome* and Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee*,' pp.23-34; McDonald, 'John Ireland's Literary Sensibility: *The Meroure of Wyssdome*, Book 7,' pp.324-25.

[63] Cf. *Test.*, l.242; *Fables*, ll.1356-57; *KQ*, ll.89-91; *Tretis*, ll.525-26.

[64] Cf. Sally Mapstone, 'The Transmission of Older Scots Literature,' in *The International Companion to Scottish Literature 1400-1650*, ed. Nicola Royan, International Companions to Scottish Literature (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2018), pp.38-59 [38-39].

[65] The only other surviving Scottish MS of Chaucer's works, containing only the lyric 'Truth,' is Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.1.5.

[66] Cf. Roderick J. Lyall, 'Books and Book Owners in Fifteenth-Century Scotland,' in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.239-56 [250-52]; Boffey and Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: The Genesis and Evolution of a Scottish Poetical Anthology,' in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2005), pp.14-29 [16-17].

[67] Cf. Boffey and Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and the '"Scotticization of Middle English Verse,"' p.167.

[68] Ibid., p.167.

[69] Cf. A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch Selden B 24: A "Transitional" Collection,' in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen J. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp.53-68 [56-67].

[70] Cf. Ralph Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts,* Figurae (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.116.

Rebecca Marsland has shown, the association of amatory and ethical material in the Selden MS is distinctively Scottish, reflecting a similar emphasis in other fifteenth-century manuscripts in Scotland.[71]

The Selden MS, in addition to providing a further insight into the Scottish transmission of Chaucer's works, connects to larger developments in writing in the vernacular in Scotland in this period.[72] Of particular importance in this regard is the manuscript's affiliation with the Sinclair family, who were more active as patrons in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries than the Crown.[73] Henry Sinclair, a well-known bibliophile and literary patron, may have overseen the manuscript's compilation. It has also been suggested that the two scribes involved in the copying of the manuscript were based in the Sinclair household either as notaries public or as clerics employed in administrative roles.[74] The Selden MS, while a household collection almost certainly intended for private use,[75] therefore nevertheless reflects a wider set of ambitions in the advancement of Scotland's literary scene. As Louise Fradenburg rightly notes, it reveals a 'deliberate, energetic enrichment of Scots vernacular resources,' one attesting, as she observes, to the 'centrality of the Chaucerian text to the aspirations of Scottish culture,'[76] therefore reflecting in codicological terms a similar process of appropriation as the texts in this thesis.

Further evidence for this reading lies in the inclusion of unique copies of the Scottish texts – *The Kingis Quair* and *the Quare of Jelusy*, as well as the shorter *The Luvaris Complaynt* and *The Lay of Sorrow* – with the poems by Chaucer and the English Chaucerian texts making up the bulk of the Selden MS.

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[71] Cf. Rebecca Louise Katherine Marsland, 'Complaint in Scotland, c.1424-c.1500' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2013), pp.60-139.
[72] Cf. Mapstone, 'Was there a Court Literature in Scotland?' p.422.
[73] Cf. Sally Mapstone, 'Introduction: Older Scots and the Fifteenth Century,' in *Older Scots Literature,* ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2005), pp.2-13 [9].
[74] Cf. Boffey and Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and the "Scotticization" of Middle English Verse,' p.177; Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer and the Kingis Quair: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24,* pp.3-4. For a discussion of the Sinclair family as patrons of vernacular writing in Scotland, see esp. Katherine H. Terrell, *Scripting the Nation: Court Poetry and the Authority of History in Late Medieval Scotland,* Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2021), pp.104-12.
[75] Cf. esp. Julia Boffey, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and Definition of the "Household Book,"' in *The English Medieval Book: Studies in Memory of Jeremy Griffiths*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards, Vincent Gillespie, and Ralph Hanna, The British Library Studies in the History of the Book (London: The British Library, 2000), pp.125-34 [127-32].
[76] Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' p.185

These Scottish texts, which were added at a later date in the gradual compilation of the manuscript, share the thematic preoccupation with questions of courtly love that dominate in the preceding contents.[77] A. S. G. Edwards, however, argues that their inclusion also reflects the manuscript's transitionality, for it creates 'an admixture of the old and the new' by virtue of its 'incorporation of indigenous poetic material.'[78] Thus, the Selden MS reflects in itself the process of adaptation and extension of the Chaucerian canon, beginning with Chaucer, whose poetry marks the start point for the advancement of a Scottish literary tradition.[79]

The Kingis Quair's placement at the intersection of both English and Scottish texts in the Selden MS points to its transitional importance within the larger development of Scottish Chaucerianism[80] – an aspect of James's courtly allegorical work which will be the principal focus of Chapter 1 of this thesis. Indeed, the *Quair* stands out from the texts studied therein by virtue of its comparative Englishness, as James, in addition to deploying the familiar rhyme royal stanza, a favourite verse form of English Chaucerian poets, uses an anglicised diction which reflects his years spent at the Lancastrian court.[81] Yet, the *Quair* nevertheless demonstrates an occasional, highly self-conscious use of Scottish forms,[82] as James looks forward to the later writers in this thesis in his ambitious appropriation of Chaucer. The *Quair*, moreover, establishes a number of significant currents in later medieval Scottish Chaucerian texts, in particular its combination of an individualistic narrative with stylistic and generic experimentation.[83] James's poem therefore reveals an ongoing preoccupation with the status of the vernacular author and the

[77] Cf. Rebecca Louise Marsland, 'Complaint in Scotland, c.1424-c.1500' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2013), pp.60-139.
[78] Edwards, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden B. 24: A "Transitional" Collection,' p.66.
[79] Cf. T. S. Miller, 'Chaucer Abroad, Chaucer at Home: MS Arch Selden B 24 as the "Scottish Ellesmere,"' *CR* 47.1 (2012), pp.25-47 [26-33].
[80] Ibid., pp.33-40.
[81] C. D. Jeffery, 'Anglo-Scots Poetry and *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Actes du 2e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Écossaises (Moyen Âge et Renaissance)*, ed. Jean-Jacques Blanchot and Claude Graf (Strasbourg: Institut d'études anglaises de Strasbourg, 1978), pp.207-21 [207-10, 215-18].
[82] Ibid., pp.211-13.
[83] Cf. Parkinson, 'Centres, Peripheries and Networks: the flourishing of Older Scots literature, c.1400-c.1500,' forthcoming; Cf. Royan, 'Serving Venus: Attitudes to Authority in *The House of Fame*, *The Kingis Quair*, and *The Palice of Honoure*,' pp.86-100.

Quair, which in closing explicitly gestures back to the tradition of writing upon which it draws,[84] takes Chaucer as the starting point in the development of an equivalently sophisticated literary culture in Scots.

If the *Quair*, as an 'Anglo-Scots' text, involves an initial attempt to 'Scotticize' Chaucer, then Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*, the focus of Chapter 2 of this thesis, takes that principle further still, to the point, indeed, that it is not traditionally included with other Scottish Chaucerian texts. Yet, the *Howlat* represents an important early example of a bold appropriation of the *Parliament of Fowls* and *The House of Fame*, recasting both of those dream-vision poems into thirteen-line alliterative stanzas. The *Howlat,* moreover, is also unusual in setting those texts together in dialogue with John Barbour's *Bruce* (c.1375), a late fourteenth-century narrative poem dealing with the Scottish Wars of Independence, and which, in Scots, is foundational in being the earliest extant poem in the vernacular in Scotland. Thus, the *Howlat* represents a vernacular self-consciousness in absorbing the dream-vision poetry of Chaucer into an existing Scottish literary tradition as represented by the poetically ambitious rhetorical nature of the *Bruce*, anticipating comparable patterns of assimilation in the work of the later Scottish Chaucerians. Holland, moreover, inscribes onto the figure of the alienated howlat itself a sense of difference, one which is ultimately asserted in positioning himself relative to the established tradition of Chaucer in England.

Chapter 3 of this thesis begins by examining how alterity likewise informs Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, which explicitly presents itself as a response to *Troilus and Criseyde*,[85] interrupting Chaucer's narrative, from which it abruptly breaks away in carving out a space for Cresseid. The *Testament*, as this thesis contends, expresses its author's sense of Scottishness via Cresseid herself, who embodies a perspective of difference in responding to the dominant, English Chaucer tradition. Chapter 3 also provides an original reinterpretation of *Orpheus and Eurydice*, arguing that Henryson's two-part poem responds to the use of the all-verse 'mixed form,' itself a reworking of the Boethian prosimetrum, in the *Troilus*, with Chaucer effectively left behind as the work moves to the wisdom of the *moralitas*.

[84] KQ, ll.1372-79.
[85] Cf. *Test.*, ll.64-66.

Orpheus's structure thus reinforces the pattern of displacement that typifies Scottish Chaucerian texts. The *Moral Fables* likewise involve an interruption of the leisurely pace of the *Canterbury Tales*, with Chaucer's own experimental handling of the story collection genre influencing Henryson's. While Chaucer's grouping of tales provides an authorizing vernacular precedent for the latter's fables, and while Henryson's structuring of his story collection invites a recursive reading similar to that of the *Tales*, the *Moral Fables* nevertheless involve an implicit self-assertion as they also depart from Chaucer. Indeed, Henryson's ambitious affirmation of his native tongue is suggested from his engagement with Aesop as the *Moral Fables* express a sense of vernacular independence indicative of a self-conscious Scottishness.

If Henryson's poetry reveals a growing awareness of an existing Scottish Chaucerian tradition, as suggested in his engagement with the poetry of both James I of Scotland and Richard Holland, then William Dunbar points to its effective consolidation by the early sixteenth century in Scotland. As Chapter 4 argues, Dunbar's verse suggests a clear awareness of an established Scottish Chaucerian tradition, the existence of which is explicitly recognized as well as implicit in his poetic practice, with James, Holland, and Henryson all informing his reworking of the poetry of Chaucer. However, Dunbar adopts a characteristically subversive attitude towards this body of writing, effectively standing at an angle to this native poetic tradition despite his self-conscious engagement with it. Thus, Dunbar illustrates the way in which the later poets in this thesis respond to Scottish Chaucerianism differently, with his oblique reception of it contrasting sharply with its more unambiguous proclamation by Douglas, where the Scottish vernacular tradition of writing is the subject of a noticeably triumphal affirmation.

Chapter 5 of this thesis concludes by examining both the *Palice of Honour* (c.1503), and the *Eneados* (c.1513), poems which it argues respond directly to an existing Scottish Chaucerianism. The *Palice* suggests its author's self-conscious response to this native tradition in the form of *The Kingis Quair* (c.1424), with James's implicit assertion of the vernacular providing a precedent for Douglas's own. Thus, the *Palice*, which as multiple critics of that work have noted also responds to *The House of Fame*, adopts

a Chaucerian questioning of poetic authority yet implicitly redirects it against English Chaucerianism itself, with the *Quair* representing the native tradition of writing in relation to which Chaucer is displaced. The *Eneados*'s use of the mixed form also connects back, as this thesis argues, to *Troilus and Criseyde*; yet, Douglas's ambitious adaptation of it suggests the influence of Robert Henryson, whose 'New Orpheus' is the subject of explicit praise in one of the glosses to Douglas's Scots Virgil.[86] Thus, with the *Palice* looking back to the earlier handling of the dream vision in the *Kingis Quair*, and the *Eneados* positioning itself in line with the experimental vernacular translations of Robert Henryson, both of Douglas's poems point to his active engagement with an established Chaucer tradition in Scotland.

With the *Palice*, therefore, Douglas formulates a poetics that goes on to inform his Scots Virgil. Indeed, the *Eneados*, which was completed twelve years later, according to the author, on 22 July, 1513, nevertheless reflects his ongoing promotion of kingly virtue, as well as his valuation of honour over fame, while also expressing a more mature conception of the youthful poetics of his earlier courtly allegory, retracing the spiritual ascent enacted in that work but with the greater confidence of an experienced poet. Yet, Douglas, in promoting the principles of accurate translation, of the close reproduction of one's source, as well as openly proclaiming the importance of making classical literature available to a wider audience, also reflects the significant literary and cultural shift that comes with the advent of the new humanism: Chaucer and the Scottish Chaucerians, as poetic influences, are confined to the interstices of the *Eneados*, to the Prologues which function as highly original commentaries on the individual books of the *Aeneid*. Thus, the Chaucerian tradition is effectively displaced in offering a lens through which to read Virgil, as Douglas, in looking back on the medieval tradition of writing, also articulates a humanist Scotland.[87]

In 1424, just ten years short of a full century before the completion of Douglas's *Eneados*, King James I arrived in Scotland after eighteen years as the prisoner of the Lancastrian court in England. The

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[86] *Aeneid* II, p.19, n.13.

[87] Cf. Bruce Dearing, 'Gavin Douglas' *Eneados*: A Reinterpretation,' *PMLA* 67.5 (1952), pp.845-62 [862]; Louis Brewer Hall, 'An Aspect of the Renaissance in Gavin Douglas' *Eneados*,' *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960), pp.184-92 [184].

Kingis Quair, which is generally agreed to have been written around the time of his return,[88] represents the cultural branch of what has rightly been described as the young king's ambitious political program,[89] with the poem itself expressing a sense of literary moment as the work's sleepless authorial persona, enjoined upon by the matins bell, addressing him directly and urging him to write, sits down to do so:

> Determyt furth therewith in myn entent,
> Sen I thus have ymagynit of this soun,
> And in my tyme more ink and paper spent
> To lyte effect, I tuke conclusioun
> Sum newe thing to write. I set me doun,
> And furthwithall my pen in hand I tuke
> And maid a cros, and thus begouth my buke.[90]

James's presentation of his text echoes a similar passage in the Prologue to John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (c.1390), where the authorial persona likewise resolves 'som new thing I scholde boke,'[91] as well as *The House of Fame*, with its challenging presentation of 'Somme newe tydynges for to lere, / Somme newe thinges, y not what,' the confused jumble of narrative fragments populating the House of Rumour.[92] Yet, the *Quair*, while explicitly acknowledging its author's indebtedness to 'Gowere and Chaucere,'[93] nevertheless demonstrates a spirit of literary independence towards both of its avowed forebears, thus asserting its newness in a way that makes it a natural start point for the texts to which this thesis now turns.

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[88] Cf. Rev. Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Kingis Quair, together with A Ballad of Good Counsel by King James I of Scotland*, 2nd ed., STS, Second Series, 1 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911), p.xi; John Norton-Smith, ed., *James I of Scotland: The Kingis Quair,* Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.xxiv, For a significantly later date, see Matthew P. McDiarmid, ed., *The Kingis Quair of James Stewart* (London: Heinemann, 1973), p.38.
[89] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' pp.180-81.
[90] *KQ*, ll.85-91.
[91] *CA*, Prol., l.51.
[92] *HF*, ll.1886-87.
[93] *KQ*, l.1374.

Chapter 1: *The Kingis Quair*

The Kingis Quair (c.1424) of James I of Scotland (1394-1437) is the earliest surviving Scottish Chaucerian text. While much has been written about its conceptual reworkings of *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, in particular in relation to its royal author's kingly identity and ideas of good governance, the *Quair*'s significance as a highly self-conscious appropriation of the English Chaucerian tradition of writing in Scotland merits further attention, together with its later influence on Scottish Chaucerian texts. This chapter seeks to build on existing criticism by arguing that the former is reflected in the way that James follows Chaucer before breaking away from him and taking off in an innovative direction of its own. The *Quair*'s importance in establishing several currents in subsequent Scottish Chaucerian writing is subject, moreover, to serious critical consideration for the first time in the second half of this chapter, which addresses what has regrettably become a neglected area within the existing scholarship on the *Quair*, that is, James's influence on later fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century poets in Scotland. This chapter identifies the *Quair*'s influence in its narrative, thematic, and structural parallels with subsequent Scottish Chaucerian texts, previously unexplored connections relating to one of this thesis's central claims: that the writers at hand gradually show signs of reading and drawing on one another's work, thus supporting the argument that theirs comes to represent an independent and distinctive poetic tradition.

The *Quair*'s significance in marking the beginning of Scottish Chaucerian writing also has linguistic implications, for James, as critics of the poem have noted, blends both English and Scots.[1] That he does so is perhaps not surprising given the young king's time spent at the English court; yet, as C. D. Jeffery contends, James's use of Scots, far from being incidental, shows signs of self-consciousness.[2] The

[1] Cf. esp. C. D. Jeffery, 'Anglo-Scots Poetry and *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Actes du 2e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Écossaises (Moyen Âge et Renaissance)*, ed. Jean-Jacques Blanchot and Claude Graf (Strasbourg: Institut d'études anglaises de Strasbourg, 1978), pp.207-21.
[2] Ibid., pp. 211-13.

Quair therefore comes to represent a shift in the overall valuation of Scots relative to Latin, with Chaucer, moreover, both authorizing and helping to express this desire for a sophisticated vernacular.[3] Yet, it is not only Latin which provides the standard against which to measure the increased status of Scots, which in the *Quair* is also implicitly, as a vernacular language, set alongside the English of Chaucer. It is as if Chaucer provides a mode for his own displacement, for, where his poetry, as Rita Copeland has shown, reflects a shift in the conception of the vernacular author, with the translator emerging as *auctor*,[4] James, even as he signals his engagement with Chaucer, nevertheless asserts his independence from him. The *Quair*-persona's increasing confidence therefore relates to the work's implicit valuation of Scots, as James's Scottish Chaucerian poem asserts his native vernacular's linguistic distinctiveness from English.

In early 1402, David Stewart, Duke of Rothesay (1378-1402), eldest son of Robert III of Scotland (c.1337/1406), died under suspicious circumstances while a prisoner in the dungeons of Falkland in Fife.[5] Rothesay's death made his younger brother, James (1394-1437), heir to the throne, and fears for his safety, given the designs on political power held by the ambitious Robert Stewart, earl of Fife (later duke of Albany) (c.1340-1420), lay behind the plans made to send the young prince to France.[6] On 22 March 1406, James, escorted by Henry Sinclair, second earl of Orkney, had the vessel carrying him to safety intercepted by Norfolk pirates off Flamborough Head and immediately delivered to King Henry IV (1367-1413). News of his heir's capture and imprisonment apparently precipitated the swift decline of his father, King Robert III, who would die not long after on Palm Sunday, 4 April 1406.[7] Thus, James became

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[3] Cf. Louise O. Fradenburg, 'The Scottish Chaucer,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance) (University of Stirling*, *2-7 July 1981)*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, 1981), pp.177-90 [189].

[4] Cf. Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic traditions and vernacular texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp.193-94. See also Elizabeth Elliott, 'The Open Sentence: Memory, Identity and Translation in the *Kingis Quair*,' in *'Joyous Sweit Imaginatioun': Essays on Scottish Literature in Honour of R. D. S. Jack*, ed. Sarah Carpenter and Sarah M. Dunnigan, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 9 (Amsterdam, NL, and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2007), pp.23-39 [29-31].

[5] E. W. M. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1406-1437* (London: Methuen, 1936), pp.19-21; Michael Brown, *James I*, The Stewart Dynasty in Scotland (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), pp.12-27 [12-13].

[6] Cf. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1406-1437*, pp.29-31; Brown, *James I*, pp.14-15.

[7] Cf. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1406-1437*, pp.31-34; Brown, *James I*, pp.16-17.

Scottish monarch at the age of eleven, with a further eighteen years passing before his return to Scotland. In February 1424, James was betrothed to Joan, née Beaufort (d.1445), a member of the Lancastrian dynasty, niece of Cardinal Henry Beaufort and the second cousin of Henry VI (1421-1471). Shortly thereafter, the royal couple would make their way northwards, arriving in Edinburgh in early May,[8] the same month as James's coronation at Scone and the opening of parliament the following day in Perth.[9]

While the exact dating of the poem remains uncertain, critics generally agree that James wrote *The Kingis Quair* sometime around the time of his marriage and return to Scotland in the first half of 1424.[10] The *Quair* as a poem reflects its royal author's reading of and engagement with the Chaucerian texts which he would have gained access to in the course of his prolonged imprisonment in England. James's manifest familiarity with the poetry of Chaucer, as well as that of John Gower and John Lydgate attests, moreover, to his more general exposure to a different way of doing things at the English court,[11] where he gained insight into the workings of the centralized government of Henry V (1386-1422) and Henry VI. It has rightly been observed that James brought back an alternative model of kingly rule to Scotland, a nation effectively left kingless after the demise of his father, where he sought to introduce new legislation, as well as a bicameral parliament inspired along the lines of what he had himself learned in England.[12]

At the *Quair*'s end, James pays explicit tribute to his 'maisteris dere / Gowere and Chaucere' (1373-74),[13] a fitting close to a work which in many ways wears its poetic affiliations on its sleeve: indeed, the *Quair* signals that ambitious engagement from its outset, with its sophisticated, philosophizing

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[8] Cf. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1406-1437,* pp.104-05; Brown, *James I,* p.26.
[9] Cf. Balfour-Melville, *James I, King of Scots, 1406-1437,* pp.106-09; Brown, *James I*, pp.44-48.
[10] Cf. Rev. Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Kingis Quair, together with A Ballad of Good Counsel by King James I of Scotland*, 2nd ed., STS, Second Series, 1 (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911), p.xi; John Norton-Smith, ed., *James I of Scotland: The Kingis Quair,* Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.xxiv, For a later date, see Matthew P. McDiarmid, ed., *The Kingis Quair of James Stewart* (London: Heinemann, 1973), p.38.
[11] Cf. Brown, *James I,* p.20.
[12] Cf. Brown, *James I,* pp.17-24; Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) p.34; Louise O. Fradenburg, 'The Scottish Chaucer,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance), University of Stirling, 2-7 July 1981*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: Universities of Stirling and Glasgow, 1981), pp.177-90 [181-82].
[13] Quotations are from Julia Boffey's 2003 text of *The Kingis Quair*: *The Kingis Quair*, in *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology*, ed. Julia Boffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.90-157.

Chaucerian opening. James's use of rhyme royal, moreover, further reflects his literary aspirations, for, as R. James Goldstein has shown, the stanza form enjoyed a certain cultural capital in fifteenth-century Scotland, and James's choice of it for his own poem provides an additional indication of that prestige.[14] Indeed, the king's Scots vernacular is effectively made to rise to the challenge of the rhyme royal stanza's artful structure, reaching expressive heights of the tradition of writing to which he implicitly lays claim.[15] Indeed, for James, Chaucer belongs to the cultural branch of the political program introduced upon returning to Scotland, one founded on an experimentation with alternative forms of governance.[16] James's poetic activities therefore emerge as being related to his attempt to consolidate his power, one of the many forms of which includes the writing of poetry, backed by the authorizing figure of Chaucer.

While the *Quair* reflects James's acquaintance with a wide range of poems by Chaucer,[17] modern critics have rightly noted that the work responds in particular to both *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, courtly philosophical romances drawing heavily on Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in examining the joys and sorrows of love[18] in relation to the workings of Fortune. *Troilus*, written shortly after Chaucer had finished his translation of Boethius, reflects the *De Consolatione*'s ongoing influence on the poem's characters as they strain to understand the workings of the universe,

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[14] Cf. R. James Goldstein, 'A Distinction of Poetic Form: What Happened to Rhyme Royal in Scotland?' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600,* ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp.161-80 [166-68].

[15] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' pp.181-82; John MacQueen, 'The Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland,' in *Scottish Society in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Jennifer M. Brown (London: Edward Arnold, 1977), pp.184-208 [188].

[16] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' p.180-81.

[17] For a representative, foundational study, cf. Henry Wood, 'Chaucer's Influence upon King James I of Scotland as Poet' (Ph.D. diss., University of Leipzig, 1879), pp.1-44.

[18] Love, unless otherwise indicated, in the context of this chapter is understood within the larger context of courtly love, or *fin amor*. In Chaucer's *Troilus*, the passion and desire that are part of courtly love are shown to be potentially transformative and opening onto the sublime, yet also destructive and mutable and destructive and in this regard separated from the perfect, stable love of God: for context, cf. Corinne Saunders, 'Love and the Making of the Self: *Troilus and Criseyde*,' in *A Concise Companion to Chaucer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.135-56; Barry Windeatt, '*Troilus and Criseyde*: Love in a Manner of Speaking,' in *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages,* ed. Helen Cooney, Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Cultures (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), pp.81-97; Helen Phillips, 'Love,' in *A Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Peter Brown, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp.281-95. More recent criticism examines love's potential insights via a reconsideration of the medieval philosophical contexts for the *Quair*: cf. esp. John M. Hill, *Chaucer's Neoplatonism: Varieties of Love, Friendship, and Community,* Studies in Medieval Literature (Lanham, MA; Boulder, CO; New York, NY; London, UK: Lexington Books, 2018), and Jessica Rosenfeld, *Ethics and Enjoyment in Late Medieval Poetry: Love after Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

striving for philosophical insights yet often falling short of them in their enjoyment of worldly things. *The Knight's Tale* likewise reveals its author's preoccupation with the application of Boethian ideas, where a love situation forms the starting point in an exploration of Fortune, where Palamon, Arcite, and even Theseus reveal an imperfect comprehension of Lady Philosophy's teachings.[19]

Later Scottish Chaucerian texts also demonstrate their author's engagement with Chaucer's use of Boethius: Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* occupies a similar classical landscape to *The Knight's Tale*, for, although the original tradition of the myth is reflected in the narrative setting of the poem as Thrace,[20] Orpheus is also placed within a broader category of antiquity in being tied to the great lords of Greece (15, 24). Jane Roberts too argues persuasively for the parallels between *Orpheus* and *The Knight's Tale,* noting that Henryson's Boethian treatment of love is also evident in the characters of Palamon and Arcite, whose love for Emelye initiates a metaphorical imprisonment influenced by the *De Consolatione*.[21] For Roberts, Orpheus's loss in love not only corresponds to that which is experienced by Arcite; furthermore, like Chaucer, Henryson invests this event with a philosophical depth by using it to explore larger questions regarding love itself within the broader context of human life and its unanticipated reversals of Fortune – a Boethianism which is not only expressed in his treatment of the separation of Orpheus and Eurydice, but also in *Orpheus*'s structural engagement with exegetical readings of the myth found in Boethius.[22]

Indeed, Henryson's division of his poem into two parts more closely connects it to the *Troilus*, for Chaucer's narrative not only engages with the larger concepts presented in the *De Consolatione*, philosophical principles subject to fictive elaboration within the narrative of *Troilus and Criseyde*, but

[19] This reading of Chaucer's treatment of Boethius and courtly love in the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale* is that of Lois Ebin and Sally Mapstone, whose respective essays, 'Boethius, Chaucer, and *The Kingis Quair*' (1974) and 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*' (1997), currently represent the accepted critical view of James's handling of Chaucer's two texts.
[20] Cf. *Metamorphoses* X.1-85. Fox notes that, 'According to some accounts, Orpheus was the son of Oeagrus, king of Thrace,' and that 'Trivet, like Boethius, calls Orpheus simply "Thracian"': Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, p.396.
[21] Cf. Jane Roberts, 'On Rereading Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*,' in *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen, King's College London Medieval Studies, 5 (London: King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1999), pp.103-21 [105-06].
[22] Ibid.

also, through its five-book structure, suggests the influence of the *De Consolatione*.[23] As Eleanor Johnson maintains in her book-length study of the mixed form in later medieval texts, Chaucer's *Troilus*, through the dual use of song and dialogue as transformative verbal modes, connects to the *De Consolatione*. Chaucer, as Johnson maintains, responds to the alternation of prose and meter as found in that text, redefining the prosimetrum to include the toggling between song and dialogue in the *Troilus*;[24] the occasional and lyrical interruptions to the linear and continuous plot of that poem on behalf of its narrator;[25] and the reassignation of the aesthetic work of prose to the verse form of rhyme royal.[26]

While the *Quair*'s switching between linear narrative, lyrical song, and even sometimes dialogue points to James's possible engagement with the alternation of prose and meter in the *De Consolatione* and, thus, by implication, to Chaucer's own reworking of the prosimetrum as outlined above, the Scottish monarch, in alluding to his own personal history of setback, most obviously borrows from Chaucer in connecting his youthful persona's reversal of Fortune to that of the lovers in the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*.[27] Yet, in Chaucer, love ultimately increases one's susceptibility to the vagaries of Fortune; James on the other hand presents the experience of falling in love as, despite initially being an imprisonment,[28] setting the youthful persona on the path to wisdom and a greater understanding of Fortune. Moreover, whereas Chaucer's characters struggle to find consolation in the knowledge of the divine plan, the *Quair* remains comparatively more optimistic in arguing that human reason can be applied, together with the

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[23] Cf. John P. McCall, 'Five-Book Structure in Chaucer's *Troilus*,' *MLQ* 23.4 (1962), pp.297-308.
[24] Cf. Eleanor Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp.94-95.
[25] Ibid., pp.79-91.
[26] Ibid., pp.102-03, 107-14.
[27] Cf. Walter Scheps, 'Chaucerian Synthesis: The Art of *The Kingis Quair*,' *SSL* 8.3 (1971), pp.143-65 [144]; John MacQueen, 'Tradition and the Interpretation of *The Kingis Quair*,' *RES* 12, no.46 (1961), pp.117-31 [118-19]; The *Quair*'s Boethianism, with limited reference to Chaucer, is also examined in John Preston, 'Fortunys Exiltree: A Study of *The Kingis Quair*,' *RES* 7.28 (1956), pp.339-47 [343-344]; Mary Rohrberger, '*The Kingis Quair*: An Evaluation,' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 2.3 (1960), pp.292-302 [296].
[28] Cf. Julia Boffey, 'Chaucerian Prisoners: The Context of *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Julia Boffey and Janet Cowen, King's College London Medieval Studies, 5 (London: King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1999), pp.84-102 [95].

lessons learned directly from experience, to better understand the workings of Fortune.[29] Indeed, for James, love is an integral aspect of this process, as well as being, moreover, compatible with Christian virtue, marking a further distinction from the apparent separation of both categories at the *Troilus*'s end.[30]

The *Quair*'s positive reworking of the relationship between love and a Boethian Fortune as found in Chaucer has rightly been interpreted within the larger thematic context of James's kingship, with the poem's emphasis on the crucial mastery of the emotions linked to the monarch's rule of himself.[31] James thus implicitly asserts the stability of his realm over against that of the Lancastrian regime's,[32] adding to Boethius and Chaucer both in emphasizing the increased susceptibility of youth to Fortune.[33] The *Quair*-persona's lack of maturity is itself further related to the fact that he is at once a lover and an author, for the way the narrative persona grows into his role as a poet is foregrounded through the text's recollective framework, as, explicitly turning from his earlier frivolous writing to subjects of a serious nature (85-91), he gradually works towards a deeper understanding of the events of his youth in the process of writing.[34] Indeed, the act of composition according to which the *Quair* is structured reinforces this view of the author, for, in working through the meaning of the events of his youth, the authorial persona displays the special insight through which he comes to discern the profound allegorical significance of his literal experience.[35]

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[29] Cf. Ebin, 'Boethius, Chaucer, and *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.324-25.
[30] Cf. John M. Steadman, *Disembodied Laughter: Troilus and the Apotheosis Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972); E. Talbot Donaldson, 'The Ending of Chaucer's Troilus,' in *Speaking of Chaucer* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co, 1970), pp.84-101.
[31] Cf. esp. Sally Mapstone, 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*,' *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp.51-69 [53-54];
[32] Joanna Martin, 'The Translations of Fortune: James I's *Kingis Quair* and the Rereading of Lancastrian Poetry,' in *Langage Cleir Illumynate: Scottish Poetry from Barbour to Drummond, 1375-1630*, ed. Nicola Royan (Amsterdam, NL, and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2007), pp.43-60 [44]; Joanna Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540* (Aldershot, Eng., and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp.19-29.
[33] Lois Ebin notes that, unlike in Boethius, in the *Quair* it is the authorial persona's youthful immaturity rather than his obsession with the false goods of the world that makes him vulnerable to Fortune: cf. 'Boethius, Chaucer, and *The Kingis Quair*,' p.327.
[34] Cf. Ian Brown, 'The Mental Traveller – A Study of *The Kingis Quair*,' *SSL* 5.4 (1968), pp.246-52 [246, 248]; William Quinn, 'Memory and the Matrix of Unity in *The Kingis Quair*,' *ChauR* 15.4 (1981), pp.332-55 [334-35, 350]. For the *Quair* in relation to the medieval arts of memory, see esp. Elliott, 'The Open Sentence: Memory, Identity and Translation in *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.23-39.
[35] Cf. Darragh Greene, '"Sum Newe Thing": Autobiography, Allegory and Authority in *The Kingis Quair*,' in *On Allegory: Some Medieval Aspects and Approaches (with an Introduction by Eric Stanley and an Afterword by Vincent Gillespie*), ed. Mary Carr, K. P. Clarke and Marco Nievergelt (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp.70-86 [78]; Kylie

Yet, the *Quair*, despite its sustained engagement with the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*, is notable for its lack of overt reference to the backdrops of both texts, namely the Trojan and Theban legends. Indeed, as the *Quair*'s editor, John Norton-Smith observes, James is likely to have read John Lydgate's *Troy Book* (c.1420) and his *Siege of Thebes* (c.1422) as well, both of which, as critics have argued, draw on the classical past in creating a literary genealogy used to serve the interests of the Lancastrian regime.[36] Given, moreover, the extensiveness of his ambitions as a king upon his return to Scotland in 1424, that James does not exploit the self-authorizing strategies available to him in the use of the classical past is striking: the 'matter of Troy' remains in the very distant background in the poem's allusion to the Judgment of Paris via Venus, Minerva, and Fortune, the three goddesses visited by the youthful persona.[37] Rather, James, despite his very clear engagement with and appropriation of the Chaucerian tradition, nevertheless demonstrates an awareness of taking on that which, as his poem states, is new (85-91). This distinctiveness is inscribed in his distancing of himself from the classical narratives laid claim to by the English, focusing on contemporary historical events and giving them a literary casting instead.

Chaucer's significance in providing an important vernacular precedent for the *Quair* is signaled in James's representation of his authorial persona's reading of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* picked up, following literary precedent, to pass the time on a sleepless night (15-49).[38] The *Quair*-persona writes admiringly of Boethius's poetic skill, 'His metir swete full of moralitee, / His flourit pen so fair'

Murray, '"Out of My Contree": Visions of Royal Authority in the Courts of James I and James II, 1424-1460,' in *Medieval and Early Modern Representations of Authority in Scotland and the British Isles*, ed. Kate Buchanan and Lucinda H. S. Dean with Michael Penman (Abingdon, Eng., and New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), pp.214-34 [218].

[36] Cf. Paul Strohm *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven, CT, London, UK: Yale University Press, 1998); Paul Strohm, 'Hoccleve, Lydgate, and the Lancastrian Court,' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.640-41; Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate,' in *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton, NJ; Chichester, UK: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp.69-107; Silvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

[37] Cf. Elizabeth Elliott, '"This is myn awin ymagynacioun": the Judgment of Paris and the influence of medieval faculty psychology on *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp.167-76.

[38] Cf. *BD*, ll.44-61; *PF*, ll.17-21. For an overview of the uses of Troy in medieval Scottish literature, see esp. Emily Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014).

(23-24), before, in referring to the senator's 'faire Latyne tong / So full of fruyte and rethorikly pykit' (43-45), James's narrator turns to his subject, 'and in my tong / Procede I will again to my sentence / Of my mater,' an assertion of himself as a vernacular poet reinforced by the triple use of 'my' (47-49). Thus, while Boethius provides an authorizing model for the authorial persona's writerly activities, [39] the *Quair*'s vernacular status is pointedly drawn attention to in contrast to the Latin *De Consolatione*, with James's narrator, in focusing on his own narrative, and its integumental meaning, or 'sentence,'[40] aspiring to the status of *auctor*, albeit in the vernacular and 'along lines suggested by Boethius's *auctoritas*.'[41]

That Chaucer provides the authoritative cultural and poetic discourse within which James as a Scottish poet self-consciously situates himself is signalled early on in the opening stanzas of the *Quair*, in, for example, the deliberate choice of rhyme royal as the stanza form for the young king's narrative.[42] The *Quair*'s framing reference to its sleepless narrator passing the night with a good book at hand, also brings to mind the similar openings in both *The Book of the Duchess* and *The Parliament of Fowls*.[43] Indeed, Chaucer's dream-vision poems reveal their author's original handling of the genre in their suggestive blurring of the line between reality and dream and in their enigmatic links between episodes: the *Book of the Duchess* is notable, moreover, for its abruptly sudden and mysterious shifts in direction, as well as what has increasingly come to be seen as a sophisticated concentric structure, with the poem's narrator falling asleep over a text which features a dream, while his unspecified sorrow implicitly acts as a frame for the black knight's tale of the loss of his lady, itself contained with the narrative of the hunt. The *Parliament* likewise plays with the boundaries between dream and waking. Chaucer's poem also

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[39] Cf. Elizabeth Elliott, *Remembering Boethius: Writing Aristocratic Identity in Late Medieval French and English Literatures* (Farnham, Eng., and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), pp.123-43 [125-26]; Joanna Summers, *Late-Medieval Prison Writing and the Politics of Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.69-71.
[40] Cf. Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p.10.
[41] Greene, '"Sum Newe Thing": Autobiography, Allegory and Authority in *The Kingis Quair*,' p.78.
[42] Cf. Goldstein, 'A Distinction of Poetic Form: What Happened to Rhyme Royal in Scotland?' pp.167-68.
[43] Cf. *BD*, ll.44-61; *PF*, ll.17-21. See also Piero Boitani, 'Old Books Brought to Life in Dreams: the *Book of the Duchess,* the *House of Fame*, the *Parliament of Fowls*,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.58-77.

represents a composite of different topics, namely philosophy, love and politics, the exact relationship between which remains uncertain throughout, thus contributing to the poem's puzzling effect.

The *Quair* arguably reflects a series of false starts, abrupt transitions, and loose connections – all elements of this episodic work that point to its engagement with the innovative use of dream-vision in Chaucer. Yet, the *Quair*-persona does not follow precedent by falling asleep; rather, he remains awake, reflecting, prompted by Boethius, to consider Fortune's role in his own life before sitting down to pen his own narrative (85-91).[44] Thus, the *Quair* begins with what is effectively a gesture of double displacement, as the *De Consolatione* is explicitly referenced only to be made to give way to the authorial persona's narrative. James's Scots poetic adaptation of the Latin treatise is, furthermore, given a Chaucerian casting, thus suggesting Chaucer's significance in providing an authorizing vernacular precedent for the *Quair*.[45] However, Chaucer himself, as James's overt departures from dream-vision convention indicate, is as an *auctor* similarly supplanted as the poem's authorial persona remains awake instead of falling asleep.[46]

The *Quair*'s Chaucerian affinities are likewise signalled towards the beginning of the work's narrative proper, as James's authorial persona adapts elements from the invocations to the *Troilus*, applying the Boethian metaphor of the ship contained therein to his own experience of Fortune (99-133).[47]

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[44] The ambitiousness of this gesture is further suggested by the religious overtones of the context within which it occurs, as the *Quair*-persona believes he hears the ringing matins bell urge him to write, thus implicitly giving his narrative the sanction of a divine authority. Cf. Greene, '"Sum Newe Thing": Autobiography, Allegory and Authority in *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.78-79; Murray, '"Out of My Contree": Visions of Royal Authority in the Courts of James I and James II, 1424-1460,' pp.216-18.

[45] Cf. For medieval Boethian translation traditions, cf. Ian Cornelius, 'Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*,' in *The History of Classical Reception in English: Volume 1: 800-1558,* ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp.269-98; Alastair Minnis, ed., *The Medieval Boethius: Studies in the Vernacular Translations of* De Consolatione Philosophia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and Alastair Minnis, ed., *Chaucer's Boece and the Medieval Tradition of Boethius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Chaucer's adaptation of the prosimetric form of the *De Consolatione* is subject to original interpretation in Eleanor Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[46] Sally Maptone notes that the narrator's wakefulness is indicative of a 'greater interpretative control over his material': 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*,' p.54.

[47] Cf. *TC*, I, ll.416-18; II, ll.1-10. For the metaphor of the ship in poetry, see esp. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middles Ages*, translated by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp.128-30.

The *Quair*-persona proceeds to the literal image of the ship in recounting his captivity at sea (155-68). Chaucer is again drawn upon in the section of the poem which follows, wherein the narrator describes how he first caught sight of his beloved in the garden below the tower in which he was imprisoned (169-350), a scene which it has long been noted closely resembles that in Book 1 of *The Knight's Tale*, where the imprisoned Palamon and Arcite are both smitten with love at the sight of the beautiful Emily.[48] As in Chaucer, where the experience of love transforms their literal imprisonment into a metaphorical one,[49] James's youthful persona likewise becomes the prisoner of love upon first seeing his beloved, an incarceration acquiring rhetorical form as he becomes trapped in the circular complaints that follow.[50]

Yet, the *Quair*'s promise of a freedom from subjection is alluded to in the youthful persona's visionary journey, during which he is invited to learn from the goddesses Venus, Minerva, and Fortune, an episode connecting back to the poem's positive reworking of the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*.[51] The *Quair*-persona's liberation acquires additional significance in light of Julia Boffey's observation that Chaucer's treatment of imprisonment presents his followers with a metaphor for their subjection to him, as James effectively breaks away from the narrative of Palamon and Arcite in *The Knight's Tale*.[52] Indeed, the youthful persona's visionary journey represents a particular kind of departure from Chaucer, for Palamon and Arcite's subjection to love causes their rivalry, one ending in the latter's death, with Theseus's closing speech offering only partial consolation in answer to the problem of human suffering.[53]

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[48] Cf. *CT* I [A], ll.1040ff. The *Quair*'s ultimate insistence on the compatibility of secular love with Christian virtue is, as critics have noted, already implicit in the heightened religiosity of the beloved's portrayal early on: cf. M. R. G. Spiller, 'The Donna Angelicata in *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance, Fourth International Conference 1984: Proceedings,* ed. Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, and New York: Peter Lang, 1986), pp.217-27 [217]; Alessandra Petrina, '*Donne Gentili* and Courtly Ladies: A Comparison between Dante's Beatrice and the Lady of *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Older Scots Literature,* ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), pp.30-38 [31-37].

[48] Cf. *CT* I (A), ll.1033-91

[49] Cf. Julia Boffey, 'Chaucerian Prisoners: The Context of *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.84-85.

[50] Cf. Rebecca Marsland, 'Complaint in Scotland, c.1424-c.1500' (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2013), p.98.

[51] Cf. Boffey, 'Chaucerian Prisoners: The Context of *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.94-96.

[52] Ibid., p.84.

[53] Cf. Kathleen A. Blake, 'Order and the Noble Life in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*? *MLQ* 34.1 (1973), pp.3-19; Joerg O. Fichte, 'Man's Free Will and the Poet's Choice: The Creation of Artistic Order in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*,' *Anglia* 93 (1975), pp.335-60.

The *Quair* on the other hand effectively represents an interruption to the narrative of *The Knight's Tale*, for James, in having his youthful persona escape his literal prison and proceed to his encounter with Venus, Minerva, and Fortune, deities whose wisdom helps free him from his symbolic entrapment, thus cuts Chaucer's poem short, leaving it behind as he takes the ideas contained therein in a new direction.

That this change of narrative and thematic course should spur a new inventiveness is suggested from the *Quair*-persona's account of his youthful self's encounter with the goddess Fortune. However, Fortune invites the persona to climb her wheel, only for him to fall off and suddenly wake up (1156-1204) – a highly original episode reminding readers that even kings remain susceptible to Fortune.[54] C. D. Jeffery, moreover, in his essay on the language of the poem, notes a heightened use of Scots in the meeting with Fortune, a linguistic shift which he relates to the goddess' low and colloquial diction.[55] That James's native vernacular surfaces near the poem's end suggests a growing distinctiveness from Chaucer; indeed, the Scottishness of this episode aligns with the larger narrative development of the *Quair*, for the youthful persona's confrontation with Fortune represents the climax of the work as a whole,[56] with the use of Scots forms indicative of its royal author's vernacular self-consciousness and growing poetic confidence.

Yet, the youthful persona's waking initially gives rise to a familiar Chaucerian pose: first, James's reference to 'the besy gost flickering to and fro' evokes the sense of spiritual unrest in the *Troilus*,[57] a feeling of disquiet linked to the narrator's reflections on the ambiguity of dreams themselves (1212-32). Thus, James, in expressing the youthful persona's response to his visionary experience, adapts Chaucer's characteristic treatment of dreams as typically enigmatic and open to a variety of interpretations. In the *Quair*, however, this pose comes to be subject to revision, via the appearance at the window of a turtledove

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[54] Cf. Mapstone, 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.58-59.

[55] C. D. Jeffery, 'Anglo-Scots Poetry and *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Actes du 2e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Écossaises (Moyen Âge et Renaissance*), ed. Jean-Jacques Blanchot and Claude Graf (Strasbourg: Institut d'études anglaises de Strasbourg, 1978), pp.207-21 [211-13]. For an earlier view of the poem's language, 'English modified by Scottish scribes' (p.27), cf. William A. Craigie, 'The Language of *The Kingis Quair*,' *Essays and Studies* 25 (1939), pp.22-38.

[56] Cf. Ebin, 'Boethius, Chaucer, and *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.337-38.

[57] Cf. *TC*, IV, ll.302ff.

bearing a message of hope in answer to the youthful persona's troubled questioning (1233-67).[58] James's integration of dream into a larger narrative also highlights his departure from Chaucer, for, where the latter's dream-visions feature authorial personae whose waking fails to yield any certainties,[59] the *Quair* shows the transformation in the dreamer's waking life, one which is produced by his dream.[60] While, as A. C. Spearing notes, 'unChaucerian,' the resulting certainty in the dream's larger meaning nevertheless 'derives from a clear understanding of the significance of Chaucerian uncertainty,'[61] with Chaucer's own playful use of dream-vision poetry forming the basis for the genre's experimental revision in the *Quair*.

James's emphasis on the waking life of the poet provides a further connection to Chaucer, whose *House of Fame* engages with changing fourteenth-century conceptions of authorship and literary authority, whereby, as Jane Griffiths writes of this new cult of the author in humanist Italy, 'people were celebrating the achievements of the author as an individual, rather than simply the writings he had produced.'[62] Chaucer's subversive treatment of this almost heroic attitude to authorship is suggested from *The House of Fame*, where the Eagle's effective abduction of the poet, rather than reinforcing the author's divine inspiration, instead raises troubling questions with regards to the reliability of written material.[63] As Vincent Gillespie notes, the House of Rumour, mingling true and false, also casts doubt on the poet's role, for it is a 'seething maelstrom of gossip and storytelling,'[64] a 'workaday sweatshop of "tydynges," of ever

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[58] Matthew McDiarmid identifies certain suggestive parallels between this scene and a similar moment in the popular fourteenth-century allegorical poem by Guillaume de Deguileville, the *Pélérinage de la Vie Humaine* (c.1330): Matthew P. McDiarmid, ed., *The Kingis Quair of James Stewart* (London: Heinemann, 1973), p.138. See also Alessandra Petrina, 'Some Dream-Related Images in "The Kingis Quair,"' *Studi Medievali* 35.1 (1994), pp.307-16 [312-14]. The turtledove's association with marital fidelity within the larger context of the poem is discussed in Carl E. Bain, 'The Nightingale and the Dove in *The Kingis Quair*,' *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 9 (1964), pp.19-29 [23-24]; Petrina, 'Some Dream-Related Images in "The Kingis Quair,"' pp.314-15; Murray, '"Out of My Contree": Visions of Royal Authority in the Courts of James I and James II, 1424-1460,' p.220.

[59] Cf. *BD*, ll.1324-34; *PF*, ll.693-99; *HF*, ll.2155-58.

[60] Cf. A. C. Spearing, '*Dreams in* The Kingis Quair *and the Duke's Book*,' in *Charles d'Orléans in England 1415-1440*, ed. Mary-Jo Arn (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), pp.123-44 [124].

[61] A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.185.

[62] Jane Griffiths, 'The Author,' in *A Concise Companion to Middle English Literature*, ed. Marilyn Corrie (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp.120-41 [129].

[63] Cf. *HF*, ll.644ff; Vincent Gillespie, 'Authorship,' in *A Handbook of Middle English Studies*, ed. Marion Turner, Wiley-Blackwell Critical Theory Handbooks (Chichester, Eng.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp.137-54 [149-52].

[64] Ibid., p.151.

changing and augmenting stories, where nothing is fixed, where every person and every subject is open for storytelling, and where truth is ephemeral, provisional, subjective and always hard to discern.'[65] Thus, 'Geffrey,' despite the promise of a special insight in his ascent in Book II, towards the *House of Fame*'s abrupt conclusion, refuses to name himself as author,[66] becoming, as Gillespie likewise observes, 'just another reader of his own art,' his interpretation of which remains both partial and fallible.[67]

In *The Kingis Quair*, the youthful persona's ascent resembles 'Geffrey's' in *The House of Fame*, carried up by the Eagle, who reflects on the soul's flight as examined in the *De Consolatione*.[68] In Chaucer's poem, the parodic nature of this ascent undercuts its apparent philosophical ambitions, as the eagle perversely misunderstands and obfuscates the spiritual concepts presented by Lady Philosophy. Yet, the *Quair*-persona's philosophical journey intersects in a more serious fashion with the Boethian principles laid out by Minerva, although his subsequent reversal, suddenly thrown off Fortune's Wheel (1200-04), with the Chaucerian uncertainty that follows upon waking, suggests he has failed to absorb them. Yet, the *Quair* ultimately resolves that ambiguity in asserting the dream's impact on the persona's waking life. James, moreover, foregrounds the author's role in making sense of his subject matter in the course of writing; indeed, the narrative persona only arrives at a complete understanding of the deeper significance of those events towards the end of the poem as a whole, as a result of giving them a written form: the dream itself, for instance, does not yield such insight, producing instead spiritual unrest (1205-11). Indeed, the *Quair*-persona echoes the vexed lament of human life made by the woeful Troilus in Book 4 of Chaucer's text, who commands his own soul to quit his unhappy body and follow Criseyde.[69] Yet, the sudden change of tone which follows suggests that this earlier agitation has been rectified through the authorial persona's realization of the role of the gods in bringing about his good fortune. Thus, now no

[65] Ibid., p.152.
[66] Cf. *HF*, ll.1868-82.
[67] Gillespie, 'Authorship,' p.151.
[68] Cf. *HF*, ll.541-48, 972-78; *De cons* I, m.1.
[69] Cf. *TC*, IV, ll.302-08.

longer looking back on the events of his youth in an effort to work out their divine pattern, the writerly narrator displays a coming to joy in the here and now, as signaled by a shift to the present tense (1266),[70] marking a sense of the positive workings of the gods in his life that had eluded him at the poem's outset.

The *Quair*, therefore, unlike the dismantling of poetic authority in Book III of *The House of Fame*, is distinguished by a closing celebration of the author's powers, as the narrative persona reflects on how he came to happiness, crediting the aid and support of his lady, before offering, 'in laud and prise' (1315), a kind of hymn of thanks to the deities who saw to it that he should be granted his heart's desire (1317-21). He also extends his thanks to the cast of minor agents who brought him to good fortune (1322-37) – including the castle wall from which he saw his beloved, and the green boughs under which he fell in love (1331-32; 1335-37) – to the extent that the whole passage reads like a review of the preceding narrative, one which parses its various elements in light of the deeper meaning it has been found to contain. Thus, the persona not only gives thanks to the gods and to the earthly means through which they operate, but also subjects the different parts of his written history to what is in effect an allegorical commentary, examining the literal aspects of his narrative in unearthing its integumental significance or *sentence*.[71]

The vernacular self-assertion implicit therein is made via allusion to Chaucer's 'envoy' in *Troilus and Criseyde*, the narrator of which takes leave of his text, his 'litel book,' urging it to 'subgit be to alle poesye; / And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace / Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.'[72] James alludes to this passage but also has his authorial persona address not his book but his 'litill tretisse' (1352), a difference in wording that sets his poem apart for its vernacular precedent in Chaucer. James's persona strikes a humble pose by asking that its flaws be corrected by his readers in reading (1352-58),[73] a deferential stance adopted again in the work's last stanza, with its dedication to the author's 'maisteris':

Unto inpnis of my maisteris dere,

[70] Cf. Quinn, 'Memory and Matrix of Unity in *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.349-50.
[71] Cf. Greene, '"Sum Newe Thing": Autobiography, Allegory and Authority in *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.72, 84.
[72] *TC* V, ll.1789, 1791-92.
[73] James displays a greater trust in the reader's interpretative capacity than Chaucer: cf. *TC* V, ll.1793-78.

> Gowere and Chaucere, that on the steppis satt
>
> Of rethorike quhill thai were lyvand here,
>
> Superlative as poetis laureate,
>
> In moralitee and eloquence ornate,
>
> I recommend my buk in lynis sevin,
>
> And eke thair saulis unto the blisse of hevin. (1373-79)

The 'envoy' to the *Troilus* is adapted once again but with the difference that the classical authors evoked by Chaucer are effectively displaced by the vernacular poets depicted on the 'steppis . . . Of rethorike.'[74] Thus, the Chaucerian tradition embodies the authorizing power drawn upon in James's Scots *Quair*. Yet, the *Quair*'s closing stanza also refrains from too reverential a treatment of Chaucer and Gower: the persona's text is never made to kiss the steps where they sit, nor is it dedicated to the poets themselves, but rather, in a metonymic sleight of hand, to their pens, effective symbols of their rhetorical excellence.

Indeed, the 'go litel boke' stanza is effectively taken apart to make room for the interval between James's address to his 'litill tretisse' and his tribute to his vernacular forebears, Chaucer and Gower. The space between the two displaces the latter poets to make room for the first author, God, a shift which I would argue draws attention to the authorial persona's divine inspiration.[75] Thus, James turns to 'him that hiest in the hevin sitt' (1369),[76] God the Creator, 'To quhame we thank, that all oure lif hath writt / (Quho coutht it red), agone syne mony a yere / Hich in the hevynnis figure circulere' (1370-72). The *Quair*-persona's allusion to the divine pattern written onto human life connects back to his narrative, where he himself ultimately comes to discern the heavenly design behind the events related therein, a celestial order

[74] Cf. *TC*, V, l.1791.

[75] Cf. Greene, '"Sum Newe Thing": Autobiography, Allegory and Authority in *The Kingis Quair*,' pp.70-86; Murray, '"Out of My Contree": Visions of Royal Authority in the Courts of James I and James II, 1424-1460,' pp.214-34.

[76] This line looks forward to the heavenly bliss wished for on behalf of the souls of Chaucer and Gower (1379).

written into the form of the poem itself, the first line of which is repeated in line 1372.[77] Thus, the poem's structure imitates the universal motif which is traced onto all human life by its Creator, and in doing so, moreover, reveals the author's power to bind his poem into a circular harmony, fashioning a perfect round, thereby reflecting the deeper sense he makes of those events in the course of the text.

The *Quair*'s penultimate stanza therefore contains an implicit assertion of its divine inspiration, thus resonating with the poem's more general spiritual outlook, an aspect of the work in which, moreover, Kylie Murray rightly identifies a timely assertion of royal authority and kingly empowerment.[78] James's monarchical status also complicates his identification of Chaucer and Gower as 'poetis laureate,' a title evocative of rhetorical and stylistic excellence on the one hand and of political sanction on the other.[79] Yet, James, as King of Scotland, is not speaking on behalf of another but rather as the voice of authority; as Seth Lerer observes, his poetry remains free as a result of the 'periphrases of a Lydgate.'[80] Like Lydgate, James also draws on fantasies of a literary past with an eye towards the political present.[81] However, James is likewise looking ahead to the future, to the creation of 'sum thing newe' in Scotland, with the *Quair*: thus, despite following the vernacular precedent signalled by the poets Chaucer and Gower, he does so only up to the point that he then breaks away from them in asserting that new thing.

The Kingis Quair and later Scottish Chaucerianism

The *envoi* to *The Kingis Quair* is the first of many such tributes in later Scottish Chaucerian texts: William Dunbar and Gavin Douglas, for example, respectively acclaim Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate in *The*

[77] Cf. Andrew Von Hendy, 'The Free Thrall: A Study of *The Kingis Quair*,' *SSL* 2.3 (1965), pp.141-51 [151]; Alice Miskimin, 'Patterns in *The Kingis Quair* and the *Temple of Glas*,' *PLL* 13.4 (1977), pp.339-61 [343-44, 348-49]; Karin E. C. Fuog, 'Placing Earth at the Center of the Cosmos: *The Kingis Quair* as Boethian Revision,' *SSL* 32.1 (2001), pp.140-49 [148-49].
[78] Cf. Murray, '"Out of My Contree": Visions of Royal Authority in the Courts of James I and James II, 1424-1460,' pp.214-21.
[79] Cf. Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, p.53.
[80] Ibid., p.53.
[81] Ibid., p.54.

Goldyn Targe[82]and the *Palice of Honoure*, both written near the beginning of the sixteenth century.[83] James himself, however, does not feature in these eulogies, emerging much later in Sir David Lindsay's *The Testament of the Papyngo* (1530), where the royal poet is the object of the latter's effusive praise.[84] James himself, however, does not feature in these eulogies, emerging much later in Sir David Lindsay's *The Testament of the Papyngo* (1530), where the royal poet's 'flude of eloquence' is the object of Lindsay's effusive praise.[84] That James, although understandably named in the list of rulers rather than poets here by Lindsay, should be explicitly identified in these words in a poem that includes a list of Scots poets who were implicit rivals to Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, indicates James's significance as a vernacular literary authority of considerable poetic standing. Yet, the *Kingis Quair* also enjoys more than just a rhetorical status in later medieval poetry in Scotland, reflecting, rather, a mediating influence on the way the later poets in this thesis themselves read and interpret Chaucer. The Jamesian quality, moreover, that can be detected in their work points to the way the Scottish Chaucerians respond increasingly to one another's writing in addition to the poetry of Chaucer, with the *Quair* as an important early example of this layering as it comes to be applied to the poets in this thesis.

The *Quair*'s placement at the effective interface of English and Scottish Chaucerianism is suggested in Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24, a Scottish manuscript compiled between 1489 and 1513,[85] and containing a striking mixture of texts which are both English and Scottish.[86] The Selden MS includes *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Legend of Good Women*, *The Parliament of Fowls*, as well as

[82] 'Ryght as the stern of day begouth to schyne'; B 59.
[83] Cf. *GT*, ll.253-79; *PH*, ll.916-21.
[84] *The Testament and Complaynt of our Soverane Lordis Papyngo*, in *Sir David Lyndsay, Selected Poems*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams, ASLS, 30 (Glasgow: ASLS, 2000), pp.58-97 [ll.430-32].
[85] Cf. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer and* The Kingis Quair*: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp.3-4.
[86] Cf. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24 and the "Scotticization" of Middle English Verse,' in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602*, ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp.166-85 [167]; A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden B. 24: A "Transitional" Collection,"' in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany,* ed. Stephen Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp.53-67 [54]; Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: The Genesis and Evolution of a Scottish Poetical Anthology,' in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2005), pp.14-29 [15].

select poems (some misattributed) by John Lydgate, Thomas Hoccleve, John Clanvowe, and John Walton. These English Chaucerian texts all appear at the start of the manuscript (except Hoccleve's *Letter of Cupid*), with *The Kingis Quair* marking the beginning of what is effectively the second part of the Selden MS, the Scottish poems therein either unique or occurring elsewhere only in copies Scottish in provenance.[87] The *Quair*'s positioning within the manuscript therefore suggests its significance at a point of transition from an English Chaucerian tradition of writing to one which is self-consciously and distinctively Scottish, qualities informing the manuscript as a whole, which, as Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards note, asserts a Scottish literary identity in its inclusion of indigenous verse and its redefinition of the 'Chaucerian.'[88]

The *Quair*'s positive reworking of the concept of love as represented by Chaucer in the *Troilus*, moreover, also informs the poem's inclusion in a manuscript whose contents follow, as Rebecca Marsland has shown, a paradigm of love as moving from 'wo to wele and after out of joie.'[89] Yet, the *Quair*'s handling of love is subject to reinterpretation in another text, one that shows signs of its influence, namely *The Quare of Jelusy*, a Scots poem which can be found in the second section of the Selden MS. As Joanna Martin notes, the *Quare of Jelusy* simultaneously engages with the poetry of Chaucer, as well as with the *Quair*, illustrating the double response that this thesis argues also defines Scottish Chaucerianism, as later medieval Scottish poets come to read and answer one another in addition to Chaucer himself.[90] Thus, the *Quair*, while effectively initiating a tradition of responses to the poetry of Chaucer in Scotland, is itself, as *The Quare of Jelusy*, for example, demonstrates, subject to critical reinterpretation by later Scots poets. The *Quair* therefore represents an important starting point in the development of Scottish Chaucerianism,

[87] Cf. Boffey and Edwards, eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer and* The Kingis Quair: *A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24*, p.20.
[88] Ibid., pp.19-21.
[89] *TC*, I, l.4. Cf. Marsland, 'Complaint in Scotland, c. 1424-1500,' p.60.
[90] Cf. Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540,* pp.19-39.

partly because it involves an early appropriation and assimilation of Chaucerian writing into Scots, but also because it initiates the subsequent poetic dialogue and debate between later Scottish Chaucerian poets.

The *Quair*'s mediating influence is further suggested from its parallels with Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, which, like James's poem, presents a creative re-reading of Chaucer's *Troilus*. Matthew P. McDiarmid writes in passing about the connections between the *Quair* and the *Testament*, focusing particularly on both works' thematic reconceptualization of a Chaucerian Boethianism.[91] He also identifies narrative correspondences between the texts, including their bookish winter openings,[92] with Cresseid's dream encounter with the planetary deities mirroring the youthful persona's in the *Quair*. McDiarmid, however, does not set these resemblances within the context of Scottish Chaucerianism as a tradition, as evidence, that is, of a highly self-conscious engagement on Henryson's part not just with Chaucer but also with James and, by extension, with a native tradition of Chaucerian writing in Scotland. Indeed, if the *Testament* is viewed as containing an implicit statement of Scottish literary identity, then, while Chaucer himself nevertheless remains the named author with whom the poem explicitly engages,[93] Henryson's use of James's poem emerges as deliberate, as part of his assertion of Scottishness, with the *Kingis Quair* informing the sense of literary and cultural alterity that is so pronounced in the *Testament*.

The *Quair*'s influence is also discernible at the levels of structure and genre in the *Testament*, for, like James's poem, which contains an inset visionary episode featuring an encounter with the gods, Henryson's is likewise structured around a dream sequence, in which his heroine, Cresseid, is visited by the planetary deities, who pronounce judgement on her for her blasphemy against Cupid and Venus.[94] In the *Quair*, the vision represents an implicit escape from the imprisonment of the lovers in *The Knight's Tale*, and, by extension, as this chapter has argued, from the strictures of the Chaucerian tradition; the

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[91] Cf. Matthew P. McDiarmid, 'Robert Henryson in his Poems,' in *Bards and Makars: Scottish Language and Literature: Medieval and Renaissance*, ed. Adam J. Aitken, Matthew P. McDiarmid, and Derick S. Thomson (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977), pp.27-40 [35-37].

[92] Cf. *Test.*, ll.1-42.

[93] Cf. *Test.*, ll.36-70.

[94] Cf. *Test.*, ll.141-343.

Testament, by comparison, takes this strategy of interruption and writes it across the *Troilus* as a whole, for Henryson's narrative is not a sequel but rather takes place before the final events of Chaucer's poem. The *Testament*'s generic and structural experimentation thus points to the influence of the *Quair*. Henryson's vernacular self-consciousness, moreover, is not just expressed relative to Chaucer; it also reveals itself in his additional and alternative engagement with an early Scottish Chaucerian text, the *Quair*, which provides him with a precedent for the taking apart and rebuilding of the poetry of Chaucer.

Thus, the *Testament* raises a suggestive possibility, one encouraged by its ties to the *Quair*, namely that the Scottish Chaucerians are self-consciously working within a native vernacular tradition, one which, moreover, has certain definite features already early on, that is, innovation and experimentation; in other words, Henryson, in addition to his explicit appropriation of and departures from Chaucer himself, imitates James too, that is, his original use of genre and structure, to signal his place within a Scottish Chaucerian tradition. To be Scottish, therefore, is by definition to be exploratory and radical in relation to Chaucer. In the *Quair* and the *Testament*, this statement further applies to both texts' handling of narrative deferral: in Chaucer, dream vision, while beginning with a long preamble, nevertheless ends suddenly and abruptly. In the *Quair* on the other hand the youthful persona's vision does not bring the poem to an end, functioning instead as a major turning point in his philosophical growth, one postponed to the writing present. Like James's, Henryson's narrative continues beyond the dream, which marks the beginning of Cresseid's path to insight, [95] the ultimate attainment of which in both texts is expressed through the act of writing: the *Quair*-persona explicitly cites his coming to bliss as the reason for the poem at hand (1268-74), while Cresseid, by comparison, gives her new knowledge a written form in her last will and testament. [96]

The *Quair*'s later influence is also apparent in another poem by Henryson, namely *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Henryson's text consists of two parts: the narrative proper, featuring the myth of Orpheus and

[95] Cf. Ralph Hanna, 'Cresseid's Dream and Henryson's *Testament*,' in *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins,* ed. by Beryl Rowland (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), pp.288-97 [295]; Kathryn L. Lynch, 'Robert Henryson's "Doolie Dreame" and the Late Medieval Dream Vision Tradition,' *JEGP* 109.2 (2010), pp.177-97 [181-82].
[96] Cf. *Test*, ll.575-91.

Eurydice, and a *moralitas*, the principal source of which is the popular medieval commentary on the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* by the thirteenth-century Dominican friar, Nicholas Trivet (1265-1334). *Orpheus*, however, also reveals its author's knowledge of and engagement with the Chaucerian tradition: Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, for instance, notes its affinities with both the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*,[97] while David Parkinson, in his edition of Henryson's poems, raises the neglected connection between *Orpheus and Eurydice*, specifically the visionary ascent therein, and Chaucer's dream-vision poems.[98] *Orpheus*, thus viewed in line with the Chaucerian tradition, also invites comparison with the *Quair*: Joanna Martin, for one, examines the parallels between both texts, specifically their representation of kingship, noting that, like James's, Henryson's male protagonist is portrayed as both a lover and a king, a conjunction of roles which in both texts, moreover, is related to the concept of self-governance.[99] Like the *Quair*-persona, furthermore, Orpheus is also a poet, yet one who remains set apart from James's joyful narrator, whose celebration of his narrative's deeper meaning also applies to his powers as an author, for Orpheus's fateful backwards glance at his beloved, Eurydice, forever condemning her to the Underworld, expresses a considerably less positive view of the poet as limited by his attachment to earthly things.

As in the *Testament*, *Orpheus* also demonstrates larger structural parallels with the *Quair*, where the youthful persona's dream vision affords an escape from the generic confines of *The Knight's Tale*. Orpheus likewise ascends through the planetary spheres after uttering his complaint against Love, meeting, moreover, with deities who guide and direct him, albeit to a more limited extent than in James. Like the *Quair*, where the visionary episode is followed by a delayed philosophical understanding, in *Orpheus* this postponement is transposed to the reading of the narrative provided by the *moralitas*. In James, the authorial persona himself provides his gloss on the tale which he has just related; Orpheus, on

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[97] Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, 'Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the Orpheus Traditions of the Middle Ages,' *Speculum* 41.4 (1966), pp.643-55 [646].
[98] David J. Parkinson, ed., *Robert Henryson: The Complete Works*, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2010), p.215.
[99] Cf. Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, c.1424-1540*, p.94.

the other hand, as a poet, is left behind by the reader, who is given access to the tale's *moralitas.* Thus, while *Orpheus* reflects in its overall construction the deferral of meaning that connects it to the *Quair*, Henryson demonstrates a more pronounced interest in the reader's role in the process of interpretation. *Orpheus* therefore involves a taking apart of the roles that are united in the figure of the poet in the *Quair*, for James's authorial persona is represented as both a writer but also the reader of his own narrative. Henryson, while nevertheless indebted in his own experimentation with genre and structure to the *Quair*, effectively separates the roles of both reader and writer in his use of tale and *moralitas* in *Orpheus*.

While the *Testament* and *Orpheus* display certain key differences from *The Kingis Quair*, James's influence on Henryson provides provocative evidence for our understanding of Scottish Chaucerianism. *Orpheus*, for example, is a poem which explicitly signals its engagement with writing in Latin, as represented by the *De Consolatione*, Henryson's stated source for the 'fenyeit fable' found in 'Boece,'[100] and Nicholas Trivet's allegorical interpretation of that text, also mentioned directly in the *moralitas*.[101] Yet, *Orpheus*, as Chapter 3 of this thesis will argue, also responds to both the *Knight's Tale* and *Troilus.* Chaucer therefore furnishes the authorizing literary precedent for the poem's use of his vernacular Scots. Yet, *Orpheus*, as a Scottish text, also implicitly represents an alternative to English Chaucerianism, with Henryson, whose poem demonstrates his appreciation of and engagement with *The Kingis Quair*, asserting that Scottishness by drawing on a native tradition of writing, at the beginning of which stands James I.

That the *Quair* informs how the later poets in this thesis conceive of themselves in relation to Chaucer is also suggested from the allusions to that work in the poems of William Dunbar (c.1460?-1513x1530), including one near the beginning of his poem, *The Thrissill and the Rois* (c.1503).[102] The *Thrissill and the Rois*, written for the wedding of James IV of Scotland (1473-1513) and Margaret Tudor

[100] *OE*, ll.416, 415.
[101] Cf. *OE*, ll.421-24.
[102] 'Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past'; B 52.

(1489-1541) in 1503,[103] and composed in rhyme royal, is clearly indebted to *The Parliament of Fowls*: Nature summons her creation to the triple crowning of the Lion, the Eagle, and the Thistle – together symbols of the Scottish king – as well as the Rose, a complimentary emblem for his betrothed, Margaret Tudor. Chaucer's poem, possibly linked with a royal wedding, and dealing with the subject of love, is given a topical recasting, as Nature is active in the proceedings, crowning but also giving political instruction.[104] Dunbar's use of Chaucer, too, carries a political significance, for, as Chelsea Honeyman argues, the Rose renews the Stewart line, but is also portrayed in a way that asserts its autonomy and supremacy.[105] The *Thrissill*'s diplomatic manoeuvring finds its literary and cultural expression in the poem's Chaucerianism, for Chaucer's poetry, as one of the text's main sources of influence, represents an English poetic tradition. Yet, the *Thrissill*, even as it signals its indebtedness to and engagement with English Chaucerian texts, is also Scottish, and as such also expresses its independence from the very tradition from which it draws.

This sense of distinctiveness is further inscribed in the poem's framing allusion to *The Kingis Quair*. Indeed, James's Scottish Chaucerian poem presents certain suggestive parallels to the *Thrissill*, not least its connection to the union of the king with a member of the English nobility, Joan Beaufort. Like the *Quair*, the *Thrissill* presents love and marriage within a larger advice-to-princes tradition, urging James IV to practice virtue and moderation in both areas, as well as in his governance of the realm.[106] Like James's, Dunbar's poem adapts dream-vision convention, but, where the former features a reading persona, Dunbar's narrator is represented as lethargic, visited and chastised by the goddess Aurora:

'Slugird', scho said, 'Awalk annone for schame,

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[103] Cf. Norman MacDougall, *James IV*, The Stewart Dynasty in Scotland (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp.250-51; R. L. Mackie, *King James IV of Scotland: A Brief Survey of His Life and Times* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), pp.90-112.

[104] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.95-97; A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* pp.192-97 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[105] Cf. '"Rois Red and Quhit, Resplendent of Colour": Margaret Tudor and Scotland's Floricultural Future in William Dunbar's Poetry,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.181-93 [190-91].

[106] Cf. esp. Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540*, pp.158-60.

And in my honour sum thing thow go wryt.

The lork hes done the mirry day proclame,

To rais vp luvaris with confort and delyt,

Ȝit nocht incresis thy curage to indyt,

Quhois hairt sum tyme hes glaid and blissful bene,

Sangis to mak vndir the levis grene.'[107]

Aurora's strongly worded injunction for the sleeping poet to 'sum thing thow go wryt' echoes the *Quair*, for James's authorial persona eventually sits down and declares his intention to write 'sum new thing' (89). Furthermore, the goddess's opening rebuke to the poet recalls a later passage in the *Quair*, where the imprisoned persona addresses a nightingale from his tower, chastising the bird for its silence, exclaiming 'Sluggart, for schame! Lo, here thy goldin hour / That worth were hale all thy lyvis laboure!' (405-06). The *Quair*'s sluggish nightingale is thus transformed into the languid narrator of the *Thrissill*, who, as Anthony Hasler, noting the echo between both passages, writes, resembles 'the obstreperous nightingale of *The Kingis Quair*, a dysfunctional stage property who remains silent when he should sing.'[108]

In the *Thrissill*, before Aurora appears to rebuke the poet, there appears an opening Chaucerian stanza, an account of the change from winter to spring recalling the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (an affinity further suggested from the use of suspended syntax from the first line of the stanza onwards).[109] Yet, Chaucer's Prologue, which is itself so recognizable, is effectively interrupted in the *Thrissill*, with 'Quhois armony to heir it wes delyt – ', the last line of the first stanza, leading to 'In bed at morrow sleeping as I lay,' the first line of the second stanza, involving a sudden and abrupt change in focus.[110] Thus, Dunbar, while beginning in imitation of the springtime opening from *The Canterbury Tales*, departs

[107] B 52, ll.22-29.
[108] Antony J. Hasler, *Court Poetry in Late Medieval England and Scotland: Allegories of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.33.
[109] Cf. B 52, ll.1-7.
[110] B 52, ll. 7, 8.

from Chaucer, indeed, roughly breaks away from him, turning to an original poem of his own. The *Thrissill*-persona's apparent sluggishness acquires a new significance within the context of this reading, constituting a form of resistance to the poetic convention with which he is expected to comply. The *Thrissill*'s preliminary stanzas therefore represent an assertion of their author's literary independence, with Chaucer's poetry drawn upon only to be departed from, a process evident within the *Thrissill* as a whole, which, in addition to constituting a creative reworking of the assembly of birds in the *Parliament*, is also Scottish, and as such represents a self-conscious alternative to the tradition of English Chaucerianism.

In light of this reading, it becomes all the more significant that this expression of resistance to the Chaucerian tradition of writing should be made in terms drawn at least in part from *The Kingis Quair*: for Dunbar, the nightingale's sluggishness offers him a vehicle for maintaining his distance from Chaucer. The *Quair*, moreover, provides a suggestive point of reference for the later writer's assertion of himself, for James's poem also gives voice to the sense of alterity likewise inscribed within the *Thrissill*. However, Dunbar's authorial persona articulates feelings of pointlessness separating him from the narrator of the *Quair*, who, in the closing stanzas of that poem, celebrates the transformative power of love; in the *Thrissill*, on the other hand, the narrator defends his reluctance to write on the grounds that love, in fact, is not worth rising from bed and writing about, given that it is so often a cause of pain and sorrow.[111] Nor does his initial hesitation resolve itself into the closing celebrations such as at the end of the *Quair*; rather Dunbar, despite drawing on the native vernacular tradition represented by James's poem, nevertheless adopts a comparatively subversive attitude towards the native tradition of writing with which he engages.

With Dunbar, Gavin Douglas stands near the end of a developing Scottish Chaucerian tradition: his *Palice of Honour* (c.1503) signals its engagement with Chaucer's *House of Fame*, for it too is a dream vision, divided into three parts, featuring an ascent to a lofty dwelling, albeit Honour's, not Fame's.[112]

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[111] Cf. B 52, ll.29-35.

[112] Cf. Denton Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), pp.164-200 [193-200]; Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.104-28. For Douglas's use of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, see

Yet, Douglas, as recent criticism has sought to argue, also reveals his knowledge of the *Quair*: Nicola Royan, for example, provides a timely reassessment of the possible literary sources for the *Palice*, focusing on its Scottish context in particular by considering the textual parallels between that poem and James's.[113] Royan, more precisely, identifies connections in both texts' acknowledgement of Venus's authority, and by extension, their acceptance of the values of courtly love, as well as in their portrayal of the dreamer: unlike in Chaucer, where poets are depicted as disseminating not the truth, but rather, half-truths, both James and Douglas remain comparatively confident in their assertion of the author's capacities, including, as Royan argues, that of learning the moral values through which they are brought into Venus's service.[114]

The *Palice*, as this thesis goes on to argue, reflects a deeper engagement still with the *Quair*, for James's poem provides a lens through which that work responds to Chaucer's *House of Fame*. While the *Quair* does not itself engage with that poem but, rather, with *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, James presents a critical departure from both texts in adopting a more positive view of love. In the *Palice*, Douglas adopts a similar revisionary stance in reworking the idea of fame as found in Chaucer.[115] Both the *Quair* and the *Palice* therefore present positive re-readings of different texts by Chaucer. James's influence, moreover, can be discerned in the latter text's portrayal of its youthful authorial persona, one whose episodic education in matters of love is itself related to his gradual development as a writer. Like the *Quair*, which ultimately and triumphantly asserts a view of the author as religiously inspired, the *Palice* likewise works towards a concluding affirmation of the poet's ability to express truths of a higher kind.[116]

Douglas's deliberate construction of a youthful, inexperienced authorial persona is suggestive in light of the *Palice*'s Chaucerianism, as well as, moreover, its implicit engagement with the *Quair*, for

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esp. Joanna Martin, 'Responses to the Frame Narrative of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Scottish Literature,' *RES*, New Series, 60.246 (2009), pp.561-77 [570-74].

[113] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'Serving Venus: Attitudes to Authority in *The House of Fame*, *The Kingis Quair*, and *The Palice of Honoure*,' in *The Mediaeval Journal* 10.1 (2020), pp.81-104.

[114] Ibid. pp.94-100

[115] Cf. Chelsea Honeyman, 'The *Palice of Honour*: Gavin Douglas' Renovation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*,' in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations*, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle upon Tyn e: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.65-81 [65-66].

[116] Cf. *PH,* ll.2116-69.

James's narrator explicitly forsakes the frivolous writings of youth in favour of a more serious project. In the *Quair*, this gesture connects to the poem's overall positioning of itself relative to the Chaucerian tradition, and James's narrative persona gradually works towards a newfound vernacular confidence. The *Palice*, too, initially emphasizes the immaturity of the author, who matures over the course of the work. Thus, Douglas's apparent self-deprecation stands in a complex relationship to the poetry of Chaucer, for the *Palice* expresses its author's self-conscious engagement with an established literary tradition, with the *Quair* providing a discourse to express the narrative persona's sense of his youthful inexperience. Yet, the *Palice*-poet's professions of poetic immaturity contain an exciting assertion of newness, as is also the case in the *Quair*, where James's resolution to write something new relates to the poem's Chaucerianism. The *Palice* therefore implicitly promotes its author's vernacular not just through its adaptation of Chaucer, but, as the *Quair*'s influence on the poem also indicates, in its signalled participation in a Scottish tradition of Chaucerian writing, one which is defined by its newness, distinctive and independent from England's.

Thus, Douglas effectively brings this thesis full circle with his sustained response to the *Quair*. In 1513, he finished the ambitious work of twelve years, that is, his vernacular translation of the *Aeneid*, near the end of which he quotes directly from his earlier text, proudly referring to its honourable content.[117] Indeed, he takes stock of his literary career as he looks back on his poetic output from over a decade, implicitly tracing his growth as a writer from its early stages to this final triumphant assertion of authority. He thus applies to a much longer period of literary activity an outlook such as one also finds in the *Quair,* towards the beginning of which the mature narrator figure resolves to write about more serious subjects, effectively distancing himself from the frivolous work with which he amused himself in his youth (85-91). James's repetition of lines from the start of his text at its end also constitutes a retrospective moment (1372), one looking back at the work's beginning from the more informed point of view of its conclusion, thus tracing the formation of its author through which he has earned a place next to his literary forebears.

[117] Cf. *Aeneid*, IV, p.139 [ll.1-8].

The *Quair*'s circularity also looks forward to a neglected Scottish Chaucerian text, *The Buke of the Howlat* (c.1448), by the Orkney poet Richard Holland, the last lines of which echo the first.[118] Iain Macleod Higgins, in a recent essay in which he discusses the artful structure of the *Quair*, observes James's proclivity towards layered openings and beginnings, with the narrative proper of the poem, as Higgins notes, appearing to begin at three, possibly even four, separate points (stanzas 1, 14, 20 and 30).[119] The *Quair*'s multiple starts are paralleled in the apparently false one near the outset of the *Howlat*, where Holland's authorial persona first describes the garden, before turning to focus on the ugly howlat. Holland, in the middle of his account of the birds summoned to hear the howlat's case, abruptly starts up again – 'All thus in May, as I ment in a mornyng' – words closely echoing the first line of the *Howlat*. For Higgins, these numerous beginnings are best understood as a function of the author's Chaucerianism, with James's self-conscious framing and reframing of his sources inscribed in the poem's narrative structure.[120] The *Howlat*, likewise distinguished by this opening layering, involves a corresponding self-awareness, as Holland, too, undertakes an active reworking of the poetry of Chaucer and the Chaucerian tradition, more specifically, of *The Parliament of Fowls*, and, as this thesis contends, *The House of Fame* as well.

The *Howlat*, as a 'Scotticization' of Chaucer, thus stands in close parallel with the *Quair*: like James, whose poem alludes directly to his experiences, namely his captivity at sea and imprisonment (155-68), Holland's *chanson d'aventure* opening is localized, given a historical reality in the forest of Darnaway, the seat of his patron, named at the poem's end, Archibald Douglas, Earl of Moray (d.1455).[121] The *Quair*, as a Scottish Chaucerian precedent, is, moreover, alluded to towards the opening of the *Howlat*, where the 'cerkill solar' signals an interest in cosmic consequence further linking it to James's poem (1).[122]

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[118] Cf. *BH*, ll.998-1001.
[119] Cf. Iain Macleod Higgins, 'Old Books and New Beginnings North of Chaucer: Revisionary Reframings in *The Kingis Quair* and *The Testament of Cresseid*,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp.620-35.
[120] Cf. Higgins, 'Old Books and New Beginnings North of Chaucer: Revisionary Reframings in *The Kingis Quair* and *The Testament of Cresseid*,' pp.623-28.
[121] Cf. *BH*, ll.989-1001.
[122] James begins and ends his poem with reference to the 'hevynnis figure circulere' (1, 1372).

(Indeed, proportion and number are central to both works, key features in their overall design.)[123] The 'eloquence' implicitly asserted in the authorial persona's explicit disavowal of such poetic mastery is, in the *Quair*, that skill pointedly attributed to the poet's forebears, namely Chaucer and Gower (1377). Like James, however, for whom such vernacular eloquence is itself sought after in his own native Scots, Holland likewise strives for that poetic ideal embodied, by the mid-fifteenth century, by Chaucer. Thus, while Chaucer provides both writers with a starting point, with an authorizing vernacular precedent, both James and Holland remain self-consciously alternative, redefining the 'Chaucerian' in Scottish terms.

Yet, the *Howlat* nevertheless positions itself very differently in relation to Chaucerian writing than the *Quair*, which is less 'Scottish' in the sense that it is written with a heavily anglicised diction. James, moreover, chooses rhyme royal stanzas as his verse form, thus more clearly following the Chaucerian tradition. Holland, on the other hand, despite his indebtedness to the poetry of Chaucer, is very 'un-Chaucerian,'[124] arguably deliberately so, not only, for example, writing in alliterative stanzas, but also, as David Parkinson notes, in the poem's language, 'its vocabulary bristling with distinctively Scots forms.'[125] The *Howlat* therefore provides an unusual but suggestive early example of a Scottish Chaucerian text, one which asserts its distinctiveness from, in the first instance, the poetry of the English Chaucerian tradition. Yet, the *Howlat*, as Parkinson also perceptively observes, likewise represents a kind of 'anti-*Quair*';[126] indeed, Holland's poem, with its decentering of royal authority and fulsome praise of the magnate 'Black Douglases,' remains ambiguous as an expression of its author's loyalties to the Scottish Crown. What the

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[123] Cf. Margaret A. Mackay, 'Structure and Style in Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance), University of Stirling, 2-7 July 1981*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, 1981), pp.191-206; Miskimin, 'Patterns in *The Kingis Quair* and the *Temple of Glas*,' *PLL* 13.4 (1977), pp.339-61; John MacQueen, 'Poetry – James I to Henryson,' in *The History of Scottish Literature*, ed. R. D. S. Jack (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University, 1988), pp.55-72; MacQueen, 'The Literature of Fifteenth-Century Scotland,' pp.184-208.

[123] Cf. Fradenburg, 'Scottish Chaucer,' p.180-81.

[124] Felicity Riddy, 'The Alliterative Revival,' in *The History of Scottish Literature, Vol 1: Origins to 1660 (Mediaeval and Renaissance)*, ed. R. D. S. Jack (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988) p.41.

[125] David Parkinson, 'Centres, Peripheries and Networks: the flourishing of Older Scots literature, *c.*1400-*c.*1500,' in *The Cambridge History of Scottish Literature*, ed. Ian Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[126] Ibid.

Howlat therefore demonstrates is not simply its author's appreciation of and engagement with the *Quair*, but also Holland's simultaneous assertion of himself with regards not just to Chaucer, but James as well.

Chapter 2: *The Buke of the Howlat*

The Buke of the Howlat (c.1448) by the Orkney ecclesiastic and poet Richard Holland (d. in or after 1483) constitutes one of the earliest substantial responses to Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* in Scotland.[1] Yet, the *Howlat*, despite its signalled indebtedness to that text, has not been treated as a Scottish Chaucerian poem, a neglect in part due to the critical preoccupation with the work's possible political significance. Like the *Quair*, the *Howlat* remains a highly self-conscious appropriation of English Chaucerian writing into Scots and as such deserves to be considered within the early stages of Scottish Chaucerianism. The *Howlat*, as the first part of this chapter will illustrate, involves a breaking away from the *Parliament*, with Holland asserting a sense of difference inscribed in the alienated figure of the howlat itself. Holland's Chaucerian sources, moreover, are also subject to re-evaluation in the second part of this chapter, which sees *The House of Fame* as a possible influence on the handling of poetic reputation in the *Howlat* before arguing that Holland's positive reworking of the more problematic treatment of that topic by Chaucer influences Gavin Douglas's much later reinterpretation of that same text in the *Palice of Honour* (c.1503). The *Howlat*, thus regarded, emerges as more than just a superficial adaptation of the *Parliament*; rather Holland's poem represents a regrettably overlooked response to two dream-vision poems by Chaucer, thus representing an important point of continuity in the overall development of Scottish Chaucerianism.

The *Howlat*'s main Chaucerian influences are generally agreed to include *The Parliament of Fowls*. Like Chaucer's, Holland's poem depicts a bird assembly governed by the goddess Nature. Indeed, Chaucer, whose dream-vision poem adapts its Latin source, the *De Planctu Naturae* of Alain de Lille (c.1128-1202), into English, provides a vernacular precedent for the Scots *Howlat*, which responds to the

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[1] Cf. Felicity J. Riddy, 'Dating *The Buke of the Howlat*,' *RES*, New Series, 37 (1986), pp.1-10 [9-10]. For the alternative dates of 1446 and 1450, see, respectively, Matthew P. McDiarmid, 'Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*: An Interpretation,' *MAE* 38.3 (1969), pp.277-90 [278-80], and Marion Stewart, 'Holland's "Howlat" and the Fall of the Livingstones,' *IR* 26.2 (1975), pp.67-79 [71].

De Planctu,[2] as well as to the fable by the thirteenth-century fabulist Odo of Cheriton (c.1180/90-1246) about the ugly crow in borrowed feathers, humiliated for his pride and arrogance.[3] However, Holland's Scots poem likewise asserts the authority of his native vernacular vis-à-vis Chaucer's English. Thus, the *Howlat*, while it signals its engagement with the poetry of Chaucer and English Chaucerianism, nevertheless remains set apart from that tradition by the very fact of its self-conscious 'Scottishness.'

Holland, in addition to his narrative and thematic adjustments to the *Parliament*,[4] is 'un-Chaucerian,' opting for a stanza form which is distinctive for not having been used by Chaucer, namely the thirteen-line alliterative stanza with a long ninth line instead of a 'bob.' Nicola Royan, noting the stanza's presumed origins in the late fourteenth-century Northern English romance *The Awntyrs off Arthure*, identifies structural parallels between that text and the much later *Howlat*.[5] Yet, Holland's conspicuous use of the thirteen-line alliterative stanza also relates to his poem's Chaucerianism, for the *Howlat* is thus notable for not being written in the same rhyme royal stanzas as the *Parliament*. Indeed, Holland's choice would appear to be deliberate: to write in a stanza form that is not Chaucerian, and in doing so to assert his independence from the poetry of Chaucer and English Chaucerianism. The *Howlat*'s verse form thus forms a part of the work's overall appropriation and assimilation of Chaucer, for Holland, while self-consciously drawing on the narrative and generic content of the *Parliament*, writes a Scottish Chaucerian poem in his own native vernacular, distancing himself from English Chaucerianism. The

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[2] Cf. Ralph Hanna, ed., *The Buke of the Howlat*, STS, Fifth Series, 12. Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester NY: The Boydell Press, 2014).

[3] For the text of the fable and a translation of it, see, respectively, Léopold Hervieux, ed., *Les Fabulistes Latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du moyen âge: Eudes de Cheriton et ses dérivés,* vol. 4 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1896), pp.180-81, and John C. Jacobs, ed. and tr., *The Fables of Odo of Cheriton* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp.74-75.

[4] Cf. Hanna, ed., *The Buke of the Howlat*, pp.24-25; Nicola Royan, '"Mark your Meroure be Me": Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp.49-62 [54-55].

[5] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'The alliterative *Awntyrs* stanza in Older Scots verse,' in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, ed. John A. Burrow and Hoyt N. Duggan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp.185-94 [190-93]; . Royan, '"Mark your Meroure be Me": Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' p.55.

Howlat's distinctive thirteen-line alliterative stanza, while not necessarily in itself 'Scottish,' thus affords Holland a means through which to express further still this sense of independence from Chaucer.[6]

Holland further asserts his poetic autonomy in breaking away from the *Parliament,* his engagement with which is nevertheless signalled early on in the opening stanzas of the *Howlat*. The poem's Chaucerian influence is suggested in the authorial persona's allusion to 'dame Natur, that noble mastres' (32), whose presence within the work gives it an underlying 'intellectual scheme.'[7] The *Parliament* is further evoked as the narrative develops, leading to a raucous parliament of birds. However, Holland, in describing the procession of birds summoned to consider the howlat's case, leaves Chaucer, turning towards the heraldic excursus that will be addressed in greater detail later in this chapter. What appears, therefore, from the opening stanzas of the poem, with its reference to the goddess Nature, and the *Howlat*'s subsequent adaptation of the bird-assembly genre, to be an imitation of Chaucer's *Parliament*, asserts its freedom to break away suddenly from that model, that is, not to follow in a servile manner, but to take apart Chaucer's poetry and Chaucerian writing and to make them into something new instead.

Indeed, Holland makes this independence explicit at a suggestive juncture, for, after alluding to 'dame Natur,' the authorial persona refrains from providing an extended description of the *plesaunce*, for to do so would take too much time and he has much to write, or, as the narrator declares to the reader:

Bot all thar names to nevyn as now it nocht neid is,
It war prolixt and lang and lenthing of space,
And I have mekle mater in meter to glos
Of ane nother sentence,
And waike is my eloquence;
Thairfor in haist will I hens

[6] The *Awntyrs* stanza becomes very popular in later fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scotland. For an overview, see esp. Royan, 'The alliterative *Awntyrs* stanza in Older Scots verse,' pp.185-94.
[7] Riddy, 'The Alliterative Revival,' p.44.

To the purpos. (33-39)

The *Howlat*-narrator's pointed assertion of eloquence is highly suggestive in the poem's Chaucerian context, as 'eloquence,' already in the first years after his death, is evoked in praise of Chaucer.[8] Yet, Holland, through the figure of the authorial persona, whose protestations notwithstanding, implicitly draws attention to his possession of that enviable quality, highlighting the virtuosity of his performance. Holland's 'eloquence,' moreover, is also different in kind, that is, unlike that of the Chaucerian tradition, an alterity suggested from the reference to the fact that the narrative to follow is 'ane nothir sentence.'[9] Thus, the *Howlat*, while signalling its status as an original response to Chaucer and Chaucerian writing, nevertheless presents itself as distinct from that very poetic tradition.

As a Scottish poet, Holland thus expresses a sense of otherness that I would argue is inscribed in the howlat itself, that lonely figure who emerges shortly after the authorial persona's statement of purpose. Indeed, the howlat's introduction within the narrative is part of its break from the *Parliament*, for Chaucer's description of the pleasant place includes a long list of all the birds under Nature.[10] The howlat, moreover, in addition to standing in effective opposition to the natural order depicted by Chaucer, is first portrayed grumbling about the fact that he is an ugly bird, and that he was made thus by Nature (40-86). The *Howlat*'s critics have tended to emphasize the owl's association with baseness and treachery.[11] Yet, Holland remains more interested in the howlat's ugliness, the main focus of its opening complaint, one signalling the work's thematic concern with the ideas of creation: of fashioning (55), shaping (60), and making (72, 73), suggestive concepts given the text's self-conscious reworking of its poetic sources. Thus, the howlat, traditionally interpreted within the context of the poem's perceived political point, expresses Holland's awareness of writing a work which is different, which is, poetically speaking, an outsider.

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[8] Cf. Barry Windeatt, 'Chaucer Traditions,' in *Chaucer Traditions*, ed. Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.1-20 [4-10]; *Meroure* III, p.164.

[9] Cf. Henryson's reference in the *Testament* to his fictional source, 'ane uther quair' (61).

[10] Cf. *PF*, ll.323-64.

[11] Cf. McDiarmid, '*The Buke of the Howlat*: A Reinterpretation,' pp.281-83.

That the howlat provides a vocal point of reference of the poem's positioning of itself relative to Chaucer and Chaucerian writing is further suggested from the bird's connection to Holland himself. Randy Schiff, in a regrettably overlooked essay on the poem, argues that the howlat offers a reflection of Holland, a reading encouraged by the close physical proximity of both the owl and the poem's narrator at the *Howlat*'s outset, where the latter is alone with the former, a pose struck again at the end of the work.[12] That the howlat should be regarded within the larger context of the poem's self-reflexivity is also indicated from Holland's portrayal of the owl looking at his reflection, mirrored back to him in the water of a lake.[13] Schiff perceptively notes the parallel between the howlat's exasperated reliance on formal procedure – his complaint is first taken to the peacock-pope before being subject to the opinion of the larger bird assembly – and Holland's own personal history of legal wrangling over religious benefices early in his career.[14]

Holland's implicit connection to the howlat also links to his engagement with Chaucer, for the *Howlat*, as a Scottish Chaucerian text, stands in a self-conscious relation to English Chaucerianism. Thus, Holland, through the figure of the outsider howlat, voices a sense of difference relative from Chaucer as a Scottish poet, whose own highly self-aware attempt to write a poem in the Chaucerian tradition is informed by an awareness of alterity, of being radically different from Chaucer. Holland's pointed emphasis on the howlat's ugliness also reflects back on his poem as 'Chaucerian,' for the *Howlat*, while, at a narrative and thematic level clearly indebted to the world of the *Parliament*, is in Scots, the perceived roughness and simplicity of which is addressed by other poets in this thesis.[15] Holland's depiction of the howlat is therefore playfully self-referential in a way not identified by Schiff, with the howlat's explicit complaint about his appearance relating to the poem's 'Scottishness.' Thus, the misshapen and outcast

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[12] Cf. Randy P. Schiff, 'Holland as Howlat: Shadow Self and Borderland Homage in *The Buke of the Howlat*,' *Mediaevalia* 29.2 (2008), pp.89-114 [95].
[13] Cf. Ibid., p.97.
[14] Cf. Schiff, 'Holland as Howlat: Shadow Self and Borderland Homage in *The Buke of the Howlat*,' pp.97-98. Holland's biography is pieced together in Marion M. Stewart, 'Holland of the *Howlat*,' *IR* 23.1 (1972), pp.3-15; Marion Stewart, 'Holland's "Howlat" and the Fall of the Livingstones,' *IR* 26.2 (1975), pp.67-79 [71].
[15] Cf. *Fables*, ll.36-42.

owl's grumbling acknowledgement of his otherness applies to the poem as a whole, which, as a Scottish text, is, like the owl itself, likewise positioned at the fringe, standing apart from the poetry of Chaucer.

The *Howlat*'s preoccupation with difference is further suggested from its portrayal of the rook firing Scots-Gaelic in a lively ejection scene which also recalls the bird debate in the *Parliament*, where Chaucer's assembly breaks into the raucous debate among the birds of 'lower kynde.'[16] Indeed, these birds assume a subversive role in effectively critiquing the aristocratic ideals espoused by those of higher rank, while their impatient interjections are at odds with the cosmic harmony outlined earlier in the poem. In the *Howlat*, social disruption becomes boisterously physical in the entertainments at the bird assembly, where a rhyming rook suddenly bursts onto the scene and flytes the company in a mixture of Scots and Gaelic. While this bard sets out to make fun of his courtly audience, the joke is in fact on him, for Holland, as a Lowlander, satirizes the rook, parodying the language and culture of this 'bard owt of Irland' (795).[17] The rook, whose 'lesingis' (807) are reported by the narrator, is eventually subject to a rough rebuke, when two court fools, the lapwing and the cuckoo, enter, verbally abusing and physically attacking the Gaelic bard, pulling at his hair but also defecating on him, before he rushes out, humiliated (820-845). The rook's violent expulsion therefore reinforces the divide between different parts of Scotland, between the Highlands, on the one hand, which the poem portrays as 'undesirable, certainly unsophisticated,' and the Lowlands on the other, culturally and linguistically distinct, and with its own sense of Scottishness.[18]

The Gaelic rook's appearance and ejection are also related to the Chaucerianism of the *Howlat*, for Holland, through his signalled adaptation of and engagement with the poetry of Chaucer, asserts the value of Scots as a language implicitly capable of reaching the expressive heights of Chaucerian English

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[16] *PF*, l.450.
[17] Cf. David Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse: Holland, Douglas, Dunbar,' *JGEP* 85.4 (1986), pp.494-509 [496-98]; Elizabeth Elliott, 'Scottish Writing,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English,* ed. Elaine Treharne, Greg Walker, and William Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.574-93 [586].
[18] Kate Ash, 'Friend or Foe? Negotiating the Anglo-Scottish Border in Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica* and Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp.51-67 [64].

in and on its own terms. Holland's assertion of his native vernacular is made, moreover, by way of reference to Scots Gaelic, which, in being thus subject to ridicule within the poem, and its representative ignominiously cast out, is, through its effective exclusion and pointed humiliation, evoked to raise the status of the author's Scots. Indeed, it is suggestive that the rook's introduction should occur within the larger courtly context of the Chaucerian assembly, which includes, for instance, an elevated hymn to the Virgin Mary (715-84), one Matthew McDiarmid argues corresponds to the worshipful song to Nature by Chaucer.[19] The *Howlat*'s assertion of its author's native vernacular is thus made via its engagement with the Chaucerian tradition; the Chaucerian bird assembly therefore has an implicit linguistic and cultural dimension, one, moreover, which is further suggested from the eviction of the rook, with his unwelcome volley of Scots Gaelic.

Yet, if the *Howlat*'s 'Scottishness' is expressed in its literal displacement of the Highland poet, Holland at the same time draws an unusual parallel between the rook and the later mobbing of the howlat. David Parkinson argues that the bard's violent dismissal looks forward to the howlat's later de-feathering, a correspondence conveying the poem's moral warning against unearned pride by way of humour.[20] While the bird assembly initially decides in favour of the howlat's request to reform his appearance, Holland's owl, granted a feather from each of the birds, becoming more beautiful than any of them (885-97), demonstrates a newfound arrogance that drives the birds to complain to the goddess Nature, who states, '"My first making," quod scho, "was unamendable, / Thocht I alterit, as ye all askit in ane"' (928-29). Nature's first making refers to the howlat's original form, to which he is summarily returned, as she reminds him of the borrowed nature of his feathers, '"of othir mennis all, and nocht of thi awne"' (938). Nature then declares that every bird shall take back its feather, which they proceed to do, leaving the unfortunate howlat alone once again with the narrator: 'All thar levit allane / The Howlat and I' (948-49).

[19] Cf. McDiarmid, 'Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*: An Interpretation,' pp.288-89.
[20] Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse: Holland, Douglas, Dunbar,' pp.499-502.

If the *Howlat*'s self-consciousness as a vernacular text, in particular in relation to the Chaucerian tradition, is expressed via the figure of its feathered protagonist, then the owl's fate seems to suggest that Holland's poetic experimentation is somehow misplaced, as the creature is returned to his initial state. However, Holland's representation of the disgruntled howlat has been implicitly self-deprecatory from the start, thus suggesting that his portrayal of the owl is tongue-in-cheek, as encouraged, for instance, in the authorial persona's opening reference to the howlat's situation as a kind of play or sport, a 'bourde' (87).[21] Indeed, the howlat's ugliness is emphasized as part of a larger gesture of comical self-effacement, with Holland's implicit identification with the owl the equivalent of an extended modesty topos, acknowledging, through the figure of the outsider howlat, the inferiority of his poetic creation. Yet, even in doing so, appearing to decline any claim to eloquence, he nevertheless asserts his poetic abilities.

Nature's explicit reference, moreover, to borrowed feathers acquires an additional significance in light of the *Howlat*'s signalled engagement with, as well as appropriation of, Chaucer's poetry into Scots; the *Howlat*, in other words, is a hybrid of different traditions, foremost among which is the Chaucerian. Indeed, the lonely owl's remaking becomes especially suggestive within the larger context of the *Howlat*, which is notable for the way in which it takes from a wide variety of different genres and traditions, including animal fable, bird allegory, mobbing, flyting, religious lyric, chivalric epic, among others, with the poem's styles 'including the heroic, courtly, didactic, devotional, homiletic, and heraldic'[22] – Holland's use of which is partly done with a view to the reader who is implicitly encouraged to work through the conceptual connections between the various elements of this highly eclectic work.[23] The *Howlat*, self-conscious about its status as a poem, also draws attention to the capacity of the Scots to take on a range of poetic shapes and forms, to reach the heights of a particular kind of eloquence. The howlat itself, with its opening reflections on its origins, on its first creation by the goddess Nature, together with

[21] Cf. *DOST*, s.v. 'bourde.'
[22] Theo van Heijnsbergen, 'Holland, Richard (*Buke of the Howlat*),' in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*, ed. Siân Echard and Robert Rouse, Vol. 3 (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), pp.1032-34.
[23] Ibid.

its explicit expression of difference and alterity and its recasting into borrowed feathers, therefore resonates within a work which exhibits its own making and unmaking of established traditions of writing.

That Chaucer and the Chaucerian tradition are subject to this process is suggested at the *Howlat*'s close, where Holland's authorial persona stands in contrast to the dreamer-narrator of the *Parliament*, who, upon waking from his dream vision, remains unsatisfied, and so continues his search for knowledge.[24] While the *Howlat* as a whole expresses a sense of nostalgia for a more virtuous world gone by,[25] Holland's final stanza nevertheless finds solace in the figures of the author's emblematic patrons:

Thus for ane dow of Dunbar drew I this dyte,
Dowit with ane Dowglass – and boith war thai dowis –
In the forest forsaid, frely parfyte,
Of Terneway, tender and tryde, quhoso trast trowis.
War my wit as my will than suld I wele wryte.
Bot gif I lak in my leid that nocht till allow is,
Ye wyse, for your worschipe wryth me no wyte.
Now blyth us the blist barne that all berne bowis:
He len us lyking and lyf everlestand.
In mirthfull moneth of May,
In myddis of Murraye,
Thus on a tyme by Ternway
Happinnit Holland. (989-1001)

The doves alluded to in the opening lines of the stanza are the Earl and Countess of Moray, Holland's patrons, to whom the poem is thus explicitly dedicated, where they are the object of a moral compliment,

[24] Cf. *PF*, ll.693-99.
[25] Cf. Alasdair MacDonald, 'Richard Holland and *The Buke of the Howlat*: Remembrance of Things Past,' *MAE* 86.1 (2017), pp.108-22.

for the dove's traditional spiritual symbolism is reinforced by earlier references to its virtuousness.[26] Holland, moreover, in alluding to the marriage of his patrons (Elizabeth Dunbar is 'Dowit with ane Douglass'), rewrites Chaucer, for, where the formel eagle defers her choice until the following Valentine's Day,[27] and in so doing creates a space within which to express her resistance to the demands of Nature, the *Howlat* brings a kind of implicit closure to the love problem of the *Parliament*, as Holland draws attention at the end of his poem to choice and the happy union resulting therefrom.[28]

The *Howlat*'s final stanza also involves the rewriting of the poem's opening, indebted to Chaucer, in 'Scottish' terms: the birds who, throughout the narrative, assumed a generic function, connected to the *Parliament*, take on the specific identity of the author's patrons, pointedly referred to by their Scots names. The *Howlat*'s closing stanza also associates the idyllic setting, at the work's outset broadly 'Chaucerian,' with its description of the verdant springtime scene under the beneficent power of Dame Nature, effectively transforming it into the precise historical place of Darnaway Castle, in Morayshire. Holland's localization of the poem's setting is in keeping with his homage to the earl and countess of Moray;[29] it also, however, connects to the work's larger appropriation and assimilation of an English Chaucerian tradition, as Holland effectively takes apart the poetic landscape borrowed from the *Parliament*, and 'Scotticizes' it, giving, through his use of name and place, that material an original Scottish form. The *Howlat*'s closing stanza thus represents a bolder restatement of the vernacular assertion implied in Holland's opening claim to eloquence after he turns to his other narrative at the poem's outset. Thus, Holland, despite his self-deprecatory association with the howlat, that ugly, alienated outsider figure, not

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[26] Cf. Regina Scheibe, 'The Major Professional Skills of the Dove in *The Buke of the Howlat*,' in *Animals and the Symbolic in Medieval Art and Literature* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), pp.107-37.
[27] Cf. *PF*, ll.647-53.
[28] On 'closure' in Scottish Chaucerian writing, cf. esp. Louise O. Fradenburg, 'The Scottish Chaucer,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance) (University of Stirling, 2-7 July 1981)*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, 1981), pp.177-90 [183].
[29] Cf. Anne Kelly, 'Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*: An Alternative View.' In *Premodern Scotland: Literature and Governance, 1420-1587*, ed. Joanna Martin and Emily Wingfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.74-84 [82-83].

only implicitly declares his individual abilities as a writer, but also, as his engagement with Chaucer's poetry indicates, celebrates an alternative, indeed, rival, tradition of writing, one which is proudly Scots.

The *Howlat*'s closing lines also merit comparison with the envois in other Scottish Chaucerian texts: *The Kingis Quair*'s, for instance, where James I pays tribute to both Chaucer and Gower, as well as Dunbar's effusive praise of Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate at the end of *The Goldyn Targe*,[30] where Chaucer and Chaucerian writing represent a poetic tradition which is laid claim to by later Scottish poets. While the *Howlat*'s final stanza does not make reference to any of these poets, including Chaucer, Holland's conclusion is nevertheless written with some of the same spirit of vernacular self-assertion. Indeed, his pointed naming of himself at the poem's very end, which alludes to all that 'Happinnit Holland,' represents an early example of authorial self-naming in surviving Scottish Chaucerian texts; as such, it looks forward to the fuller expressions of a vernacular identity among later Scots poets, passages which connect to the overall growth and development of a native Scottish Chaucerianism.

The Buke of the Howlat and *The House of Fame*

If *The Kingis Quair* of James I establishes an early interest in both *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale* in Scotland, then *The Buke of the Howlat*, written around a quarter of a century later, reveals a taste for Chaucer's dream visions, as suggested from the poem's engagement with the *Parliament of Fowls.* Yet, Holland's Chaucerian influences should also be made to include his reading of *The House of Fame* (c.1378-80), for the *Howlat*'s so-called heraldic core, in which the poem pays glowing tribute to the 'Black Douglases,' focusing in particular on the past heroics of the 'Good' Sir James Douglas (d.1330), raises questions not just regarding the nature of reputation itself but also the author's role in upholding it.

[30] 'Ryght as the stern of day begouth to schyne'; B 59.

Holland, moreover, in addition to offering a more positive interpretation of fame than Chaucer, also, via the *Howlat*'s centrally placed and highly original reworking of parts of John Barbour's *Bruce* (c.1375), foregrounds his Scots sources and by extension asserts an existing vernacular tradition in Scotland. Chaucerianism as associated with the courtly bird assembly is thus pushed to the margins of the *Howlat*, as Holland's rhetorically impressive middle stanzas by contrast express a competing sense of Scottishness.

In Book III of *The House of Fame*, the poet 'Geffrey' 'to thys place aproche / That stood upon so hygh a roche,'[31] inside which he finds a large crowd of people, included among whom are 'pursevantes and heraudes' depicted wearing embroidered coats of arms and singing the praises of rich men.[32] Their commitment of their professional services to the wealthy, rather than to the noble or the virtuous, ties in with the poem's critical treatment of earthly renown and the weak foundation upon which it rests.[33] Chaucer's probing handling of the topics of fame and reputation is reflected in the next sequence, as the authorial persona goes on to describe the building's interior, including the statues of writers in the hall, authors responsible for holding up the renown of those famous names and places of times gone by.[34] Yet, Fame's arbitrary conferral of that distinction to her supplicants, paired with the chaotic rumblings of the House of Rumour, full of whispers and gossip on every topic, memorably referred to as 'tydynges,'[35] casts serious doubt on the legitimacy of the celebrity they seek, and which poets are supposed to promote.

Like Chaucer's text, which is critical in its view of fame, the same topic is addressed in the *Howlat*, where Holland's satire of the secular and religious estates suggests a similar attitude to earthly renown. Yet, the *Howlat*, while responding to the treatment of these themes as found in *The House of Fame*, indeed echoing Chaucer's own criticism of glory and reputation, at the same time also departs from him, for Holland simultaneously presents an alternative fame, one which is grounded in virtuous behaviour. Thus,

[31] *HF*, ll.1115-16
[32] *HF*, l.1321.
[33] Cf. *BH,* ll.204-208.
[34] Cf. *HF*, ll.1419-1512.
[35] Cf. *HF*, ll..644, 675, 1027, 2124, 2143.

the *Howlat* stands in a corrective relationship to the view of renown presented in *The House of Fame*, for while it shares in that text's critical attitude to fame, it nevertheless presents an alternative, one contrasting sharply with the randomness with which different kinds of reputation are jumbled together in Chaucer, stories whose seemingly chaotic transmission in the form of nothing more than pure discourse suggests that, with little to set it apart from gossip and rumour, narrative itself is protean and ephemeral.[36]

Like Chaucer's, Holland's text is also concerned with fame as the subject of narrative: in the *Howlat*, for instance, the telling of stories past is the focus of the poem's central praise of the 'Black Douglases,' more specifically, its retelling of the deeds of Sir James Douglas in the Holy Land, who carries the heart of King Robert the Bruce (1274-1329) into battle, presenting it before the Holy Sepulchre.[37] Douglas dies fighting the Saracen, as he did in real life, albeit not in the Holy Land but in Spain. The Douglas narrative is contained within what is often referred to as the poem's 'heraldic core,' for Sir James's actions are framed by a description of the coats of arms of the peacock-pope and eagle-emperor (Holland makes a lightly satirical point by selecting the real arms of the anti-pope Felix V (1439-49), as well as those of the emperor-elect not the emperor-crowned at the time the poem was written).[38] They are joined together with the arms of France and Scotland,[39] which are followed by those of the Douglas family as would have been borne, at the time of the poem's composition, by the eighth Earl of Douglas (1424/4-1452), followed by a description of the shields of several of the clan's members, including Holland's patron, Archibald Douglas, the Earl of Moray (d.1455), and the coats of arms of the Earl's two younger brothers, that is, Hugh, created Earl of Ormond in 1455 (d.1455) and John, lord Balvenie (d.1463).

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[36] Cf. Vincent Gillespie, 'Authorship,' in *A Handbook of Middle English Studies*, ed. Marion Turner, Wiley-Blackwell Critical Theory Handbooks (Chichester, Eng.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp.137-54 [149-52].

[37] Cf. *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, ed. Jules Viard and Eugène Déprez, vol. 1, Société de l'Histoire de France (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1904), p.84; *Chroniques de Jean Froissart*, ed. Siméon Luce, Société de l'Histoire de France, vol. 1 (Paris : Jules Renouard, 1869), p.79. The most detailed analysis of Douglas's journey, yet one which does not refer to the *Howlat*, is by Sonja Cameron (previously Väthjunker): 'Sir James Douglas, Spain, and the Holy Land,' in *Freedom and Authority, Scotland c.1050-c.1650: Historical and Historiographical Essays presented to Grant G. Simpson*, ed. Terry Brotherstone and David Ditchburn (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp.108-17.

[38] Cf. Riddy, 'Dating *The Buke of the Howlat*,' pp.2-6.

[39] Felicity Riddy argues that this linkage alludes to a series of marriage alliances made or proposed for several of the sisters of James II in the 1440s: Riddy, 'Dating *The Buke of the Howlat*,' pp.8-9.

The *Howlat*'s heraldic core connects to the poet's role as depicted in *The House of Fame*, where Fame's magnificent hall is lined with pillars on which stand the statues of historians and poets past; their presence in the House of Fame winks playfully at the contingency and instability of their renown.[40] Holland's poem, too, is not merely concerned with the praise of 'Sir James' and the Douglases, but rather expresses through his eulogy to them a view of the poet as one who also holds up the fame of men. Yet, whereas Chaucer portrays the randomness with which fame is bestowed in Book III, where the House of Rumour casts doubt on the reliability of writing, thus subverting the author's function,[41] Holland provides a positive affirmation of the written nature of the exemplary behaviour he promotes. The *Howlat*'s authorial persona, signalling his subject matter, 'Of the douchty Dowglass to dyte I me dress' (391), also explicitly directs the reader to one of the sources of his account, the 'writ of thar werk' (395), a 'writ' which is pointedly referred to again later as the persona recounts the knight's deeds (507).

Unlike *The House of Fame*, which engages with the interpretation of the *Aeneid*, and the *auctores*, into English, the poetic tradition that emerges in the central stanzas of the *Howlat* is distinctively 'Scottish.' Holland, in addition to possibly drawing on a now-lost Douglas family history,[42] also recalls John Barbour's *Bruce* (c.1375), a late fourteenth-century poem in octosyllabic couplets focusing on King Robert, yet nevertheless including its own account of the service paid to him by Sir James Douglas. Holland's effective modifications to that text certainly contribute to the poem's support for the Douglas clan; yet, the *Howlat*'s central stanzas also contain a striking and neglected expression of vernacularity, for Barbour's text belongs to a native tradition of writing, with its own stories of famous men. Indeed, Holland's alterations to that account may well have a political significance given his ties to the Douglases. However, it is possible to see in them a certain performativity, as he acts out what it means to be a Scottish poet, part of which, for instance, includes self-consciously working within a native tradition. The *Howlat*'s

[40] Cf. *HF*, ll.1450-1512.
[41] Cf. Vincent Gillespie, 'Authorship,' in *A Handbook of Middle English Studies*, ed. Marion Turner, Wiley-Blackwell Critical Theory Handbooks (Chichester, Eng.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp.137-54 [149-52].
[42] I am indebted for access to this reading of the poem to an unpublished paper by Sally Mapstone.

'heraldic core,' moreover, in drawing not on the narratives of classical antiquity, asserts a sense of 'newness,' an exciting awareness of an emergent vernacular tradition in the author's native Scotland.

The *Howlat*'s central promotion of this poetic heritage is further suggested from Holland's framing of Sir James Douglas's deeds as representing a narrative widely known to and shared among all Scots. Holland's authorial persona, for instance, while declaring that the arms of the House of Douglas are 'Knawin throw all Cristindome' (381), also presents them as having a specifically Scottish significance, 'Of Scotland the wer wall' (383), 'Our fais force to defend, and vnfaleable / Baith barmekyn and bar to Scottis blud bene' (383-84); indeed, the family name inspires, as the following passage indicates:

> That word is so wonder warme, and euer yit was,
>
> It synkis sone in all part
>
> Of a trewe Scottis hart
>
> Reiosand ws inwart
>
> To heir of Dowglass. (386-90)

The Douglas name, as well as implicitly the narratives featuring it, have a particular effect on a Scottish listener, a sense of national identity that is further suggested from the use of the collective pronoun (534). Thus, the story that follows has a twofold significance, the first of which is to demonstrate Douglas's status, the reputation justified by the glowing accounts of his heroic acts of valour and service. Yet, Holland's emphasis on the transmission of such narratives, and, in particular, their reception in Scotland suggests his implicit assertion of the vernacular tradition of writing from which such stories are drawn.

Thus, the *Howlat*, as a response to the treatment of poetry and the role of the poet in *The House of Fame*, likewise draws attention to the author's source material, but to a different end than Chaucer, whose dream-vision poem calls his literary authorities into question, signalling, in evoking his work's intertextual relationship to classical texts, the fact that they are subject to a multiplicity of interpretations. The *Howlat*, similarly, the central stanzas of which are notable for their departures from the *Bruce*, are arguably

Chaucerian insofar as they gesture at the poet's rewriting of his source material. Unlike *The House of Fame*, however, which emphasizes notions of textual instability and uncertainty, the *Howlat* illustrates its author's place within an established, vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland. Thus, while the *Howlat*'s 'heraldic core' demonstrates its author's allegiance to the Douglas family, Holland's reworking of his source materials need not be read in such exclusively political terms; rather, it can be interpreted in a more positive light as relating to the work's larger vernacular self-consciousness, with the *Howlat*'s central stanzas containing an implicit assertion of a native poetic tradition in Scotland.

The *Howlat*, moreover, in doing so, appropriates a strategy which is itself 'Chaucerian,' given that *The House of Fame* evokes its author's reliance on the texts of classical antiquity, like the *Aeneid*; yet, Chaucer, signalling his engagement with those works, also draws attention to his use of English. The *Howlat*, as this chapter has argued, finds an authorizing vernacular precedent in the poetry of Chaucer, as Holland, for instance, recasts into his native tongue Odo of Cheriton's Latin fable, and the *De Planctu*. Yet, Holland, while effectively borrowing for this assertion of his native vernacular from Chaucer, is writing in Scots, not English, and therefore his poem involves a further displacement of Chaucer himself. The *Howlat*'s 'heraldic core' thus becomes the focal point of the poem's response to *The House of Fame*, for Holland expresses therein a view of poetry and the poet, to celebrate a lasting kind of glory; unlike Chaucer, who, in writing about the lives of famous men, turns for his sources to the classical past, Holland makes a point of drawing on neither authorizing tradition, that is, neither the Latin nor the Chaucerian, turning to Scottish writing as the material for his own original retelling of the deeds of 'Sir James.' The *Howlat*'s central stanzas thus express a feeling of newness that is evident in other Scottish Chaucerian texts, for Douglas's heroics, from the not-too-distant past, are the subject of a nascent tradition of writing.

That Chaucer and Chaucerian writing are thus forced to make way for a native, Scottish tradition in the *Howlat* is further suggested by the poem's division into a frame narrative and heraldic core. Indeed, as Margaret Mackay demonstrates in a seminal early essay on the structure of the *Howlat*, Holland's poem

is the result of a deliberate arrangement, resembling, as she notes, a 'Chinese box,' with the Douglas family occupying the formal centre of the poem, across which, moreover, the various episodes from the howlat narrative are made to reflect one another, thus producing a balance and symmetry.[43] For Mackay, Holland's apparently careful organization of his text is evidence of its overall coherence; indeed, the *Howlat*'s structural unity relates to the work's thematic concern with ideas of harmony and order, concepts likewise underlying the poem's intricate rhyme scheme and number symbolism.[44]

Yet the *Howlat*'s effective division into a frame narrative and heraldic core also relate to Chaucer, for Holland's rhetorically accomplished middle stanzas, with their praise of the Good 'Sir James,' are Scottish insofar as they express a sense of a native tradition, one implicitly distinct from the Chaucerian. The *Parliament*, as Holland's source of influence for his own vernacular adaptation of the *De Planctu*, is displaced, not only in an abstract sense but also literally, occupying the margins of the *Howlat*, with the Douglas narrative, by contrast, at the poem's front and center, a placement which makes it stand out. Indeed, the *Howlat*'s heraldic core effectively interrupts the bird assembly narrative, which is Chaucerian: the *Parliament* in other words is thus taken apart to make room for the poem's central, Scottish, core. The *Howlat*'s structure thus connects to similar examples of disruption in other Scottish Chaucerian texts, where Chaucer and the Chaucerian tradition of writing are broken up in expressing a Scottish alternative: in Holland, this process takes the form of the poem's central encomium to an explicitly Scottish subject, with the Douglas narrative far more than just a digression, but, rather, a pointed interruption of Chaucer.

The *Howlat*, therefore, interpreted within the context of a larger Scottish Chaucerianism, is self-conscious about the very acts of disruption and interruption, as is the case with the bardic rook, speaking

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[43] Cf. Margaret A. Mackay, 'Structure and Style in Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance), University of Stirling, 2-7 July 1981*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, 1981), pp.191-206. Mackay's essay is based on work contained in her doctoral thesis: 'The Alliterative Tradition in Middle Scots Verse' (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1975), pp.34-86.

[44] Cf.. Mackay, 'Structure and Style in Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' pp.191-206. See also Van Heijnsbergen, 'Holland, Richard (*Buke of the Howlat*),' p.1033-34.

Gaelic, who bursts in on the assembly of birds and brings an abrupt halt to the formal proceedings. The *Howlat*'s concern with such moments of sudden disorder, episodes which, in the case of the Gaelic bard, are given an additional linguistic significance, connect to the work's rewriting of Chaucer, for Holland, as a Scottish poet, is likewise an outsider figure, one who breaks in on the Chaucerian tradition – a barging in which is inscribed in his poem's very structure, with its unexpected display of Scottishness, the Douglas narrative which in terms of its content is sharply distinguished from English Chaucerianism.

The Buke of the Howlat and later Scottish Chaucerianism

The Buke of the Howlat's later popularity is suggested by the fact that it was among the first of the texts printed by Walter Chepman (c.1473-1528) and Andrew Millar (fl.1503-08) in Edinburgh in 1508, while, moreover, also featuring in two key later manuscript anthologies, the Asloan and Bannatyne MSS. Yet, the *Howlat*'s influence has not received much attention despite evidence for it in later Scottish Chaucerian texts. Holland's poem, as this chapter argues, redefines what it means to be Chaucerian in Scotland, articulating, in particular, a sense of alterity that informs the work of the later Scottish Chaucerians, whether in the form of another, alienated, disfigured outsider, namely the ostracized and leprous Cresseid, or in Dunbar's exploration of formal and stylistic extremes in his original re-castings of Chaucer's texts. The *Howlat*, moreover, in representing an early response to the view of poetry in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, informs Gavin Douglas's rewriting of that work in his much later *Palice of Honour* (c.1503). Holland's text is also associated with the act of revision in the ending to the *Parliament* in MS Arch Selden B. 24, where, as I will argue, the allusion to it further suggests its centrality to Scottish Chaucerianism.

The *Howlat*'s grumbling protagonist is in the first instance alluded to in *The Testament of Cresseid,* as Henryson's female protagonist wakes from her dream to find herself changed into a leper, 'hir face sa

deformait,'[45] a disfigurement which she discovers upon rising and seeing her reflection in a mirror. Cresseid later presents herself as a cautionary example, urging others to 'ane mirrour mak of me,'[46] a line echoing the howlat's presentation of himself as a negative exemplum at the end of Holland's text (970-75). In the *Howlat*, the owl's reference to himself as a mirror, in addition to signalling the poem's moral point, also relates to the creature's newfound self-awareness, his understanding of the error of his ways.[47] Kylie Murray observes that the howlat looks forward to a similar change in point of view in Cresseid, who, while initially plaintive in front of her ugly reflection, much like the owl in Holland's text, later arrives at both a reasoned judgement and self-insight, thus connecting her to the enlightened howlat.[48]

Yet, the *Howlat*'s influence runs deeper than the parallels in situation between Cresseid and the owl, for, like Holland's text, where the howlat itself express a sense of alterity relative to the Chaucerian tradition, Henryson writes from a perspective of difference, one made explicit in the *Testament*'s opening articulation of its interpretative distance from its source, written by 'worthie Chauceir.'[49] The *Testament*, as this thesis argues, inscribes this otherness – which, in the case of Scottish Chaucerian writing, assumes a larger linguistic and cultural significance – in the figure of its female protagonist, who, in being both ostracized from society as well as deformed, closely resembles the ugly, alienated howlat. Henryson's allusion to the latter is thus highly suggestive within the context of his response to Chaucer, as the *Howlat* provides a precedent for his own expression of a sense of difference in the *Testament*, with both Cresseid and the howlat embodying the very distinctiveness that defines Scottishness itself. Like Holland's, Henryson's poem therefore lays claim to the qualities of ugliness and exclusion, appropriating them and turning them into forms of expression, of the assertion of a native vernacular.

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[45] *Test*., l.349.
[46] *Test*., l.257.
[47] Cf. Kylie Murray, 'Passing the Book: The Scottish Shaping of Chaucer's Dream States in Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp.121-39 [132-33].
[48] Ibid., p.132.
[49] *Test*., l.58.

Holland's importance in expressing this sense of alterity is also evident in the poem *A Ballat of the Abbot of Tungland*,[50] a nightmarish dream-vision allegory about a court trickster and fraud by William Dunbar. The *Ballat*, while its representation of an assembly of birds suggests its indebtedness to the *Parliament* is also, despite its brevity, closely related to the *Howlat*: David Parkinson, for one, notes the parallels between the owl's fate and the mobbing of Dunbar's 'anti-hero'.[51] Dunbar's choice of such a character as his protagonist is significant in light of his response to Chaucer, with the *Ballat* representing a distinctive vernacular recasting of the avian universe of the *Parliament*, a 'Scottishness' which expresses itself in terms of difference, implicitly identifying with outsider figures. The *Ballat*, in addition to its narrative and thematic parallels to the owl's treatment in the *Howlat*, like Holland's text, is concerned with the quality of being other, an aspect of the work which, in light of its use of Chaucer, connects to the fact that it too is alternative, belonging to a tradition which is Scottish.

The *Howlat*'s influence can also be discerned in the much later *Palice of Honour* (c.1503), for Gavin Douglas's text, like Holland's, represents a response to Chaucer's *House of Fame*, as a Scottish rejoinder to that text, one which promotes a lasting fame, embodied by the difficult-to-attain Honour. Like Holland, Douglas therefore articulates a corrective view of the treatment of fame presented by Chaucer, while likewise examining the topic of reputation in relation to the function of poetry and of the poet. The *Howlat*, moreover, also implicitly asserts the existence of a vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland, an aspect of Holland's text which is not only also shared by the self-consciously Scottish *Palice*, but also the *Eneados* (c.1513), the end material of which includes a brief rebus on the name of the translator:

> The GAW onbrokkyn mydlyt with the WYNE,
>
> The DOW ionyt with the GLAß rich in a lyne :
>
> Quha knawys nocht the translatouris naym,
>
> Seik na forthar, for lo, with litill pyne

[50] 'As ȝung Awrora with cristall haile'; B 4.

[51] Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse,' pp.507-09.

Spy leill this verß: men clepys hym swa at haym.[52]

Priscillla Bawcutt notes that the word DOW recalls the two doves in the closing stanza of the *Howlat*:[53] 'Thus for ane dow of Dunbar drew I this dyte, / Dowit with ane Douglas - and boith war thair dowis' (989-90). The *Eneados*, which this thesis argues displays an ongoing concern with 'fame' and 'name,'[54] alludes to the *Howlat*, to Holland's own playful working out of his identity as a vernacular poet in Scotland. The *Eneados*, explicitly self-conscious about its status as an ambitious vernacular translation of the *Aeneid*, draws on Holland as a precedent for its author's allusive naming of himself as the poet of the Scots Virgil.

The *Howlat*'s influence is further suggested from the unique ending to the *Parliament of Fowls* in MS Arch. Selden. B. 24, which was compiled in stages, between the years 1489 and 1513.[55] The Selden version breaks off in the middle of the bird debate, namely at line 600 of the *Parliament*, where the cock first interrupts the formel by telling of his seven loves, all of whom have made him a cuckold, provoking both the nightingale and the popinjay to express their sorrow to hear of lovers spoken thus. The peacock with angel feathers bright[56] intervenes in what follows in proposing the eagle for the formel. Nature, biting her lip and smiling, silently defers to the peacock, before commanding the birds to pair off. The goddess then takes leave of the company, before the birds themselves depart two by two, yet rather conspicuously leaving behind them a solitary owl, 'was leuit behind than of all that rout' (665). The final two stanzas of the text return to the figure of the narrator, who does not awake from his dream, but returns home to study the meaning of the assembly of birds before turning to 'Myn olde boke' (672), while acknowledging that books contain an elusive knowledge, even if he were to read them all year.[57]

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[52] *Aeneid* IV, p.139.

[53] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), p.44.

[54] Cf. *Aeneid* II, p.5 [ll.73-74]; cf. *HF,* ll.305-06, 1275-76, 1311-12, 1405-06, 1411-12, 1461-62, 1489-90, 1555-56, 1609-10, 1619-20, 1695-96, 1715-16, 1735-36, 1761-62, 1871-72, 1899-1900, 2111-12.

[55] Cf. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer and* The Kingis Quair*: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp.3-4. For a transcription of the Selden text of the *Parliament*, see *Supplementary Parallel Texts of Chaucer's Minor Poems*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, Part I, Chaucer Society, First Series, 22 (London: N. Trübner & Co, 1871), pp.50-98.

[56] Cf. *PF*, l.356.

[57] Cf. *PF*, ll.1-25.

That the *Howlat* is being alluded to in the isolated owl towards the end of the Selden text of the *Parliament* is generally agreed to be the case by critics such as, for example, Kylie Murray and Rhiannon Purdie.[58] The Selden ending to the *Parliament*, according to Murray, suggests a sophisticated understanding of the *Howlat*, of Holland's subordination of questions dealing with love to topics of a more overtly political nature.[59] Nor is the lonely owl itself the only evidence of the unique ending's possible interaction with Holland's text. Rather, the role which the peacock and the eagle assume in the final stanzas of the Selden *Parliament* arguably alludes to the narrative prominence assigned to the same pair of birds in the *Howlat*. However, in Holland, they appear in significantly different guise as the more dubious pope and emperor, an important difference in emphasis which speaks to the more generally satirical quality of the *Howlat*. The Selden MS by contrast presents the eagle positively, as a suitor worthy of Nature's approval (631-33), while the peacock's angelic attributes point to a more positive interpretation of its role in the *Howlat*,

Yet, the Selden ending involves a deeper indebtedness still to the use of Chaucer in the *Howlat*, an influence which is signalled in the allusion to that work in the manuscript reworking of the *Parliament*. Like Holland's text, a highly self-conscious appropriation and rewriting of Chaucer's poem into Scots, the Selden ending undertakes a similar process of assimilation as it, too, adapts the ending of the *Parliament*. The Selden's pointed identification of the lonely owl thus not only suggests the influence of the *Howlat*; rather, Holland's poem is being alluded to deliberately as an example of a Scottish Chaucerian text. Rhiannon Purdie notes that the theme of borrowed weathers that is present in the *Howlat* informs the Selden poet's self-conscious putting on of a Chaucerian 'disguise' in the revised ending to the

[58] See Rhiannon Purdie, 'Borrowed Feathers: The Spurious Older Scots Ending to Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* in Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24,' *CR* 59.2 (2024), pp.135-81 [161-70]; Kylie Murray, 'Passing the Book: The Scottish Shaping of Chaucer's Dream States in Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.121-39 [127-32].
[59] Cf. Murray, 'Passing the Book: The Scottish Shaping of Chaucer's Dream States in Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24,' pp.127-32.

Parliament.[60] However, as this chapter has argued, the potential metafictional significance of those same borrowed feathers had already been mined in the *Howlat*, which proclaims Scottish vernacular identity, self-referentially winking at the presumed ugliness of their wearer as a covert form of self-assertion. Thus, the figure of the lonely owl, left behind as the birds fly off, acquires a larger discursive significance, as the Selden poet arguably integrates the owl into his text to signal his participation in a Scottish Chaucerian tradition; indeed, if the howlat embodies, as this chapter argues, a sense of alterity relative to Chaucer, the Selden poet's deployment of it becomes all the more appropriate to his own reworking of the *Parliament*.

Indeed, this self-consciousness is further suggested from the final stanza of the Selden ending to the *Parliament*, which rewords the proverbial wisdom presented in the opening stanzas of that text, where Chaucer's authorial persona expresses the possibility of knowledge to be gained from reading.[61] This familiar passage is directly transplanted to mark the close of the version of the text in the Selden MS:

For out of olde feildis as men seis

Cummys all this new corn fro ȝere to ȝere

And out of olde bookis quho thame viseis

Cummys all this new science þat men now lere

Thus beginnis and endis this matere

The lyf so schort the craft so long to lere

To full connyng I can noght cum / : suppose I rede all ȝere (673-79)

The penultimate line of this stanza is likewise drawn directly from the opening of the *Parliament*: the Selden poet thus evokes the ideas of beginnings and endings, provocative concepts given that his own Scottish text begins where its source comes to a close, that is, towards the end of the *Parliament*. Scottish Chaucerian writing, moreover, expresses a sense of newness, of the creation of 'sum newe thing'[62]: in

[60] Cf. Purdie, ''Borrowed Feathers: The Spurious Older Scots Ending to Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* in Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden. B. 24,' pp.168-69.
[61] Cf. *PF*, ll.22-25.
[62] *KQ*, l.89.

Selden, this process is not only illustrated in the poet's crafting of an alternative ending to the *Parliament*; rather, the text's deliberate and signalled adaptation of earlier poems from within the Scottish Chaucerian tradition of writing demonstrates an awareness of an alternative and native body of writing, giving an additional and challenging meaning to the concept of new corn from old fields.

Chapter 3: Robert Henryson

'Quha wait gif all that Chauceir wrait was trew? / Nor I wait nocht gif this narratioun / Be authoreist, or fenȝeit of the new' (64-66): thus follows the narrative persona's provocative response on reading 'ane vther quair' (61) than *Troilus and Criseyde* in Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (c.1470-90).[1] Possibly admitted as a licentiate in arts and a bachelor in decrees at the University of Glasgow in 1462 and 'maister' in the title pages of the later sixteenth-century prints of his *Fables* and the *Testament*, Henryson was a notary public and schoolmaster of Dunfermline for most of the reign of King James III (1452-1488), and, although it is impossible to date with certainty his three longer narrative works, evidence places his principal period of literary activity in the last three decades of the fifteenth century.[2] Henryson's criticism of his stated source's authority therefore not only reflects his own literary confidence but also relates to the growing sense of vernacular identity in the later fifteenth century in Scotland. Henryson thus stands at the start of an important later stage in the development of Scottish Chaucerianism, a phase marked by the spirit of poetic confidence that one can sense in his direct challenge of Chaucer.

Troilus and Criseyde could have circulated in both manuscript and print in the last three decades of the fifteenth century in Scotland.[3] Yet Henryson is likely to have been familiar with more than just this version of the story of Cresseid[4] who had a long and diverse history in works stretching back from antiquity through the medieval period.[5] While knowledge of these other texts has led several readers to

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, quotations will be from Denton Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

[2] Cf. David Laing, ed., *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1865),pp.ix-xxxvi; Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, pp.xiii-xxii.

[3] Cf. Sally Mapstone, 'The Transmission of Older Scots Literature,' in *The International Companion to Scottish Literature 1400-1650*, ed. Nicola Royan, International Companions to Scottish Literature (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2018), pp.38-59 [38-39].

[4] Cf. Sally Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature 1100-1500*, ed. Larry Scanlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.243-55 [252].

[5] Cf. Gretchen Mieszkowski, 'The Reputation of Criseyde: 1155-1500,' *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 43 (1971), pp.73-153 [73-74]; Sally Mapstone, 'The Origins of Criseyde,' in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in*

seek to identify the nameless ‘vther quair,’[6] Henryson may simply be evoking the idea of a mix of sources for his treatment of Cresseid.[7] Thus, Chaucer’s version of his heroine’s fate represents only one of many accounts of the same story, with the text the authorial persona reads to pass the time a powerful symbol of a competing literary authority whose fictionality remains paradoxically grounded in the real existence of other texts about Cresseid.[8]

Henryson’s poem also coincides with a more general interest in the ‘matter of Troy’ in Scotland.[9] Indeed, Cresseid’s complex and oftentimes contradictory history is arguably evoked in the *Testament*, which offers a reminder that, despite their frequent use as part of their origin myth, the history of Troy and after-history of the Trojan War could not, in fact, be so exclusively appropriated by the English.[10] Henryson therefore paves the way for readings of the ‘matter of Troy’ other than Chaucer’s and England’s – a gesture which assumes an additional vernacular significance given that he is also writing as a Scot.[11] Combined as it is with the sense of textual multiplicity to which his allusion to other sources gives rise, Henryson’s poem expresses an early sense of a distinctive, independent vernacular tradition of writing, one that soon after acquires an explicit form in the lists of writers drawn up by the later poets in this thesis.

While Henryson’s Chaucerian influences have been the subject of much critical discussion, his poetry has not in fact been examined at length for evidence of a self-conscious Scottish Chaucerianism.

Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchison, Carol M. Meale, and Lesley Johnson, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts, 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp.131-47 [132].

[6] Cf. B. J. Whiting, ‘A Probable Allusion to Henryson’s "Testament of Cresseid,"’ *MLR* 40.1 (1945), pp.46-47; James Kinsley, ‘A Note on Henryson,’ *TLS,* November 14, 1952, p.743; Eleanor Long, ‘Robert Henryson’s “Uther Quair,”’ *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 3.1 (1972), pp.97-101; Robert L. Kindrick, ‘Henryson’s “Uther Quair” Again: A Possible Candidate and the Nature of the Tradition,’ *ChauR* 33.2 (1998), pp.190-220; W. H. E. Sweet, ‘The “Vther Quair” as the *Troy Book*: The Influence of Lydgate on Henryson’s *Testament of Cresseid*,’ in *Premodern Scotland: Literature and Governance 1420-1587*, ed. Joanna Martin and Emily Wingfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp.57-73.

[7] Cf. Mapstone, ‘Robert Henryson,’ p.252.

[8] Cf. Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, p.344; William Stephenson, ‘The Acrostic “Fictio” in Robert Henryson’s *The Testament of Cresseid* (Lines 58-63),’ *ChauR* 29.2 (1994), pp.163-65 [164].

[9] Cf. Emily Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp.120-49.

[10] I am indebted for access to this reading of the poem to an unpublished paper by Sally Mapstone.

[11] Cf. Sandra M. Hordis, ‘Metatextual Resistance in Henryson’s *Testament of Cresseid*,’ in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations*, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.46-64 [55]; George Edmondson, *The Neighbouring Text: Chaucer, Boccaccio, Henryson* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), p.39.

Henryson's major poems – the *Testament of Cresseid*, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, and the *Fables* – each draw on Chaucer, appropriating his poetry in creating a distinctive tradition of Chaucerian writing in Scotland. The *Testament*, highly aware of itself as being alternative, as standing outside an English Chaucerian tradition, inscribes this sense of difference in its narrative interest in marginalized, outcast figures: Cresseid herself, as this chapter argues, and the leper lady, are associated with a Scottish perspective that takes Chaucer's verse and the poetic tradition he embodies and rewrites it from the point of view of alterity.

While the *Testament* is explicit in its indebtedness to and reworking of the poetry of Chaucer, Henryson's two other major narrative poems also belong to a developing Scottish Chaucerian tradition: *Orpheus and Eurydice*, examined in the second part of this chapter, responds to both *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, texts providing an authorizing precedent for Henryson's Scottish reworking of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, his signalled source for the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice (415-18). The *Fables*, the Prologue of which expresses its author's insecurities about translating into Scots, is also Chaucerian, indirectly engaging, as the third part of this chapter contends, with *The Canterbury Tales*, Henryson's perceived indebtedness to which has been limited to his reworking of *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, or to general comparisons between the universes of both texts, with their lively variety of tone. [12] This chapter refines these critical observations in arguing that the sophisticated use of the storytelling genre in the *Tales* provides an influential precedent for the deliberate organization and arrangement of the *Fables*, with Henryson's self-consciously vernacular Scots collection of tales standing in response to Chaucer's.

Like the *Testament*, which effectively inserts itself between the events of the *Troilus* rather than after them, *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the *Fables* both involve a similar interruption of Chaucer: Henryson's *moralitas*, for instance, represents a breaking away from the tale portion of the former work, which is heavily Chaucerian, moving into the author's translation of the commentary by Nicholas Trivet

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[12] Cf. Douglas Gray, *Robert Henryson*, Medieval and Renaissance Authors (Leiden E. J. Brill, 1979), p.161; Dieter Mehl, 'Robert Henryson's *Moral Fables* as Experiments in Didactic Narrative,' in *Functions of Literature: Essays Presented to Erwin Wolff on his Sixtieth Birthday,* ed. Ulrich Broich, Theo Stemmler, and Gerd Stratmann (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1984), pp.81-99 [81-82].

(1265-1334). The *Fables* take a serious turn that parallels the ending to the *Tales*: in Henryson, however, this move occurs at the collection's midway point, and in so doing effectively cuts Chaucer short. Thus, Henryson's major narrative poems display a tendency towards interruption and redirection characteristic of Scottish Chaucerian writing, which takes one poetic tradition apart as it seeks to create a new one.

The Testament of Cresseid

The *Testament*-persona's opening challenge to a predecessor previously applauded as 'worthie Chaucer glorious' (41) provides a suggestive indication of the work's self-conscious engagement with Chaucer. This chapter affords a reassessment of that response within the larger context of the Scottish Chaucerian tradition, arguing that Henryson's text represents an interruption to the narrative of *Troilus and Criseyde*. The *Testament*, moreover, expresses its author's sense of difference relative to English Chaucerianism, an alterity that connects to the poem's place within an alternative tradition of writing in Scotland. The *Testament*'s narrative and thematic concern with marginalized characters is linked to its Scottishness, while Henryson's ultimate empowerment of such figures is tied to his proclamation of that very quality. Indeed, the *Testament*, as this chapter section concludes, looks forward to Gavin Douglas's *Palice of Honour* (c.1501), not least because both texts overtly rework a single poem by Chaucer into Scots, but also in that Douglas's adaptation of exclusion and isolation are likewise expressive of his Scottishness.

In his 1532 edition of Chaucer, William Thynne includes 'The testament of Creseyde' after *Troilus and Criseyde*, leading the texts to be read in sequence, with Henryson's presented as a kind of sequel to Chaucer's.[13] Yet, the *Testament* is deliberately framed not as taking place after the events of the *Troilus*. Rather, Henryson's narrative is situated in the interval after Criseyde pledges herself to Diomede but

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[13] Cf. Tatyana Moran, '*The Testament of Cresseid* and *The Book of Troylus*,' *Litera* 6 (1959), pp.18-24 [18]; Louise O. Fradenburg, 'Henryson Scholarship: The Recent Decades,' in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984), pp.65-92 [79].

before the events leading to the death of Troilus and the ascent of his soul in Book V of Chaucer's poem.[14] The *Testament* is therefore perhaps better regarded as an interlude, engaging with the themes of the *Troilus*: Henryson's characters articulate a view of the pagan gods as malignant and oppressive, as do Chaucer's,[15] yet Cresseid ultimately gains a deeper self-understanding despite her parallels in situation with Troilus.[16]

The *Testament*'s status as an effective interpolation also connects to the poem's Scottishness, for Henryson, despite signalling his indebtedness to his poetry, also expresses his difference from Chaucer. Henryson's fulsome praise of the latter suggests his engagement with an established Chaucerianism, while the *Testament* itself is styled as a deliberate and attentive working within the tradition of Chaucer. Yet, the *Testament* also represents a departure from that body of writing by virtue of the fact that it is Scottish in literary terms: Henryson's poem therefore involves a kind of double gesture in that it appears to follow Chaucer, whose *Troilus* provides a precedent for the writing of sophisticated and civilised poetry in the Scots vernacular.[17] Henryson, however, is also self-consciously working within an alternative tradition, one which is Scottish, and the *Testament* signals its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness in its positioning relative to the *Troilus*, for Henryson follows his signalled source but only up to a point, thus implicitly interrupting Chaucer, with Cresseid's narrative representing an abrupt moving away from the tradition of writing he embodies.

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[14] Iain Macleod Higgins, 'Old Books and New Beginnings North of Chaucer: Revisionary Reframings in *The Kingis Quair* and *The Testament of Cresseid*,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp.620-35 [628-29].

[15] Cf. A. C. Spearing, '*The Testament of Cresseid* and the "High Concise Style,"' *Speculum* 37.2 (1962), pp.208-25 [216-25]; Douglas Duncan, 'Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,' *Essays in Criticism* 11.2 (1961), pp.128-35 [131]; E. Duncan Aswell, 'The Role of Fortune in *The Testament of Cresseid*,' *PQ* 46.4 (1967), pp.471-87 [473]; Nick Haydock, '"The pane of Cresseid for to modifie": Robert Henryson's Moral Tragedy,' in *The Flouer o Makarheid: Papers from the Eighth and Ninth Annual Conferences of the Robert Henryson Society*, ed. Morna R. Fleming (Dunfermline: Robert Henryson Society, 2003), pp.61-93.

[16] Cf. Melvin Storm, 'The Intertextual Cresseida: Chaucer's Henryson or Henryson's Chaucer?' *SSL* 28.1 (1993), pp.105-22 [108-109].

[17] Cf. Elizabeth Elliott, 'Scottish Writing,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English,* ed. Elaine Treharne, Greg Walker, and William Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.574-93 [587]

Henryson, indeed, makes this break explicit in the opening frame of the *Testament*, the aged authorial persona of which describes how he passed the night by reading 'ane quair' (40) by Chaucer, his effective summary of which concentrates on the separation of Troilus and Cresseid in Book 5 of *Troilus* (43-56). Troilus's attendant sorrow is briefly recounted and the reader directed to Chaucer's text (57-60), before Henryson's authorial persona seeks to pass the night by reading 'ane vther quair' (61). Thus, Henryson, while providing a concise summary of the sorrowful events of the last book of the *Troilus*, cuts Chaucer short before explicitly questioning his authority in the well-known stanza which follows (64-70). Indeed, the *Testament*, despite its explicit praise of his verse, signals its departure from Chaucer in adapting the dream-vision convention whereby the sleepless narrator picks up a book to read: Henryson's authorial persona is shown reading not one book but *two*,[18] a pointed shift away from the Troilus, and the English Chaucerian tradition of writing, to its implied alternative in the form of Henryson's Scots text.

The *Testament*'s self-conscious positioning of itself relative to the poetry of Chaucer is, moreover, suggested from the authorial persona's reference to his reading of 'ane vther quair' (61), for Henryson's almost certainly fictional[19] source for his text stands in contrast to Chaucer's 'quair' (40). The *Testament* to a certain extent builds on the poetic tradition represented by that first 'quair,' the *Troilus*; yet, Henryson's emphasis on the fact that the second 'quair' is 'ane vther' relates to his Scottishness, for the *Testament*, written in Scots, is as such other to the poetry of Chaucer and English Chaucerianism. As Sandra Hordis notes, Henryson's invention of his source in the form of the 'vther quair' displaces Chaucer: Henryson thus effectively creates a space for divergence, that is, for the assertion of a native Scottish tradition, one which, despite drawing heavily on his poetry, also insists on its distance from Chaucer.[20]

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[18] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Writing About Love in Late Medieval Scotland,' in *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages*, ed. Helen Cooney, Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Cultures (New York, NY, and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), pp.179-96 [193].

[19] William Stephenson 1994 essay added further evidence to the interpretation of 'ane vther quair' as fictional, for the stanza in which this mysterious source is referenced is constructed according to the acrostic 'O FICTIO': cf. Stephenson, 'The Acrostic "Fictio" in Robert Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid* (Lines 58-63),' pp.163-65.

[20] Cf. Sandra Hordis, 'Metatextual Resistance in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,' in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations,* ed. Kathleen A. Bishop with a Foreword by David Matthews (Newcastle

The *Testament*-persona's nighttime reading of both texts thus suggests the double-faced nature of Scottish Chaucerian texts, for, while on the one hand drawing on and self-consciously imitating Chaucer, the Scots poets appropriate and transform the poetic tradition he embodies, making it distinctively their own.

The 'vther quair['s]' presumed fictionality, moreover, suggests how this process is itself Chaucerian, for Henryson's invention of his poetic source closely resembles Chaucer's 'Lollius,'[21] the Latin authority for his vernacular translation of his actual source, Boccaccio's Italian *Il Filostrato*.[22] Where Chaucer, however, uses Lollius to authorize his own use of the vernacular in *Troilus and Criseyde*, Henryson's 'vther quair' on the other hand is not so specific, and could be either vernacular or Latin. Indeed, the larger narrative context within which the phrase appears would seem to point to the former, for the 'vther quair' that the authorial persona reads is directly placed in relation to Chaucer's *Troilus.* Thus, while Chaucer uses Lollius to locate his poem within a textual tradition with its own *auctor*, Henryson by comparison appropriates this same gesture to assert his authority relative to Chaucer's. For Tim William Machan, this self-assertion suggests an increased valuation of the vernacular in general.[23] Yet, Henryson's pointed identification of his fictional source, in particular over against Chaucer's 'quair,' resonates more specifically within the larger context of his appropriation of Chaucer into Scots. Indeed, the 'vther quair' is regarded as evoking an idea of alterity, that is, of readings other than Chaucer's, so that Henryson's phrase indirectly asserts the existence of a native vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland.

The *Testament*'s self-conscious expression of an alternative poetic tradition to Chaucer's is further

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upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.46-64. See also Kathryn Lynch, 'Robert Henryson's "Doolie Dreame" and the Late Medieval Dream Vision Tradition,' *JGEP* 109.2 (2010), pp.177-97 [178-79].

[21] The Lollius comparison is made in passing by earlier critics: cf. Douglas Gray, *Robert Henryson*, Medieval and Renaissance Authors (Leiden E. J. Brill, 1979), p.170; Alastair Minnis, *Chaucer and Pagan Antiquity*, Chaucer Studies VIII (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1982), p.29; Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p.85.

[22] Cf.*TC* V, l.1653; Marilynn Desmond, 'Chaucer and the Textualities of Troy,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp.238-51 [243-44]. See also George Lyman Kittredge, 'Chaucer's Lollius,' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 28 (1917), pp.47-133, and Beila Millett, 'Chaucer, Lollius, and the Medieval Theory of Authorship,' *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Proceedings, 1 (1984), pp.93-103.

[23] Cf. Tim William Machan, 'Textual Authority and the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson,' *Viator* 23 (1992), pp.281-99 [297-98].

suggested, moreover, by its author's contrastive emphasis on the narrative of Cresseid, not Troilus: Chaucer (the English poet) is identified as dealing with the sorrow and suffering of Troilus (43-56), while Cresseid, whose history is introduced as a counterpoint,[24] is implicitly connected to a Scottish point of view. While Cresseid's portrayal suggests the influence of her depiction in the *Troilus*,[25] Sally Mapstone notes that 'in earlier versions of the story, including Chaucer's,' her 'voice and perspective traditionally recede from the narrative as the facts of her betrayal of Troilus with Diomede become known.'[26] In Cresseid's effective reclaiming of both of these there is an implicit self-assertion of the Scottish point of view, for Henryson as a Scots poet also finds his voice, thereby distinguishing himself from Chaucer.

Indeed, Henryson inscribes a sense of difference as a poet relative to the English Chaucer onto Cresseid, a social outcast due to her rapid marginalization and subsequent disfigurement in the *Testament*. Henryson's narrative proper addresses these themes early on, turning to her expulsion by Diomede (71-86). She is 'excludit' (75), and becomes increasingly so, for, upon returning to her father Calchas, she is led by a sense of shame to remove herself from public view by withdrawing 'into ane secreit orature' (120). Felicity Riddy notes that her exclusion is progressive, identifying, for example, Henryson's repeated emphasis on the physical edges where she roams: 'far out of the toun' (95) and 'the tounis end' (382).[27] For Riddy, Cresseid thus affords a negative reflection of positive qualities in Troilus, noting that Cresseid 'is 'untrew' (602), heterogenous and changeable, while he is 'trew … and self-consistent.'[28] Cresseid's exile, repudiation, and physical defacement together point to an underlying gender dynamic, that Troilus's identity and masculine identity in general depend on the exclusion of the feminine.[29]

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[24] Cf. Iain Macleod Higgins, 'Old Books and New Beginnings North of Chaucer: Revisionary Reframings in *The Kingis Quair* and *The Testament of Cresseid*,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp.620-35 [629].

[25] Cf. Mapstone, 'The Origins of Criseyde,' pp.146-47.

[26] Sally Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature,* ed. Larry Scanlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.243-55 [252].

[27] Felicity Riddy, '"Abject odious": Feminine and Masculine in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,' in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp.229-48 [233].

[28] Ibid., p.233.

[29] Ibid., pp.234-36; 244-48.

Yet, Henryson's concern with outcast figures, I argue, connects back to his Scottishness: the *Testament*, as a Scots text, also speaks from the margins, responding to an established Chaucerianism. Through Cresseid, whose disfigurement causes her to join the community of lepers, the Scots Henryson expresses a sense of his own difference as a vernacular poet relative to Chaucer. Henryson's decision to write from the perspective of a liminal, disaffected figure thus carries a larger linguistic and cultural significance within the context of his highly self-conscious response to Chaucer, for the *Testament* itself in literary terms occupies a similar position with regards to its explicitly stated influence, the *Troilus*. Yet, Henryson's empowerment of his heroine suggests his work's ultimate assertion of that point of view – Cresseid's – but also that of the alternative vernacular tradition implicitly proclaimed in the *Testament*.

Nor is Cresseid the only character in the poem who is disfigured and marginalized. Henryson's heroine, now 'deformait' (349), removes herself to the hospital at the edge of town (386-99) where, 'In ane dark corner of the hous allone' (405), we are told that 'weiping, scho maid hir mone' (406). 'The Complaint of Cresseid,' a planctus in the high style, is also given a Chaucerian casting, for Henryson changes from rhyme royal to the nine-line stanza (*aabaabbab*) used for the complaint in *Anelida and Arcite.* The use of a title to set the complaint apart also recalls the headings of *Litera* and *Canticus* in *Troilus*, while Cresseid's complaint has been compared to Dorigen's in *The Franklin's Tale.*[30] Given its Chaucerianism, that the complaint elicits this response from a nearby leper lady is striking:

> Ane lipper lady rais and till hir wend,
>
> And said, 'Quhy spurnis thow aganis the wall
>
> To sla thy self and mend nathing at all?
>
> Sen thy weiping dowbillis bot thy wo,
>
> I counsall the mak vertew of ane neid;

[30] Cf. A. C. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.184-85.

Go leir to clap thy clapper to and fro,

And leif efter the law of lipper leid.' (474-80)

The leper lady offers this hard advice concisely and directly, qualities often associated with Henryson's verse. Yet, the leper lady's pointed remonstrance has a larger significance within the context of Scottish Chaucerianism, brusquely bringing the complaint to an end, the ongoing nature of which until this point is suggested from Henryson's use of the present participle: 'chydand' (470) and 'weiping' (471). Indeed, Cresseid, according to the leper lady, is asked why she 'spurnis,' which is in the present tense. The leper lady's powerful speech thus represents an interruption to the mode of complaint identified as Chaucerian, and Cresseid, moreover, modifies her behaviour immediately, turning to a life of begging (481-83).

The leper lady, in addition to cutting short a moment which we are meant to see as Chaucerian, herself provides a concise summary of the philosophical principles laid out by Theseus at the end of *The Knight's Tale*. Theseus instructs his subjects to make virtue of necessity in a seemingly unjust universe – an injunction whose effectiveness is marred by its incomplete reformulation of the principles laid out by Lady Philosophy, whose advice hinges less on a stoic acceptance of the destructiveness of Fate, but rather on a dogged insistence that the bad things that happen in life fall within a munificent Providence.[31] This Boethian counsel is reiterated by the leper lady but distinguished by its curtness and directness. These qualities are identifiable within the length of the speech itself, amounting to a tidy six lines of verse, and in this regard sharply differentiated from the lengthy disquisition on the nature of the universe by Theseus, whose heightened language is appropriate to his sophisticated treatment of such philosophical problems. Thus, the leper lady presents what is in effect an accelerated version of the speech at the end of *The Knight's Tale*, adapting the extended advice-giving therein and repackaging it in a succinct form.

[31] *CT* I (A), ll.3041-74.

Henryson's depiction of the leper lady therefore involves an implicit interruption of Chaucer, with Theseus's expansive speech subject to abbreviation as she makes the case for a brutal pragmatism.[32]

The Scottishness of this moment is suggested by the leper lady's colloquial diction: indeed, the 'Quhy' with which her question of reproach begins is spelt using the distinctively Scots 'quh-'; 'spurnis,' too, with its density of consonantal forms, gives her first words an added emphasis, while the line 'To sla thy self and mend nothing at all?' as a sequence almost entirely comprises monosyllabic words (476). The leper lady's use of an informal register stands in further contrast to Cresseid's complaint, itself so Chaucerian, as well as, moreover, to the high style deployed by Theseus at the end of *The Knight's Tale*. Henryson, while showcasing his ability to reach the expressive heights of the nine-line stanza from *Anelida and Arcite* (Douglas Gray describes Cresseid's complaint as his 'finest piece of rhetorical writing, a great tragic *aria*'),[33] also articulates a sense of difference from the poetry of Chaucer and Chaucerian writing in the sudden Scottishness of the leper lady's intervention, with its modest but forceful vernacularity.[34]

Henryson, whose portrayal of liminal figures such as the leper lady connects to his Scottishness – that is, to his implicit assertion of a native tradition of writing over against an established Chaucerianism – likewise empowers those marginalized characters, allowing them to speak with authority. The leper lady, for example, in addition to effectively cutting short the philosophizing speech of Theseus, likewise differs from the Athenian king by virtue of her social status, living off begging at the edge of town. Unlike Chaucer's wise ruler, moreover, the leper lady is female, and thus further set apart in terms of gender. Yet, she is a major voice of authority within the narrative, stirring the plaintive Cresseid to action. Indeed, Henryson's corpus often features straight-speaking female figures who are sources of wisdom,[35] like the

[32] Cf. James Simpson, '"And that was litel nede": Poetry's Need in Robert Henryson's *Fables* and *Testament of Cresseid*,' in *Medieval Latin and Middle English Literature: Essays in Honour of Jill Mann*, ed. Christopher Cannon and Maura Nolan (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), pp.193-210 [204-05].
[33] Gray, *Robert Henryson*, p.197.
[34] Cf. David Parkinson, 'Henryson's Matter of Style: *The Garmont of Gud Ladeis*,' *RES*, New Series, 62.256 (2010), pp.520-37 [536].
[35] Cf. Rosemary Greentree, 'Literate in Love: Makyne's Lesson for Robene,'in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 2005), pp.61-69 [63-64]; Anne M. McKim, '"Makand Hir Mone': Masculine Constructions of the Feminine Voice in Middle Scots Complaints,' *Scotlands* 2 (1994), pp.32-46 [33-35].

country mouse who responds to her sister's urban lifestyle with a terse rebuke of its excesses,[36] or the rural maiden whose advice to her jilted suitor involves bluntly telling him he needs to move on.[37]

Indeed, Cresseid herself, as a woman set apart from the 'sone of Troye,' Chaucer's Troilus,[38] ultimately comes to a deeper understanding of herself and is thus empowered at the end of the *Testament.* Her damning recognition of her past falseness (540-70) marks a turning point in her self-knowledge.[39] Cresseid immediately thereafter sits down to compose a will, 'hir testament' (575-76), a poignant act of writing that allows her to reclaim her agency and control her posthumous reputation.[40] Her testament also has an additional significance in that it affords an opportunity for moral introspection, functioning in the broader sense of the term as a mode for examining oneself and for making confession.[41] Thus, the pragmatism advised by the leper lady assumes a literary form in the writing of a legal document. Indeed, Cresseid does not inscribe her new way of seeing in the writing of a poem about love;[42] instead, she composes an altogether different kind of literary text, one adopting the perspective of a strict legality.

Cresseid's writing of her testament represents a final act of self-assertion to close off Henryson's poem. Yet, as Jana Mathews argues in an insightful essay on the treatment of the law in the *Testament*, Cresseid's recourse to legal procedure stands at odds with her exclusion as a leper from society: 'By relegating Cresseid to the space of the legally dead, the law seemingly thwarts any possibilities of future rebellion.'[43] Yet, as Mathews notes, the leper's exclusion from society includes the law itself.[44] Cresseid's composition of her testament thereby consists of a self-expression of a particular kind, for, while her will

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[36] Cf. *Fables*, ll.344-52.
[37] Cf. *RM*, ll.112-13.
[38] *TC*, I, l.2.
[39] Cf. Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' p.254.
[40] Cf. Laura Wang, 'Cresseid's Testament: Rewriting Herself,' *ES* 93.2 (2012), pp.138-49 [139]; Jana Mathews, 'Land, Lepers, and the Law in *The Testament of Cresseid*,' in *The Letter of the Law: Legal Practice and Literary Production in Medieval England*, ed. Emily Steiner and Candace Barrington (Ithaca, NY, and London, UK: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp.40-66 [63-66].
[41] Cf. Julia Boffey, 'Lydgate, Henryson, and the Literary Testament,' *MLQ* 53.1 (1992), pp.41-56 [45].
[42] Cf. *KQ*, ll.90-91.
[43] Mathews, 'Land, Lepers, and the Law in *The Testament of Cresseid*,' p.63.
[44] Ibid.

draws on the forms of an authorizing legality, it also exists outside of it, thus representing the way that its marginalized and disfigured female author comes to define herself in her own terms. These, moreover, are striking for their underlying emphasis on the 'discourse of self-exclusion.'[45] Indeed, as Mathews writes, 'it is precisely through her marginalized position within the law and the church structure – the ownership of her body is ambiguous – that she is able to claim her corpse for herself.'[46] Cresseid's leprosy in other words allows her to carve a space for herself in which she can express her independence.[47]

The *Testament*, as a poem, undertakes an act of similar rewriting as Henryson asserts the existence of a Scottish vernacular tradition of writing that is distinctive even as it draws on the poetry of Chaucer. Indeed, Henryson's Scots text is situated on the periphery of an established English Chaucerianism; yet, the *Testament* also implicitly asserts the existence of an alternative Chaucerian tradition in Scotland. Henryson thus transforms disfigurement and exclusion into forms of an empowering self-assertion. The *Testament*'s literary self-consciousness is suggested by the number of texts referred to in it: as Emily Wingfield argues, these provide an indication of the work's concern with multiple interpretation, an attitude for example, made explicit in its opening challenge to the truthfulness of Chaucer's writing (64).[48] Yet, Henryson is a Scottish poet and therefore his awareness of the different readings of Cresseid must surely comprise a positive assertion of one of these as belonging to a native tradition of writing. The *Testament* opens the door to the possibility of varying interpretations of the story of Cresseid, including the Scottish, and the alternative vernacular tradition of writing which the poem implicitly asserts.

The *Testament* in this regard looks forward to the overt reworking of Chaucer in Gavin Douglas's *Palice of Honour* (c.1503), which signals its status as a direct response to *The House of Fame*.[49] The

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[45] Ibid., p.64.
[46] Ibid., pp.64-65.
[47] Ibid. See also Chelsea Honeyman, 'Narrative Afterlife and the Testament of Time in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*,' in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 35 (2009), pp.50-69.
[48] Emily Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp.129-44.
[49] Cf. Denton Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), pp.164-200 [193-200]; Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.104-28. For Douglas's use of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, see esp.

Testament's influence on that text may not be immediately evident given its concern with the *Troilus*. Yet, Henryson's is the first poem in this thesis to undertake an overt rewriting of a single poem by Chaucer. The *Palice* therefore stands in a complex relationship to its sources in both English and Scots, for, while Douglas's poem clearly draws attention to its creative engagement with Chaucer's *House of Fame*, the *Palice,* as a Scots reworking of that text, also takes up the poetic strategy adopted in the *Testament.* Indeed, like Henryson, whose poem expresses a vernacular self-consciousness relative to the poetry of Chaucer, the *Palice*, as this thesis argues, likewise implicitly asserts an alternative Scottish Chaucerianism.

Both the *Testament* and the *Palice* do so, moreover, by way of reference to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, the Prologue to which features a trial scene in which the poet is held to account by the God of Love for his portrayal of women in his previous works and consequently required to make amends: the 'penaunce' is to compose a specific kind of narrative, a 'glorious legende / Of goode wymmen.'[50] Yet, the *Legend*, despite its apparent denunciation of the poet, also implicitly asserts his use of English; indeed, as Rita Copeland argues, Chaucer's text represents his 'most sustained examination of vernacular authorship,' one implicitly authorizing the poet's 'translations and receptions of classical *auctores*.'[51] Thus, the Prologue, with its confrontation between the poet, the God of Love, and Alceste, who defends 'Chaucer,' consists in an authorizing narrative clarifying how he came to write the *Legend*. As Copeland notes, the Prologue, in providing this framing explanation, corresponds to the *accessus ad auctores*, for Chaucer, in elaborating on the cause or reason for his text, supplies a version of the *intentio auctoris* [52] The Prologue therefore carefully appropriates the rhetorical model found in its academic sources, as Chaucer, moreover, asserts his vernacular authority via his independent reading of his classical sources.[53]

Joanna Martin, 'Responses to the Frame Narrative of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Scottish Literature,' *RES*, New Series, 60.246 (2009), pp.561-77 [570-74].

[50] Cf. *LGW*, Prol, F 481-91.

[51] Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic traditions and vernacular texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.186.

[52] Ibid., pp.187-88.

[53] Cf. Florence Percival, *Chaucer's Legendary Good Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

The Prologue's influence on similar trial scenes in the *Testament* and the *Palice of Honour* suggests how Chaucer's vernacular self-authorization is picked up on and adapted by later Scots poets. Yet, both Henryson and Douglas innovate in asserting themselves relative to Chaucer himself. In the *Testament*, Cresseid is put on trial for her blasphemy against the gods Cupid and Venus (124-343). While Cresseid's consequent physical transformation effectively condemns her to the margins of society, her punishment initiates the process of self-understanding that culminates in the writing of her testament, a text which this chapter argues involves a self-assertive appropriation of an authorizing discourse. Cresseid's exclusion and disfigurement make hers an apt point of view from which the Scots Henryson expresses a corresponding poetic independence relative to an established English Chaucerianism. The Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* thus provides a precedent for this vernacular self-assertion, albeit one which Henryson appropriates to articulate a linguistic and cultural difference from Chaucer himself.

In the *Palice of Honour*, Gavin Douglas likewise draws on the trial scene from Chaucer's Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, yet the end to which he does so suggests the influence of the *Testament*. In Book I of the *Palice*, the narrator finds himself in danger of being turned into an animal by Venus, a punishment for his blasphemous lay a few stanzas prior, for which he is put on trial by her court.[54] While Chaucerian,[55] Douglas's portrayal of his persona on trial recalls the dream sequence in the *Testament*: the *Palice*-persona is not only charged with the same crime, namely blaspheming Cupid and Venus; like Cresseid, he is also threatened with a similar punishment, that is, to be physically transformed.[56] Unlike Cresseid, Douglas's narrator is ultimately spared this fate due to the timely intercession of the Muses; yet as in Henryson, whose female protagonist asserts herself through the writing of her testament, the *Palice*-

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[54] Cf. *PH*, ll.606-729.

[55] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), p.55; A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.239.

[56] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Writing About Love in Late Medieval Scotland,' in *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages*, ed. Helen Cooney, Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Cultures (New York, NY, and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), p.193.

persona quietly asserts himself in acting out his sentence: a song in honour of the goddess Venus.[57] Yet, this praise stands as something of an afterthought to the first two stanzas dedicated to the poet's 'wit.'[58] Thus, Douglas's narrator performs obedience while in fact proclaiming his independence; indeed, the persona's punishment functions as a kind of liberation, marking his transfer of allegiance to Calliope.[59]

Like Henryson's, Douglas's positioning of his protagonist relative to larger structures of authority within a work that is also self-conscious about itself connects to the text's Scottishness: Chelsea Honeyman, observing this vernacular self-awareness, notes that 'this focus on the poet's ability to negotiate an individual space within larger governing structures has metapoetic parallels with the *Palice*'s larger literary strategy, in which Douglas creates a complementary yet self-sustaining response to Chaucer.'[60] Yet, Douglas, in having his authorial persona find the space within which to assert himself in the *Palice,* reveals his appreciation of this similar strategy as already adopted by earlier Scottish poets: Cresseid's own marginalization and disfigurement at the hands of the planetary gods ultimately allow her to step outside those very structures and to proclaim her independence in her closing testament – a gesture that also has a self-referential quality in light of the work's larger handling of the poetry of Chaucer.

Orpheus and Eurydice

Unlike the *Testament*, which directly signals its engagement with the poetry of Chaucer in the *Troilus*, *Orpheus and Eurydice* identifies its sources as the 'gay buke of consolacion' (417), and Nicholas Trivet's (c.1265-1334) commentary on Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (419-24). Yet, *Orpheus and*

[57] Cf. *PH*, ll.991-96.
[58] *PH*, l.1015; cf. David Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, 2nd ed., TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2018), p.140.
[59] Cf. Chelsea Honeyman, 'The *Palice of Honour*: Gavin Douglas's Renovation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*,' in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations*, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.65-81 [73].
[60] Ibid., p.66.

Eurydice also responds indirectly to both *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, with Chaucer's poetry, moreover, providing an authorizing vernacular precedent for Henryson's Scots text. While Orpheus' and Eurydice's tragic love story is depicted by way of reference to Troilus and Criseyde's, Henryson's poem nevertheless represents an effective breaking away from the narrative of the *Troilus,* cutting Chaucer's poem short as the tale portion of the text moves into its accompanying *moralitas*, Indeed, while *Orpheus*'s reimagining in verse form of the prosimetric structure of the *De Consolatione* recalls the *Troilus*, Henryson nevertheless expresses a sense of distance from that text in his decasyllabic *moralitas*.

Whereas he explicitly identifies by name only one major source for the *Testament* (40-42), Henryson clearly distinguishes between his sources for the tale portion and for the *moralitas* of *Orpheus*, which are respectively based on the summary of the myth in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, III, m.xii and on the allegorical explanation of the poem given by the Dominican Nicholas Trivet (c.1265-1334) whose commentary is itself derived from an earlier one by William of Conches (c.1090-1154).[61] Henryson also knew the vivid renditions of the myth in Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses,*[62] a familiarity reflected in the evocative nature of the classical story as it is related in his own poem.[63] There are also strong indications of his reading of the popular romance versions of the myth of Orpheus, for his poem

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[61] Cf. Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, p.cvi. Henryson may have also been acquainted with the vernacular translations of the *De Consolatione* by Chaucer (c.1381-86) and by John Walton (1410). For Henryson's *Orpheus* in the context of earlier medieval vernacular translations of the *De Consolatione,* and for a more general study of an earlier Latin tradition of Boethius in Scotland, see respectively Ian Johnson, 'Making the *Consolatio* in Middle English,' in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages,* ed. Noel Harold Kaylor, Jr., and Philip Edward Phillips, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 30 (Leiden, NL, and Boston, MA: Brill, 2012), pp.413-46 [443-46], and Kylie Murray, *'Books beyond Borders*: Fresh Findings on Boethius's Reception in Twelfth-Century Scotland,' *M&H*, New Series, 41 (2016), pp.7-43 [7-8].
[62] *Georgics* IV.453-527; *Metamorphoses* X.1-85 and XI.1-66.
[63] Cf. Gros Louis, 'Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the Orpheus Traditions of the Middle Ages,' pp.643, 647; Petrina, 'Robert Henryson's "Orpheus and Eurydice" and Its Sources,' pp.198-217.

draws on the kind of fairy-tale elements found in the Middle English *Sir Orfeo* (c.1325),[64] while at the same reflecting his reading of the much later poem, the Older Scots *King Orphius* (c.1450).[65]

Yet, *Orpheus* is also a courtly philosophical poem, a 'fully mediaevalized classical myth,' which, as Kenneth Gros Louis notes, reflects a 'greater kinship with *The Knight's Tale* and *Troilus and Cressida*.'[66] Like the *Troilus*, which involves a fictive working out of the ideas laid out in the *De Consolatione*, *Orpheus* consists of a significant poetic augmentation of its source in Book III, m.xii of Boethius's text.[67] While Henryson's poem is more selective in that it adapts only one passage from the *De Consolatione*, it resembles Chaucer's insofar as it too engages at a deeper level with the structure of the Latin treatise, for *Orpheus*'s two sections together represent an all-verse adaptation of the prosimetric *De Consolatione*: Henryson's evocative rhyme royal narrative corresponds to the verse sections of Boethius's text, while the contrastingly rationalizing decasyllabic couplets parallel the treatise's use of prose. Indeed, Henryson's use of the mixed form suggests his appreciation of its function in Boethius's treatise, where both verse and prose are made to work together in bringing about the narrator's transformation – a process defined by Johnson as part of the prosimetrum's protreptic effect, insofar as it persuades and instructs.[68] *Orpheus*'s two parts assume a similar purpose to that of verse and prose in the *De Consolatione*, for the tale and *moralitas* reveal a prosimetric functionality in bringing the reader to the poem's underlying *sentence*.

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[64] Cf. Carol Mills, 'Romance Convention of Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*,' in *Bards and Makars: Scottish Language and Literature: Medieval and Renaissance*, ed. Adam J. Aitken, Matthew P. McDiarmid, and Derick S. Thomson (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977), pp.52-60 [53-56], and Sarah Dunnigan, 'Orpheus and Eurydice Disenchanted?: Henryson's Hellish Fairy Romance,' in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp.59-74 [60]. It has been speculated that the version of *Sir Orfeo* in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61 was copied from a 'very northerly or Scottish exemplar,' thus suggesting its Scottish circulation: Alan Bliss, ed., *Sir Orfeo*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p.xxv.

[65] Cf. MacQueen, *Robert Henryson: A Study of the Major Narrative Poems*, pp.24-26; Marion Stewart, '*King Orphius*,' *Scottish Studies* 17 (1973), pp.1-16; and Rhiannon Purdie, ed., *Shorter Scottish Medieval Romances: Florimond of Albany, Sir Colling the Knycht, King Orphius, Roswall and Lillian*, Scottish Text Society, Fifth Series, 11 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2013), pp.31-33.

[66] Gros Louis, 'Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the Orpheus Traditions of the Middle Ages,' p.646.

[67] Cf. Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, pp.cvii-cviii.

[68] Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages*, pp.10-11.

Orpheus thus represents an indirect response to the stylistic and formal aspects of the *Troilus*, for Henryson's poem also experiments with the possibilities of the prosimetrum as it is used in Boethius. Like the *Troilus*, moreover, which asserts the authority of the vernacular via its reworking of the latter's Latin text[69] (an affirmation included within the work's broader engagement with a classical *auctoritas*), Henryson's poem undertakes a comparable valuation of the vernacular in recasting the *De Consolatione*, as well as Nicholas Trivet's exegetical commentary on it, into its author's native tongue, that is, Scots. However, while the narrative section of his two-part poem closely echoes passages from the *Troilus*, Henryson's *moralitas* abruptly breaks way from that text, thus effectively leaving Chaucer behind.

Indeed, the transition between the poem's two parts occurs by way of an allusion to the *Troilus* as Orpheus' and Eurydice's separation at the end of the narrative proper repeats the philosophical questions that are asked by Troilus in his much longer predestination soliloquy in Book IV of Chaucer's text: Orpheus, who 'In schort conclusion' (391) looks back, thus condemning Eurydice to the Underworld, falls to the ground where he remains in swoon and ecstasy before voicing a final complaint against love.

> 'Quhat art thou lufe? How sall I the dyffyne?
> Bitter and suete, cruel and merciable;
> Plesand to sum, til othir playnt and pyne;
> To sum constant, till othir variabil;
> Hard is thy law, thi bandis vnbrekable;
> Quha seruis the, thouch he be newir sa trewe,
> Perchance sum tyme he sall haue cause to rewe.
>
> 'Now fynd I wele this prouerbe trew,' quod he,
> '"Hert on the hurd, and hand is on the sore;

[69] Cf. Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.292-304.

Quhare lufe gois, on forse turnis the ee."

I am expert, and wo is me thar-fore;

Bot for a luke my lady is forlore.'

Thus chydand on with lufe, our burn and bent,

A wofull wedow hame-wart is he went. (401-14)

Orpheus's despairing questioning imitates the posture which is adopted by the unhappy Troilus: Robert Gros Louis notes, for instance, that the first stanza of his speech imitates the extravagant "character of love" that Chaucer uses so successfully in *Troilus*,'[70] while, more recently, Ian Johnson notes that Orpheus's complaint echoes 'the misguided words of another benighted lover, Chaucer's Troilus.''[71] Indeed, as with Troilus, whose deterministic worldview indicates his own limited understanding of Boethian philosophy, Orpheus's sense of a helpless inevitability suggests that he too is a blinkered protagonist.[72]

Unlike Troilus, however, whose soliloquy represents an extended attempt to work out Boethian principles, Orpheus's speech is made up of only two stanzas, only one of which is truly 'Chaucerian' in its direct recollection of the philosophizing reflections of the kind undertaken by Chaucer's tragic hero. Orpheus's sudden shift to an aphoristic conclusion represents a kind of interruption to Chaucer, moreover, as his Troilean questions receive an answer in the proverb to follow. Indeed, Henryson's use of a proverb in the second stanza suggests the vernacularity of this moment, for, where Orpheus's anguished speech begins in a high style further connecting it to Troilus's soliloquy, the proverb which he then goes on to quote is by its very nature distinguished by a colloquial diction: there is a Scottishness, in other words, to the implicit interruption of elevated philosophical speculation.[73] Thus, Orpheus's closing words

[70] Gros Louis, 'Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the Orpheus Traditions of the Middle Ages,' p.653.
[71] Ian Johnson, 'Hellish Complexity in Henryson's *Orpheus*,' *FMLS* 38.4 (2002), pp.412-19 [417].
[72] Cf. Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' pp.251-52.
[73] Cf. *Test.*, ll.474-80. The change to a colloquial register and the use of the proverb often characterizes Pandarus's play with language and style in the *Troilus* as well.

simultaneously point both towards and away from the poetry of Chaucer, for, while the first stanza of his speech signals the influence of the predestination soliloquy in the *Troilus*, Orpheus presents an abrupt conclusion to that monologue in the form of simple proverbial wisdom, one, moreover, whose inherent vernacularity becomes highly suggestive within the context of that departure.

The *moralitas* which then follows further signals this movement away from Chaucer, that is, from the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*, fictionalized treatments of the ideas laid out in the *De Consolatione*. Henryson's poem changes from the rhyme royal used for the narrative proper to decasyllabic couplets, a change of form that serves to separate the fable itself from its accompanying allegorical commentary. Yet, Henryson's choice of decasyllabic couplets is also significant in light of his response to Trivet, for the metrical simplicity of the couplets gives them a natural flow that has some of the same quality as prose.[74] Thus, the decasyllabic couplets represent the appropriate form for the rational argument contained therein, contrasting with the evocative reading experience generated in the rhyme royal stanzas used for the tale. The formal distinction between the poem's two parts draws attention to their difference in effect: indeed, as critics have noted, the relationship between the two seems to be one of a troubling contradiction.[75] Yet, this sense of tension is a deliberate aspect of the text's treatment of the affect and the intellect,[76] thus underscoring the view that grasping virtue in a sinful world is counterintuitive because it is so difficult.[77]

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[74] Cf. Parkinson, 'Henryson's Matter of Style: *The Garmont of Gud Ladeis*,' p.536.
[75] Cf. John Block Friedman, *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*, Medieval Studies (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p.203; Gros Louis, 'Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and the Orpheus Traditions of the Middle Ages,' p.654; Dietrich Strauss, 'Some Comments on the Moralitas of Robert Henryson's "Orpheus and Eurydice,"' *SSL* 32.1 (2001), pp.1-12 [6]; Alessandra Petrina, '"Aristeus Pastor Adamans": The Human Setting in Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice* and its Kinship with Poliziano's *Fabula di Orpheo*,' *FMLS* 38.4 (2002), pp.382-95 [385]. For a recent overview of scholarship on *Orpheus*, see Anne M. McKim, '*Orpheus and Eurydice* and *The Testament of Cresseid*: Robert Henryson's "fine poeticall way,"' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp.105-17 [108-11].
[76] Cf. John Marlin, '"Arestyus is Noucht bot Gude Vertewe": The Perplexing *Moralitas* to Henryson's Orpheus and *Erudices*,' in *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, ed. William C. McDonald, vol. 25 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), pp.137-53 [139]; Ian Johnson, 'Reading Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*: *Sentence* and Sensibility,' in *The Impact of Latin Culture on Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. Alessandra Petrina and Ian Johnson, Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 58 (Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2018), pp.175-97 [188-89].
[77] Cf. Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' p.251.

I would argue that the complex relationship between the tale and *moralitas* of *Orpheus* is related to Henryson's own experimentation with the use of metre and prose in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, which, as Johnson argues, resolves the tension between both forms into a productive protrepsis, as Boethius's spiritual transformation is modeled to the reader through the alternation of poetry and prose.[78] *Orpheus* likewise unites its two parts to a similar end in that its narrative proper is highly affective, while the *moralitas* on the other hand relies for its effect on the direct presentation of a rational argument. Where Henryson, however, clearly departs from the understanding of protrepsis in the *De Consolatione* is in *Orpheus*'s implicit substitution of the prose form by the decasyllabic couplets of the *moralitas*. Thus, *Orpheus* undertakes an ambitious vernacular reconfiguration of the mixed form as it is found in Boethius, one implicitly designed to bring about the reader's transformation in mirroring the narrator's own.[79]

While Henryson's experimentation in this regard connects his two-part poem to the *Troilus*, (Chaucer's poem involves an all-verse reimagination of the prosimetric protrepsis in Boethius)[80] *Orpheus*'s reinterpretation of the mixed form is such that the poem ultimately leaves Chaucer behind, for Henryson's tale proper identifies the affective reading experience that it produces with the Chaucerian. Yet, if the tale portion of the work in form and function is the correlative to the use of metre in Boethius, then the explicitly rational allegorical interpretation which follows should be regarded as superior. While the Chaucerian tradition of writing is drawn upon in telling the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, Henryson's narrator ultimately moves beyond it in turning to the philosophical argument of the *moralitas*. *Orpheus*'s twinned structure therefore expresses more than the difference between its two parts. Rather, Henryson's

[78] Cf. Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve*, pp.20-26.
[79] Henryson's narrator concludes the poem on a prayerful note, praying for God's support: 'to vndirput his haly hand / Of manetemance, and geve vs grace to stand / In parfyte lufe, as he is glorius' (630-32). Cf. Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' p.251.
[80] Cf. Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve*, pp.92-115.

adaptation of the mixed form allows him to assert his distance relative to Chaucer, whose poetry is followed only up until the point that it needs to be left behind in favour of rational argument.

Indeed, Henryson's explicit incorporation of the allegorical commentary into *Orpheus* allows him to bypass Chaucer, who provides an authorizing precedent for his adaptation of Boethius into Scots. Yet, the *moralitas*, although based on the exegetical interpretation of the myth which is found in Trivet, effectively transplants that moralizing explanation to the work of the vernacular author himself: if Henryson's narrative proper points to his engagement with and assimilation of the poetry of Chaucer, then the *moralitas* represents an appropriation of a related kind insofar as it adapts the commentary by Trivet on Boethius, and redirects it to his own ambitious vernacular retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Chaucer's in other words is not the only source of vernacular authority to inform the *Orpheus*, for Henryson's application of an established allegorical commentary to his retelling of Orpheus's fate represents a destabilization of literary authority itself and a self-authorizing gesture of a radical kind.

Orpheus's vernacular innovations are suggested from Gavin Douglas's view of Henryson's poem, for, in a marginal note to his own translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* into Scots, he writes that the word 'Musa in Grew signifeis an inuentryce or inuention in our langgage, and of the ix Muses sum thing in my Palyce of Honour and be Mastir Robert Hendirson in New Orpheus'[81] – a reference to Henryson's extended description of the Muses towards the outset of the *Orpheus* (29-64). That Douglas should point in this learned manner both to his own work and to Henryson's as sources for the Muses indicates an implicit assertion of an authorizing vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland. *Orpheus*'s apparent newness, moreover, clearly suggests that it was a work that impressed Douglas; I would argue that Henryson's use of the mixed form looks forward both to the latter's *Palice of Honour* (c.1501), which is distinguished by

[81] *Aeneid* II, p.19, n.13.

its rapid and versatile use of multiple stanza forms,[82] as well as the *Eneados* (c.1513), the Prologues of which feature a strikingly wide variety of poetic genres and verse forms.

Indeed, *Orpheus* looks forward in ways that have not fully been appreciated to the *Eneados*: like Henryson's text, which presents itself as a vernacular translation of both Book III, m.xii of the *De Consolatione*, and Trivet's allegorical commentary of the myth as found in Boethius's treatise (415-424), the *Eneados* is explicitly self-conscious about its status as a translation of the *Aeneid* into Scots.[83] *Orpheus*'s combination of rhyme royal stanzas and decasyllabic couplets also anticipates the *Eneados*, where Virgil's hexameter line is appropriately replaced by iambic pentameter heroic couplets. The Prologues on the other hand are written in comparatively more demanding and complicated verse forms. The *Eneados* Prologue-Book structure thus resembles that of the tale-*moralitas* to the *Orpheus*, for like Henryson, who combines the rhyme royal narrative proper with the allegorizing decasyllabic couplets, Douglas likewise experiments with the mixed form in presenting his vernacular translation of Virgil.

As in *Orpheus*, moreover, where the mixed form assumes a larger protreptic function, with Henryson's narrator modeling a spiritual ascent to the reader, a similar transformation is encouraged in the *Eneados*, the Prologues of which, as this thesis will argue, trace an upwards philosophical trajectory. Douglas's translation thus deploys the mixed form in a manner which merits comparison to Henryson's, taking that principle further still as it ranges widely across different poetic genres and verse forms. Thus, the *Eneados* not only showcases the expressive potential of its author's native tongue, his Scots vernacular; rather, Douglas's formal experimentation contains a deeper vernacular self-assertion still, for the protreptic function which it fulfills indirectly asserts his text's ethical worth and poetic authority.[84] Like

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[82] Cf. David Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, 2nd ed., TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2018), pp.36-37.
[83] Cf. *Aeneid* II, pp. 3-6 [ll.1-104].
[84] Cf. Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages,* 2nd ed., The Middle Ages (1984; Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp.211-17.

Henryson, whose allegorical explication represents an implicit self-authorizing gesture, Douglas, in the *Eneados*, also appropriates the commentary tradition to give his vernacular translation authority.[85]

Yet, behind both texts' implicit valuation of the vernacular also lies master Chaucer: *Orpheus*'s narrative section suggests its author's reading of and engagement with the *Troilus*, while that text's experimentation with the mixed form also provides a vernacular precedent for Henryson's own; 'venerabill Chauser' is both the object of praise and criticism in the opening Prologue to the *Eneados*,[86] for, while he represents an authorizing tradition of writing, one which is appropriated by Douglas, Chaucer, as this thesis will argue, is also left behind as the translation moves into its second half. Like *Orpheus*, therefore, which looks both ways in its complex response to the poetry of Chaucer, following the Chaucerian tradition before abruptly breaking away from it, thus asserting a vernacular independence, the *Eneados* involves a similar double gesture as it too follows, before moving away from, Chaucer.

The Moral Fables

Henryson's collection of thirteen animal fables does not appear at first glance to be especially Chaucerian. Indeed, modern critics have largely confined their assessment of the work's Chaucerian influences to Henryson's use of *The Nun's Priest's Tale* as his source for the fable of *The Cock and the Fox*.[87] The *Fables*' debt to Chaucer is reevaluated in this chapter by being placed alongside *The Canterbury Tales* (c.1388-95), which, as an example of the storytelling genre, provides a precedent for the *Fables*, for, like Chaucer's, Henryson's collection of stories is organized according to a self-conscious sophistication. Like

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[85] Cf. Ian Johnson, 'Vernacular Self-Commentary during Medieval Early Modernity: Reginald Pecock and Gavin Douglas,' in *Self-Commentary in Early Modern European Literature, 1400-1700*, ed. Francesco Venturi, Intersections, 62 (Leiden, NL, and Boston, MA: Brill, 2019), pp.71-98 [84-96].

[86] *Aeneid* II, p.12 [l.339].

[87] Cf. I. W. A. Jamieson, 'The Poetry of Robert Henryson: A Study of the Use of Source Material' (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1964), pp.169-89; Donald MacDonald, 'Henryson and Chaucer: Cock and Fox,' *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 8.4 (1967), pp.451-61; Douglas Gray, '"Merry Tale", Animal Tale, and Fable,' in *Simple Forms: Essays on Medieval English Popular Literature*, ed. Douglas Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.144-61 [157-58].

the *Tales*, Henryson's fables also trace a larger structural arc, moving towards a prayerful and spiritual ending. Yet, the introduction of this change in tone already at the traditional midpoint of the *Fables* represents the tendency towards interruption that this thesis argues characterizes Scottish Chaucerianism. However, Henryson's suspicion of straightforward allegorization further connects him to Chaucer and relates to his creation of a reading experience which in terms of its effect is similar to that of the *Tales*. Yet, Henryson's destabilization of authority as a gesture is implicitly directed at Chaucer himself, as the *Moral Fables* express a sense of vernacular independence indicative of a self-conscious Scottishness.

Henryson's fable collection reflects an unusual textual situation in that the work's most complete witnesses are its latest ones, namely the versions of the text respectively printed in Edinburgh in 1570 and 1571 by Robert Lekprevick (*fl.*1561-1581) (for Henry Charteris) and Thomas Bassandyne (d.1577). The 'Bassandyne' order of the collection is usually accepted as most closely representing Henryson's intentions based on the unfolding of the text's meaning and his engagement with his source materials.[88] Indeed, the Bassandyne order of the fable collection is the result of a deliberate arrangement, that is, of an authorial self-consciousness that gives the poem as a whole an overall structural sophistication – a complexity setting it apart from the other vernacular fable translations with which it has been compared.[89]

Yet, the *Fables*, viewed as a larger story collection, also has parallels with *The Canterbury Tales*. Several of these have been identified in passing by critics such as Douglas Gray, who writes that the

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[88] Cf. Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, pp.lxxv-lxxxi. For a representative alternative view, cf. John MacQueen, *Complete and Full with Numbers: The Narrative Poetry of Robert Henryson*, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 5 (Amsterdam, NL, and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2006), pp.283-89.

[89] The *Fables* are most commonly set alongside either John Lydgate's *Isopes Fabules* or William Caxton's *History of Reynard the Fox* (c.1481) and the *Fable of Aesop* (c.1484). Cf. David Crowne, 'A Date for the Composition of Henryson's *Fables*,' *JGEP* 61.3 (1962), pp.583-90; Julian Good, 'Literality and Aurality in the Texts of Henryson's *Fables* and Caxton's *The History of Reynard the Fox*: Audience Construction of Meaning Related to Reception of the Texts,' in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp.47-58; W. H. E. Sweet, 'The influence of Lydgate and his *Isopes Fabules* on Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*,' in *Fresche Fontanis*, pp.31-45. Roderick J. Lyall argues that the *Fables* might be influenced by Heinrich Steinhöwel's Aesop (c.1477): 'Henryson's *Morall Fabillis* and the Steinhöwel Tradition,' *FMLS* 38.4 (2002), pp.362-81. John MacQueen also reviews Henryson's use of Aesopic and Reynardian materials in the appendixes included in *Robert Henryson: A Study of the Major Narrative Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). For a counter to MacQueen, cf. esp. Denton Fox, 'Henryson and Caxton,' *JEGP* 67.4 (1968), pp.586-593.

Fables, with its multiplicity of perspective and tone, 'achieves an imaginative harmony which is surprisingly impressive, and surprisingly reminiscent in miniature of *The Canterbury Tales*,'[90] while Dieter Mehl, moreover, regards both works as experiments with ways of telling stories.[91] I would argue that Chaucer's innovative handling of the storytelling genre provides a model for Henryson. The extant copies of the *Tales* exhibit a wide variation in the orders in which the stories are presented, and Chaucer`s collection has survived in different orders in different manuscripts, none of which, if any, can be said with certainty to be authorial.[92] However, Chaucer's poem, as Helen Cooper argues, nevertheless, despite surviving in unlinked fragments, nevertheless displays a concern with structure that distinguishes it from medieval story collections.[93] The *Fables* as a whole likewise represent far more than just a random assembly of individual stories, for in their traditional order they fall into a clear pattern according to the fabular tradition from which they draw: the first two, the last two, and the middle three in the traditional order of the collection are derived from the elegiac Romulus, while the remaining six of thirteen fables form two blocks of three which are taken from other fable collections or from non-fabular sources, such as, for example, the Reynardian tradition.[94]

Henryson's ordering of the fables generates a reading experience that invites recursive reading by virtue of its repetition of themes and motifs. The *Fables* are, not unlike other frame tale collections such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, structured according to patterns such as repetition and variation: for example, the Bassandyne order of the text is organized in such a way that foxes and wolves come in and out of focus, the 'rascally protagonists'[95] prominently featured in the alternating blocks of Reynardian

[90] Gray, *Robert Henryson*, p.161.
[91] Cf. Mehl, 'Robert Henryson's *Moral Fables* as Experiments in Didactic Narrative,' pp.81-82.
[92] Cf. Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, (1987; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.1117-22.
[93] Cf. Helen Cooper, *The Structure of The Canterbury Tales* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1983).
[94] Cf. Howard Roerecke, 'The Integrity and Symmetry of Robert Henryson's *Moral Fables*' (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University Press, 1969), pp.15-16, 89-135.
[95] Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' p.247.

fables.[96] Indeed, the symmetrical arrangement of the whole collection encourages the process of re-reading, as the earlier sets of fables are placed in the new light of the later ones with which they form an implicit set.[97] Indeed, Henryson's use of repetition extends beyond larger narrative and thematic patterning; it includes, as David Parkinson notes, recurring words and phrases, repeated to indicate 'changed circumstances.'[98] The *Fables*, arranged according to an internal resonance, requires readers to read comparatively, that is, working backwards and forwards across the whole collection in order to discern its deeper meaning.[99]

Yet, the *Fables*, despite generating what is in effect a non-linear reading experience, like the *Tales*, does not abandon the principle of linearity altogether, thus further connecting it to Chaucer's text: the *Tales* after all have as their premise the idea of a journey in the form of the pilgrimage to Canterbury. Indeed, time is not merely a concern to certain pilgrims; it is also part of the structure of the *Tales*, where astrological and astronomical references function as ways of marking the passing of time.[100] While the *Fables* clearly lack an overarching pilgrimage framework, they contain multiple references to time as well, *chronographiae* which relate to one of the collection's central themes, namely that of Prudence, which 'consists of the ability to hold in mind not merely the present time, but also the past and the future.'[101] Henryson connects this prudential outlook to the act of reading as the reader is meant to look forward, that is, to anticipate the meaning of the text based on the past, the fables which have come before.[102]

[96] Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson,* p.lxxvii-viii. A striking example of close fable linking can be found in the fact that the fox of 'The Cock and the Fox' is explicitly identified as the same fox as the next fable, 'The Fox and the Wolf' (616-617), whose son, moreover, features in the fable after that, 'The Trial of the Fox' (796-802).
[97] Ibid.
[98] David J. Parkinson, ed., *Robert Henryson: The Complete Works*, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2010), p.24.
[99] Cf. Sally Mapstone notes that this reading strategy is alluded to in the idea of 'prudence,' which is addressed in the centrally placed 'Preaching of the Swallow': Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' pp.249-50.
[100] Cf. Marijane Osborn, *Time and the Astrolabe in the Canterbury Tales* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press), pp.3-9. The pilgrims' resistance to time's authority is more recently examined by Gillian Adler: *Chaucer and the Ethics of Time* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2022), pp.145-70, while notions of temporality are situated in relation to the processes of reading and writing by Kara Gaston in *Reading Chaucer in Time: Literary Formation in England and Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[101] John Burrow, 'Henryson: *The Preaching of the Swallow*,' *Essays in Criticism* 25.1 (1975), pp.25-37 [31].
[102] Cf. Mapstone, 'Robert Henryson,' p.249.

Henryson's fable collection thus acknowledges that the reading process is governed by time constraints, for, while its recursive reading strategies are part of the way that the meaning of the text is accessed, future dangers nevertheless lurk around the corner in a way that subjects reading itself to a time sensitivity.

The *Fables*, moreover, grow increasingly serious in a way which further connects them to the *Tales*, for Chaucer's story collection ends on a sobering note with the *Parson's Tale* and the *Retractions*. Henryson's fable collection involves a similar progression, for, as demonstrated by Denton Fox, the *Fables* are structured according to a larger change in tone from the comic to the darkly tragic.[103] Yet, this shift does not take place as a final gesture but rather occurs already at the *Fables*' midpoint.[104] It is as if the *Fables* move up the turn to a more serious way of seeing that defines the end of the *Tales*; in so doing, Henryson's fable collection represents an effective breaking into Chaucer's *Tales*, for the *Fables*' much earlier change in outlook involves an implicit cutting in on the earlier poet's text. Indeed, this process of interruption is likewise inscribed in the difference in length between both the *Tales* and the *Fables*, with the relative conciseness of the latter indicative of its accelerated tying up of the former.

Thus, the *Fables* as a story collection represents a complex response to the *Tales*, for Henryson's fables suggests his appreciation of the sophisticated use of that genre by Chaucer. Indeed, the *Fables* involve an attempt to match that achievement in their author's native vernacular: Henryson's Prologue, for instance, is explicitly self-conscious about his decision to write in his 'mother toung' (31). Henryson's repeated emphasis on the mingling of 'ernist' and 'merie' to 'gar the tyme be schort' (20, 21) recalls the Host's evocation of the same literary theoretical principle in the Prologue to the *Tales*.[105] The *Fables* as a whole enact this framing concept in their blending of comic and serious stories; however, unlike the leisurely tempo with which individual stories are swapped by the pilgrims in the *Tales*, Henryson's

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[103] Cf. Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson*, pp.lxxix-lxxxi.
[104] Ibid, p.lxxix.
[105] Cf. *CT* I [A], l.800. Cf. Glending Olson, 'The Medieval Theory of Literature for Refreshment and its Use in the Fabliau Tradition,' *Studies in Philology* 71.3 (1974), pp.291-313. See also I. W. A. Jamieson, '"To preue thare preching be a poesye": some thoughts on Henryson's poetics,' *Parergon* 8 (1974), pp.24-36 [28-29].

comparatively brief story collection suggests not a desire so much to surpass Chaucer's text. Rather, it points to a sense of an almost nervous urgency informing the reading of narrative itself, one I would argue arises from the pervasively dark worldview ultimately separating Henryson from Chaucer.[106]

Yet, this pressing sense of a need to move quickly does not entail a monolithic reading of the text: Henryson, as critics have shown, keeps the door open to multiple interpretations in the *Fables*. The most obvious instance of this practice can be found in the relationship between tale and *moralitas*,[107] Indeed, dissonance and incompleteness both are integral to the reading experience of the *Fables*, for Henryson refrains from the imposition of a single moral precisely to train the art of interpretation.[108] The extent to which this aspect of the fable collection can itself be described as 'Chaucerian' is addressed by I. W. A. Jamieson, who identifies a correspondence between the handling of endings by Chaucer in general, and the implicit refusal to provide the reader with a single totalizing meaning in the *Fables.*[109] Like the *Tales*, which, despite their overarching teleological trajectory, point back to the middle of the text,[110] Henryson's *Fables* also recognize the need for a similar reading process despite their awareness of time running out.

Henryson's conclusion to his fable collection further suggests its parallels with the *Tales*, for, where Chaucer's poem ends on the penitential note with both *The Parson's Tale* and the *Retractions*, *The Paddock and the Mouse*, the last in the order of Henryson's fables, is a similarly solemn pendant to the

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[106] Cf. Daniel M. Murtaugh, 'Henryson's Animals,' *Texas Studies in Language and Literature* 14.3 (1972), pp.405-21.
[107] Cf. Denton Fox, 'Henryson's *Fables*,' *ELH* 29.4 (1962), pp.337-56 [347-48]; Harold E. Toliver, 'Robert Henryson: from *moralitas* to irony,' *ES* 46 (1965), pp.300-09; I. W. A. Jamieson, 'The Beast Tale in Middle Scots: Some Thoughts on the History of the Genre,' *Parergon* 2 (1972), pp.26-36; Gray, *Robert Henryson*, p.129; George Clark, 'Henryson and Aesop: The Fable Transformed,' 43.1 (1976), pp.1-18; Arnold Clayton Henderson, 'Having Fun with the Moralities: Henryson and Late-Medieval Fable Innovation' *SSL* 32.1 (2001), pp.67-87; John Marlin, 'Robert Henryson's "Morall Fabilles": Irony, Allegory, and Humanism in Late-Medieval Fables,' *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 34 (2009), pp.133-47; Esther Bernstein, 'Self-Evident Morals? Affective Reversal as Social Critique in Henryson's *Fables,*' in *Words that Tear the Flesh: Essays on Sarcasm in Medieval and Early Modern Literature and Cultures*, ed. Alan Baragona and Elizabeth Louise Rambo, Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture, 21 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), pp.185-203.
[108] Cf. Stephan Khinoy, 'Tale-Moral Relationships in Henryson's *Moral Fables*,' *SSL* 17.1 (1982), pp.99-115 [100].
[109] Cf. Jamieson, '"To preue thare preching be a poesye": some thoughts on Henryson's poetics,' p.31. Cf. esp. Rosemarie P. McGerr, *Chaucer's Open Books: Resistance to Closure in Medieval Discourse* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998) and Donald R. Howard, *The Idea of the Canterbury Tales* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), pp.177-82.
[110] Cf. Patricia Clare Ingham and Anthony Bale, 'Chaucer's Sense of an Ending,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Frank Grady (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.218-31 [221, 222].

Fables: the fable proper brings its animal protagonists to a violent end, while the accompanying double *moralitas* widens its opening warning against wicked company to a reflection on the division of soul and body (2910-61). Viewed as the conclusion to the whole fable collection, this moral has the weight of finality to it; yet, the narrator's emphasis on the importance of prudence sends the reader back to the heart of the *Fables* (1622). Indeed, Henryson's unusual application of two moralities in different stanza forms invests his final tale and the collection as a whole with an implicit assertion of the multiplicity of perspectives.[111] The *Fables*' conclusion therefore represents an opening up of interpretation instead of its closing down, while its cautionary spiritual warnings do not cancel out the humour in the previous half of the collection.

Indeed, the *Fables*' final stanza expresses an antifraternal sentiment that recalls Chaucer: in *The Summoner's Tale*, friar John will find a gloss somewhere to support his interpretation of Scripture.[112] Henryson's narrator by comparison alludes to the friars by way of conclusion to the *Fables*, where, apologizing for cutting his allegorical interpretation short, he then hands that task over to the friars:

> Adew, my friend, and gif that ony speiris
>
> Of this fabill, sa schortlie I conclude,
>
> Sa thow, I left the laif vnto the freiris,
>
> To mak a sample or similitude. (2969-71)

This 'Henrysonian witticism'[113] is made at the expense of the over-ingenuity of the friars: as Dieter Mehl, for instance, notes, these final lines 'involve a playful dig at the friars and their excessive moralizing.'[114] However, Henryson's allusion to the friars also implicitly elevates the status of his vernacular text by

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[111] Cf. Gray, *Robert Henryson*, p.130; I. W. A. Jamieson, 'The Beast Tale in Middle Scots: Some Thoughts on the History of a Genre,' *Parergon* 2 (1972), pp.26-36 [29].
[112] Cf. *CT* III (D), ll.1918-20.
[113] Douglas Gray, 'Medieval Scottish Poetry,' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp.592-607 [600].
[114] Mehl, 'Robert Henryson's *Moral Fables* as Experiments in Didactic Narrative,' p.93. Cf. Gregory Kratzmann, 'Henryson's *Fables*: "the subtell dyte of poetry"' *SSL* 20.1 (1985), pp.49-70 [65].

drawing attention to the fact that it should provide the material for later allegorical interpretations. Indeed, the *Fables* as a whole represents an assertion of the vernacular relative to an authorizing Latin tradition,[115] one which Edward Wheatley argues grows increasingly pronounced towards the end of the collection.[116]

Yet, if the *Fables*, as this chapter has sought to argue, also responds to the *Canterbury Tales*, then Henryson's implicit valuation of his native tongue is also being made relative to the poetry of Chaucer. This assertion acquires an additional significance in light of the generic uniformity of the *Fables*, for Henryson, who signals his use of his vernacular in translating 'this nobill clerk, Esope' from 'Latyng' (57, 31), invests his Scots story collection with the authority of an established classical tradition. If the *Tales*, as Seth Lerer contends, provides a model for future literary history in the very act of 'quitting' itself, as 'acts of writing after someone . . . become acts of quitting: ways of recasting inherited material,'[117] then the *Fables* 'quit' the *Tales* insofar as they represent a story collection not in English, but in Scots. Nor should Henryson's emphasis on fable be regarded as a tersely moralizing rebuke to Chaucer's text, for there is enough of comedy, scurrility, and blasphemy in the collection to counter that view.[118] Rather, 'Esope' (27), despite the collection's blending of different fabular traditions, is the *auctor* of the genre (29-35), and as such forms part of the work's vernacular assertion of itself relative to Chaucer.

This Scottish self-authorizing is further suggested from the dream-vision Prologue to *The Lion and the Mouse*, where Aesop appears before the authorial persona who has fallen asleep beneath a tree (1321-1404). Aesop, who cuts a handsome and stately figure, represents an authority worth appropriating.[119] Indeed, as Tim William Machan persuasively argues, the meeting is concerned with vernacularity: when

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[115] Cf. Machan, 'Textual Authority and the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson,' p.

[116] Cf. Edward Wheatley, *Mastering Aesop: Medieval Education, Chaucer, and his Followers* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000), pp.149-89 [186-89].

[117] Seth Lerer, 'The Canterbury Tales,' in *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven, CT, and London, UK: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.243-94 [288].

[118] Cf. Chad D. Schrock, 'The Sacramental Language of Robert Henryson's Fox,' *JEGP* 116.3 (2017), pp.330-50.

[119] Cf. Iain Macleod Higgins, 'Master Henryson and Father Aesop,' in *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, ed. Stephen Partridge and Erik Kwakkel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp.198-231 [201-06]. See also David Moses, 'Lyrical liars, animal desire and figurative kinship: Robert Henryson's defence of poetry in the prologue to *The Morall Fabillis*,' *IR* 72.1 (2021), pp.27-48 [39-44].

Aesop questions the value of fable itself, for example, these objections are effectively overridden (1391-1404), with a 'transference of textual authority from traditional authors and books to vernacular writers' which Machan also identifies in the authorial persona's relative dominance within the dialogue itself.[120] Henryson's use of his native tongue situates this exchange in line with a self-conscious Scottishness: Iain Macleod Higgins also provides an illuminating reading of the dream episode as an assertion of the Scots vernacular, arguing, for instance, that the authorial persona's positioning of himself relative to Aesop provides a dramatization of the linguistic and cultural ambitions implicit in the collection's Prologue, where Henryson's narrator signals his desire to emulate the rhetorical excellence of his *auctor* (36-42).[121]

The Chaucerianism of this episode has been underrated despite relating to its Scottishness: Chaucer's influence, for example, is not simply evident in the use of the genre of dream-vision.[122] Rather, I would argue that Henryson is here staging tale telling in a manner that connects back to the *Tales*, with the Chaucerian dreamer figure not depicted reading a book but listening to the fable that follows.[123] The Chaucerian tradition of writing thus provides an authorizing frame for the vernacular poet's self-assertion. Yet, Henryson's location of this framing exchange between the authorial persona and Aesop not at the start of the *Fables* but rather near the middle point of the collection as a whole relates back to Chaucer: if the *Fables*, as this chapter has sought to demonstrate, are inspired by the use and models of storytelling in the *Tales*, then Henryson's insertion of this dream episode partway through his poem effectively interrupts Chaucer, or at the very least underscores the vernacular independence with which he departs from the latter's text.

This vernacular self-assertion is further suggested from the implicit displacement of Chaucer as Henryson's authorial persona makes his voice heard relative to that of his stated authority, Aesop.[124] While

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[120] Machan, 'Textual Authority and the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson,' p.297.
[121] Cf. Higgins, 'Master Henryson and Father Aesop,' pp.208-09.
[122] Cf. A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* pp.192-97 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp.188-89.
[123] Jill Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard: Beast Literature in Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.304-05.
[124] Cf. Machan, 'Textual Authority in the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson,' p.297.

the Chaucerian tradition of writing is indirectly evoked to reinforce this self-authorizing gesture, Chaucer himself, as a vernacular authority figure, is notably absent, yielding to '"maister Esope, poet lawriate"' (1377). Aesop's explicit association with the poetic values of mastery and laureateship lays claim, as Higgins argues, to those qualities for the dreamer persona, whose authority displaces the *auctor*'s.[125] Yet, Chaucer himself is frequently referred to by his followers by the same identifiers of rhetorical excellence: *The Kingis Quair*, for instance, closes with a tribute to the poet's 'maisteris dere' and 'poetis laureate.'[126] Henryson thus reappropriates the terms of praise that later medieval poets often use for Chaucer.[127] Henryson therefore suggests a direct claim to poetic skill, that is, to the values embodied by Aesop, with Chaucer's mediating vernacular authority implicitly displaced by the confidently independent Scots poet.

As Douglas's admiring reference in the marginal gloss to 'New Orpheus' suggests, Henryson's 'Scotticization' of an established classical textual tradition had not a little influence on the *Eneados*. In addition to *Orpheus*, however, which is limited to a single narrative and accompanying *moralitas*, the *Fables* also provide a vernacular precedent for the later poet's organization of his materials in the *Eneados,* The Prologues in particular follow an overarching structure that connects back to Henryson's text. Yet, while Douglas's Prologues together involve a shift in their second half that also recalls the *Fables*, Douglas's assertion of his vernacular authority differs in tone from that of his near contemporary – a notable difference in outlook that also relates to one of the central claims of this thesis, namely, that while Scottish Chaucerian poets' increasing engagement with one another's work distances them from Chaucer, the native vernacular tradition of writing whose implicit consolidation is suggested from that displacement acquires an internal dynamism as a result of the way that its poets come to depart from one another.

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[125] Cf. Higgins, 'Master Henryson and Father Aesop,' p.224-26.
[126] *KQ*, ll.1373, 1376.
[127] Cf. Barry Windeatt, 'Chaucer Traditions,' in *Chaucer Traditions*, ed. Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.1-20 [4-10].

The *Eneados*'s structuring of its framing material partly connects it to that of *The Canterbury Tales*, a text which it has rightly been observed provides a vernacular precedent for the Prologues.[128] Bawcutt, for instance, notes the parallels between the use of prologues and epilogues in the *Tales*, and Douglas's adaptation of a literary framework within which to situate the narrative of the *Aeneid*.[129] Indeed, the *Tales* reflect an overall principle of arrangement that was most likely known to Douglas when ordering his Prologues. Yet, Chaucer, despite the fact that his storytelling collection moves from a pagan to a Christian worldview, nevertheless refrains from making that transition absolute, favouring a multiplicity of perspectives.[130] The Prologues on the other hand reflect a greater coherence as they move to a decidedly religious viewpoint. Thus, Douglas, despite displaying an impressive variety of form and style such as one finds in the *Tales*, reveals, in his careful organization of his framing material to express a shift to a spiritual worldview, a far more uniform outlook than is the case in the tale-telling universe inhabited by the itinerant pilgrims.

The Prologues' shift in point of view instead suggests a greater indebtedness to Robert Henryson's *Moral Fables*, which consist of thirteen different fables, translated into Scots vernacular. The *Fables* are far more than just a straightforward translation but rather reflect a concern with correct reading, with the right ethical interpretation of the text as encouraged by the disposition of the tales themselves which in the traditional order of the collection are arranged to reflect a deliberate symmetrical pattern.[131] The *Fables*, for instance, illustrate this neat organization in their marked change in tone and emphasis, as the fable collection as a whole moves from comic to tragic, to the darker fables of its second half.[132] This serious turn takes place towards the halfway point of the work, with the bloody death of the birds who, in failing to listen to the swallow's repeated words of advice, end up caught in the fowler's nets,[133] a tragic

[128] Cf. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*, p.164.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Cf. Helen Cooper, *The Structure of The Canterbury Tales* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), pp.238-39.
[131] Cf. Denton Fox, ed., *The Poems of Robert Henryson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.lxxv-lxxxi.
[132] Ibid., pp.lxxix-lxxxi.
[133] Cf. *Fables*, ll.1874-87.

ending presaging the change in point of view to follow, one accompanied, moreover, by an increased prayerfulness, as the narrator reflects a marked urgency in pointing towards a spiritual way of seeing.

That Douglas knew the *Fables* is clear from the echoes of and allusions to it in both the *Palice* and the *Eneados*, and it is possible, furthermore, that he read it in the order reflected in the Bassandyne print.[134] Indeed, the *Eneados* not only contains broader conceptual and structural parallels with the *Fables*: Henryson's translation is made up of thirteen different fables, arguably paralleling the thirteen books of the *Eneados*. Douglas integrates the narrative proper with framing Prologue material: Prologue I, for instance, as a statement of poetic purpose, recalls the opening Prologue to the *Fables*, while the Prologue to the *Lion and the Mouse* clearly informs the exchanges in both Prologues VIII and XIII. Like the *Fables*, the Prologues also demonstrate a spiritual turn around their midway point, displaying an increased prayerfulness thereafter connecting them to that in the second half of Henryson's collection. Yet, Douglas, while engaging with this shift in outlook as reflected in the arrangement of the *Fables*, nevertheless inscribes that change in point of view with a greater sense of joy and optimism than Henryson, whose spiritual perspective is more soberly expressed, giving rise to a humble, quiet, even anxious prayerfulness.

[134] Cf. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study,* .43-44; Emily Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), pp.168-69.

Chapter 4: William Dunbar

Robert Henryson is fifth from last in the list of poets in William Dunbar's *I that in heill wes and gladnes* (c.1505), where Death 'In Dunfermelyne . . . has done rovne / With maister Robert Henrisoun' (81-82).[1] David Parkinson writes of these lines that 'Henryson dies from having been whispered to; it is as if Death has appeared to him in the temptingly conspiratorial guise of the fox in more than one fable.'[2] Dunbar's reading of Henryson is further suggested in a passage from his dream vision *The Goldyn Targe*[3] which contains an allusion to the fateful backwards glance sentencing Eurydice to the Underworld:

> Allace, it was grete hertsare for to here
> Of Orpheus the weping and the wo,
> Quhen that his wyf, quhilk he had bocht so dere,
> Bot for a luke sa sone was hynt hym fro.[4]

Orpheus's look and its explicit association with love are alluded to as the narrative persona of the *Targe* covertly makes his way through the leaves in order to get a better view of the female servants of Venus:[5]

> Thair obseruance rycht hevynly was to here.
> Than crap I throu the leuis and drew nere,
> Quhare that I was rycht sudaynly affrayt,
> All throu a luke, quhilk I haue boucht full dere. (132-35)

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[1] B 21. Poem numbers are based on the 1998 two-volume edition of Dunbar's poetry by Priscilla Bawcutt from which, unless otherwise indicated, all quotations in this chapter will also be drawn. Where a work is referred to by its more popular title, Bawcutt's title (based on the first line of the text) will be provided in a footnote: Priscilla Bawcutt, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar*, 2 vols., ASLS, 27, 28 (Glasgow: ASLS, 1998).
[2] David J. Parkinson, ed., *Robert Henryson: The Complete Works*, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2010), p.1.
[3] 'Ryght as the stern of day begouth to schyne'; B 59.
[4] *OE*, ll.394-97.
[5] Cf. A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.249-62 [242].

The high price that the narrator of the poem will pay for his look is predicted in the final lines of the stanza which marks an important turning point in the narrative as he is, immediately after, apprehended by Venus, whose order for his arrest leads to an extended allegorical battle between her forces and those of Reason.

Henryson is once again recalled near the end of the poem when the authorial persona watches as the whole company suddenly disappears and the landscape is turned into an inhospitable wilderness. Dunbar draws on the metaphor of sight to express the rapidity with which this change occurs, thus taking up the motif of seeing from earlier on in the work yet in a way which does not invite a deeper interpretation:

> And at the last Departing coud hir dresse,
>
> And me delyuerit vnto Hevynesse
>
> For to remayne, and scho in cure me tuke.
>
> Be this the lord of wyndis with wodenes
>
> (God Eolus) his bugill blew, I gesse,
>
> That with the blast the leuis all toschuke.
>
> And sudaynly in the space of a luke
>
> All was hyne went, thare was bot wildernes,
>
> Thare was no more bot birdis, bank and bruke. (226-34)

'Tuke' and 'luke' together bring to mind the same rhyme as applied after Cresseid's dream in the *Testament*, when Henryson's heroine rises 'vp and tuik / Ane poleist glas, and hir schaddow culd luik.'[6] In Henryson, the act of looking signals a profound moment of psychological and spiritual apprehension; in Dunbar on the other hand it functions as a figure of brevity, expressing a change in narrative situation.

Thus, the *Targe* reflects a limited engagement with the view of love presented by Henryson, for, although his authorial persona's own look of love relates to the poem's warning against the senses,[7]

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[6] *Test.*, ll.347-48. Cf. *Test.*, ll.60-61; *Fables,* ll.2587-88.

[7] Cf. R. J. Lyall, 'The Stylistic Relationship between Dunbar and Douglas,' in *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*, ed. Sally Mapstone (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), pp.69-84 [77].

Dunbar does not invest this cautionary theme with nearly the same philosophical depth as Henryson does despite its implicit association with the poem's sobering treatment of courtly love and desire. Rather, the *Targe* takes up a comparatively cursory treatment of the same motif as it is used by the latter poet, repeating it later in the narrative in a relatively functional way to move the action of the poem along. Dunbar in other words avoids investing the look of love with a deeper philosophical freight, refraining rather from the deeper kind of inquiry that the poem's religious content might otherwise seem to invite.[8]

Dunbar's 'un-Henrysonian' handling of the motif of sight connects to his response to Chaucer, for where Chaucer's poems are 'typically narrative, philosophical, richly suggestive, and lengthy,'[9] Dunbar's evident preference for working on a smaller scale sets him apart from the English poet, whose mastery of a wide variety of poetic forms and kinds in many ways anticipates Dunbar's own.[10] Thus, Dunbar's articulation of vernacularity relies on a recognition of the excellence and mastery of the English Chaucer.[11] Dunbar therefore implicitly appropriates the vernacular tradition explicitly associated with Chaucer, evoking the English Chaucerian tradition of writing by self-consciously working through its Scottish alternative.[12] Indeed, Dunbar's awareness of the latter is further suggested from his engagement with the earlier Scottish Chaucerians, poets who provide him with an existing vernacular tradition from which he is able to draw.

However, Dunbar's awareness of this native tradition sits at an angle to Scottish Chaucerianism. On the one hand, Dunbar's verse implicitly lays claim to the poetry of Chaucer for Scotland, while, moreover,

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[8] Cf. Gregory A. Foran, 'Dunbar's Broken Rainbow: Symbol, Allegory, and Apocalypse in "The Goldyn Targe,"' *PQ* 86.1 (2007), pp.47-65; David Strong, 'Supra-Natural Creation in Dunbar's "The Goldyn Targe,"' *PQ* 82.2 (2003), pp.149-66.

[9] Cf. Denton Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), pp.164-200 [186].

[10] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp.22-24.

[11] Cf. *GT*, ll.253-61. Cf. Lois Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE, and London, UK: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp.77-78.

[12] Cf. Katherine H. Terrell, *Scripting the Nation: Court Poetry and the Authority of History in Late Medieval Scotland,* Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2021), pp.117-27; Katherine H. Terrell, 'Scots Literature in the Age of the *Makars* and Beyond,' in *A Companion to British Literature: Volume II: Early Modern Literature 1450-1600*, ed. Robert DeMaria, Jr., Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), pp.249-63 [251-52].

his poetic practice expresses a recognition of an existing Scottish Chaucerian tradition. Indeed, this latter aspect of his writing points to an important later development within Scottish Chaucerianism, the gradual consolidation of which as a poetic tradition is suggested from the way that it begins to build on itself. However, this thesis also maintains that this body of writing is received differently by later Scots poets. Whereas Douglas, as the next chapter of this thesis shows, strongly asserts this native Chaucerianism, Dunbar subverts this vernacular inheritance in a way that is, as this chapter contends, itself Chaucerian. Thus, while self-consciously positioning himself in relation to an established Scottish Chaucerianism, Dunbar also challenges and undermines that tradition in a manner connecting him back to Chaucer.

This chapter examines this process as it is played out in a selection of poems by Dunbar, works whose Chaucerianism is strongly inflected by their author's reading of earlier Scottish Chaucerian texts. Although Dunbar's poems appear to signal their involvement in this received Chaucerian tradition, the sudden change of perspective and tone with which they conclude pulls back from that engagement. Dunbar's endings are therefore connected in their inconclusiveness and open-endedness to Chaucer's. While Dunbar's narrators in other words draw attention to their participation within the Chaucerian tradition, the endings of his poems provide them with a space from which to step back and challenge it. However, this chapter also argues that this gesture of withdrawal, while in many ways indebted to Chaucer, that is, articulating an awareness of the latter's use of endings as sites for the contestation of meaning, inscribes this expression of resistance with a troubling quality ultimately distinguishing it from Chaucer.

The Lament for the Makaris

In *I that in heill wes and gladnes* or, as more commonly known, *The Lament for the Makaris* (c.1506), Dunbar provides an extensive list of vernacular writers, almost all of whom have been taken by Death.[13]

[13] B 21.

Chaucer's prominence within this grouping is indicative of his significance for later Scottish poets. The *Lament*, as this chapter argues, directly appropriates the poetry of Chaucer and English Chaucerian writing, both of which form the starting point for a native vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland. Dunbar, despite expressing his awareness of the latter, nevertheless positions himself to its side, for, while the *Lament* articulates its author's feeling of belonging within a community of mostly past Scottish poets, Dunbar simultaneously subverts that sentiment in portraying his authorial persona as not dead yet. Thus, the *Lament* involves a qualified recognition of the existence of a vernacular tradition in Scotland, the assertive formal declaration of which is likewise ironized in a manner which is itself Chaucerian.

The *Lament*'s list of poets is set within the work's larger framing reflection on Death.[14] Dunbar's authorial persona begins with a reference to his own infirmity before expressing his fear of Death (1-4) – a sentiment repeated in the form of the poem's refrain which occurs in the last line of each quatrain. Priscilla Bawcutt rightly notes that the use of repetition connects to the work's portrayal of Death as an inexorable power steadily moving closer until becoming a 'personal, poignant, and experienced reality.'[15] Yet, these more general musings acquire a specific reference at around the poem's halfway point, where the 'makaris,' referred to as playing out life's pageant, are included within Death's compass (45-47). The *Lament* then proceeds to a densely referential enumeration of roughly two dozen named writers (49-92). Thus, while Dunbar's poem on one level reflects soberly on the passing of time and man's mortality, the *Lament*'s shift in focus to the vernacular writers subject to that law gives the work a larger resonance, transforming the poem into a defiant commemoration of the native tradition of writing in Scotland.

That the *Lament* articulates this sense of vernacular identity in relation to Chaucer supports the view that Scottish poets turn to him as a first point of reference in developing a tradition of their own. Indeed, Dunbar begins his list of the writers who have come and gone with 'noble Chaucer, of makaris

[14] Cf. R. D. Drexler, 'Dunbar's "Lament for the Makaris" and the Dance of Death Tradition," *SSL* 13.1 (1978), pp.144-58; Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, pp.154-55.
[15] Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.156.

flour' (50) before adding to his notable example 'the monk of Bery and Gower' (51). English Chaucerian writing provides a flexible starting point for the narrator's list of Scottish authors, as Dunbar effectively lays claim to the established tradition first and foremost represented by Chaucer. The *Lament* therefore makes explicit the poetic ties alluded to in the passages of praise in other Scottish texts, where Chaucer's name is invoked to authorize an emergent, alternative tradition of writing in Scotland.[16] Dunbar by comparison presents a variation on this strategy in setting the names of Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower directly alongside those of the vernacular writers who together comprise a native Scottish tradition. Chaucer and the English Chaucerian poets in other words are not the only ones to be named explicitly; rather, they are made to stand next to other writers whose naming suggests their authority as well.

Indeed, Chaucer's relative positioning within the work's list of authors prioritizes the Scottish tradition: whereas Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower all together are assigned two lines of the *Lament*, the Scottish writers on the other hand make up a larger grouping, occupying a total of ten stanzas (53-91). Dunbar's poem thus expresses in structural terms the displacement central to the Scottish response to Chaucer, who is effectively forced to give way to the native tradition of writing which he inspires. Indeed, this shift is marked by an explicit sense of a national identity, that is, to the writers of 'this cuntre' (54). Chaucer in other words may provide an authorizing point of reference for the vernacular in Scotland, but Dunbar's poem swiftly breaks away from him in turning to the native tradition of writing instead. The *Lament* thus illustrates the double gesture which this thesis argues is inherent in Scottish Chaucerianism: that Chaucer is left behind even as he is laid claim to, for he gives rise to an independent tradition.

The *Lament* thus looks backwards in looking forwards to vernacular writing in Scotland. As Katherine Terrell notes, the poem on the one hand articulates a 'desire for the Chaucerian past,' albeit one presented on the other hand in such a way as to celebrate both 'cultural and national difference.'[17] Indeed, Terrell rightly argues that the work's concern with death sets the writing of poetry within a historical view:

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[16] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1373-79; *Test.*, ll. 41, 58, 64; *Meroure* III, p.164.

[17] Terrell, *Scripting the Nation: Court Poetry and the Authority of History in Late Medieval Scotland,* p.126.

Chaucer's death places him firmly within a past tradition that is implicitly continued by the Scots poets.[18] The *Lament*'s explicit interest in the passage of time thus brings questions of poetic inheritance to the fore, for Dunbar's text chronicles the creation of a poetic tradition whose direct ancestor is Chaucer.[19] Yet, as Terrell notes, the evident lack of balance to that portrait in the emphasis given to the Scots writers suggests Dunbar's 'investment in his own cultural milieu that insists on early sixteenth-century Scotland's difference from Chaucer's England,' with, moreover, the weight of history evoked by the *Lament* rendering Chaucer 'inert,' turning him into 'little more than an icon of a particular genealogical myth.'[20] The Scottish writers in this reading carry on the poetic tradition which can be traced back to Chaucer, yet Dunbar's particular framing of this relationship also suggests the independence of their writing.[21]

The *Lament*, moreover, identifies its authorial persona with his fellow writers 'of this cuntre': Dunbar's narrator, for example, speaks with affection of those who have come before him. Indeed, whereas the *Lament*'s authorial persona describes in general terms those subject to Death (21-44), he writes 'I se that makaris, amang the laif, / Playis heir ther padȝanis, syne gois to graif' (45-46): the first-person reference to the act of seeing in these lines brings the writers in question before his eyes. This sense of personal acquaintance is further suggested later in the list, when the poem's narrator refers to two writers, 'Roull of Aberdene and gentill Roull of Corstorphin,' noting 'Two better fallowis did no man se' (78-79). Dunbar's poet persona makes his place within the company explicit near the end of the *Lament*, where Death is also referred to as having taken 'all my brether' (93), a use of the first-person possessive which, alongside the third-person plural pronoun (62), indicates the individual author's sense of place within the larger community of vernacular writers whose passing the work so poignantly laments.

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid
[20] Ibid., pp.126-27.
[21] Ibid.

Yet, if the *Lament* is regarded as asserting an established vernacular tradition in Scotland,[22] then Dunbar expresses this sense of a native body of writing in an oddly restrained and reluctant manner. Indeed, one might expect his authorial persona's listing of his fellow writers to yield a closing affirmation of the consolidation of his position among that grouping that will occur as a result of his own death. Dunbar does gesture at his narrator's inclusion among them but this move is somewhat half-hearted, for it is framed as a nervous recognition of the fact that he is next, that he has to join their company: 'Sen he has all my brether tane / He will naught lat me lif alane. / On forse I man his nyxt pray be' (93-95). The fear of Death which he expresses makes the narrator unwilling to have his name added to the dead Scottish writers; Dunbar's authorial persona in other words would appear to prefer to continue to live 'alane,' with Death and by extension his inclusion within a native tradition of writing an unfortunate necessity. The *Lament*'s penultimate stanza does not square with a reading of the poem as proclaiming Scottishness, for, while clearly showing his awareness of the existence of an established vernacular tradition in Scotland, Dunbar's poem does not work towards the grand finale that one might look for in such an interpretation. The *Lament* in other words deflects away from the self-assertive trope of poetic immortality,[23] to the Christian memento mori tradition with its quietly humble recognition of the inevitability of Death.

Dunbar's effective divergence from this expected affirmation is further suggested in the *Lament*'s last stanza, where his authorial persona finds consolation in the promise of everlasting life: 'Sen for the ded remeid is none, / Best is that we for dede dispone, / Efter our deid that lif may we' (97-99). Alasdair MacDonald rather provocatively contends that this ending 'seems disappointingly weak,'[24] and I would agree, but not because such a reminder of eternity appears somewhat hackneyed and predictable.[25] Rather,

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[22] Cf. Terrell, *Scripting the Nation*, pp.126-27. See also Pamela King, 'William Dunbar,' in *The Oxford History of Poetry in English: Volume 3: Medieval Poetry: 1400-1500*, ed. Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), pp.461-78 [464-67].
[23] Cf. *Met.*, XV: 871-79.
[24] Alasdair MacDonald, 'Alliterative Poetry and its Context: The Case of William Dunbar,' in *Loyal Letters: Studies on Mediaeval Alliterative Poetry & Prose*, ed. L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald, Mediaevalia Groningana, 15 (Groningen, NL: Egbert Forsten, 1994), pp.261-79 [277].
[25] Ibid.

the narrator's comforting reminder of life after death veers away from the anticipated conclusion, namely a hopeful assertion of the lasting nature of the fame which the aforementioned writers enjoy. The *Lament* in other words appears to balk at such a statement, hesitating before such assurance, and turning instead to the spiritual certainties afforded by the prospect of the life eternal that awaits after Death.

That Dunbar's recognition of the vernacular writers making up a native tradition in Scotland should be run through with a repeated reminder of man's mortality is also indicative of his subversiveness. Given the *Lament*'s extensive review of the country's literary output and acknowledgement of its many authors, that the authorial persona fails to articulate the connection between the promise of everlasting life and the immortality which is granted to those writers as a result of their efforts is in itself highly suggestive. William Quinn identifies a fear of fame within the poem, tersely observing, for instance, that in the *Lament* 'Dunbar worries his Renaissance eulogy with echoes of the medieval requiem.'[26] Whether that encomium is 'Renaissance' is a matter of debate given that it expands on an earlier tradition of poetic praise; still, Quinn's observation draws attention to the poem's mingling of a self-conscious vernacularity with a competing sense of the limitations imposed on authorial fame by the fleeting nature of human life itself (a an apparently deliberate clash of irreconcilable perspectives that is itself arguably Chaucerian). Thus, Dunbar remains aware of the existence of a full-fledged vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland; yet, the *Lament*'s ultimate effect is not one of a positive assertion but rather a melancholic sense of Death whose dominance through to the very last line of the work seems to make any such statement impossible.

That the *Lament* is performing an unexpected role is further suggested by Alasdair MacDonald, who argues that Dunbar's poem is not meant to be read as straight but as a parody of the mortality theme.[27] MacDonald notes, moreover, that 'if the poem were to be read aloud at the court, it would without doubt lend itself to ironic presentation' given that its author could hardly be on his deathbed in this context.[28] I

[26] William A. Quinn, 'William Dunbar's Fear of Fame.' *Essays in Criticism* 61.3 (2011), pp.251-31 [226].
[27] Cf. Macdonald, 'Alliterative Poetry and its Context: The Case of William Dunbar,' p.277.
[28] Ibid.

would argue that this sense of irony would surely be compounded by the poem's list of vernacular writers, for a Scottish audience might look for a roll call of such a kind to be made with a greater assertiveness. Yet, the *Lament* defies expectations in evoking the idea of a native tradition of writing in Scotland while offsetting its potential celebration of that body of writing with a sobering reminder of man's mortality. If, as MacDonald suggests, the poem had been read at court, then it could well be tongue-in-cheek, with Dunbar the spokesperson of a native vernacular tradition who refuses to perform that function as expected.

That Dunbar positions himself at a remove from the native body of writing he evokes in the *Lament* is further suggested from his portrayal of his authorial persona as struck down by sickness and infirmity (1-3), both of which provoke the narrator's general reflections on the transitoriness of things (4-6). Yet, I would argue that malady in this instance also affords the poet persona an expressive interstitial space, for his unspecified ailment situates the poem's speaker at the juncture of life and death. Dunbar's representation of his narrator as suffering from illness also relates to his status as a vernacular poet, for the authorial persona's sickness in effect brings him closer to the group of dead writers he describes. However, it simultaneously keeps him at a distance from them given he has not yet joined their number. Sickness and infirmity thus provide a means of articulating the poet's detachment from his own tradition, as Dunbar is closely associated with that native body of writing while nevertheless standing outside of it.

That the *Lament* expresses its author's awareness of an existing vernacular tradition in Scotland is clear; indeed, Dunbar employs the rhetorical strategies also found in other Scottish Chaucerian texts, with Chaucer representing the starting point of an alternative tradition of writing in Scotland. Yet, Dunbar's critical response to this native body of writing suggests a subversiveness which is Chaucerian: Quinn, for example, argues that the poem's ambivalent attitude to poetic fame recalls Chaucer's own.[29] I would argue by comparison that the work's implicit critical remove is itself broadly Chaucerian, for, like Chaucer, who so often pulls back from a complete engagement with the tradition to which he responds,

[29] Cf. Quinn, 'William Dunbar's Fear of Fame,' p.226.

Dunbar likewise adopts an ironized perspective of his own proclamation of poetic immortality. Thus, the *Lament* does not represent a straightforward adaptation of a new way of thinking about writing in Scotland; rather, it alludes to an established native body of writing but refrains from a complete assertion of its value.

The Thrissill and the Rois[30]

If the *Lament* explicitly articulates the idea of a vernacular tradition in Scotland, then Dunbar's *Thrissill and the Rois* puts this literary ideal into practice in its blending of English and Scottish sources. The *Thrissill*, as this chapter argues, is not only indebted to the poetry of Chaucer, more specifically, the *Parliament*, but also suggests its author's engagement with the reworking of that text in the *Howlat*. The *Thrissill*, moreover, in its situating of courtly love in relation to governance, recalls *The Kingis Quair*. This chapter undertakes an original reconsideration of the poem's handling of its vernacular inheritance in relation to Dunbar's celebration of the political merger of the kingdoms of England and Scotland. Yet, the *Thrissill*, despite expressing its author's awareness of an established vernacular tradition in Scotland, nevertheless pulls back from a forthright assertion of it in its depiction of a reluctant authorial persona. Indeed, Dunbar's subversiveness is further suggested from the open-endedness of the *Thrissill*, one which, while Chaucerian, is distinguished by a troubling quality that likewise complicates its indeterminacy.

The Thrissill and the Rois (c.1503) is a dream-vision poem written for the occasion of the wedding of James IV of Scotland (1473-1513) and Margaret Tudor (1489-1541) on 8 August 1503.[31] Dunbar depicts Margaret as the white and red rose in an allusion to the particoloured rose of the Tudors.[32] King James by comparison is shown in triple heraldic reference as the lion, the eagle, and the thistle. The

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[30] 'Quhen Merche wes with variand windis past'; B 52.

[31] Cf. Norman MacDougall, *James IV*, The Stewart Dynasty in Scotland (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp.250-51; R. L. Mackie, *King James IV of Scotland: A Brief Survey of His Life and Times* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), pp.90-112.

[32] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Dunbar's Use of the Symbolic Lion and Thistle,' *Cosmos* 2 (1986), pp.83-97 [83-84].

goddess Nature addresses and crowns each of these in turn, although the central stanzas of the work are focused on giving political advice to the monarch via the figures of the lion, eagle, and the thistle. Dunbar's poem thus strikes a balance in its address between praise and celebration on the one hand (the work, for instance, has a pageant-like and ceremonial quality that connects it to the royal wedding, perhaps even suggesting the author's direct familiarity with the spectacular arrangements for the marriage),[33] and on the other the advisory stance adopted in presenting instruction in the art of good government to James IV. Indeed, Dunbar's text borders in places on admonition as it alludes to the monarch's various failures, namely the predisposition to lechery and vice attested to in his love affairs before and after marriage,[34] as well as his possible failures in the exercise of justice, an important quality in an ideal ruler.[35]

Thus, the *Thrissill* from a political standpoint evokes an ideal union of the English and Scottish kingdoms, expressed via the poem's celebration of the marriage of James IV and Margaret Tudor. Yet, as Chelsea Honeyman contends in an essay that situates the poem within the context of Anglo-Scottish relations, Dunbar's use of horticultural metaphor brings the two powers into a relationship of mutuality.[36] The Rose, Honeyman argues, represents a heritage and power that is not just celebrated by Dunbar but also implicitly laid claim to with a view to strengthening and advancing the interests of Scotland.[37] Thus, English history is appropriated to assert the political authority of the poet's native Scotland.[38] I would argue, furthermore, that this process of appropriation assumes a larger poetic dimension in the *Thrissill*,

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[33] Cf. Sarah Carpenter, '"Gely wyth Tharmys of Scotland England": Word, Image and Performance at the Marriage of James IV and Margaret Tudor,' in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp.165-177 [171]; Douglas Gray, 'The Royal Entry in Sixteenth-Century Scotland,' in *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), pp.10-37 [11-22].
[34] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.78.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Cf. Chelsea Honeyman '"Rois Red and Quhit, Resplendent of Colour": Margaret Tudor and Scotland's Floricultural Future in William Dunbar's Poetry,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp.181-93 [186-93].
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

for English Chaucerian literature is absorbed within a native vernacular tradition in Scotland, a joining together which is further suggested by the work's allusions to Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*.

Dunbar's poem draws on and departs from one of its principal sources in *The Parliament of Fowls*. (Bawcutt notes, for instance, that the latter work is itself also possibly linked with a royal wedding).[39] In the *Thrissill*, Nature, however, assumes a more active role than her symbolic counterpart in the *Parliament*, for, in addition to embodying natural order and harmony, she also takes on the related roles of ruler and lawgiver on the one hand and educator on the other, offering instruction in the art of good governance.[40] Where Chaucer's parliament of birds gather to choose their mates as they do from year to year,[41] an event which, moreover, leads to a lively debate about love and the deferral of the formel's choice of suitor, Dunbar's poem, written on the occasion of the royal wedding, is less concerned with that selection process, (as the identity of the couple in question is clearly established through the work's symbolic references) but instead with the relationship of love itself to the successful governance and stability of the realm.

Dunbar's representation of the royal couple also points to his engagement with the *Parliament*, in which three separate suitors come before the assembly, each making his case for the formel's hand.[42] The *Thrissill* depicts only a single suitor, but portrays him in a symbolic triplicate, with the lion, the eagle, and the thistle together combining in reference to the same person: the king. Thus, the value three is applied not to an ideal choice of lover but rather to the lover's ideal moral qualities, for the three symbols assigned to the monarch are not simply drawn upon as allusive royal identifiers. The lion, for instance, although his description corresponds to the lion's portrayal on the Scottish royal arms, nevertheless reflects a further level of symbolic reference as an emblem of not just courage or ferocity, but for his familiar association with the justice and magnanimity hoped for in a good ruler (85-112).[43] The eagle, likewise, while

[39] Cf. Bawcutt, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar*, vol. 2, p.395.
[40] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, pp.95-97.
[41] Cf. *PF*, l.321.
[42] Cf. *PF*, ll.414-83.
[43] Cf. Bawcutt, 'Dunbar's Use of the Symbolic Lion and Thistle,' pp.85-86.

traditionally the king of birds, is a figure for the impartial exercise of justice (120-26).[44] The thistle's prickly properties as a plant also make it more than just the personal badge of the Scottish king, but rather connect it as a symbol to the monarch's duty to defend and protect the realm (127-33).[45] Dunbar gives it a further meaning in a possible allusion to the king's love affairs, for Nature urges the thistle to exercise discretion and 'honesty,' that is, honour and, specifically, chastity (135-40).

Thus, the *Thrissill* involves a pointed taking apart of elements of the *Parliament of Fowls*, as Chaucer's poem provides an authorizing precedent which is then reworked and given a Scottish form. Yet, the *Thrissill* also gestures in a way that has not fully been appreciated to *The Buke of the Howlat*; indeed, Holland's bird assembly poem provides an early example of a similar 'Scotticizing' of the *Parliament*. Like the *Howlat*, moreover, which not only depicts an assembly of birds under the goddess Nature, recalling Chaucer, but also runs its narrative through with a description of different shields, Dunbar's poem too integrates its portrayal of an assembly of animals with a symbolic heraldic reference. Like Holland, moreover, who as this thesis has shown implicitly asserts himself relative to Chaucer, whose *Parliament* provides him with a vernacular poetic authority from which he simultaneously departs, Dunbar's poem too undertakes a gesture of a similar kind as it responds to the *Parliament* while effectively taking it apart in a way which points to his independence from Chaucer.

In the *Howlat*, this sense of autonomy is expressed by way of reference to the earlier Scottish vernacular tradition of writing represented by the late fourteenth-century John Barbour's *Bruce* (c.1375). In the *Thrissill* on the other hand this native literature receives an update via the poem's use of the *Howlat* as the Scottish Chaucerian tradition of writing is established by the early sixteenth century and available for Dunbar to draw upon in his own later vernacular rewriting of elements of the *Parliament*. Indeed, that Dunbar should do so acquires an additional significance within the political context of the *Thrissill* which asserts Scottish autonomy not separately from but rather through and as a result of the union with England.

[44] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, pp.99-100.
[45] Cf. Bawcutt, 'Dunbar's Use of the Symbolic Lion and Thistle,' p.90.

The *Thrissill* gives this political ambition a poetic form, for, while Dunbar signals his response to Chaucer, that is, to the *Parliament* as well as to an authoritative vernacular body of writing which is English, he also responds to the native tradition that is the result of that poetic merger in the *Howlat.*

The *Thrissill*'s Scottish influences also extend to include its parallels with *The Kingis Quair* of James I of Scotland, a work which self-consciously signals its engagement with the poetry of Chaucer. The *Quair*, moreover, which responds to the larger questions raised by both the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*, is further distinguished in examining the relationship between courtly love and good governance; James I draws on the former in order to present an ideal view of what a ruler should be.[46] Like James's, Dunbar's poem involves a similar working out of the ties between courtly love and kingship: the *Thrissill*, however, picks up the question by way of engagement with a different poem by Chaucer. Both Scottish Chaucerian texts are nevertheless related insofar as they explore the topic of courtly love, which in both poems implicitly functions as a measure of the values expected and required of a good king. In the *Quair*, however, the texts's royal author presents himself as working towards that political ideal, while Dunbar's poem adopts an advisory stance in the lessons it presents to James IV.[47]

Unlike the *Quair*, moreover, which works towards a final confident assertion of Scottishness, of a native Chaucerian tradition of writing which simultaneously draws on but also departs from England's, the *Thrissill* does not engage in a similar proclamation of this vernacular independence. Indeed, Dunbar adopts a similar strategy as the other poets in this thesis in positioning himself relative to Chaucer: the *Thrissill*, for example, begins with an first stanza marking the welcome onset of spring (1-7)[48] (Bawcutt notes the parallels between this opening passage and that of *The Canterbury Tales*).[49] Yet, this Chaucerian beginning is brought to a sudden close as the next stanza turns suddenly to the poet in bed (8): the absence

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[46] Cf. esp. Sally Mapstone, 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*,' *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp.51-69.
[47] Cf. Joanna Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540* (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), pp.158-59.
[48] Cf. *CT* I (A), ll.1-11.
[49] Cf. Bawcutt, ed., *The Poems of William Dunbar*, Vol. 2, p.396.

of stops in the poem's opening stanza further contributes to this sense of abruptness, generating a feeling of movement contrasting sharply with the image of the author lying in his bed. Thus, the *Thrissill*, while adopting the strategy of interruption that this thesis argues is characteristic of Scottish Chaucerian texts, subverts that gesture in refusing to draw out of it a positive assertion of Scottishness.

Dunbar's difference in this regard is further suggested from his allusion to the *Quair*. The *Thrissill*'s authorial persona recounts how there appeared at the window the personification of May, who chastises him for his lethargy and commands him to rise and write '"sum thing"' in her honour (23).[50] In a Scottish context, this reference to 'sum thing' evokes the injunction to the poet near the *Quair*'s outset, where James's authorial persona is called on by the ringing matins bell to write 'sum newe thing.'[51] In the *Thrissil*, however, the command to write does not yield as enthusiastic a response as in the *Quair*; rather, Dunbar's authorial persona expresses his independence, albeit by talking back to May, asking her what the point is of doing as she instructs given the birds are silent and the air is neither '"holsum nor benyng"' (32). May, however, responds patiently by repeating herself, ordering the authorial persona to rise '"and do thy observance. / Thow did promyt, in Mayis lusty quhyle / For to discryve the ros of most pleasance"' (37-39),[52] before passing through the garden gate where he follows her in haste (43-49).

A. C. Spearing writes thoughtfully about the opening stanzas to *The Thrissill and the Rois*, noting that Dunbar 'celebrates an ideal, while at the same time admitting, with poise and toughness, that reality often diverges from it,' a reading inscribed in the authorial persona's initial objections to writing.[53] This contrast between things as they are and things as they should be is evident in the work's handling of James IV's failures to live up to the moral ideal that it presents, such as, among others, his love affairs.[54] However, the feelings of pointlessness governing the poet's task lacks the corresponding sense of moral

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[50] Cf. *KQ*, l.89.
[51] *KQ*, l.89.
[52] Cf. *CT* I (A), ll.1042-45.
[53] A. C. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.212.
[54] Ibid., p.214. Cf. *Fables*, ll.1384-97.

outrage to make this interpretation of the work's opening stanzas more persuasive.[55] Nor, moreover, is the narrative figure busily engaged at the poem's outset in the pursuit of an ideal form of love.[56] Rather, the authorial persona's reluctance to participate hints at a feeling of detachment or indifference. Indeed, that the poem itself is the product of an agreement or compromise and therefore written out of obligation (36-42) is reflected in the fact that the narrative proper suffers from an almost excessive conventionality,[57] with the ideals the work expresses arising from compulsion as opposed to deep personal conviction.

That the *Thrissill* positions itself relative to the vernacular tradition to which it belongs in a way that is Chaucerian is suggested from the parallels between the ending of the poem and that of the *Parliament.* Chaucer's courtly allegorical poem concludes abruptly, with the shouting of birds waking the authorial persona who, unsatisfied with his dream experience, turns again to his books for knowledge.[58] Dunbar's final stanza follows a similar pattern as the song of the birds jolts the narrative figure awake:

> Than all the birdis song with sic a schout
>
> That I annone awoilk quhair that I lay,
>
> And with a braid I turnyt me about
>
> To se this court, bot all wer went away.
>
> Than vp I lenyt halflingis in affrey,
>
> And thus I wret, as ȝe haif hard toforrow,
>
> Off lusty May vpone the nynt morrow. (183-89)

The Thrissill and the Rois's ending appears at first glance to form a neat contrast with the *Parliament*, for, as Chaucer's authorial persona continues his quest for learning and in doing so leaves the poem open-

[55] Cf. *Fables*, ll.1388-97.

[56] Cf. *PF*, ll.1-28. Cf. Louise Olga Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Madison, WI, and London, UK: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p.134.

[57] Cf. Deanna Delmar Evans, 'Ambivalent Artifice in Dunbar's *The Thrissill and the Rois*,' *SSL* 22.1 (1987), pp.95-105 [96-97].

[58] Cf. *PF*, ll.693-99.

ended, Dunbar's narrative figure does not assume a similarly questioning attitude, tying up his dream vision by signalling his writing of it upon waking in an apparent gesture of narrative closure.

Yet, Dunbar's authorial persona reveals a disquiet in writing that sets him apart from Chaucer's: in the *Thrissill*, the shouting of the birds that wakes the dreamer in the closing stanza of the *Parliament* assumes a significantly more threatening character, causing the authorial persona to turn around with a start, looking about him for a sight of the courtly assembly which has instead completely disappeared. This striking change of tone at the end of the work gives his dream experience a nightmarish quality, for the narrator is startled into waking by the shout of the birds and writes his poem in a state of fear.[59] The act of literary composition thus described brings the poem full circle as it recalls its opening negotiation, with the authorial persona completing the poetic task demanded of him in the text's opening stanzas.[60] Yet, the apprehensiveness with which he does so gives that framing obligation a menacing character, thus marking a troubling shift in tenor in the final stanza of the work as the dreamer is not so much unsatisfied, perusing books for that deeper knowledge which remained elusive despite his visionary experience,[61] but brings the narrative to a close without asking questions and yet in a manner which certainly raises them.

Thus, the *Thrissill* provides an indication of the later development of Scottish Chaucerianism, for Dunbar's text self-consciously engages with a poetic inheritance now no longer exclusively Chaucerian but responds instead to a native vernacular tradition of writing grown out of building on itself. Yet, while the *Thrissill* speaks to its author's awareness of the existence of such a poetic tradition in Scotland, Dunbar's response to that body of writing is not one of a straightforward proclamation or assertion. Rather, Dunbar expresses his detachment from that tradition via the figure of his reluctant authorial persona. Thus, the *Thrissill* illustrates a tension within the later reception and practice of Chaucerian writing in Scotland,

[59] Cf. *GT*, ll.275-79.
[60] Cf. Antony J. Hasler, *Court Poetry in Late Medieval England and Scotland: Allegories of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.41.
[61] Cf. *PF*, ll.693-99.

for, while clearly working within this poetic tradition in presenting his own version of the *Parliament*, Dunbar's framing fiction nevertheless draws attention to the way that he also stands off to its side.

The *Thrissill* therefore responds simultaneously to two vernacular traditions of writing: the first is English, that is, Chaucer's poetry which is appropriated and reworked by being given a Scottish form. Yet, Dunbar, writing in the early years of the sixteenth century, likewise reveals an awareness of a Scottish Chaucerian tradition, one suggested, for example, via his indirect handling of the *Howlat*, as Holland's mid-fifteenth-century poem provides him with a precedent for his handling of Chaucer. Indeed, the *Thrissill*'s status as an occasional poem also invites a reading of it as self-consciously Scottish, for Dunbar's text stands in an oblique poetic relationship to the political merger which it celebrates, for the Scottish Chaucerian tradition of writing grows out of its joining together with an established English one. Thus, on the one hand, the *Thrissill* affords its author the opportunity to assert a native Scottish Chaucerian tradition, whose recognizability is suggested from Dunbar's engagement with the *Howlat*; on the other hand, however, Dunbar also subverts the very vernacular traditions of writing to which he responds, inscribing the authorial role which he self-consciously adopts with a sense of reluctance and menace.

A Ballat of the Abbot of Tungland

As with the *Thrissill*, the *Parliament of Fowls* also stands behind the *Ballat of the Abbot of Tungland*.[62] Dunbar's poem, however, this chapter agues, is more indebted still to the *Buke of the Howlat* as a Scottish precedent for its highly original reworking of the bird assembly as found in Chaucer's text. The *Ballat*, more specifically, responds to the expressive potential of difference itself in the *Howlat*, where Holland, as this thesis has shown, transforms alterity into a way of asserting himself relative to Chaucer. Thus, as in the *Howlat*, which focuses on an outsider figure, an anti-hero is featured in the *Ballat*: like Holland's,

[62] 'As ȝung Awrora with cristall haile'; B 4.

Dunbar's poem stands in a relationship of opposition to the world of the *Parliament*. For Holland, however, alterity becomes a source of assertion, of his independence relative to Chaucer, whereas the *Ballat* does not inscribe the themes of exclusion and isolation with a positive vernacular self-assertion.

The *Ballat* focuses on a real figure from the court of James IV: John Damian, a foreigner (probably Italian), who played the roles of doctor and alchemist, and friend and companion to the Scottish king.[63] (James IV favoured Damian with the bestowal of a benefice, namely the abbacy of Tongland in 1504).[64] Damian's suspiciously varied career and interests are the subject of satire and burlesque in the *Ballat*, the nameless protagonist of which leads a fugitive existence that eventually brings him to Scotland (25-26) where he pursues a largely successful career as a greedy and incompetent doctor and alchemist (27-56). However, his failure to make the quintessence ultimately leads him to attempt his escape by air as he dons a coat of feathers only to have them stripped by the birds who set upon him in the skies above (57-112). (Damian's possible failed attempt at a similar flight may have provided the inspiration for this episode).[65] This literal downfall clearly has symbolic implications as the poem's protagonist gets his comeuppance, with his headlong tumble into a muddy pond a deserved end for this depraved trickster's overweening.

The *Ballat*'s selection of the birds who set upon the abbot recalls a similar list in the *Parliament*, while Dunbar's poem, moreover, opens with the same reference to the dawn as his other major Chaucerian allegories,[66] therefore suggesting that this poem too will be a dream vision in a similar generic vein. Yet, the *Ballat* features a world which is altogether different in tone and in its portrayal of the bird kingdom, for, instead of depicting the ideal harmonies binding the assembly together in the *Parliament*, Dunbar inverts those very principles of order in his poem's unnatural picture of birds attacking men.[67] The catalogue of the birds who ambush the abbot also differs strikingly from the feathered assembly in

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[63] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.56.
[64] Ibid., p.57.
[65] Ibid., pp.57-58.
[66] Cf. *TR*, l.9; *GT*, ll.1-9.
[67] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.277.

Chaucer, which together reflects the inviting plenitude and tuneful consonance of the natural world.[68] In the *Ballat*, on the other hand, the birds are those of prey alone, depicted shrieking and screaming, a stark difference in emphasis contributing to the greater sense of violence and threat that the poem produces.[69]

Dunbar's work also contains a number of parallels with Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat* (c.1448). Its use of tail rhyme connects it to medieval romance[70] and thus by extension to the *Howlat*, for both poems manipulate the conventions of that genre in their satirical treatment of social climbers.[71] Both texts are, moreover, written in the alliterative style and feature an anti-hero as their protagonist. Bawcutt, for instance, notes the highly suggestive reference to the abbot as the 'hornit howle' (74),[72] while there are striking points in common between his attack, or mobbing, and that of the howlat's (105-12).[73] In terms of narrative detail, however, this episode owes more to the ejection of the rook in the *Howlat*, where two birds set upon the flyting bard who is pulled about and begrimed by them both.[74] The farcical dimension of this boisterous episode as signalled in the response of the onlooking company, the lords who laugh on high to see the rook thus treated, while, moreover, the threat of the real anger raised in the verbal exchange between the bard and the other birds present evaporates as the two birds who had attacked him set upon one another in a rough and tumble that ends with a kiss of reconciliation.[75] Thus, although the mobbing of the rook looks forward to the later and serious reversal of the howlat's fortunes,[76] Holland's representation of the laughter to which it gives rise also takes the edge off his poem's depiction of violence.

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[68] Cf. *PF*, ll.316-71.

[69] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, pp.275-76.

[70] Cf. Rhiannon Purdie, 'Scottish Poets and English Stanzas: *Schir Thomas Norny* and Dunbar's Use of Tail-Rhyme,' *Florilegium* 25 (2008), pp.175-91 [179-84].

[71] Cf. Nicola Royan, "'Mark your Meroure be Me': Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*,' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp.49-62 [50-52].

[72] Ibid., p.58.

[73] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, .277-78; David Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse: Holland, Douglas, Dunbar,' *JEGP* 85.4 (1986), pp.494-509 [505-09].

[74] Cf. *BH*, ll.820-32; Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.278.

[75] Cf. *BH*, ll.833-45; Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse,' pp.499-500.

[76] Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse,' p.500.

Like the *Howlat*, moreover, which gives a historical specificity to the world of the *Parliament* – Holland's final stanza, for example, refers directly to the seat of his patrons in Darnaway in Morayshire,[77] while the poem's heraldic core describes the shields of contemporary members of the Douglas clan[78] – the *Ballat* alludes via John Damian to the goings-on at the court of James IV of Scotland. The *Howlat*'s 'Scotticization' of Chaucer thus expresses itself in the poem's adaptation of the *Parliament* to refer to the Scottish names and places which this thesis argues come to form the effective landscape of the poem. The *Ballat* represents a similar process of assimilation as the universal poetic setting of the *Parliament* is laid claim to, reworked in being applied to the present-day events at the early sixteenth-century Scottish court. The *Ballat* in this regard not only responds to the poetry of Chaucer and English Chaucerianism; it also engages with the *Howlat*, thereby revealing an awareness of an existing vernacular tradition in Scotland.

Yet, Dunbar's greater detachment from this body of writing is suggested by his departures from the *Howlat*, for the two poets develop the concept of alterity in notably contrasting directions. In the *Howlat*, Holland inscribes the idea of difference with a positive assertion of his independence from Chaucer, with the howlat becoming the figure through which this distinctiveness is articulated. The *Ballat*, too, self-consciously situates itself in a relationship of opposition to the poetry of Chaucer, for Dunbar makes his anti-hero the protagonist of what is in effect an upside-down version of the *Parliament*: Bawcutt for one observes the poem's reversal of the 'normal relationship between birds and men,' with the former attacking the latter, as well as its pointed overturning of 'accepted natural hierarchies.'[79] Yet the *Ballat*, despite presenting a world which is notable for being different from that of the *Parliament*, departs from Holland in that it does not develop this alterity into a corresponding assertion of a Scottish tradition.

That the *Ballat* pulls back from such a gesture is suggested from a further contrast with the *Howlat*: for Holland inscribes the themes of isolation and exclusion, both applied mainly to the howlat itself but as

[77] Cf. *BH*, ll.999-1000.
[78] Cf. *BH*, ll.348-90, 547-632.
[79] Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.277.

this thesis argues emerging elsewhere within the narrative, as with the mobbing of the Gaelic rook, with a playful humour designed to point up the author's own connection to such outsider figures. The *Howlat*, moreover, integrates its portrayal of difference within a larger celebration of the positive values embodied by Sir James Douglas, for example, as well as the morally deserving members of the Black Douglases. Together with the poem's closing warning against the dangers of earthly attachments and its pointed redirection of the reader's attention to the virtuous turtledoves with whom the author associates,[80] the *Howlat*'s shifts in tone and emphasis effectively frame its treatment of alterity and difference, supporting a reading of them in relation to the view of poetry that the work as a whole promotes.

Dunbar by contrast subverts the positive reworking of isolation and exclusion in the *Howlat*. In the *Ballat*, for example, the mobbing of the abbot is more darkly represented than the howlat's or the rook's. While Bawcutt argues that this attack is comically treated using burlesque and the mock-chivalric, with the abbot keeping company with the ducks as he hides from the birds for three days in a pond (119-20),[81] this apparently passing detail resonates disturbingly with the three days and nights spent by Christ in the tomb, thus rendering the poem's use of humour less light-hearted and far more transgressive instead. The corresponding absence of laughter within the narrative itself withholds the feeling of release following the comparatively lengthy portrayal of the attack on the abbot while here there is no kiss of reconciliation. Nor does the poem's protagonist emerge again from the pond, in which he is shown cowering in fear, to address the reader with a reflection on the error of his ways and to warn them against sinfulness.[82] Indeed, the poem reflects a harsh justice which, it has rightly been noted, has more to do with fable, 'in which animal malefactors receive bloody heads or broken bones, or to that of the fabliau, in which rogues repeatedly end in ditches, dykes, and even less salubrious places,' not unlike the besmirched rook.[83] Yet,

[80] Cf. *BH*, ll.989-1001.
[81] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.278.
[82] Cf. *BH*, ll.950-84.
[83] Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.279.

there remains a troubling lack of a moral at the end of this tale that separates it from the genre of fable, while the vividly brutal treatment of the abbot makes the poem's comic elements more difficult to discern.

Thus, the *Ballat*, while responding to the treatment of alterity and difference in the *Howlat*, with Dunbar implicitly drawing on both in order to situate itself in relation to the poetry of Chaucer, takes Holland's poem and effectively empties it of the positive values underpinning its assertion of Scottishness. The *Ballat*'s handling of exclusion and isolation thus lacks the constructive quality it has in the *Howlat*. Indeed, Dunbar's poem is notable for the apparent absence of governing ideals or principles: for example, in addition to the vacuum which follows in the wake of the mobbing of the poem's protagonist, Dunbar does not point his readers to a positive exemplum of the virtues found wanting in the abbot. In other words there are no morally attractive birds to whom the poem invites us as readers to aspire, feathered embodiments of the underlying moral principles which should govern the poem's narrative.[84] The only birds to whom the reader might look for guidance are those who viciously attack the abbot, a threatening group which appropriately, given their role, almost entirely comprises birds of prey.[85] This selectiveness contributes to the impression of a bleak malevolence governing the world of the poem, as the birds' shrieks and cries are made to echo through to the end of the narrative proper of the work.

This sense of the company itself as being threatening is reinforced in the final stanza of the *Ballat,* where the waking of the dreamer by the noise of the birds recalls the ending to Chaucer's *Parliament*. In Dunbar, however, the dissatisfaction expressed by the narrative persona is of a very different nature, arising as it does from the dreamer's profound animosity towards the birds whose shouting wakes him:

> The air was dirkit with the fowlis,
> That come with ȝawmeris and with ȝowlis,
> With skryking, skrymming and with scowlis,
>   To tak him in the tyde.

[84] Cf. *BH*, ll. 989-93.
[85] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.278.

I walknit with the noyis and schowte,

So hiddowis beir was me abowte.

Sensyne I curs that cankerit rowte,

Quhair evir I go or ryde. (121-28)

There is also a clear contrast between the representation of the noise of the birds in the *Parliament*, where the harmonious roundel at the end of the dream is what rouses the authorial persona from his slumber, and the dissonant shrieking and screaming of the birds circling above in the concluding stanza of the *Ballat*. Nor, moreover, does the narrative persona awake to pursue a still-elusive ideal through further reading; rather, his sense of discontent does not manifest itself in the ongoing but hopeful quest for an ideal, expressing itself instead in his feeling of bitter hostility towards the evil or malignant crowd of birds.

The *Ballat*'s final turning to the narrator's perspective also recalls the closing stanza of the *Howlat*, for, like Holland's, Dunbar's poem ends with a personal shift, that is, to the authorial figure himself, who reflects back on his own relationship to the throng of birds represented in the preceding narrative.[86] In Dunbar, however, this connection is tinged with resentment, as the narrator's comments make clear, nor is his (in this case explicit) criticism of the feathered assembly accompanied by a positive affirmation of a personal commitment to the ethical ideals found lacking in the disharmonious world they inhabit.[87] Thus, instead of the prayerful iteration of the spiritual values which are meant to underpin that universe, Dunbar's narrator is simply woken from his dream and angrily curses the shrieking and shouting birds. Nor, moreover, does the persona identify any other birds to whom he might otherwise attach himself, and in doing so potentially transform this feeling of contempt into a positive assertion of a higher ideal.[88] Rather, the narrator's reference to himself cursing the poisonous crowd of birds henceforth suggests a seclusion very different from the religious retreat promoted in the final stanza of the *Howlat*, as Dunbar's

[86] Cf. *BH,* ll.989-1001.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

authorial persona remains an outsider in a far darker and more troubling sense than Holland's, for, in the absence of a more lasting set of values to celebrate, his is an angrier, negative isolation.

In the *Howlat*, the final line of which functions as an authorial signature, 'Happinnit Holland,' Holland himself playfully assumes the position of the howlat, situating himself in the forest of Darnaway where he implicitly joins the morally admirable turtledoves, namely the Earl and Countess of Moray.[89] The *Ballat* contains a similar mixture of historical and political reference within a poetic landscape, with, for instance, the final stanza of the work expressing a point of view likely to reflect the author's own. Dunbar, moreover, through the figure of the narrative persona, also identifies with his poem's anti-hero, that is, the flying abbot who slips out of his false coat of feathers in an attempt to escape his attackers (105-08), for, although the work's protagonist is clearly the object of censure in the lead-up to this event, Dunbar's closing expression of distaste for the whole assembly lends that portrayal a certain sympathy, indicating a sense of affinity with one who is the victim of the feathered retinue's violence and brutality.

Yet, the *Ballat*'s final stanza does not transform this implicit identification into a positive. The *Howlat* by comparison develops the connection between the authorial persona and the howlat itself (whose return to his original state at the end of the narrative confirms his status as an ostracized figure) into a subtle assertion of the desirability of being on the outside, that is, of being excluded and shunned. Thus, Holland's empowering treatment of difference aligns with his poem's assertion of Scottishness. In the *Ballat*, the authorial persona's closing sense of a rapport with the outsider abbot is less affirming, in large part because the poem from start to finish does not seek to frame alterity in positive terms. I would argue that this reading of the work can be extended to include its response to the poetry of Chaucer, for, while Dunbar's choice of subject matter places his work in a relationship of opposition to the *Parliament*, the *Ballat* ultimately refuses to transform difference into the celebration of alternative vernacular identity.

[89] Cf. *BH*, ll.989-1001.

The *Ballat* thus represents a circumscribed engagement with an existing Scottish Chaucerianism, for Dunbar does not simply undertake the appropriation of the poetry of Chaucer into Scots; rather, the *Ballat*, structured as it is around the downfall of its anti-hero and with its thematic disharmony, rewrites the *Parliament* from the point of view of difference in a way that directly connects it to the *Howlat*. Yet, if Dunbar's poem is regarded as a poetic response to not just an established Scottish Chaucerianism, but also to the way that the writers of that tradition express themselves in relation to Chaucer, then the *Ballat* constitutes a highly subversive answer to this process of vernacular self-assertion in Scotland. Dunbar in other words not only implicitly refrains from a simple imitation of the poetry of Chaucer. The *Ballat* simultaneously pulls back from the forthright proclamation of alterity that he finds in the *Howlat,* adopting a qualified attitude to statements of such a kind despite his awareness of a native Chaucerianism.

The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo

Dunbar's 'Scotticization' of Chaucer is most strongly felt in his poem *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*,[90] which, while drawing on aspects of both the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale* and *The Merchant's Tale*, nevertheless gives those texts what is best described as a Scottish recasting.[91] The *Tretis*, however, this chapter argues, provides a response in miniature to the whole of the *Tales*. While the *Tretis*'s status as a concise rejoinder to the use of the storytelling genre by Chaucer is its primary focus, this chapter begins by considering the poem's relation to its larger Scottish Chaucerian context: first, the *Tretis*'s use of the long alliterative line indicates its double engagement not just with Chaucer, but also with the *Howlat*, whose formal recasting of the latter's verse provides a precedent for Dunbar's own; the *Tretis*, secondly,

[90] 'Apon the Midsummer Ewin, mirriest of nichtis'; B3.

[91] Cf. Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.130-34; Francis Lee Utley, *The Crooked Rib: An Analytical Index to the Argument about Women in English and Scots Literature to the End of the year 1568* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University, 1944), .282-83; James Kinsley, 'The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo,' *MAE* 23 (1954), pp.31-35 [33-34]; Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, pp.216-33.

intersects in a way that has not previously been appreciated with the *Fables*, for Henryson's Scots story collection likewise looks forward to the grouping of tales in the *Tretis*. Yet, Dunbar's difference in the handling of multivocality also distinguishes his poem from the *Fables*, thereby illustrating the way in which the later poets of this thesis both draw on and depart from the earlier ones.

The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo is one of the longest of the poems by Dunbar. It is narrated from the perspective of a first-person observer who ventures into a garden on Midsummer's Eve, where he comes upon three splendidly dressed ladies on whom he eavesdrops from a concealed position.[92] The group consists of two married women and a widow, depicted sitting drinking in the garden. The widow addresses her companions with a provocative question regarding their views on love and marriage: whether they have been happy and faithful in marriage or whether they would have chosen better (41-48). The exchange that follows is shockingly revealing of their views of love, marriage, and sex, with the two wives and the widow herself each speaking in frank and bawdy terms of their married experience. The widow's speech comprises virtually half of the poem and contains lessons for the younger women on how to negotiate the power dynamics of marriage as evidenced in her subjugation of her two husbands. Her speech is greeted with laughter and further drinking until the arrival of dawn ends their reveling. The poem closes with a question addressed to an implicit male audience on behalf of the first-person narrator, who asks which of the three women his listeners would select as their own if they had the choice (527-30), a problematic query contributing to the poem's unusual mixture of literary kinds.[93]

While the *Tretis*'s subject matter is altogether different from that of the *Buke of the Howlat* (c.1448), Dunbar's use of the unrhymed alliterative long line connects back to Holland's poem. The *Howlat*, as this thesis has shown, adopts the thirteen-line alliterative stanza in recasting Chaucer,

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[92] Cf. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur: Looking and Listening in Medieval Love-Narratives*, pp.249-67.

[93] Cf. Elizabeth Roth, 'Criticism and Taste: Readings of Dunbar's *Tretis*,' in *SLJ Supplement* 15 (1981), pp.57-90 [59-62]; Roy J. Pearcy, 'The Genre of William Dunbar's *Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*,' *Speculum* 55.1 (1980), pp.58-74 [58-61]; Joanna S. Norman, 'The Paradox of Tradition in the Poetry of William Dunbar,' in *Actes du 2e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Écossaises, Université de Strasbourg, 5-11 Juillet 1978*, ed. Jean-Jacques Blanchot and Claude Graf (Strasbourg: Institut d'études anglaises de Strasbourg, 1979), p.339-59 [339].

'Scotticizing' the Chaucerian tradition of writing in a way which is also evident in the *Tretis*: as Felicity Riddy notes, the *Tretis* is 'aberrant' in that it uses the alliterative long line for a Chaucerian text, employing 'the most 'un-Chaucerian of all verse forms' to signal its departure from the poetry of Chaucer.[94] The *Tretis*, while its deployment of the alliterative long line finds a native vernacular precedent in the *Howlat*, is tellingly not written in the thirteen-line stanza as that text, thus indicating how Dunbar, in addition to Chaucer, also seeks to distinguish himself from the earlier poets of the Scottish Chaucerian tradition.

If the *Tretis*, furthermore, is regarded as a response to the whole of the *Canterbury Tales*, then Dunbar's poem likewise deserves to be considered in line with Robert Henryson's *Moral Fables* which this thesis has shown represents an indirect response to the use of the storytelling genre by Chaucer. The *Fables* thus interpreted constitute an ambitious attempt to present an alternative version of the *Tales*, where Scots, moreover, emerges as the rhetorical language par excellence over against Chaucer's English.[95] The *Tretis* thus represents an early sixteenth-century example of the storytelling genre as used in the *Tales.* Yet, Dunbar's response to that text is also implicitly mediated by his reading of the *Fables*. Thus, the *Tretis* should also be viewed as responding to the native vernacular tradition of re-reading the *Tales.* Unlike the *Fables*, however, which this thesis argues asserts itself relative to the poetry of Chaucer, the *Tretis* by comparison presents a far more subversive handling of the storytelling genre than Henryson.

Henryson's affirmation of his native tongue is suggested from his effective upgrade to the *Tales*, for the *Fables* are explicitly self-conscious of their status as a vernacular translation of a Latin *auctor*. Henryson, for example, as this thesis has demonstrated, while to a certain extent imitating Chaucer, effectively pushes him aside in explicitly undertaking a translation of the fables of Aesop into Scots: the *Fables* in other words represent a neatly authorized variation on the generically mixed *Tales*. While the *Tretis* on the other hand indirectly engages with the native reworking of the latter text in the *Fables*,

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[94] Felicity Riddy, 'The Alliterative Revival,' in *The History of Scottish Literature, Vol 1: Origins to 1660 (Mediaeval and Renaissance)*, ed. R. D. S. Jack (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988) pp.39-54 [41].
[95] Cf. *Fables*, ll. 36-42.

Dunbar does not seek to assert his vernacular through a retelling of the stories of classical antiquity. Rather, the *Tretis* turns for inspiration to the comparatively unauthoritative examples of fabliaux in the *Tales*. Dunbar's own miniature story collection therefore evokes its vernacular precedent in the *Fables*, yet the *Tretis* at the same time also pulls back from the self-assertion that is an important feature of that text, with Dunbar's preference for fabliau an implicit deviation from this kind of gesture as made by Henryson.

Indeed, the *Tretis*, in its generic homogeneity both follows and departs from the *Fables*, for Henryson's fable collection is of a greater uniformity compared to Chaucer's *Tales*. However, the *Fables*' highly self-conscious alternation of tales from different branches of the fable tradition, together with its deliberate overarching arrangement, creates a reading experience like that of the *Tales*.[96] Indeed, the *Fables* themselves constitute a response to the back and forth of storytelling in Chaucer's text. The *Tretis* to a certain extent joins in on this trading of tales in a way that connects it to Henryson. Yet, Dunbar, as the remainder of this chapter section will argue via a closer comparison with the *Tales*, also implicitly undercuts this principle of a dynamic exchange due to the comparative sameness of the *Tretis*. Thus, the *Tretis*'s qualified engagement with earlier examples of the storytelling genre in the *Tales* and the *Fables* is suggested from its internal resistance to the variety of point of view that defines those texts.

The *Tretis* as a Chaucerian poem reflects a number of parallels with *The Canterbury Tales*: Dunbar's depiction of the widow, for instance, clearly recalls the portrayal of the Wife of Bath.[97] Yet, the *Tretis*'s storytelling structure also suggests the possibility of a broader relationship with the *Tales*, as Dunbar engages not only with individual tales but also with the work as a whole. The *Tretis*'s relative length, moreover, within the author's poetic corpus provides further evidence to support this reading,

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[96] Cf. Denton Fox, ed. *The Poems of Robert Henryson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.lxxv-lxxxi.

[97] Cf. Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.130-34; Francis Lee Utley, *The Crooked Rib: An Analytical Index to the Argument about Women in English and Scots Literature to the End of the year 1568* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University, 1944), pp.282-83; James Kinsley, 'The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo,' *MAE* 23 (1954), pp.31-35 [33-34].

representing a miniature version of the assemblage of stories told by the pilgrims on their journey.[98] Indeed, the group of the two married women and the widow tell tales for similar reasons to the pilgrims, exchanging personal anecdotes about their lives as a way of passing the time (526) and for 'gam' (241).[99] That their speeches are meant to be regarded as stories is indicated from the narrative figure's reference to the 'mony taill sindry' (38) shared between the women near the poem's outset, as well as by the widow's declaration, after hearing her two companions speak, that her '"taill it is nixt"' (246). The connection to storytelling is further implied in the authorial persona's closing address to his listeners (527), which situates the narrative within a performative context, suggesting it may have been read aloud.[100]

Yet, the *Tretis*, as a smaller scale engagement with the storytelling of the *Tales*, is highly selective, with the three women's tales most resembling the fabliaux told by Chaucer's pilgrims.[101] Even then, however, the stories the women share about their lives are far more violent than anything in Chaucer: the first wife, for instance, fantasizes about dressing in fine clothes and being seen in public places, much like the Wife of Bath, yet her description of her husband is filled with a distinctively vitriolic intensity (89-145), one, moreover, drawing for its shockingly abusive effect on the poetic genre of flyting (342), as the two married women and the widow respectively pile insults on husbands past and present, making use of the degrading analogies and reductive animal imagery which are all characteristic of flyting.[102] Dunbar's adaptation of flyting on one level reflects the genre's use for displays of rhetorical virtuosity,[103] as a

[98] Bawcutt notes of the *Tretis* that 'in its very much smaller way this, like *The Decameron*, is a framed tale-collection': *Dunbar the Makar*, p.325.
[99] Cf. *CT* I (A), ll.769-808.
[100] Cf. R. D. S. Jack, 'The Dramatic Voice of William Dunbar,' in *The Best Pairt of Our Play: Essays Presented to John J. McGavin*, Part One, ed. Sarah Carpenter, Pamela M. King, Meg Twycross, and Greg Walker, Medieval English Theatre, 37 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015), pp.73-89 [85-86].
[101] A. C. Spearing, for instance, compares the *Tretis* to *The Merchant's Tale*: *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry,* pp.216-23.
[102] Cf. Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.334.
[103] Cf. Nicole Meier, '*The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy* in Context,' in *Langage Cleir Illumynate: Scottish Poetry from Barbour to Drummond 1375-1630*, ed. Nicola Royan, Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature, 10 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp.61-79 [76-77].

Scottish version of the poetic eloquence which the fifteenth century so often assigns to Chaucer.[104] Yet, the cursing match of which flyting usually consists remains strangely one-sided in the *Tretis*, leaving the absent subjects of its abuses disturbingly silent in response to the noisy tirades launched their way.

The absence of retort has further implications for the poem's ties to the *Tales*, for Chaucer's pilgrims engage in a vigorous debate in between tales, often disagreeing with one another. The *Tretis* by contrast presents a very different view of the relationship between the three tale-telling women, for each's speech is punctuated by a chorus of agreement as 'a regular burst of laughter cheers each tale,'[105] with the two wives and the widow making merry and drinking in response to one another's stories (146-49; 239-44; 505-25). The implied uniformity of perspective is also evident in their respective tales, for, although the widow's opening question with regards to love and marriage invites a variety of points of view, including, potentially, an endorsement of courtly love and the possibility of marital bliss (41-48), her own lengthy discourse on those controversial subjects, together with her companions' speeches, marks a striking lack of disagreement on the undesirability of husbands and the married state in general. Rather, the women's tales illustrate their consensus with regards to the widow's framing interrogation, namely that the blissful band of love is easily undone for those who revile their partners in marriage.

This sameness forms the basis for a poetic sleight of hand in the final lines of the *Tretis*, as the authorial persona presents a question of his own to his listeners as to which of the three women they prefer. However, the innate difficulties in answering this question suggest that this is a false kind of closure, for the lack of differences between the two married women and the widow raises more problems than it solves:

> Ȝe auditoris most honorable, that eris has gevin

[104] Cf. Jacquelyn Hendricks, 'A Battle of "Trechour Tung[s]": Gaelic, Middle Scots, and the Question of Ethnicity in the Scottish Flyting,' in *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, ed. Barbara I. Gusick and Matthew Z. Heintzelman, vol. 37 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2012), pp.71-96 [71-78].

[105] Klaus Bitterling, '*The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo:* Some Comments on Words, Imagery, and Genre,' in *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance, Fourth International Conference 1984: Proceedings,* ed. Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, and New York: Peter Lang, 1986), pp.337-58 [339].

Onto this vncouth aventur quhilk airly me happinnit,[106]

Of thir thre wanton wiffis that I haif writtin heir,

Quhilk wald ȝe waill to ȝour wif, gif ȝe suld wed one? (527-30)

Bawcutt rightly notes of this passage that the audience's answer would surely be "'None of them!'"[107]. The authorial persona's question also echoes that which is addressed by the widow to her companions regarding whether they would choose differently in marriage, if they were given such a choice (46). Yet, the attitudes to marriage itself which then come out make the whole concept of a better choice irrelevant. The *Tretis*'s circular structure therefore gives rise to what is in a sense an impossible conundrum, for the options presented by the narrative figure to his listeners expose a troublingly narrow view of marriage.

The *Tretis*'s closing provocation also subverts the lively debate invited by the *demandes d'amour* in the *Tales*, for this final question to the poem's implied audience acknowledges the possibility for discussion only for it to become clear that none is to be had given the nature of the narrator's query. The *Tretis* itself as a whole thus becomes one story in addition to those narrated by the three women, with its internal tale-telling framework thus effectively externalized as a result of this concluding address. Yet, the undesirability of the three women represented therein effectively forces the poem's listeners into silence. Indeed, the quiet which naturally follows the end of the work seems to resonate in a troubling way as a result of the abruptness with which the authorial persona's startling question is directed at his hearers. Thus, the effect of the poem's final lines is to open up the text and to shut it down at the same time, for the narrative figure appears to engage his audience in a discussion which does not in fact take place, nor is such an exchange conceivable given the absence of options within the question which they are asked.[108]

The *Tretis*, therefore, when regarded as a miniature version of the story collection in *Tales*, is distinguished by the absence of a meaningful debate among the groups of listeners represented therein.

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[106] Cf. *BH*, l.1001.

[107] Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.328.

[108] The *Tretis* within the context of this thesis thus represents a written response to Chaucer's *Tales*. Yet, it is worth noting that within an oral context, Dunbar's poem may well have elicited an exchange of the kind that is absent in the text itself.

This essential difference between the two works underpins the lack of a notable dialectic in the *Tretis*, for, in Chaucer, the pilgrims engage in a constant push and pull of contesting views and opinions of life, a variety inscribed in the work's overall storytelling structure, and in the tales which they go on to tell. The *Tales* therefore involve a competitiveness that ensures, moreover, that no one perspective dominates, an aspect of the tale collection which is perhaps reassuring in light of the bawdiness of several of its fabliaux, as the ideal view of courtly love and marriage absent therein is nevertheless asserted in the romances. Chaucer's presentation of storytelling as a contest underpins a back and forth of contrasting worldviews, while the collection's extraordinary generic variety reflects his enjoyment of human life in all its forms, a celebration of its diversity which is implicit in his suggestive lack of or avoidance of a final verdict.[109]

The *Tretis* on the other hand lacks the variety of stories that is characteristic of the *Tales*, as the two married women and the widow all give similar accounts of their experience of love and marriage, while the silence following the authorial persona's question implies an absence of alternative narratives. Indeed, Dunbar's poem also steers clear of a final judgement, albeit in a different way from the *Tales*, for the implicit lack of choice with which the work concludes thus ensures that closure remains impossible, playing on the feelings of repulsion which the portrayal of the three women elicits in a male audience. The apparent unavailability of a counter-perspective celebrating the courtly ideals of love and marriage has troubling implications in light of the poem's violently animalistic portrayal of both those concepts, for, in the notable absence of a retort from a listener offering a positive answer to the widow's question, the attitude which the two wives and the widow embody is disturbing precisely because it stands alone, unchallenged by a competing ideology that might have kept their opinions on love and marriage in check.

The *Tretis*'s closing silence also connects back to its engagement with the poetry of Chaucer. The *Fables*, as this thesis argues, represents a quitting in literary historical terms of the *Tales*, as Henryson

[109] Cf. Helen Cooper, *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), pp.54-55.

presents his own vernacular adaptation of the storytelling genre as he finds it in Chaucer.[110] The *Tretis* likewise constitutes a response to its poetic models as its author goes on to tell a tale of his own. Yet, Dunbar's handling of the storytelling genre implicitly subverts this notion of a productive dialectic given that there is no real back and forth when the tales told in his poem are in effect all the same. If the *Tretis* in other words is regarded within the larger context of the rereading and rewriting of Chaucer, then Dunbar's treatment of storytelling reflects back on the nature of poetic reception and tradition building. The *Tretis*'s subversion of the telling of tales thus relates to its positioning of itself relative to Chaucer and to Dunbar's upending of the positive assertions of vernacularity found in other Scottish Chaucerian texts.

The Goldyn Targe[111]

The Goldyn Targe contains Dunbar's fullest expression of his poetic indebtedness to Chaucer: as Priscilla Bawcutt notes, the poem's closing encomium to the latter suggests a 'clear-sighted recognition of Chaucer's revolutionary impact upon the poets who followed him, in Scotland as well as England.'[112] Chaucer and the English Chaucer tradition of writing are also subject to appropriation in the *Targe*, as Dunbar implicitly lays claim to this poetic inheritance, adopting it for his native Scotland.[113] Yet, Dunbar nevertheless expresses a detachment from the tradition of writing to which the *Targe* responds, a remove this chapter argues is further suggested from his cursory treatment of his work's central themes. The *Targe* represents a stark contrast in this regard to Gavin Douglas's *Palice of Honour* (c.1503), a work with which it has often been compared yet which displays a different approach to Scottish Chaucerianism.

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[110] Seth Lerer, 'The Canterbury Tales,' in *The Yale Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Seth Lerer (New Haven, CT, and London, UK: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.243-94 [288].
[111] 'Ryght as the stern of day begouth to schyne; B 59.
[112] 'William Dunbar,' in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume One: From Columba to the Union (until 1707),* ed. Thomas Owen Clancy (to 1314) and Murray Pittock (1314-1707) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp.286-94 [302].
[113] Terrell, *Scripting the Nation*, p.117.

The Goldyn Targe is one of three poems by its author to be produced by the Edinburgh-based printers Walter Chepman (c.1473-1528) and Andrew Myllar (fl.1503-08) in and around April and May 1508,[114] and Dunbar's reference in the final stanza of that work to his hoped-for prospects for his 'lytill quair' (271) conceivably expresses his intentions for his work to be sent to their press for printing.[115] The *Targe* as a poem, moreover, arguably reflects the influence of this emergent print culture in Scotland, for it is crafted in a way which suggests an authorial pride or a desire to make one's mark as a poet. The *Targe*, in addition to its heightened use of form and style, is also one of the longest poems by Dunbar. It represents, moreover, a view of poetry and the poet and as such functions as a kind of literary manifesto.[116] Lois Ebin, for one, writes at length about the elevated vision of poetry that underpins the *Targe*, arguing that Dunbar's poem points to his preoccupation with the 'process of "making" and the effect of the author's craft,' a concern expressed via the work's formal and stylistic rendering of its subject matter, as Dunbar develops the poem's 'analogy between the sun and the poet, the natural landscape and the rhetorical.'[117]

That the *Targe*'s implicit vision of poetry also relates to its author's identity as a Scot is addressed by Elizabeth Elliott, who briefly examines the poem within a larger historical literary context, arguing that Dunbar's poem suggests his awareness of a vernacular tradition of writing that looks back to Chaucer.[118] Katherine Terrell likewise provides an updated reading of the implicit vernacularity of the *Targe*, the final

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[114] Cf. Sally Mapstone, ed., *The Chepman and Myllar Prints. Digitised Facsimiles with introduction, headnotes and transcription*, DVD Rom, (Edinburgh: The Scottish Text Society and the National Library of Scotland, 2008), pp.1-10; William Beattie, 'Some Early Scottish Books,' in *The Scottish Tradition: Essays in Honour of Ronald Gordon Cant,* ed. G. W. S. Barrow (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp.107-20; Catherine van Buuren, 'The Chepman and Myllar Texts of Dunbar,' in *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*, ed. Sally Mapstone (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), pp.24-39 [27].

[115] Cf. Sally Mapstone, 'The Transmission of Older Scots Literature,' in *The International Companion to Scottish Literature 1400-1650*, ed. Nicola Royan, International Companions to Scottish Literature (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2018), pp.38-59 [44]; Sally Mapstone, 'Introduction: William Dunbar and the Book Culture of Sixteenth-Century Scotland,' in *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*, ed. Sally Mapstone (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), pp.1-23 [4-12].

[116] Cf. Mapstone, 'Introduction: William Dunbar and the Book Culture of Sixteenth-Century Scotland,' p.11.

[117] Lois Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE, and London, UK: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp.75, 76.

[118] Cf. Elizabeth Elliott, 'Scottish Writing,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English,* ed. Elaine Treharne, Greg Walker, and William Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.574-93.

stanzas of which elide the geographical and linguistic differences between England and Scotland.[119] Yet, while Terrell is right to argue that this bringing together relates to the construction of a poetic genealogy, with Chaucer and the 'English progenitors' founding a tradition of writing for their 'Scottish inheritors,'[120] the implications of such explicit statements within the larger context of the work's actual poetic practice suggest a greater degree of vernacular self-assertion than is permitted within such an interpretation. Dunbar in other words makes a gesture that this thesis argues is characteristic of Scottish Chaucerian texts, for, while admittedly expressing a sense of commonality with the poets south of the Border, the *Targe* nevertheless evokes the tradition of writing they represent in a spirit of vernacular independence.

The *Targe*'s poetic aspirations are signalled in its closing encomium to 'reuerend Chaucere, rose of rethoris all' (253) (Chaucer is assigned the first full stanza, with a second for Gower and Lydgate (262-70)). Chaucer sets the standard for rhetorical eloquence as the speaker asks, 'Was thou noucht of oure Inglisch all the lycht, / Surmounting ewiry tong terrestriall, / Alls fer as Mayes morow dois mydnycht?' (259-61), a rhetorical question drawing attention to the poem's replication of those principles in Scots, for the *Targe* itself begins on a brilliant springtime morning, one filled with both brightness and light (1-9). The *Targe*'s opening stanza is marked by an amplification of its description of the morning sun, initially referred to as the daystar in the first line of the passage, as the golden candle in its third,[121] and then again as Phebus, a triple patterning capturing the sun's effect, the growing and expanding light of dawn. Dunbar's portrayal of the sun's illuminating power also functions as a metaphor for good writing,[122] while the *Targe* contains a further four stanzas of natural description before the narrative proper begins (10-45), thus suggesting its author's desire to impress his readers with eloquence in his native vernacular.[123]

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[119] Cf. Terrell, *Scripting the Nation*, pp.117-18.
[120] Ibid., p.118.
[121] Cf. *Complaint of Mars*, l.7.
[122] Cf. Denton Fox, 'Dunbar's *The Golden Targe*,' *ELH* 26.3 (1959), pp.311-34 [332-33]; Lois Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE, and London, UK: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp.74-79; Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.23; Isabel Hyde, 'Poetic Imagery: a point of comparison between Henryson and Dunbar,' *SSL* 2.3 (1965), pp.183-97 [186].
[123] Lois Ebin, 'The Theme of Poetry in Dunbar's "Goldyn Targe,"' *CR* 7.2 (1972), pp.147-59 [154].

That Dunbar should choose to write, moreover, in the nine-line stanza of the complaints in *Anelida and Arcite* further suggests the full extent of his ambitions as he gives this challenging form a narrative function, sustaining its syntactic and metrical complexities over the course of the entire dream vision.[124] Bawcutt, for instances, observes that the 'complex stanza is handled superbly' in the *Targe*, as Dunbar commonly withholds the sense until the end of the stanza, using 'suspended clauses and phrases.'[125] The assuredness with which he does so is reflected in the easy unfolding and movement of the narrative, as the authorial persona relates how he fell asleep to see a company of women disembark from a ship (49-63). There follows an allegorical contest between the personified forces of Love, on the one hand, and Reason, on the other, who wields the golden shield in defence against the former's onslaught (200). Yet Reason's blinding causes the narrative figure to become the woeful prisoner of Love (202-25), whose fleeting nature, moreover, produces despair and heaviness until the whole company vanishes (229-34), as the authorial persona finds himself in a wilderness landscape prior to waking up from his dream (235-52). The narrative thus circles back to its springtime opening before the poem's closing encomium (253-61).

The *Targe*, alongside its obvious indebtedness to the courtly allegorical tradition of the *Roman de la Rose* (c.1275), displays broad similarities with later medieval poems such as the anonymous *Assembly of the Gods* (c.1478-83), or, for example, the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century *Bowge of Courte* (c.1499) by John Skelton, which has itself been proposed as a southern response to *The Goldyn Targe*.[126] That Dunbar's text is a miniature version of this kind of poem is suggested from its involvement of the classical gods in its psychomachic representation of the internal battle taking place within the dreamer. Yet, the mythological elements to the amatory narrative are limited by comparison with the above works: the catalogues of the gods are compressed into two stanzas only, with 'quick and vivid characterization'[127] (73-81; 109-26), and play a limited part in the allegorical narrative that follows. Thus, Dunbar, despite

[124] Cf. Bawcutt, *The Poems of William Dunbar*, vol. 2, p.413; Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.311.
[125] Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, p.312.
[126] Cf. Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, pp.149-50.
[127] Fox, 'Dunbar's *The Golden Targe*,' p.330.

giving his own courtly allegorical narrative an added classical and mythological scope, nevertheless refrains from a deeper exploration of the relationship between these categories, which he adopts without activating them in an extensive way within the psychological drama that he depicts.[128]

Thus, the *Targe*'s vernacular ambitions are suggested from its signalled engagement with an English vernacular tradition of writing which is explicitly associated with the poetry of Chaucer (251-61), yet which in practice also includes a small subset of later fifteenth-century psychomachic allegories. Yet, Dunbar's subversive handling of his poetic inheritance is evident in the cursory nature of that response, for through it he adopts an ironically mocking attitude towards grandiose statements of poetic authority. Dunbar's deliberately accelerated working within the expected posturings of the vernacular *auctor* acquires a suggestive dimension in the speed with which the narrative itself is made to unfold in the *Targe*: Eolus, for example, is suddenly introduced after the dreamer has been delivered into 'Hevynesse''s care, and with a blast of his trumpet the dream landscape is transformed into a barren wilderness (226-34).[129] In the stanza which follows, the authorial persona describes how the whole company returned to their ship, swiftly (236) setting sail and then with 'swift course' (237) quickly navigating their way through the water before the firing of the ship's guns loudly resounds within the encircling rocks and cliffs (240-43). Indeed, the 'raynbow,' or ship itself[130] appears to 'brak' (241), a verb which, with 'frak,' 'rak,' and 'crak' (237, 240, 243) contributes to the impression that this sequence, in addition to waking the narrator from his vision, dismantles the allegorical structure of the whole dream almost as quickly as it had been built up.

The *Targe*'s subversive handling of its poetic inheritance is also evident in its closing stanza where Dunbar presents his own variation on the familiar envoi towards the end of *Troilus and Criseyde.*[131] However, Dunbar's concluding adaptation of these famous lines is itself far from straightforward,

[128] Cf. C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p.252.
[129] Cf. *HF*, ll.1635-44.
[130] Cf. *DOST*, s. v. 'Rainbow,' n., 1.
[131] Cf. *TC*, V, ll.1786-92.

reflecting instead a complex relationship to the vernacular tradition ambitiously evoked at the poem's end:

> Thou lytill quair, be ewir obedient,
>
> Humble, subiect and symple of entent
>
> Before the face of ewiry connyng wicht.
>
> I knaw quhat thou of rethorike hes spent.
>
> Off all hir lusty rosis redolent
>
> Is non in to thy gerland sett on hicht.
>
> Eschame tharof and draw the out of sicht.
>
> Rude is thy wede, disteynit, bare and rent,
>
> Wele aucht thou be aferit of the licht. (271-79)

The closing line of this passage picks up on light as a metaphor for a high standard of writing (253-70). Yet, the narrator enjoins his little text to remove itself from sight, to be fearful, even, of the light, a movement inwards and away that contrasts sharply with the book's cautiously outward path in the *Troilus*. Nor is the shame and fearfulness associated with the poem simply a function of the modesty topos, giving rise, rather, in its highly charged and even moral language to a more ambiguous set of associations,[132] such that this self-assertion involves a typical rejection of the closure that such a gesture should entail.

The *Targe*'s final stanza, moreover, suggests an implicit sympathy between the text and its author. Indeed, the fear and shame ascribed to the narrator's poem echoes passages in, for instance, *The Thrissill and the Rois*, where the authorial persona is himself depicted as the object of shame and, ultimately, fearful (22, 187), or in the *Ballat*, where the dreamer identifies with the set-upon and alienated abbot (121-28). That Dunbar, in the guise of his narrative personae, often speaks out from the margins of his texts indicates his challenge to the centres of literary, cultural, and political authority with which his verse engages. His 'lytill quair''s placement half in light and half in shadow, partly withdrawn from public view, likewise

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[132] Cf. David N. De Vries, 'The Pleasure of Influence: Dunbar's *Golden Targe* and Dream-Poetry,' *SSL* 27.1 (1992), pp.113-27 [126-27].

reflects the liminal positions, events, and places so frequently occupied by the narrators of his poems.[133] Thus, the *Targe*-persona's expressed derision for his work is tempered by a sense of implicit recognition, of an affinity between a poet often found at the side-lines and a text at the boundary of darkness and light. Indeed, Dunbar, even as he evokes the standard of writing which is so strongly embodied by Chaucer, and to which his poem so clearly aspires in its style and language, also pulls back from that engagement, a striking withdrawal of his text from the light that implies his subversive treatment of such gestures.

The *Targe* in this regard differs sharply from a poem with which it is often compared, *The Palice of Honour* by Gavin Douglas, which is also a courtly allegory, dating roughly to around 1501.[134] The *Targe* is presumed to have been composed sometime prior to its publication by Chepman and Myllar in 1508,[135] while the close stylistic similarities between both texts, especially in their opening and final stanzas, presents the possibility of a relationship of influence, with one writer responding to the other.[136] Bawcutt has sought to argue that the *Palice* represents a young poet's imitation of an older one,[137] yet R. J. Lyall is more persuasive in regarding the *Targe* as a condensed distillation of Douglas's text,[138] not least because Dunbar's writing, as this chapter has shown, often displays a tendency towards compression. That the *Targe* should therefore represent a response in miniature to the more expansive *Palice* makes sense in relation to its author's more general preference for engaging with longer poems on a smaller scale.

The *Targe*'s comparative brevity thus makes it a very different poetic manifesto from the *Palice*, for, although Dunbar's courtly allegory reflects a competitive ambitiousness in relation to Douglas's, it shrinks from the sweeping delineation of a vision of poetry of the kind undertaken by his contemporary. Indeed, the striking succinctness of a poem which he may have intended for later publication suggests

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[133] Cf. David Parkinson, review of *Dunbar the Makar*, by Priscilla Bawcutt, *Speculum* 69.3 (1994), pp.739-41 [740-41].
[134] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, ed. *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, 2nd ed., STS, Fifth Series, 2. Edinburgh: STS, 2003, pp.xxvii-xxviii.
[135] Cf. Bawcutt, ed., *Dunbar the Makar*, vol. 2, pp.413-14.
[136] Cf. Bawcutt, *The Poems of William Dunbar*, vol. 2, p.414; Lyall, 'The Stylistic Relationship between Dunbar and Douglas,' pp.70-71.
[137] Cf. Bawcutt, *The Poems of William Dunbar*, vol. 2, p.414.
[138] Lyall, 'The Stylistic Relationship between Dunbar and Douglas,' p.77.

Dunbar's oblique engagement with an established vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland, for while the *Targe* implicitly asserts the existence of a native poetry to rival that of Chaucer and of England, the conspicuous conciseness with which it does so points to its author's subversion of such gestures. As with the *Lament*, where the ostentatious listing of the nation's writers is undercut by a reminder of Death, the *Targe* also plays with later medieval assertions of the vernacular poet's ambitions and authority. Dunbar's text thus illustrates the varied reception of the emergent Chaucer tradition in Scotland, the *Targe*'s self-conscious response to which is marked by the seeming appearance of a lack thereof: that is, Dunbar's challenging treatment of the triumphalist statements of vernacular authority is evident in the *Targe*'s calculated narrative and thematic conciseness, as well as its performed reluctance and withdrawal.

Gavin Douglas thus represents a very different kind of poet than his near-contemporary Dunbar. The *Palice of Honour*, for example, as this thesis will show, is heavily indebted to *The Kingis Quair*, while the *Eneados* responds to the handling of the all-verse prosimetrum in Robert Henryson's *Orpheus*. The *Targe*, especially given its status as a kind of manifesto, might be expected to do the same. Yet, Dunbar's poem is oddly restrained where the drawing on an earlier native tradition of writing is concerned: allusions to Henryson remain passing, as noted at this chapter's outset, while, moreover, even if one regards the *Targe* as a response in miniature to the opening springtime description of the courtly allegorical *Palice*, Douglas's poem hardly evokes an extensive reading, being subject to a highly selective treatment. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and there is ample evidence in Dunbar's other poems in this chapter that he was well acquainted with the work of the earlier Scottish Chaucerians. Rather, the *Targe* refrains from the vernacular self-assertion informing too signalled an engagement with their work, evoking, that is, the idea of a native vernacular tradition yet without fully putting it into practice.

Thus, Dunbar stands in a complex relationship to the overall development of Scottish Chaucerianism, for his poetry on the one hand suggests a clear appropriation of the poetry of Chaucer, of an English Chaucerian tradition of writing self-consciously invoked to authorize its alternative in Scotland.

That Dunbar should draw on the work of the earlier poets in this thesis points to the gradual consolidation a native Chaucerian tradition of writing by the early years of the sixteenth century in Scotland. Yet, Dunbar, despite his awareness of this vernacular tradition, ultimately adopts a challenging view of it and in doing so provides a striking indication of the varied reception of this emergent Scottish Chaucerianism. As the final chapter of this thesis argues, Douglas, by contrast, is more positive in affirming that tradition. Yet, it is precisely this difference between the last two poets that points to the dynamism of this native vernacular tradition of writing.

Chapter 5: Gavin Douglas

In Prologue I of his translation of the *Aeneid* into Scots (1513) Gavin Douglas finds fault with Chaucer who, as he notes, 'in hys legend of notabill ladeis said / That he couth follow word by word Virgill, / Wisar than I may faill in lakar stile'[1] – a reference to Chaucer's words in *The Legend of Good Women*, where he writes that he 'coude folwe, word for word, Virgile, / But it wolde lasten al to longe while.'[2] In fact, Chaucer apologizes for *not* being able, for reasons of time and space, to present every word of the *Aeneid* but rather only the tragic love affair between Aeneas and Dido in Book IV of Virgil's text.[3] Douglas ignores this explicit selectivity as he attacks Chaucer for making a false claim to textual fidelity, a small but significant distortion of the earlier poet's expressed statement of his authorial intentions. This effective misreading of Chaucer's poetic aims connects back to the implicit 'agenda' of the *Eneados*, for Douglas highlights his use of his native vernacular in offering his own close translation of Virgil. Thus, Douglas, as the Prologue illustrates, remains caught between an evident admiration for Chaucer and his desire to follow as faithfully as his native vernacular will permit the original *sentence* of the *Aeneid* – a divided loyalty further suggested from his tortured syntax in discussing Chaucer's use of Virgil.[4]

Douglas's adherence to strict principles of translation points to his departure from an earlier, 'medieval' approach to the texts of antiquity, his contempt for which is more forcefully expressed, for instance, in his discussion of William Caxton's *Eneydos* (1490) (itself a translation of the *Livre des Eneydes,* c.1483), so far from Virgil that it causes Douglas as he himself declares to 'spittit for dispyte.'[5] Although his respect for Chaucer is by contrast far greater, nevertheless, in stressing his fidelity to Virgil,

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[1] *Aeneid* II, p.12 [ll.344-46].
[2] *LGW*, F, ll.1002-03.
[3] Cf. A. E. C. Canitz, 'From *Aeneid* to *Eneados*: Theory and Practice of Gavin Douglas's Translation,' *M&H*, New Series, 17 (1991), pp.81-99 [83].
[4] Cf. *Aeneid* II, pp.14-16 [ll.401-49].
[5] *Aeneid* II, p.7 [l.150].

Douglas goes directly to the source in a way that reflects the influence of the new humanism on his work, for his translation, the first in English or 'Inglys' of Virgil,[6] is as one reader notes 'seriously and successfully committed to the philological goal of faithful reproduction of poetic "sentence" and rhetorical gravity.'[7] Indeed, Douglas, who by his own testimony had been to 'Ingland, France, and Rome'[8] benefited from the increased exposure to the new humanism which was brought about by his travels. David Parkinson, for instance, in writing of the poet's time abroad, observes that 'in such an intellectually rigorous environment, and at a stimulating distance from the duties of the provostship of St Giles, Douglas' own humanist interests take a momentous step toward his translation into Scots of Virgil's *Aeneid*.'[9] Douglas thus gained an immediate exposure to major intellectual developments on the Continent, the influence of which on his writing reaches its fullest expression in his vernacular rendering of the *Aeneid*.

Yet, Douglas's 'humanist interests' are also evident in his earlier poem, *The Palice of Honour* (c.1501), written sometime between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth.[10] John MacQueen notes, for instance, that the Court of the Muses in the *Palice* includes the humanist poets Petrarch, Boccaccio, Poggio Bracciolini, Lorenzo Valla, and Pomponius Laetus, two of whom, Valla and Boccaccio, are also referred to in Prologue I to the *Eneados*.[11] Thomas Rutledge, in developing this point further, argues that Douglas's references and allusions to several of these authors in his own work suggests he did not know them simply by name but was for the most part directly acquainted with their work.[12] *The Palice of Honour* reflects, therefore, its author's immediate engagement with classical literature, and as

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[6] *Aeneid*, II, p.6 [l.117].
[7] James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.72-73.
[8] *Acts of the Lords of Council in Public Affairs 1501-1554: Selections from the* Acta Dominorum Concilii *Introductory to the Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, ed. Robert Kerr Hannay (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1932), p.41.
[9] David Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, 2nd ed., TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2018), p.8.
[10] John MacQueen writes that Douglas's poem 'is in many ways a manifesto of Renaissance and humanistic ideals': 'Some Aspects of the Early Renaissance in Scotland,' *FMLS* 3.3 (1967), pp.201-22 [214]. Cf. John Durkan, 'The Beginnings of Humanism in Scotland,' *IR* 4.1 (1953), pp.5-24 [5].
[11] Cf. MacQueen, 'Some Aspects of the Early Renaissance in Scotland,' p.214.
[12] Cf. Thomas Rutledge, 'The Development of Humanism in Late-Fifteenth-Century Scotland,' in *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. David Rundle, Medium Aevum Monographs, New Series, 30 (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2012), pp.237-63 [258-59].

such looks forward to Douglas's sustained humanist effort in translating the *Aeneid* into Scots.[13] In his emphasis on Honour, moreover, Douglas also reveals his knowledge of a set of quasi-humanistic texts with similar titles to the *Palice*, works composed between the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries in France and included among which are, for example, Jean Froissart's *Le Temple d'Honneur* (c.1363), Jean Molinet's *Trosne d'Honneur* (1467), Octavien de Saint Gelais's *Sejour d'Honneur* (1490-95), and *Le Temple d'Honneur et de Vertus* which was completed by Jean Lemaire de Belges in 1503.[14]

The *Palice*, however, is still very much a medieval text and one that is recognizably Chaucerian. In it, Douglas responds in particular to the world of dream as represented by the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, as well as to the three-part visionary universe of Chaucer's *The House of Fame*.[15] Indeed, Douglas, who structures his own poem in three books and engages with the topic of renown, signals his use of Chaucer and his departures from him, most notably his assertion of Honour over Fame.[16] *The House of Fame*'s direct interest in the nature of poetry itself is clearly picked up on in the *Palice*, yet, Douglas's response to that subject is expressed in more than his contrasting emphasis on Honour. Rather, his Scottish dream-vision poem self-consciously situates itself in relation to the poetry of Chaucer, for the *Palice* implicitly asserts its author's native vernacular over against that of its signalled poetic master (919). Chaucer's own subversive questioning of poetic authority is thus subject to redirection in the *Palice* where

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[13] More recent criticism has shown that Douglas, in addition to the *Aeneid*, also engages with the *Georgics* and to a lesser extent the *Eclogues* in the *Eneados*. Cf. esp. Conor Leahy, 'The Use of Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in the *Eneados* of Gavin Douglas,' *M&H*, New Series, 41 (2016), pp.101-18 [102-03]; Charles Blyth, 'Gavin Douglas' Prologues of Natural Description,' *PQ* 49.2 (1970), pp.164-177 [173, 174].

[14] Cf. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, p.51; Janet M. Smith, *The French Background of Middle Scots Literature* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1934), pp.106-07.

[15] Cf. Denton Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. D. S. Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), pp.164-200 [193-200]; Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.104-28. For Douglas's use of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, see esp. Joanna Martin, 'Responses to the Frame Narrative of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Scottish Literature,' *RES*, New Series, 60.246 (2009), pp.561-77 [570-74].

[16] Cf .Chelsea Honeyman, 'The *Palice of Honour*: Gavin Douglas's Renovation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*,' in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations*, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.65-81 [65].

it is given an updated linguistic and cultural dimension in being applied to the assertion of Scots as a poetic language able to carry the work's ambitious engagement with classical and contemporary literature.[17]

The *Palice* also responds to the thinking through of poetic tradition and authority in *The House of Fame*, drawing on that work's subversive handling of those topics to include the poetry of Chaucer. Douglas, as this chapter contends, implicitly asserts the existence of an alternative, Scottish Chaucerian tradition of writing through his engagement with the work of the earlier poets examined in this thesis. The *Palice*, more specifically, responds in a way that has not fully been appreciated to *The Kingis Quair*,[18] for James's poem provides a precedent for the self-assertive framing of vernacular authority in the *Palice*. That the *Quair*, moreover, continues to be influential in the expression of a native Scottishness in the *Eneados* is further suggested by the parallels between that earlier poem and certain of the Prologues, where Douglas's increasingly triumphant affirmation of his abilities as a vernacular poet recalls James's own. Douglas's two major poems therefore illustrate the effective displacement of the poetry of Chaucer, with the *Quair* affording an expressive starting point in later articulations of vernacular identity in Scotland.

While the *Eneados*, moreover, is often regarded as marking a shift to the new learning in Scotland, Douglas's translation nevertheless continues to engage with an earlier 'medieval' tradition of Chaucer: Douglas Gray, for example, notes the influence on it of creative translations such as the *Troilus*.[19] The *Eneados* also reveals its author's reading of and indebtedness to 'Mastir Robert Hendirson,'[20] in particular *Orpheus and Eurydice*, or, for Douglas, the 'New Orpheus,' as well as the *Moral Fables*.[21] Henryson's reworking of the mixed form, as discussed earlier in this thesis, looks forward to the *Eneados*, the readers

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[17] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'Douglas, Gavin,' in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*, ed. Siân Echard and Robert Rouse, vol. 2 (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp.686-90.
[18] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'Attitudes to Authority in *The House of Fame*, *The Kingis Quair*, and *The Palice of Honoure*,' *The Mediaeval Journal* 10.1 (2020), pp.81-104 [86-101]; Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, pp.2, 48; John Norton-Smith, ed., *The Kingis Quair: James I of Scotland*, Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.xiii, n.2.
[19] Cf. Douglas Gray, 'Virgil in Late Medieval Scotland: *Aeneid* and *Eneydos*,' in *Focus on Literature and Culture: Papers from the 2nd Conference of the Polish Association for the Study of English, Kazimierz '93,* ed. Grażyna Bystydzieńska and Leszek Kolek (Lublin: Marie Curie-Sklodowska University Press, 1994), pp.11-22 [11-13]. See also Cf. Matthew Day, *English Humanism and the Reception of Virgil c.1400-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), pp.135-66.
[20] *Aeneid* II, p.19, n.13.
[21] Ibid.

of which are implicitly invited to ascend to the philosophical heights of the later Prologues. While the *Eneados* connects to the thematization of the prosimetric structure of the *De Consolatione*,[22] Henryson's adaptation of the mixed form to the reading experience itself influences Douglas more. The *Eneados* thus provides a fitting example of the way the later poets in this thesis draw on the earlier ones as a native vernacular tradition of writing comes into its own by the early sixteenth century in Scotland.

The Palice of Honour

The *Palice of Honour* appears at first glance to reinforce the poetic primacy of Chaucer in Scotland, for Douglas's Chaucerian dream-vision poem self-consciously models itself on *The House of Fame*. Yet, Douglas's poem also reveals his engagement with the early example of that genre in the *Kingis Quair*; thus, the *Palice* responds to the questioning treatment of poetic authority in the *House of Fame*, moving it beyond Chaucer, who is displaced in favour of the native tradition of writing embodied by the *Quair*. James's representation of a youthful authorial persona also looks forward to that of Douglas's, for the *Palice* narrator's gradual coming to poetic maturity likewise brings to mind that of the *Quair*'s. Moreover, in James's text, where this personal development carries a linguistic and cultural resonance, Douglas's dream vision works towards a culminating assertion of the vernacular poet's powers. While the *Quair*'s influence suggests how this self-assertion intersects with a wider awareness of a native Chaucerian tradition, Douglas nevertheless signals his departure from that text's positive treatment of courtly love; indeed, this difference between the two poets also emerges in his ambitious translation of the *Aeneid*, the Prologues to which reveal his ongoing indebtedness to the framing of vernacular authority in the *Quair*.

[22] Cf. Eleanor Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

The *Palice,* in addition to its larger structural parallels with the three-part *House of Fame*, also consists of a journey to a lofty allegorical building and as such is further connected to Chaucer's text.[23] (Part II, for instance, features a digression on sound (364-81), recalling a similar passage in *The House of Fame*,[24] while the instructive but also sometimes comic relationship between the Nymph and the dreamer brings to mind the dynamic between the eagle and the authorial persona in Chaucer's poem). Yet, Douglas also very clearly distances himself from Chaucer in his representation of Honour, with a 'Palice' not a House being the end destination of the dreamer, while, moreover, beyond the palace lies not the House of Rumour, where language assumes the protean form of whispers and gossip or 'tydynges,' but the Garden of Rhetoric, elusive in its own way given that the dreamer wakes before reaching it. Unlike Chaucer, however, whose dream breaks off at the approach of the 'man of gret auctorite,'[25] Douglas, while his authorial persona's vision ends abruptly, nevertheless provides a strongly affirmative conclusion as the dreamer puts pen to paper in composing a stylistically and formally impressive hymn to Honour.

Yet, the *Palice*, in addition to these larger structural and narrative parallels with *The House of Fame*, is also indebted to that work's probing treatment of the nature of poetic tradition and authority. Chaucer implicitly examines the relationship between vernacular writing in England and the poet's sources, that is, the classical and vernacular writers whose authority the work throws into question. While *Palice* criticism tends to focus on the poem's preference for honour over fame in its response to Chaucer, Douglas's text also reveals a vernacular self-consciousness further connecting it to Chaucer's own: the *Palice* is a 'powerfully syncretic poem'[26] whose range of literary sources relates to its Scottishness, pointing to its author's larger cultural and linguistic ambitions in writing in his native vernacular.[27] Indeed,

[23] Cf. Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' pp.193-200.
[24] Cf. *HF*, ll.765-822.
[25] *HF*, l.2158.
[26] David Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, 2nd ed., TEAMS Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2018), p.48.
[27] Cf. Ruth Morse, 'Gavin Douglas: "Off Eloquence the flowand balmy strand,' in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.107-21 [107-12]. See also Chelsea Honeyman, 'The *Palice of Honour*: Gavin Douglas's Renovation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*,' in *Standing in the*

Douglas's strikingly wide range of source materials suggests a desire to move beyond Chaucer.[28] If the *House of Fame* provides an authorizing vernacular precedent for the *Palice*, Douglas asserts his native tongue in relying on poetic sources other than the Chaucerian.

This Scottishness, moreover, is further suggested from the poem's engagement with *The Kingis Quair*, Douglas's indebtedness to which has only recently been the subject of critical consideration: Nicola Royan, for example, identifies certain textual parallels between both the *Palice* and the *Quair*, arguing that Douglas's depiction of his narrative persona's education is framed in terms recalling James's own.[29] Indeed, Royan rightly suggests that the latter stands at the head of a native poetic tradition in Scotland.[30] Following Royan, this chapter resituates this comparison in line with a self-conscious Scottishness, arguing that James's implicit vernacular self-assertion provides a precedent for Douglas's own: like the *Quair*, whose triumphant holding up of the poet's powers connects to its unspoken affirmation of Scots, the *Palice*'s portrayal of its narrator's visionary capacity also relates to its linguistic and cultural ambitions. Indeed, Douglas puts the idea of a native tradition of writing into practice by thus evoking the *Quair*, with Chaucer's poetry effectively forced to make room for an established vernacular literature in Scotland.

That Douglas draws in this way on an existing native tradition represented by the *Quair* connects back, moreover, to the larger development and consolidation of Chaucerian writing in Scotland, for James's later influence indicates how this body of writing increasingly comes to build on itself. Indeed, the *Palice*'s use of James's earlier dream vision intersects in suggestive ways with *The House of Fame*, for Chaucer's bookish poem signals its engagement with a literary history stretching back to antiquity. Yet, Chaucer also adopts a subversive posture in implicitly querying the authority of that tradition. The *Palice* effectively redirects this questioning attitude towards the vernacular authority of Chaucer. Indeed,

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Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp.65-81 [65].

[28] Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, p.49.

[29] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'Attitudes to Authority in *The House of Fame*, *The Kingis Quair* and *The Palice of Honour,' The Mediaeval Journal* 10.1 (2020), pp.81-104 [86-101].

[30] Ibid., p.101.

Douglas's spirited exploration of his poetic sources is all the more significant in the context of the *House of Fame,* for Chaucer's poem implicitly frames the work's alternative indebtedness to the Scots *Quair*. The *House of Fame* provides the poetic vehicle through which the Scottish Chaucerian tradition of writing ultimately comes to be asserted; however, this is accomplished at the indirect expense of Chaucer.

The *Palice*'s assertion of vernacular identity is also made by way of reference to the *Quair*'s, for the visionary capacity revealed by both poems' narrators underpins their proclamation of Scottishness. Yet, the *Palice*'s indebtedness to the latter text suggests a desire to assert a native vernacular tradition; Douglas in other words is not simply drawing on the framing of vernacular authority in James's text. Rather, the *Palice* signals its engagement with that poem in a similar way as it does to Chaucer: thus, the parallel experiences of its respective authorial personae carry a larger linguistic and cultural significance since the correspondences between the two highlight the claim that theirs is a shared tradition of writing. Douglas's dream-vision poem therefore manipulates the expressive potentialities of poetic influence, evoking James's text in order to signal his participation in an established vernacular literature in Scotland.

Yet, the *Palice*, despite its signalled engagement with the native tradition represented by the *Quair*, nevertheless, as this chapter illustrates, disagrees with the work's positive treatment of courtly love: where James treats the experience of love as giving access onto an elevated, philosophical understanding,[31] Douglas, though not moralistic in his view of love, ultimately keeps it in its proper place, according a far greater significance to the higher moral ideals towards which his dreamer progresses.[32] Thus, the *Palice*'s handling of courtly love provides an expressive indication of the nature of Scottish Chaucerian writing, for Douglas's difference of perspective in this regard suggests his independence from James. Douglas's contrasting attitude to love points to one of the most striking features of Scottish Chaucerianism, namely

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[31] Cf. Lois Ebin, 'Boethius, Chaucer, and *The Kingis Quair*,' *PQ* 53.3 (1974), pp.321-41 [332]; Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, pp.321-41; Sally Mapstone, 'Kingship and *The Kingis Quair*,' *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp.51-69

[32] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Writing About Love in Late Medieval Scotland,' in *Writings on Love in the English Middle Ages*, ed. Helen Cooney, Studies in Arthurian and Courtly Cultures (New York, NY, and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), pp.179-96 [189].

the internal disagreement between the writers who make up that tradition of writing: thus, while Douglas draws attention to his engagement with a native poetry in his indebtedness to the *Quair*, an influence, moreover, which this chapter argues is made in the spirit of vernacular self-assertion, still, the *Palice*'s opposed handling of love suggests a refusal to fall into a servile imitation of its Scottish forebears.

The *Quair*'s recopying and recirculation at the end of the fifteenth century in Scotland is certain: Douglas may even have had direct access to the copy of the poem found in MS Arch. Selden. B. 24, owned by Henry, third lord Sinclair (c.1460-1513), his friend and patron, and to whom the *envoi* of the *Eneados* is directed.[33] Indeed, the *Quair*, in the scribal colophon to the copy of the poem in the Selden MS, is identified as the work of a royal author, that is, 'Jacobus Primus, Scotorum Rex Illustrissimus.'[34] In the *Palice*, moreover, Honour often assumes a kingly form, while its symbolic seat in the Palace itself represents, according to one reader of the poem, 'an idealised version of the Scottish royal household.'[35] The *Palice*, in addition to containing examples of good kings from the Old Testament to Scotland's history (2027), also recalls the prescription of a kingly style for a royal reader as set forth in the *Clerk's Tale*,[36] with Douglas's explicit reader, as his dedication indicates (2143-60), King James IV of Scotland (c.1473-1513). If Douglas, as this thesis argues must be the case, had access to a copy of *The Kingis Quair*, he must therefore have had it in mind in composing his own ambitious courtly dream-vision allegory in Scots, in particular given his poem's royal dedicatee and its thematic and stylistic adaptation of kingliness itself.

In the *Quair*, James's assertion of vernacular independence in relation to the English Chaucerian tradition intersects with his increasingly explicit affirmation of the poet as a divinely inspired figure; the *Palice* borrows from this portrayal in likewise depicting its narrator as guided by Christian Revelation.

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[33] Cf. Terrell, *Scripting the Nation*, pp.106-13; Louise O. Fradenburg, 'The Scottish Chaucer,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance) (University of Stirling*, *2-7 July 1981)*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, 1981), pp.170-71.
[34] Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer and* The Kingis Quair*: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Arch. Selden. B. 24* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), f.191^{v}.
[35] Bawcutt, ed, *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, p.xliv. Cf. William Rendall Hepburn, 'The Household of James IV, 1488-1513' (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2013), pp.36-37, 104-105.
[36] Cf. *CT* IV [E], ll.16-18; Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, p.136.

Indeed, as in James's text where this view of poetry gains in focus over the course of the *Quair*, Douglas's poem also demonstrates an incremental working towards an elevated understanding of the author's task. Thus, the *Palice*, which gestures already early on at a mystical understanding of the author's powers, presents a Christian view of the poet that acquires momentum over the course of the work as a whole, with the narrative persona's difficult ascent culminating in a climactic assertion of beatific insight, a blissfulness which brings to mind the joyfully optimistic assertion of the divine at the end of the *Quair*.[37] The challenge of expressing the ineffable that confronts the poet in the *Palice* (1162-70, 1252-60, 1288-96) is resolved in the highly structured and patterned form of his concluding hymn to Honour (2116-42), as the narrator articulates the rhetorical ideal which is worked out in the process of composition itself.

Like the *Quair*, the authorial persona of which explicitly forsakes his youthful writings,[38] the *Palice* is structured according to a recollective framework, for it is a vision recounted after the fact (125-26 [where, indeed, the narrator identifies his story as a retelling of events past], 1279-82, 1288-89). Thus, the *Palice*'s doubling of different points of view in time foregrounds its narrator's coming to poetic maturity, an aspect of the work's overall thematic structuring that connects it to the *Quair*.[39] Indeed, James's handling of youthfulness is also related to an emergent sense of vernacular identity: the *Quair*'s portrayal of its narrator's personal growth carries a linguistic and cultural resonance. The *Palice*'s vernacular self-assertion is therefore expressed by way of reference to the structure of the *Quair*, with Douglas's portrayal of his authorial persona's gradual poetic growth mirroring that of James's own.

The *Palice*'s status as a dream poem places it, moreover, directly in line with the *Quair*, the first Scottish example of the genre whose visionary elements express an implied vernacular self-assertion: Douglas's authorial persona describes how he entered a garden, rising to do his 'obseruance' in May (6),[40]

[37] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1268-1351.
[38] Cf. *KQ*, ll.85-91.
[39] Priscilla Bawcutt notes that the *Palice* is 'very much a young man's poem': *Gavin Douglas*, p.67. See also Mark E. Amsler, 'The Quest for the Present Tense: The Poet and the Dreamer in Douglas' *The Palice of Honour*,' *SSL* 17.1 (1982), pp.186-208 [188].
[40] Cf. *CT* I [A], ll.1042ff.

where, as he writes, ‘A voice I hard preclair as Phebus schone’ (63), singing a song of welcome to spring (64-88).[41] He recounts how he looked up, ‘soir affrayit, half in ane frenesie’ (90), addressing ‘“Nature, Quene, and O ȝe lustie May,”’ (91), from whom he seeks comfort, alongside the goddess ‘“Venus”’ (93). Douglas’s authorial persona then resolves to make his way home, but is stopped by a sudden bright light:

> Out of the air come ane impressioun,
>
> Throw quhais licht in extasie or swoun
>
> Amyd the virgultis all in till a fary
>
> As feminine so feblit fell I doun. (105-08)

Douglas’s Prologue thus recasts several of the visionary episodes which are also to be found in the *Quair* – the authorial persona’s address by the ringing matins bell, urging him to write about his past,[42] and the bright light that bursts through the window of his prison cell, speaking to his younger self with words of Spiritual comfort[43] – moments whose mystical overtones point to the religious poetics of the *Quair*.[44] In the *Palice*, moreover, such episodes later acquire fuller definition as is also the case in the *Quair*, with the Prologue pointing ahead to the brilliant apprehension of Honour towards the end of Part III (1921-26).

Yet, despite its self-conscious engagement with an established vernacular tradition in Scotland, the *Palice* nevertheless hesitates before the question of courtly love’s inclusion within this poetic vision. Indeed, in the *Quair*, the authorial persona’s encounter with the three goddesses, Venus, Minerva, and Fortune, implicitly signals its author’s reconciliation of the tensions between reason and love. By contrast, the *Palice*, which features a procession of three deities, namely Minerva, Diana, and Venus, connecting it to James’s text, departs from that work in refusing to present them in a harmonious relationship. Indeed, Bawcutt rightly draws attention to the parallel between the triplicate portrayal of the goddesses and the

[41] Cf. *CT* [A], ll.1510-12; *PF*, ll.680-92.
[42] Cf. *KQ*, ll.71-77.
[43] Cf. *KQ*, ll.512-18.
[44] Cf. Kylie Murray, ‘“Out of My Contree”: Visions of Royal Authority in the Courts of James I and James II, 1424-1460,’ in *Medieval and Early Modern Representations of Authority in Scotland and the British Isles*, ed. Kate Buchanan and Lucinda H. S. Dean with Michael Penman (Abingdon, UK, New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), pp.214-34 [218].

Judgement of Paris (itself a likely source for the trio of deities represented in the *Quair*),[45] observing that Douglas's implicit allusion to this familiar narrative serves to point up his persona's conflicted loyalties, and points to the different paths – in the form of love, chastity, and reason – to the elusive Honour.[46]

Love's placement within that overall progression thus remains ambiguous in the *Palice* where Venus, for instance, by contrast with her far more benevolent and helpful counterpart in the *Quair*,[47] emerges instead as a more threatening figure, charging the authorial persona with blasphemy.[48] Douglas's narrator who, seeing her retinue from his hiding place in the hollow of a tree, sings a 'lay' (606) to Love, one however capturing courtly love's paradoxes, including the suffering it produces (607-36). Venus, displeased, orders her company to find the poet, and they violently set upon him (646-54). David Parkinson notes that the description of this physical attack as 'teneful play'(655) attributes a certain childishness to the court whose decorum is upset by this mobbing scene.[49] The authorial persona is then brought before the court and put on trial for his blasphemy against Love (655-729). Yet the lack of objectivity in the proceedings is implied by the presence of Varius or, as Bawcutt writes, a 'punning reference to the traditional fickleness and uncertainty of the love-goddess,'[50] with the authorial persona's fear of metamorphosis further suggestive of that unreliability (736-62).[51]

In *The Testament of Cresseid*, Cresseid is punished with a physical change, becoming a leper,[52] a hard judgement against which she initially inveighs despite later coming to see its moral justice.[53]

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[45] Cf. Louise Olga Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Madison, WI, and London, England: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp.131-33; Elizabeth Elliott, '"This is Myn Awin Ymagynacioun": The Judgment of Paris and the Influence of Medieval Faculty Psychology on *The Kingis Quair*,' in *Fresche Fontanis: Studies in the Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams and J. Derrick McClure (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp.3-15 [3].
[46] Cf. Bawcutt, ed. *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, p.xxxii.
[47] Cf. *KQ*, ll.687-861; Lois Ebin, 'Boethius, Chaucer, and *The Kingis Quair*,' *PQ* 53.3 (1974), .321-41 [332]; Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, pp.58-59.
[48] Cf. *LGW*, F prol., ll.224-541.
[49] Cf. David Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse: Holland, Douglas, Dunbar,' *JEGP* 85.4 (1986), pp.494-509 [504].
[50] Bawcutt, ed., *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, p.186.
[51] Cf. Ovid, *Met*. I, 583-746.
[52] Cf. *Test*., ll.344-50.
[53] Cf. *Test*., ll.351-57.

Douglas's authorial persona on the other hand resists in a different way when on trial, for towards Venus's court he fails to show an expected respectfulness, instead questioning the whole process (689-90). Venus herself, for instance, lacks authority as a judge by virtue of the fact that she is a woman, or, as he states, '"Madame, ȝe may not sit in to this cace, / For Ladyis may be Iudges in na place"' (694-95). Douglas's authorial persona then goes on to claim the right to be judged by an ecclesiastical court (696-99), a move which, in addition to the poem's parody of legal conventions and terminology, also undercuts Love's standing within the hierarchy of values of the work and its subjection to higher virtues such as Honour. Indeed, Venus, on being asked why her company had stopped by the muse of epic poetry, Calliope, displays a childish petulance as she uses vitriolic language to describe the dreamer's blasphemy, and its consequences in degrading herself, her son, and her court, not to mention bidding her '"fame adew"' (947). Calliope instead exemplifies the more measured judgement becoming of her high standing, reproaching Venus for causing so much trouble over so minor an offence, thus marking her out for her pettiness.

Yet, Douglas's youthful persona himself reflects a far from straightforward relationship to Honour, with his single glimpse of the god representing the apparent fulfillment of his ambitious journey. Indeed, the larger spiritual significance of this moment is suggested by the dreamer's blinding by Honour's light (1921-24), a sequence which it has rightly been observed recalls an intense mystical experience.[54] Yet, this encounter does not represent the end of the narrative, nor a resolution of its allegorical challenges; rather, the authorial persona's swooning response requires that he be rescued by his guiding Nymph, who initially offers him words of comfort before somewhat unexpectedly rebuking him for his weakness (1927-58). In tone and narrative situation therefore the dialogue that ensues represents an effective regression, as the Nymph resumes a gently chiding attitude to her charge, suggesting his still-limited understanding.[55]

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[54] Cf. Douglas Gray, 'Gavin Douglas,' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp.149-64 [155]; Douglas Gray, 'Religious Elements in the Poetry of Gavin Douglas,' in *Literature and Religion in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland: Essays in Honour of Alasdair A. MacDonald*, ed. Luuk Houwen (Leuven, Paris, and Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), pp.69-91 [75]; Honeyman, '*The Palice of Honour*: Gavin Douglas's Renovation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*,' p.77.

[55] Cf. David Parkinson, 'The Farce of Modesty in Gavin Douglas's *The Palis of Honoure*,' *PQ* 70.1 (1991), pp.13-25 [20-21].

The dissatisfaction which this sudden anti-climax produces points back to Chaucer's influence on the *Palice*, with Douglas's withholding of narrative closure meriting comparison to *The House of Fame*, where 'Geffrey' strains for a glimpse of that elusive figure, namely the 'man of gret auctorite.'[56] The *Palice'*s narrative climax, as one reader notes, is 'almost as equivocal and tantalising,'[57] with Honour's much-anticipated appearance short-lived and yielding to a disappointing sense of burlesque. However, Douglas's poem does not suddenly break off, unfinished, in the same way as Chaucer's; rather, the authorial persona wakes up from his dream in attempting to follow his guide to the Garden of Rhetoric (2080-88), and, cursing the end of his vision as he finds himself in the garden from the poem's outset (2089-2112), he suddenly resolves 'till mak ane end' (2114) with his 'versis thre' (2115) in praise of Honour. Douglas, despite refraining from a clear narrative resolution within the dream-vision proper, thus nevertheless reflects the desire to bring his text to a close, to the strongly affirmative ending in his hymn to Honour.

This delayed technique of closure provides a further parallel between his poem and the *Quair*, the youthful persona of which also wakes from his dream only to express an intensified feeling of dissatisfaction, one, however, alleviated shortly thereafter with the turtledove's message of good news.[58] Thus, like James, whose ending to his dream vision proper withholds narrative and thematic closure only to assert it in the form of his authorial persona's eventually joyful celebration of his new insights, Douglas's courtly dream vision allegory defers the explicitly triumphal passage with which it concludes. Like the *Quair*, which conveys this sense of closure by quoting its opening lines – 'Hich in the hevynnis figure circulere'[59] (a passage which itself evokes the idea of a divine plan) – the *Palice* also comes full circle, as Douglas's authorial persona finds himself in the garden first described at the start of the poem, thereby further suggesting a desire to knit together his text, the end of which looks back to its beginning.

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[56] *HF*, l.2158.
[57] Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' p.196.
[58] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1205-53.
[59] *KQ*, l.1372.

Yet in the *Quair* this circularity includes courtly love in the providential arc which it traces. Indeed, James's poem makes it clear that it is possible to achieve on earth the higher virtues which it celebrates, as evident from the youthful persona's downward ascent and dream encounter with the goddess Fortune,[60] and from the present narrator's extended celebration of love's direct positive impact in his own life.[61] The *Palice* on the other hand follows a different trajectory as the dreamer not only ascends to Honour's dwelling, but also expresses a dissatisfaction with the garden into which he wakes up, with 'that fair Herbrie maist like to Hell' (2094), or, as he notes, 'All eirdlie thing me thocht barrane and vile' (2100). The authorial persona's longing for a return to his dream thus signals his preference for higher values, from which, for instance, courtly love, evoked by the garden, is therefore implicitly excluded. Indeed, in the Prologue he had presented himself as the poet of love, singing his allegiance to Nature, May, and Venus (91-99). The narrator as it were gestures back to that beginning, yet with a notable change of focus, rejecting the garden's pleasurable allurements in favour of highly stylized *laus* of Honour (2116-42).

Yet, the *Palice*, despite its implicit objections to the view of love presented in the *Quair*, adapts James's deferred vernacular self-assertion into a closing affirmation of the rhetorical capacity of Scots, as Honour's 'hie blis' (2124) brings to mind the strongly beatific turn in the final stanzas of James's work. Indeed, Honour, as Bawcutt observes, is addressed as if the poem's narrator 'were addressing God,' while the imagery of these closing stanzas draws upon figures 'traditionally applied to Christ or the Virgin.'[62] This passage also represents the poem's formal and stylistic apex, with 'an ingenious and cumulative use of internal rhyme'[63] which is itself multiplied, moreover, from one stanza to the next, [64] such that the praise of Honour expresses a feeling of ascent appropriate to the lasting subject which it celebrates, while the

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[60] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1053-1204.
[61] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1275-81.
[62] Bawcutt, ed., *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, p.213.
[63] Ibid., p.li.
[64] Cf. Fox, 'The Scottish Chaucerians,' p.197; Alice Miskimin, 'The Design of Douglas's *Palice of Honour*,' in *Actes du 2e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Écossaises (Moyen Age et Renaissance): Université de Strasbourg, 5-11 Juillet 1978*, ed. Jean-Jacques Blanchot and Claude Graf (Strasbourg: Institut d'études anglaises de Strasbourg, 1979), pp.396-408 [398].

closing stanzas of the narrative proper also function as an assertion of the authorial persona's poetic powers, of the triumphant achievement of a level of expression previously remaining elusive to him.[65]

The *Palice*'s closing promotion of the author's ideal subject matter reflects its status as a kind of manifesto, that is, as an early working through of the poetics that go on to influence the *Eneados*. Indeed, Douglas's ambitious vernacular translation engages with the interpretative tradition of the *Aeneid*, whereby Christian readers mined the familiar classical narrative for its underlying moral *sentence*.[66] The Prologues accompanying each book of the translation, moreover, imprint it with this allegorical reading, keeping pace as they move from worldly to spiritual concerns with the symbolic journey of Aeneas.[67] The Prologues also express a view of poetry and of the poet, with its authorial persona a heroic figure, or as Bawcutt notes, 'as creator, and the act of translation as a great and creative enterprise.[68] Douglas's narrator thus undertakes a journey of his own to restored poetic ability and confidence in his craft.[69] Unlike the *Palice*, however, which traces a similar progression, that of the author in the Prologues to the *Eneados* reflects a far greater assurance and clarity of vision, informed from its outset, for instance, by the Christian inspiration whose explicitness indicates that the later text is the work of a more mature writer.[70]

The *Eneados* nevertheless continues to look back on the authorial persona's portrayal in the *Quair*. Indeed, James's poem provides an early example of the assertion of the vernacular relative to Chaucer,

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[65] Cf. Gerald B. Kinneavy, 'The Poet in *The Palice of Honour*,' *ChauR*.3.4 (1969), pp.280-303 [301-303].
[66] Cf. Jane Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.81-102 [82-84]; Nicola Royan, 'Gavin Douglas's Humanist Identity,' *M&H*, New Series, 41 (2016), pp.119-36 [131]; Daniel Pinti, 'The Vernacular Gloss(ed) in Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' *Exemplaria* 7.2 (1995), pp.443-64 [445].
[67] Cf. David Parkinson, 'Orpheus and the Translator: Douglas's "lusty crafty preambill,"' in *Rhetoric, Royalty, and Reality: Essays on the Literary Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Alasdair A. MacDonald and Kees Dekker, Mediaevalia Groningana New Series, 7 (Paris, Leuven, and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005), pp.105-20 [114]; Gray, 'Religious Elements in Gavin Douglas,' pp.86-91.
[68] Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study,* p.165.
[69] Cf. Lois Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln, NE, and London, Eng.: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p.97. Cf. Lois Ebin, 'The Role of the Narrator in the Prologues to Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' *ChauR* 14 (1980), pp.353-65 [354].
[70] Cf. Ian Johnson, 'Vernacular Self-Commentary during Medieval Early Modernity: Reginald Pecock and Gavin Douglas,' in *Self-Commentary in Early Modern European Literature, 1400-1700*, ed. Francesco Venturi, Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture, 62 (Leiden, NL, and Boston, MA: Brill, 2019), pp.71-98 [93].

made by the *Quair*-persona's gradually increasing self-confidence and ultimate assertion of his abilities: the *Eneados*, as a highly self-conscious translation of an established classical authority into Douglas's Scots, might well be expected to rely on that authorial representation in framing its poetic relationship to Virgil. The Prologues as a whole have been rightly read as tracing a larger narrative and thematic arc, with Douglas's authorial persona moving towards a renewed sense of his value and purpose as a poet: the Prologues, as Lois Ebin notes, thus look back to the use of the individual prologues to the *Troilus*.[71] Yet, the Prologues' closing triumphalism suggests a greater indebtedness to the ending of the *Quair*, especially as Douglas's final affirmation of his poetic powers emerges out of a carefully crafted progression. The *Quair*, as a Scottish text and one, moreover, self-conscious about its rhetorical ambitions, provides Douglas with an effective template to be applied in asserting himself relative to the *auctor* Virgil.

That James's poem continues to be influential for thinking about the status of Scots is suggested from Douglas's ongoing emphasis on kingship and kingliness in the writing of the *Eneados*. Both concepts, as this chapter has shown, are thematically significant for his earlier dream vision, the *Palice*, where they point to a self-conscious engagement with a native vernacular tradition in the form of the *Quair*: Honour's 'royal fame diuine' (2129) is, for instance, proclaimed by the poet persona of the *Palice.* That the *Eneados* is governed in its writing by a similar set of values is suggested from Prologue I where Douglas appeals for divine help with his task by calling on the 'Kyng of Kyngis, Lord, Etern.'[72] From a Scottish perspective, this religious inspiration functions as an implicit vernacular self-assertion; the corresponding emphasis on kingliness meanwhile evokes the same gesture in the ambitious *Quair*. The *Eneados* in other words plays on the network of meaning established by a native tradition in Scotland, with James's poem laying the groundwork for later expressions of vernacular identity such as Douglas's.

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[71] Lois Ebin, 'The Role of the Narrator in the Prologues to Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' *ChauR* 14.4 (1980), pp.353-65 [353]. Cf. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century,* pp.97-106.
[72] *Aeneid* II, p.16 (l.453).

The *Quair*'s adaptation of visionary experience to the assertion of its author's native Scots – James's authorial persona is often placed in direct contact with sources of divine inspiration[73] – is evident in Prologue XII, a triumphant springtime description also notable for containing echoes of the *Palice*.[74] In Douglas's dream vision, the authorial persona hears a voice address him, 'preclair as Phebus schone' (63), after which a blinding light causes him to fall down, thus predicting his brief glimpse of Honour in Book III (1918-26). Phoebus is depicted in similarly brilliant terms near the outset of Prologue XII, where, however, the authorial persona is not struck to the ground, but rather rises to this visionary occasion:

> Furth of hys palyce ryall ischit Phebus,
>
> With goldyn crovn and vissage gloryus,
>
> Crysp haris, brycht as chrisolyte or topace,
>
> For quhais hew mycht nane behald hys face,
>
> The fyry sparkis brastyng from hys eyn,
>
> To purge the ayr, and gylt the tendyr greyn,
>
> Defundand from his sege etheryall
>
> Glaid influent aspectis celicall.[75]

Douglas's description of the sun in this stanza draws on the imagery used for the Christian God in Psalm 19:6.[76] Yet, it also recalls the depiction of the enthroned god towards the end of the *Palice*. The *Eneados* persona, however, gives poetic expression to that which is confined to the ineffable in the *Palice*, as Prologue XII thus displays the increased confidence of its author in rendering subjects of a spiritual nature.

The *Quair*, too, reflects a residual influence on, for example, the religious poetics of the *Eneados*. Prologue XII's culminating vision of the divine order also recalls the closing stanzas of the *Quair*, with

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[73] Cf. *KQ*, ll.71-78, 512-18, 1233-51.
[74] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, ed., *The Eneados: Gavin Douglas's Translation of Virgil*, vol.1, STS, Fifth Series, 17 (Edinburgh: STS, 2020), p.201.
[75] *Aeneid* IV, p.68 [ll.35-42].
[76] Cf. Nitecki, 'The Theme of Renewal in Douglas's Prologue XII,' p.10.

their triumphant assertion of the integral relationship of all created things under a providential sky.[77] For James, this concluding statement of a cosmic harmony is necessarily inclusive of courtly love, whereas Douglas on the other hand continues to reflect an ambivalence with regards to the latter, the place of which, for instance, in his own conception of an idealized natural order is not altogether confirmed. In Prologue XII, for example, love, despite its inclusion within this vision of a created unity, also stands apart, with more positive images of lovers mingled with references to their 'bawdry and onlesum meyn.'[78] Douglas's authorial persona also speaks out in response to a covert meeting arranged between lovers, denouncing their flirtation as 'schamefull play / Na thyng accordyng to our hailsum May,'[79] thus illustrating how his portrayal of love strikes a dissonant note within an otherwise harmonious whole.[80]

Prologue XII thus provides a strong indication of the internal continuity of Scottish Chaucerianism, as the *Quair*'s assertive expression of vernacular identity is drawn upon in translating the *Aeneid*: yet, Douglas's quarrel over courtly love also points to the dynamism of his response to James's text. The *Quair*'s ongoing influence is nevertheless further suggested from the end matter to Book XII of the *Eneados*, a brief section of verse where the translator 'makis mensioun of thre of hys pryncipall warkis.'[81] Douglas, moreover, opens this closing passage by circling back to the beginning of the *Eneados*, signalling the completion of his work by quoting the first five words with which it had opened:

> Lo thus, followand the flowr of poetry,
>
> The batellys and the man translait haue I;
>
> Quhilk ȝoir ago in myne ondantit ȝouth,
>
> Onfructuus idylness fleand, as I couth,
>
> Of Lundeys Lufe the Remeid dyd translait;

[77] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1310-72.
[78] *Aeneid* IV, p.72 [l.210].
[79] *Aeneid* IV, p.73 [ll.225-26].
[80] The lively dialogue between the lovers who arrange to meet 'quhar scho so freschly sang this hyndyr nycht' (*Aeneid* IV, p.72 [l.221] recalls the bawdier and more transgressive exchange in William Dunbar's *In secreit place this hyndir nycht* (B25).
[81] *Aeneid* IV, p.139.

> And syne off his Honour the Palyce wrait:
>
> "Quhen paill Aurora, with face lamentabill,
>
> Hir russett mantill bordowrit all with sabill, &c."[82]

Douglas, in addition to the beginning of his translation, also quotes the first lines of the *Palice*, therefore further demonstrating the circularity with which the poet rounds off an accomplished literary career. As Bawcutt observes, moreover, his citation of his earlier work is in many ways a deeply Virgilian gesture, for not only is the list of the author's works modeled on a similar piece of four lines in Latin listing Virgil's major poems, but Virgil refers back to his earlier work at the start of the *Aeneid*, evoking both the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, while also quoting the opening line of the first Eclogue near the close of the *Georgics*.[83]

Yet, Douglas's reference back to his earlier work in many ways also recalls the *Quair*, the penultimate stanza of which pointedly quotes its author by repeating the first line of the poem.[84] Indeed, James's authorial self-consciousness is suggested earlier on in his mention of his youthful writings: the *Quair*'s relative superiority thus emerges as a result of the implicit contrast to this earlier work. [85] Thus, James's vernacular self-assertion is made by way of a retrospective strategy, one which I would argue is adapted in the explicit reference to the author's oeuvre at the end of the *Eneados*: indeed, Douglas too frames his poetic career as a progression away from the unfruitful idleness of youth to the writing of his honourable dream-vision poem and his triumphant completion of his Scots Virgil. Unlike the *Quair*, however, where the author's direct completion of his work is limited to the poem at hand, the *Eneados* traces a more ambitious arc still, one stretching all the way back to the *Palice*: Douglas both draws on but

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[82] *Aeneid* IV, p.139 [ll.1-8].

[83] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'The "Library" of Gavin Douglas,' in *Bards and Makars: Scottish Language and Literature: Medieval and Renaissance*, ed. Adam J. Aitken, Matthew P. McDiarmid, and Derick S. Thomson (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977), pp.107-26 [117]. For Douglas's reading of Virgil's pastorals, see esp. Leahy, 'The Use of Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in the *Eneados* of Gavin Douglas,' pp.101-15. See also *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception*, ed. Philip Hardie and Helen Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2010).

[84] Cf. *KQ*, l.1372.

[85] Cf. *KQ*, ll.85-91.

also goes beyond the concluding stanzas of the *Quair*, applying James's vernacular self-assertion not just to one work but rather to his poetic output of over a decade.

Whereas the *Quair* explicitly situates itself in relation to the poetry of 'Gowere and Chaucere,' that is, to the Chaucerian tradition of writing whose authority is appropriated by James,[86] the *Eneados* positions its author's writing career directly in relation to that of Virgil. That Chaucer should no longer figure makes sense given that the work at hand is a translation of the *Aeneid*; yet, Douglas's career shift to vernacular translation is itself a way of effectively displacing Chaucer, as Chaucerian dream-vision is left behind in favour of the author's ambitiously direct response to Virgil. The *Palice*, taken in the context of its author's poetic career, points to his later departure from Chaucer: Douglas undertakes a gradual working towards the vernacular confidence that allows him to put Chaucer behind him as he proceeds instead to his masterful rendering of the *Aeneid* into Scots. Douglas's major works together therefore display a pattern that typifies individual Scottish Chaucerian texts which, as this thesis has shown, self-consciously draw upon the vernacular authority of Chaucer, while at the same time implicitly asserting their poetic independence by ultimately breaking away from him.

In the *Eneados*, this sense of vernacular confidence is suggested by the act of self-quotation. James's reference to his own work – 'sum new thing'[87] – functions as a means of asserting himself as a Scottish poet. Douglas's explicit citation of his earlier poem acquires an additional significance in relation to Virgil, the well-known opening lines of whose epic work are directly quoted in the end matter to the *Eneados*. Yet, Douglas's review of his poetic output concludes with the citation of the beginning of the *Palice*: the Scottish poet's own opening lines of verse are thus placed in parallel with those of the Latin *auctor*. Indeed, Douglas's quotation of his own work has a double significance for the development of the Scots vernacular: in the first instance it strongly suggests its author's confident assertion of his native tongue, with Virgil's opening to his epic poem effectively being made to give way to the initial lines of

[86] *KQ*, l.1374.
[87] *KQ*, l.89.

the *Palice*; the *Eneados*'s end matter also recalls the explicit reference back to the 'New Orpheus' in Douglas's marginal note insofar as it invokes the authority of an established vernacular tradition in Scotland.

Eneados

In the *Eneados*, Douglas refers for poetic inspiration to Christ, 'that Prynce, that hevynly Orpheus'[88]: as Joanna Martin notes, this reference recasts lines from Robert Henryson's *Orpheus and Eurydice*.[89] Nor is Henryson's poetry more than just a source of learned allusion for his near contemporary, Douglas. The *Eneados*, rather, suggests the influence of the former poet's use of the mixed form in *Orpheus*, where the Boethian prosimetric protreptic is reworked in leading the reader to the wisdom of the *moralitas*: the Prologues, as this chapter argues, undertake a similar framing of the classical narrative of the *Aeneid*, as Douglas experiments with the mixed form's capacity to bring the reader to a similar enlightenment. The *Eneados*, viewed from the point of view of the mixed form, connects back, moreover, to Chaucer, whose *Troilus* likewise engages with the alternation of verse and prose in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* Thus, the *Eneados* represents an ongoing response to the tradition of writing that goes back to Chaucer, with Henryson supplying a significant mediating influence on the vernacular reworking of Virgil. Furthermore, Prologue XIII, with which this chapter concludes, points to the consolidation of a native Scottish tradition of writing insofar as it injects the dream vision form with a signalled Henrysonianism.

The *Eneados* consists of thirteen books in total: a translation of the twelve books of the *Aeneid*, as well as of Mapheus Vegius's Latin *Supplementum* to Virgil's text, originally composed in 1428.[90] Each

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[88] *Aeneid* II, p.16 [l.460].

[89] Cf. Joanna Martin, *Kingship and Love in Scottish Poetry, 1424-1540* (Aldershot, Eng., and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), p.81. See also Parkinson, 'Orpheus and the Translator: Douglas's "lusty crafty preambill,"' pp.114-15.

[90] For a parallel-text edition of the Supplement, see Anna Cox Brinton, ed., *Maphaeus Vegius and his Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid* (New York, NY, and London, Eng.: Garland Publishing, 1978) pp.52-91. For a more modern edition of the Supplement, see Michael C. J. Putnam, ed. and trans., *Maffeo Vegio: Short Epics* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Book of the *Eneados* is preceded by an original Prologue in verse, varying in length and style, and acting as an introduction to or commentary on the subject matter of the book it accompanies. The Prologues provide an insight into the poet's work in undertaking his translation of the *Aeneid*, expressing his sense of the difficulties of writing and his changing resolve with regards to that task.[91] Yet, the Prologues taken together also afford a guide to the overall interpretation of the *Aeneid*, gradually leading the reader away from concerns of a secular or earthly nature to a heightened spiritual perspective. Thus, Douglas leaves behind the temporal point of view in favour of a religious outlook, arranging the Prologues such that they direct the reader heavenwards and away from worldly preoccupations.

Prologue I, however, is distinctive in that it functions as a general introduction to the *Eneados*. In it, Douglas reflects on the nature of his vernacular translation and positions himself relative to Virgil. Yet, in doing so, he also implicitly invokes the authority of his poetic forebear, namely, the English Chaucer, whose rhetorical achievements in his own native tongue establish a high standard in the vernacular.[92] Indeed, Chaucer's poetry influences the style and diction of the translation proper of the *Eneados*.[93] Chaucer also comes to embody the high standard of writing in the vernacular to which Douglas aspires, this despite his protestations to the contrary in claiming to lack the ability to render the *Aeneid* into Scots. Prologue I involves a subtle appropriation of the poetry of 'venerabill Chauser,'[94] of the English Chaucerian tradition of writing to authorize writing in the 'langage of Scottis natioun.'[95] Douglas's implicit promotion of his native tongue therefore connects back to his use of Chaucer, for while Prologue I draws on the latter's vernacular authority, it does so in a spirit of vernacular self-assertion.[96]

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[91] Cf. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century,* pp.97-106; Lois Ebin, 'The Role of the Narrator in the Prologues to Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' *ChauR* 14.4 (1980), pp.353-65 [353]; Alicia K. Nitecki, 'Mortality and Poetry in Douglas' Prologue 7,' *PLL* 18.1 (1982), pp.81-87 [86-87]; Alicia K. Nitecki, 'The Theme of Renewal in Douglas's Prologue 12,' *Ball State University University Forum* 22.1 (1981), pp.9-13 [9].

[92] *Aeneid* II, p.12 [ll.339-43].

[93] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), pp.39-41**;** Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Gavin Douglas and Chaucer,' *RES* 21.84 (1970), pp.401-21 [411-19].

[94] *Aeneid* II, p.12 [l.339].

[95] *Aeneid* II, p.6 [l.103].

[96] Cf. esp. Katherine H. Terrell, *Scripting the Nation: Court Poetry and the Authority of History in Late Medieval Scotland,* Interventions: New Studies in Medieval Culture (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2021), pp.171-83.

The *Eneados*, moreover, reveals a sustained engagement with individual poems by Chaucer. Douglas's ongoing concern with questions of poetic reputation suggests the influence of *The House of Fame*. Indeed, Douglas's praise of Virgil is expressed drawing on the rhyme of 'fame' and 'name' –'That na lovyngis ma do incress thy fame, / Nor na reproche dymynew thy gud name'[97] – a pairing to which Chaucer himself frequently has recourse in his own exploration of those related concepts.[98] Indeed, that Douglas remains preoccupied with his own claim to fame is suggested from the frequency with which his own name is made to appear in and around the spaces between the later books of his translation.[99] In Chaucer, Virgil, whose statue is among those lining 'Fames hall,' 'bore hath up a longe while / The fame of Pius Eneas.'[100] Douglas, too, though ostensibly a translator, assumes a similar role, holding up Aeneas's fame while at the same time ensuring that his own name signals his lasting legacy as a vernacular author.

Yet, the *Eneados*, as I would argue, also draws on poems such as *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, works setting the world of classical antiquity within a context which is Boethian: Priscilla Bawcutt, for example, notes the echoes of both poems in the earlier of the Prologues to the *Eneados* where Love's 'ioly wo' is addressed in terms recalling the soliloquies presented by their male protagonists. [101] Yet, Douglas, despite his balanced attitude to courtly love, one mingling sympathy with reproach, injects the earlier Prologues with a recurrently cautionary tone warning against attachment to earthly things. The *Eneados* as a whole frames the classical text within a larger overarching Boethianism, with the later Prologues gradually moving away from a worldly outlook to its preferable spiritual alternative. The *Aeneid* is thus implicitly subject to a reading not unlike that which informs a poem like the *Troilus*, for Chaucer's narrative is placed in implicit dialogue with that of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. Where Chaucer,

[97] *Aeneid* II, p.5 [ll.73-74].
[98] Cf. *HF*, ll.305-06, 1275-76, 1311-12, 1405-06, 1411-12, 1461-62, 1489-90, 1555-56, 1609-10, 1619-20, 1695-96, 1715-16, 1735-36, 1761-62, 1871-72, 1899-1900, 2111-12.
[99] Cf. *Aeneid* IV, ll.139, 146, 191, 188, 193, 194, 195.
[100] *HF*, ll.1483-85.
[101] Cf. Bawcutt, 'Gavin Douglas and Chaucer,' pp.408-19; Bawcutt, 'Writing About Love in Late Medieval Scotland,' pp.190-93. See also Elizabeth Archibald, 'Gavin Douglas on Love: The Prologue to *Eneados* IV,' in *Bryght Lanternis: Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. J. Derrick McClure and Michael R.G. Spiller (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), pp.244-57 [251-57].

moreover, thematizes the protreptic function that the prosimetrum assumes in Boethius's text, Douglas engages the reader directly in his use of the mixed form in the Prologues, the formal, generic, and stylistic variety of which brings about a spiritual and philosophical change of perspective in the reader.

In Chapter 3, this thesis examined the protreptic effect of the tale-*moralitas Orpheus and Eurydice* alongside Eleanor Johnson's insightful analysis of the vernacular reworking of the Boethian prosimetrum by Chaucer, who experiments with the mixed form's ethical potential in *Troilus and Criseyde.* [102] I would argue that Henryson's poem provides a precedent for the use of framing material in Douglas's text, for *Orpheus*, as this thesis has shown, itself engages with the formal and stylistic aspects of the *Troilus*, more specifically, Chaucer's experimental adaptation of the prosimetric structure of the *De Consolatione*. *Orpheus*, the narrative portion of which is situated relative to poems such as the *Troilus* and *The Knight's Tale*, likewise responds to the protreptic potential of the mixed form as it is deployed by Boethius: together, the rhyme royal tale and the allegorical interpretation in decasyllabic couplets following lead the reader towards the higher philosophical understanding achieved in turning to the poem's *moralitas*.

Douglas's experimentation with the mixed form also recalls *Orpheus and Eurydice*, or the 'New Orpheus' as it is referred to in one of the marginal glosses to Book I of the *Eneados*.[103] *Orpheus*'s formal structure represents an innovative all-verse reworking of the prosimetrum as used by Boethius; it also assumes what Eleanor Johnson views as a protreptic functionality insofar as it facilitates the 'identification between its reader and its narrator who is also the protagonist of an ethical question for truth.[104] The *Eneados* enacts a similar progression albeit on a larger scale than the *Orpheus*, with the Prologues working together in leading the reader towards a spiritual perspective. Indeed, like Henryson's *Orpheus*, moreover, which provides an all-verse response to the prosimetric structure of Boethius's text, the mixed form is likewise adopted in the framing of the classical narrative in the *Eneados*: firstly, Douglas changes verse

[102] Eleanor Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages: Ethics and the Mixed Form in Chaucer, Gower, Usk, and Hoccleve* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp.79-121.
[103] *Aeneid* II, p.19, n.13.
[104] Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory in the Middle Ages*, p.10.

form between the individual book of his poem and its corresponding Prologue (indeed, the narrative proper of the translation is presented in decasyllabic couplets, recalling *Orpheus*). He also, however, writes in a strikingly wide variety of forms, genres, and styles in each Prologue, and I would argue that this aspect of the work is a further version of its engagement with the mixed form: the Boethian rejection of the things of this world and subsequent ascent to an enlightened point of view is achieved in other words via the constant change between the poetic kinds making up the Prologues. The *Eneados* thus frames its classical narrative in terms of a protreptic mixed form distinct from Boethius's.

That Henryson is a significant influence in this regard is suggested early on, in Prologue II, Douglas's shortest, three rhyme royal stanzas commenting soberly on the events of Book I of the *Aeneid* and concluding abruptly with an aphoristic reminder of the inevitably transitory nature of happiness: 'Heir verifeit is that proverbe teching so, / "All erdly glaidness fynysith with wo."'[105] The rhyme is Henrysonian, recalling the major moral cruxes in several of that poet's earlier works: for example, the leper lady's words of counsel as well as those spoken by the narrator following the loss of Eurydice.[106] That Douglas should deploy the same rhyme in the proverbial warning at the end of Prologue II suggests the *Eneados*'s engagement with the psychological transformation that is central to Henryson's works, where it is not only represented thematically but also becomes an aspect of the reading experience itself. The Boethian echo early on in his vernacular translation suggests its conceptual indebtedness to Henryson, as Douglas's reader is likewise invited to progress beyond earthly concerns to a spiritual perspective.

Orpheus's influence is suggested from the shift that takes place at the descent to the Underworld: indeed, like Henryson's text, where the rhyme royal narrative is left behind in favour of the *moralitas*, the later Prologues mark a subtle formal shift away from the preferred stanzas of the earlier ones, the Chaucerian affinities of which are signalled through the use of rhyme royal in Prologues II and IV, while Prologue III is composed in the challenging nine-line stanza first used in Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*,

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[105] *Aeneid* II, p.65 [ll.20-21]. Cf. *TC*, V, l.1835-41; OE, ll.89-91.
[106] Cf. *OE*, ll.395-97; *Test*., ll.477-80.

and Prologue V, finally, in that which is adapted for the inset complaint in the *Complaint of Mars.* Prologue VI, however, which functions as a prelude to the hellish journey made by Aeneas to the Underworld, switches to the eight-line stanza commonly used in the later medieval period for 'serious subject matter.[107] Like *Orpheus*, where the reader ascends to the philosophical heights of the poem's *moralitas*, the later Prologues involve a similar shift in point of view as they become increasingly and explicitly spiritual. Indeed, the later Prologues assume an increasingly dialogic relationship to the books they accompany, implicitly turning away from the war and bloodshed therein and the bickering of the pagan gods by focusing instead on values of a more lasting kind which, followed, lead directly to the divine.[108]

The Henrysonianism of this change in perspective also emerges in the Prologue to Book VII, for like *Orpheus*, where the mixed form is deployed to engage the reader in a philosophical ascent, Douglas's 'winter' prologue represents the seasonal equivalent of the hellish landscape visited in Book VI.[109] Indeed, Douglas makes this connection explicit as he refers to that setting as a 'symylitude of hell,'[110] while Prologue VII concludes with his description of it, that 'this proloug smellis new cum furth of hell.'[111] Alicia Nitecki observes that the mortality theme which is so forcefully raised in this 'winter' Prologue causes the authorial persona not to turn to heaven but rather back to his work and his creative resources.[112] Yet, the Prologues as a whole do in fact make that upward turn, thus illustrating how Prologue VII evokes a hostile human world in response to which the reader is invited to find philosophical consolation instead. The authorial persona's progression towards this way of seeing thus has a larger protreptic function insofar

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[107] Bawcutt, ed., *The Eneados*, I, p.121.
[108] Cf. Anna Andrews Caughey, '"The Wild Fury of Turnus Now Lies Slain": Love, War and the Medieval Other in Gavin Douglas' *Eneados,*' in *Masculinity and the Other: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Heather Ellis and Jessica Meyer (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp.261-80 [261-62, 271-77].
[109] Cf. Blyth, 'Gavin Douglas' Prologues of Nature Description,' p.172.
[110] *Aeneid* III, p.62 [l.44].
[111] *Aeneid* III, p.65 [l.163].
[112] Alicia K. Nitecki, 'Gavin Douglas's Rural Muse,' in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance), University of Stirling, 2-7 July 1981*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Stirling and Glasgow: University of Stirling and the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow, 1981), pp.383-95 [386].

as the identification between the narrator and the reader leads the latter on a larger quest for truth, while like Henryson, Douglas also examines the way in which different poetic kinds are a part of that process.

Henryson's influence in this regard is likewise evident in the sudden change of stanza in Prologue IX, a formal shift which not only brings to mind that between the tale and *moralitas* in *Orpheus*, but also the dual structure of the allegorical interpretation to the *Paddock and the Mouse* at the end of the *Fables*, which begins with three ballade stanzas warning against 'the dangers of flattery and evil company,'[113] followed by the remainder of the interpretation of the fable, composed in rhyme royal stanzas.[114] Prologue IX opens with a set of moral maxims in three six-line stanzas before breaking off in form and outlook, as the narrator declares, 'Eneuch of this, ws nedis prech na mor,' before turning to five-beat couplets.[115] Prologue IX then goes on to outline its author's critical ideas with regards to poetry in the high style. Indeed, Douglas's adumbration of the principle of decorum, of the correct affinity of style to subject, connects back to the implicit progression towards an elevated plane of philosophical understanding, for the later Prologues keep pace with this change in point of view by signalling a corresponding ascent.[116] Douglas in other words provides an implicit assertion of poetry's capacity to produce transformation via more than merely the kind of moral maxims featured in the opening six-line stanzas of Prologue IX, where two verse forms are placed in a kind of dialectic out of which the reader is led to a higher way of seeing.

Prologue X, an extended overview of divine unknowability and the Nature of the Trinity, also recalls Henryson, who engages with the same subject in his Prologue to *The Preaching of the Swallow*.[117] Unlike Henryson, however, whose explication of such concepts assumes a comparatively simple form, Douglas strives for a greater equivalency, rendering them in his use of poetic form and style: Prologue X

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[113] Cf. *Fables*, ll.2910-33.
[114] Cf. *Fables*, ll.2934-75.
[115] *Aeneid* III, p.169 [l.19].
[116] Cf. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century,* pp.102-03; Ebin, 'The Role of the Narrator in the Prologues to Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' pp.358-60.
[117] Cf. *Fables*, ll.1622-77.

deploys threefold expression to submit what are '"similitudes"' of the Trinity,'[118] a formal approximation of the theological mysteries neatly outlined in the five-line stanzas of the Prologue. This internal patterning reflects the capacity to make the divine, that is, the inaccessible, accessible.[119] Indeed, Prologue X, in its formal rendering of theological principles, gives them a devotional character, while, moreover, through its impression of symmetry and balance, conveying a positive sense of cosmic order (one that contrasts with the random intervention of the gods in human affairs in Book X).[120] Prologue X does more than explicate hard religious paradoxes; rather, it gives them a poetic form.

Thus, Douglas on one level is directly indebted to the use of the mixed from by Henryson, for the Prologues as a whole frame the reader's interpretation of the classical narrative at hand in terms which, through the shifting from one poetic kind to another, involve a gradual philosophical progression. Indeed, Henryson's influence in this regard is further suggested from the echo of his poetry in Prologue XI, for the opening emphasis on the exemplary nature of ancestral valour recalls the beginning of the *Orpheus*.[121] Prologue XI, moreover, addresses the obstacle to virtue arising from the conflict between body and soul:

> The flesch debatis aganys the spiritual gost,
>
> Hys hie curage with sensual lust to law,
>
> And, be the body victor, baith ar lost;
>
> The spreit wald vp, the corpss ay down list draw.[122]

Thus, Douglas describes the tension between the two parts of man in terms that are strikingly Henrysonian, for the Prologue's reference to the opposite trajectory of body and soul recalls both *The Paddock and the Mouse*,[123] as well as the allegorical discussion of the same conflict in the *moralitas* to *Orpheus*.[124] I would

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[118] Gray, 'Religious Elements in the Poetry of Gavin Douglas,' p.88. Cf. *PH*, ll.2116-42.
[119] Cf. *Aeneid* III, p.223 [ll.1-5]; *Fables*, ll.1622-49.
[120] Cf. Canitz, 'The Prologue to the *Eneados:* Gavin Douglas's Directions for Reading,' pp.15-16.
[121] Cf. *Aeneid* IV, pp.1-2 [ll.1-24]; *OE*, ll.1-28.
[122] *Aeneid* IV, p.3 [ll.81-4].
[123] Cf. *Fables*, l.2959.
[124] Cf. *OE*, ll.425-58.

argue that Henryson's formulation of these concepts with regards to the process of reading itself influences Douglas's own thinking about poetry's capacity to lift the reader up to an elevated spiritual plane.

Yet, while Henryson's adaptation of the mixed form to achieve that ascent influences Douglas's own, the latter poet's ultimate rendering of the divine is made with a far greater degree of triumphalism. Prologue XII's ode to Phoebus intersects with a reading of a larger Boethian ascent: in the *De Consolatione*, as Eleanor Johnson observes, the sun is 'associated with poetic healing, relief, and recovery of one's reason. It is Phoebus's penetrating rays that bring light back to Boethius's eyes.'[125] Prologue XII thus represents the fulfilment of the reader's spiritual ascent in the *Eneados*. Implicit also in the rendering of this culminating vision are the rhetorical powers of the poet behind it, for the sun's brilliance is captured through the use of a high style as well as an aureate poetic diction.[126] Indeed, if the sun, as more than one critic has observed, is understood as a representative of God Himself,[127] then Douglas's impressive rendering of the latter is a testament to his expressive abilities as a poet: the Prologue's blending of artifice and naturalism[128] suggests the access to the divine alluded to in Prologue X where God, according to the theological precepts therein, is best understood via study of his creation.[129] Prologue XII therefore serves as an assertion of the poet's ability to render those spiritual truths, as Douglas draws on images of art and craft that connect the sun to the powers of the creative imagination.[130]

Unlike Henryson, whose concluding references to the divine feature a prayerful simplicity,[131] Douglas takes up an overt self-assertion, drawing attention to his rhetorical prowess. Indeed, Prologue XII's implicit comparison of the poet's skill in tying up his text recalls the *Kingis Quair*, where James's authorial persona identifies a similarly bold parallel between his creation and God's.[132] Douglas's

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[125] Johnson, *Practicing Literary Theory*, p.157.
[126] Cf. Penelope Schott Starkey, 'Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*: Dilemmas in the Nature Prologues,' *SSL* 11.1 (1973), pp.82-98 [90-92].
[127] Cf. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*, p.178; Nitecki, 'The Theme of Renewal in Douglas's Prologue 12,' p.10.
[128] Cf. Conor Leahy, 'Dreamscape into Landscape in Gavin Douglas,' *EIC* 66.2 (2016), pp.149-67 [160-64].
[129] Cf. *Aeneid* III, p.223 [ll.1-15].
[130] Cf. Nitecki, 'The Theme of Renewal in Douglas's Prologue 12,' p.11.
[131] Cf. *Fables*, ll.2973-75; OE, ll.628-33.
[132] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1366-72.

triumphant representation of spring also brings his work full circle, for, as Alastair Fowler argues, the Prologues both implicitly and explicitly follow the progression of the calendar year.[133] Prologues XII and XIII, as portrayals of spring and summer, respond to the wintry and Lenten Prologues (VII, VIII), and as such evoke a general structural cyclicality, expressed via the passage of the seasons.[134] Prologue XII also displays a deeper concern with circularity, with the planets circling in the skies above,[135] the 'cyrkyll rovnd'[136] under which all things are made to flourish, thus reflecting a divine harmony. Douglas, moreover, in the rhetorically impressive song to spring towards the end of Prologue XII, offers a hymn which itself functions as a grandiose gesture of closure in the poet's completion of his 'langsum wark.'[137]

Yet, Douglas's greater triumphalism notwithstanding, his indebtedness to the poetry of Henryson has larger implications for the overall development of the vernacular tradition of writing in Scotland. The *Eneados*'s Boethian reading of its classical subject matter connects it to the *Troilus* where Chaucer thematizes the protreptic function that the prosimetrum assumes in the *De Consolatione*. However, the Prologues provide a kind of an update to this understanding of the mixed form and do so, significantly, by way of reference to the earlier experimentation with that very concept in Henryson's verse. The *Eneados* thus points to the way in which the later poets in this thesis draw on the earlier ones, as Douglas turns to a native vernacular tradition of writing in his ambitious reframing of the *Aeneid*. Like Henryson, Douglas expresses an awareness of the challenges of rendering Latin into Scots.[138] Douglas, too, is explicit in his insistence on the pagan text's underlying integumental value,[139] and, like Henryson, demonstrates a sustained engagement with the medieval allegorical tradition, an interest, for instance, evident in his

[133] Cf. Alastair Fowler, 'Gavin Douglas: Romantic Humanist,' in *Rhetoric, Royalty, and Reality: Essays on the Literary Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Alasdair A. MacDonald and Kees Dekker, Mediaevalia Groningana, New Series, 7 (Paris, Leuven, and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005), pp.83-103 [96-101].
[134] Cf. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*, p.166.
[135] Cf. *Aeneid* IV, p.67 [ll.3, 10, 30].
[136] *Aeneid* IV, p.69 [l.86].
[137] *Aeneid* IV, p.74 [l.270].
[138] Cf. *Aeneid* II, p.3 [ll.19-50]; *Fables*, ll.29-42.
[139] Cf. *Aeneid* II, pp.6-7 [ll.105-12]; *Fables*, ll.1 28; *OE*, ll.415-24.

marginal notes to part of his text which offer a learned exposition of Virgil.[140] Chaucer, moreover, comes to be displaced in the work of both poets as they provide a new Boethian way of reading, recasting the mixed form protreptic in order to direct the reader's gaze upwards to God .

That the English Chaucerian tradition of writing is forced to make room for its Scottish alternative in the *Eneados* is further suggested from the unusual dream-vision encounter in Prologue XIII where Mapheus Vegius (1406-58) spurs the poet persona to translate his *Supplementum* (1428) to the *Aeneid*. Indeed, Vegius rebukes the narrator for neglecting his text, the '"thretteyn buke ekit Eneadan,"'[141] and the authorial persona accedes to his interlocutor's request after being beaten over the head with a club.[142] Douglas's presumed misgivings as a new humanist about translating what is in fact not the *Aeneid* are inscribed in the authorial persona's explicit reluctance to undertake the task assigned to him by Vegius. Yet, Douglas, despite expressing these reservations, does still translate the Supplement, opening up, as Emily Wingfield notes, his text by adding 'another layer of interpretation' to the *Aeneid* (and *Eneados*).[143] Prologue XIII, indeed, reflects his awareness of the contemporary debate around Vegius's work, as Douglas's authorial persona translates the description of it in Jodocus Badius Ascensius's 1501 edition of the *Aeneid*, that is, as 'mair than langis to the cart the fift quheill': in other words, unnecessary.[144]

That Douglas's indirect engagement with the basic duality in the reception of the *Supplementum* in Prologue XIII should be framed as a dream vision points to its more fundamental Chaucerianism. Indeed, Kantik Ghosh notes that the book to follow is run through with a subtle Chaucerian irony directed at the Christianizing of the moral and allegorical significances of this additional book to the *Aeneid*.[145] Chaucer thus provides a flexible precedent for the ostensibly apologetic Prologue XIII, with the

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[140] Cf. Johnson, 'Vernacular Self-Commentary during Medieval Early Modernity: Reginald Pecock and Gavin Douglas,' pp.71-98 [72]; Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print*, pp.81-102; Pinti, 'The Vernacular Gloss(ed) in Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' pp.443-64. The marginal notes accompanying the prologue to Book I and its first ten chapters are to be found in Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS O.3.12.
[141] *Aeneid* IV, p.143 [l.101].
[142] Cf. *Aeneid* IV, p.145 [ll.145-52].
[143] Wingfield, *The Trojan Legend in Medieval Scottish Literature*, p.169.
[144] *Aeneid* IV, p.144 [118].
[145] Cf. Kantik Ghosh, '"The Fift Quheill': Gavin Douglas's Maffeo Vegio,' *SLJ* 22.1 (1995), pp.5-21.

Chaucerian subversion of poetic authority an expressive vehicle for the implicit ridicule of Vegius.[146] The Supplement author's implicit mockery is further suggestive from his parallels to Venus in the *Palice*, who, in demanding a piece of writing from the offending poet, refers to him as a 'subtell smy' (705, 944), a language of insult which this chapter argues implicitly speaks to her diminished status within the poem.

Prologue XIII also recalls the meeting between Aesop and the poet in the Prologue to *The Lion and the Mouse*, where the former despairs of poetry's effectiveness in a sinful world before recounting a moral tale.[147] Douglas's allusion to this episode on one level relates to his own self-justification in Prologue XIII, where the explicit reservations about the task before him are balanced against the translation of Vegius's text. Yet, Henryson is drawn upon in a way which also relates to the implicit self-assertion in Prologue XIII, for I would argue that the slightly chaotic encounter between the authorial persona and Vegius stands in contrast with the more solemn and dignified exchange between vernacular poet and the Latin *auctor*. Henryson's Prologue in other words is indirectly referenced as part of the ironized handling of Vegius, whose authority is undermined by his unlikeness to his counterpart so reverentially treated in the *Fables*.

Douglas, moreover, via this allusion to the dream-vision Prologue to *The Lion and the Mouse*, also displaces Chaucer who is implicitly held up as a vernacular master in the opening Prologue to the *Eneados*. Yet, Prologue XIII provides an indication of the way in which a native tradition of writing is drawn on by Douglas as a Scottish poet working through his poetic affiliations and situating himself relative to Virgil rather than Chaucer. Where Chaucerian dream vision more broadly defined provides a frame for the translation of the Supplement, Henryson's own highly self-conscious adaptation of that genre immediately influences Prologue XIII. That the *Fables* should function in this regard is also suggestive within the larger context of the *Eneados*, for Douglas's vernacular translation reveals an explicit awareness and foregrounding of the fact that it is Scottish. Thus, Henryson functions as a poetic authority for his near-

[146] Ibid.
[147] Cf. *Fables*, ll.1321-1404.

contemporary's reworking of Virgil, and Prologue XIII points to that consolidation in alluding to the vernacular poet's meeting with Aesop.

However, Douglas expresses an awareness of alterity that simultaneously distinguishes him from Henryson, whose Prologue involves only a slight articulation of resistance on the part of the narrator towards Aesop. The *Fables* implicitly present their author's ambitions via a reverential treatment of the latter, whose dignity and gravitas together are aspects of the authority that the vernacular poet emulates. In Prologue XIII by contrast the tone is altogether different, partly indicating a subversive view of Vegius. Yet, if Douglas himself is regarded as identifying with another having undertaken a rewriting of the *Aeneid*, then Vegius's portrayal arguably becomes playfully self-referential, also directed at the author of the *Eneados*. As Daniel Pinti writes, Douglas 'casts himself, like Mapheus Vegius, as a kind of *alter Maro*, a genuine *auctor*, but one writing in the vernacular,'[148] a reading of the negotiation of authority in Prologue XIII that is further supported by the self-conscious vernacularity of the language which is used by Vegius, bristling with Scottish colloquial forms in a way which invites a correspondence between him and Douglas. Henryson's framing of vernacular authority is thus evoked only to be departed from in Prologue XIII, where Douglas's assertion of himself as a poet is indirectly made by his mocking portrayal of Vegius.

If Prologue XIII self-consciously positions itself relative to a native tradition of writing in Scotland, then Book XIII itself concludes in a way which is more directly connected to the *Troilus.* Priscilla Bawcutt, for example, points out the parallels between this ending and the ending to the *Troilus*,[149] as Chaucer engages in an extended leave taking beginning with his direct address to his 'litel bok,'[150] before turning to Troilus's death and the ambiguous fate of the hero's soul, with its expression of *contemptus mundi*,[151] followed by the author's denunciation of earthly things and prayerful turning to a

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[148] Cf. Daniel Pinti, 'Alter Maro, Alter Maphaeus: Gavin Douglas's Negotiation of Authority in *Eneados* 13,' *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23.3 (1993), pp.323-44 [324].
[149] Cf. Bawcutt, ed., *The Eneados*, I, p.224.
[150] *TC*, V, l.1786.
[151] Cf. *TC*, V, ll.1800-27.

Christian ideal.[152] Douglas makes a similar gesture in the passage immediately following the end of Book XIII, the closing lines of which contain an original description of the stellification of Aeneas,[153] added on to Vegius's Christianized treatment of the epic protagonist's ascent into the heaven, guided by Venus.[154] In the 'Conclusio' immediately following this sequence, the narrator declares that he 'salbe vpheld / Abufe the starnys perpetualy to ryng,' an assertion of poetic fame tallying with his final 'contemplatyve' turn.[155]

This 'Troilean' ending provides a fitting conclusion to a reading of the poem as Boethian: Vegius's *Supplementum* provides the right material for the reader's ascent in the later Prologues, one this chapter has argued connects back to later medieval uses of the mixed form in the *De Consolatione*. Douglas's authorial persona thus provides a point of reference for this larger protreptic transformation; his philosophical enlightenment also implicitly intersects with his closing vernacular self-assertion, for Douglas's narrator concludes with a bold assertion of the immortality earned by his translation.[156] Indeed, this aspect of these closing passages to the translation also applies to their portrayal of the author himself, the proliferation of whose name in around these final sections of text help sound this triumphant note.[157] Indeed, the effective piling on of different kinds of endings gives the impression of a victorious finale, as Douglas brings not just his translation but his whole career to a resoundingly successful conclusion.

[152] Cf. *TC*, V, ll.1828-69.
[153] Cf. *Aeneid* IV, p.186 [ll.75-76].
[154] Cf. Anne Rogerson, 'Vegio's *Supplement*: Classical Learning, Christian Readings,' in *Brill's Companion to Prequels, Sequels, and Retellings of Classical Epic*, ed. Robert Simms, Brill's Companions to Classical Reception, 15 (Leiden, NL, and Boston, MA: Brill, 2018), pp.267-94 [267-72].
[155] *Aeneid* IV, p.187 [ll.8-9, 16].
[156] Cf. Ovid, *Met*. I, 583-746.
[157] Cf. *Aeneid* IV, pp.191, 193, 194, 195. These colophons are in all likelihood not the work of Douglas but Matthew Geddes, his secretary and the scribe of the poem's oldest manuscript, Cambridge, Trinity College Library, MS O.3.12. Still, Geddes may have been responding to the example encouraged in other parts of the translation by Douglas, such as, for instance, the earlier summary of the poet's output after Book XII (*Aeneid* IV, p.139). This hypothesis is supported by more recent scholarship on scribal colophons in later medieval Scotland which reveals how the authorial attributions found in certain prints and manuscripts of Dunbar go back to an earlier period in the transmission of his verse, thus potentially originating with the poet himself: cf. Sally Mapstone, 'The Transmission of Older Scots Literature,' in *The International Companion to Scottish Literature 1400-1650*, ed. Nicola Royan, International Companions to Scottish Literature (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2018), pp.38-59 [50].

In his 'Exclamatioun,' a short section of verse defending his translation against its critics,[158] Douglas recalls the *Troilus* in drawing on the ancient topos of the ship as a metaphor for writing[159] (an image which is likewise adapted to express the authorial persona's immaturity near the outset of the *Quair*.[160] Chaucer's 'go litel bok' stanza is also revised in the final stanza of the 'Exclamatioun':

> Go, wlgar Virgill, to euery churlych wight
>
> Say, I avow thou art translatit rycht,
>
> Beseyk all nobillys the corect and amend,
>
> Beys not afferyt tocum in prysaris sycht;
>
> The nedis nocht to aschame of the lycht,
>
> For I haue brocht thy purposs to gud end:
>
> Now salt thou with euery gentill Scot be kend,
>
> And to onletterit folk be red on hight,
>
> That erst was bot with clerkis comprehend.[161]

Douglas's assertion of the worth of his translation contrasts with his earlier adaptation of Chaucer's lines in the *Palice*, at the end of which he adopts a more predictably apologetic attitude towards his text (2161-69), refusing, indeed, to acknowledge it as his own as he insults, or flytes, it for its inadequacies.[162] In the *Eneados*, by contrast, Douglas is far less critical of his work, which is implicitly superior to his *Palice*.[163] The 'Exclamatioun' also reflects a further development in his thinking as a writer as he addresses his 'wlgar Virgill,' drawing attention to the worth of his text as a vernacular translation of a Latin *auctor*. The Chaucerian 'litel bok' therefore acquires a specific definition in the form of the vernacular *Aeneid*: the

[158] *Aeneid* IV, p.192.
[159] Cf. *TC*, II, ll.1-7.
[160] Cf. *KQ*, ll.112-33.
[161] *Aeneid* IV, p.193 [ll.37-45]. Cf. *GT*, ll. 271-79.
[162] Cf. Antony J. Hasler, *Court Poetry in Late Medieval England and Scotland: Allegories of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.106.
[163] Cf. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*, p.170.

Scottish text no longer exists as the nameless variation on the theme introduced at the end of the *Troilus*; rather, Douglas effectively forces this trope out from the shadows of its source in the poetry of Chaucer, with the 'litel bok' replaced by an explicit identification of it as a vernacular translation of Virgil.

The *Eneados*'s adaptation of this farewell to the author's book also makes an apt end to Scottish Chaucerianism, for a similar envoy features in the closing stanza of that tradition's first work, the *Quair*, as James I dedicates his 'buk in lynis sevin' to his masters, that is, Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower.[164] Yet, James's lines reflect a different set of literary ambitions, as he appropriates English Chaucerian writing. The *Quair* itself, moreover, in its engagement with both *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Knight's Tale*, belongs to the later medieval adaptations of familiar classical and pseudo-classical narratives, in James's case appropriated specifically to his recent personal history as intertwined with Scotland's own. Douglas on the other hand points to a different interpretation of the world of Troy, that is, a humanist-inspired one involving the more restrained translation of the established texts of antiquity.[165] Yet, while Douglas's envoi avoids setting his text alongside vernacular forebears such as Chaucer,[166] the *Troilus* nevertheless provides him with a literary mould for his closing address to his 'wlgar Virgill,' with the *Eneados* in its entirety looking both ways as it responds to Chaucer and the Scottish Chaucerians.

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[164] *KQ*, l.1378.
[165] Cf. Day, *English Humanism and the Reception of Virgil c.1400-1550*, p.137.
[166] Cf. *KQ*, ll.1373-79.

Conclusion

In the Prologue to the *Eneados*, Gavin Douglas dedicates his text to Henry, lord Sinclair (c.1460-1513), 'Quharfor to hys nobilite and estait, / Quhat so it be, this buke I dedicait, / Writtin in the langage of Scottis natioun,'[1] that is, 'in our langage,'[2] the vernacular of the author's native Scotland. Douglas refers to Scots, that 'langage,' using the first-person plural throughout the Prologue to the *Eneados*,[3] while Matthew Geddes, his scribe, echoes this sense of a shared vernacular in his incipit to the *Eneaodos*:

> Heyr begynnys the proloug of Virgyll prynce of Latyn poetis in hys twelf bukis of Eneados compilit and translatit furth of Latyn in our Scottis langage by ane right nobill and wirschipfull clerk Master Gawyn Dowglas provest of Sanct Gylys Kyrk in Edinburgh and person of Lyntoun in Louthiane quhilk eftyr was bischop of Dunkeld.[4]

Geddes's incipit celebrates and promotes the translation in grandiose tones worthy of its author, with Scots, with which the poem's implicit reader identifies, placed in suggestive apposition with Latin. Thus, the *Eneados*, while on one level reflecting the element of opportunism to translation in this period,[5] and despite, moreover, its own author's professed embarrassment over the rudeness of his native tongue,[6] nevertheless evokes feelings of national and political pride in its ambitious elevation of the vernacular,[7] with Scots rather than English the linguistic medium through which readers are given access to Virgil.[8]

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[1] *Aeneid* II, p. 6 [ll.101-103].
[2] *Aeneid* II, p.4 [l.40].
[3] Cf. *Aeneid* II, pp.6 [ll.111, 119, 121], 13 [ll.359, 362, 360, 364], 14 [l.380], 17 [l.494].
[4] *Aeneid* II, p.1.
[5] Cf. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, 'Richard Carew, William Shakespeare, and the Politics of Translating Virgil in Early Modern England and Scotland,' *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 5.4 (1999), pp.507-27 [514-516].
[6] Cf. *Aeneid* II, p.3 [l.21], 4 [l.43].
[7] Cf. Nicola Royan, 'The Scottish Identity of Gavin Douglas,' in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity*, 1300-1600, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, The New Middle Ages (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp.195-209 [199-200]; Sally Mapstone, 'Scotland's Stories,' in *Scotland: A History,* ed. Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.250-273 [263]; A. E. Christa Canitz, '"In Our Awyn Langage": The Nationalist Agenda of Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*,' *Vergilius* 42 (1996), pp.25-37.
[8] Cf. James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.72-73.

This vernacular confidence is one which is already evident in the later fifteenth century in Scotland, where, for instance, it can be detected in the work of writers such as Robert Henryson and John Ireland. In Douglas's case, it is accompanied with an strong sense of an independent vernacular literary tradition which is implicitly expressed in the procession of vernacular poets in Part II of *The Palice of Honoure*. Although it is primarily made up of famous classical *auctores*, the Court of the Muses also includes writers of more recent memory such as the conventional trio of poets, Chaucer, Gower, and the monk Lydgate.[9] This group is balanced by a set of three poets from Scotland, for, as the narrator states, 'Of this Natioun I knew also anone / Greit Kennedie and Dunbar ȝit vndeid, / And Quintine with ane Huttok on his heid.'[10] Douglas's pointed reference to the fact that two of the poets are still living suggests exactly just how new this literary tradition is that is boldly being held up together with the older one headed by Chaucer. In presuming, therefore, that Douglas's poem was indeed written around the turn of the century in Scotland, it will only be a few years before this list of vernacular writers becomes both longer and more entrenched in the roll call of dead poets in the second half of Dunbar's *I that in heill wes and gladnes* (c.1505).[11]

It has also been observed that the passing mention of poets as 'ȝit vndeid' in Part II of the *Palice* might be interpreted as a kind of running joke on the literary insults exchanged by Dunbar and Kennedy. David Parkinson, for instance, writes that this phrase could lead a reader familiar with their *Flyting* (which was perhaps fresh in memory around the same time as the composition of *The Palice of Honour*[12]) to wonder with amusement that both poets should still be alive given the violence of each other's insults.[13] Even if one does not regard the phrase as a kind of inside joke alluding to the flyting between both poets,

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[9] Cf. *PH*, ll.916-21.
[10] *PH*, ll.922-24.
[11] B 21.
[12] Cf. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'The "Library" of Gavin Douglas,' in *Bards and Makars: Scottish Language and Literature: Medieval and Renaissance*, ed. Adam J. Aitken, Matthew P. McDiarmid, and Derick S. Thomson (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1977), pp.107-26 [121].
[13] Cf. David Parkinson, ed., *The Palyce of Honour*, 2nd ed., TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2018), p.139.

Douglas's juxtaposition of their names must surely be designed, accepting the relative dating of both texts, to evoke their ties to a genre which so clearly distinguishes Scotland's literary tradition from England's.[14] In addition to selecting poets which, evidence suggests, were prominent in literary circles in Edinburgh (Priscilla Bawcutt observes that the mysterious poet, 'Quintine,' is frequently mentioned in the *Flyting*),[15] Douglas also appears to choose writers whose work sets them apart from their counterparts in England, for in his possible reference to the genre of flyting so notoriously put into effect by Dunbar and Kennedy he thus evokes his native literary tradition to differentiate both writers from Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, a strategy of exclusion which is, moreover, made more explicit in his use of the phrase 'Of this natioun,' carefully placed, one might add, at the front of the verse line, to mark the division between poetic triads.[16]

Douglas's frequent use of the work of poets closer to home has further implications for this thesis, for it suggests a conscious effort on his part to make so much of his native Chaucerian tradition in Scotland. In many ways the opposite of his courtly contemporary, Dunbar, who, as memorably noted by Bawcutt, 'rarely worked with *any* book at his elbow,'[17] Douglas, by contrast, is a deeply literary and allusive writer, one who appears to have benefited from a greater access to print than any of the other poets in this thesis.[18] Douglas's remarkable range of reading makes it even more striking that he draws with such regularity on, that he chooses, in fact, to work with, writers who form part of the early stages of Scottish Chaucerianism, Not only does this aspect of his verse tally with explicit passages such as one finds in Part II of the *Palice*, but it also points up a more general development in this thesis, namely that, by the early sixteenth century, Scottish Chaucerianism provided poets with a literary repertoire from which to draw in their own work. Whereas, therefore, the earlier period in this tradition is mainly informed by an engagement with Chaucer,

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[14] Cf. Elizabeth Elliott, 'Scottish Writing,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English*, ed. Greg Walker and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.574-93 [574-75].
[15] Cf. Bawcutt, 'The "Library" of Gavin Douglas,' p.121.
[16] Cf. Royan, 'The Scottish Identity of Gavin Douglas,' pp.199-200.
[17] Priscilla Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.25.
[18] Cf. Sally Mapstone, 'The Transmission of Older Scots Literature,' in *The International Companion to Scottish Literature 1400-1650*, ed. Nicola Royan, International Companions to Scottish Literature (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2018), pp.38-59 [39-40].

that response comes increasingly, especially, for instance, as one moves towards the sixteenth century, to be mediated by writers from earlier on in the fifteenth century, such as James I, Holland, and Henryson, to the extent that with a poet such as, in particular, Douglas, Chaucer gives way to Scottish Chaucerianism.

In the section on the 'tyme, space, and dait' of the *Eneados*, Douglas gives its date of completion, for he writes that it was finished on the feast of Mary Magdalen, in the 'thousand fyve hundredth and thretteyn ȝeir,' a highly precise date which indicates that he finished the translation on 22 July 1513.[19] Scotland would shortly after suffer one of its worst losses at the Battle of Flodden on 9 September 1513, a military disaster that brought with it a significant reduction in literary and cultural activity in Scotland. It has, for instance, been observed of Douglas that, after Flodden, his poetic aspirations were 'swept away in the political chaos and cultural abatements that followed 1513.'[20] Flodden also, moreover, marks a natural end, in Scotland, to the medieval period, a period boundary likewise observed within this thesis. There still remains, however, work to be done on the mid- to late sixteenth-century reception in Scotland of the literary tradition which this thesis has shown develops over the course of the century beforehand, eventually acquiring an internal momentum of its own through which it develops along independent lines. By the second quarter of the sixteenth century in Scotland, therefore, writers, in addition to continuing to engage with the poetry of the Chaucerian tradition in England, benefit as much from their native tradition, one which emerges out of the response, among earlier poets, not just to Chaucer, but also to each other.

Scottish Chaucerianism's impact, is, for instance, suggested from Sir David Lindsay's (c.1485-1555) *The Testament of the Papyngo* (1530), a bird poem, the opening stanzas of which recall the *Palice* in their adaptation of the nine-line stanza in three rhymes used for the Third Part of Douglas's text.[21] Lyndsay's narrative proper is composed in rhyme royal, thus connecting his text to Chaucer, yet the *Papyngo*'s exemplary story about the fall of a parrot as a result of its ambition and pride more closely

[19] *Aeneid* IV, p.194 [l.4].
[20] Mapstone, 'Scotland's Stories,' p.264.
[21] *The Testament and Complaynt of our Soverane Lordis Papyngo*, in *Sir David Lyndsay, Selected Poems*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams, ASLS, 30 (Glasgow: ASLS, 2000), pp.58-97.

recalls *The Buke of the Howlat* than it does the assembly of birds in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*.[22] Alongside the *Howlat*, which provides 'a witty precedent for the clerical-avian drama of the *Papyngo*,'[23] Lindsay's text, in particular the papyngo's high-style complaint, also recalls Cresseid's against Fortune in the *Testament of Cresseid*, with that unhappy creature's testament offering a further allusion to Henryson's poem, an evocative literary parallel designed to set the parrot's misfortune in a tragic and comic light.[24]

The *Papyngo*'s Scottish resonances indicate that by the time in which Sir David Lindsay was writing, Scottish Chaucerianism no longer functions as a mediating influence on readings of Chaucer in Scotland but rather assumes a dominance appropriate to its status as an independent literary tradition. This view is further suggested from the poem's opening homage to the author's vernacular forebears, with 'Chawceir, Goweir, and Lidgate laureate' first within the group of writers celebrated by Lindsay (12). Yet, in rhetorical terms, his most fulsome praise is reserved for the subsequent list of Scottish poets (15-54) such as Dunbar, 'quhilk language had at large, / As maye be seen in tyll his *Goldin Targe*' (17-18). Lindsay's stanzas gain in momentum however in working towards the poem's impressive panegyric of Gavin Douglas, who is 'Of eloquence the flowand balmy strand, / And, in our Inglis rethorick, the rose' (23-24). James I of Scotland, too, features later on in the poem, as the subject of authorial compliment, 'The patroun of prudence, / Gem of ingyne and peirll of polycie, / Well of justice and flude of eloquence' (430-32) – terms of praise which recall those addressed to the poet Virgil in the First Prologue to the *Eneados*.[25]

In *The Kingis Quair* (c.1424), James I pays tribute to his avowed masters Chaucer and Gower, 'Of rethorike quhill thai were lyvand here / Superlative as poetis laureate, / In moralitee and eloquence

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[22] Ibid., p.238.
[23] Ibid., p.xvi.
[24] Cf. Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp.257-58; Janet Hadley Williams, 'Sir David Lyndsay,' in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), pp.179-91 [185].
[25] Cf. *Aeneid* II, p.3 [l.4].

ornate.'[26] The *Quair* thus reflects its aspirations to achieve an eloquence that is identifiably Chaucerian, with Chaucer's verse in particular embodying that ideal as it is praised by fifteenth-century writers.[27] In Scotland, John Ireland contrasts his impoverished vernacular with that of Chaucer's 'gret eloquens.'[28] Yet, Lindsay's application of that same term forty years later to the Scots poets James I and Douglas, drawing, moreover, on the eloquent examples of literary excellence in the latter's *Eneados*, presents a Scots version of the eloquence which was in the previous century commonly represented by Chaucer. Chaucer's effective displacement thus reflects a larger shift, away from an English Chaucerian tradition to a Scottish, to, that is, a native body of writing wherein ample evidence of such eloquence can be found.

[26] *KQ*, ll.1375-77.
[27] Cf. Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, ed., *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, 1357-1900,* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), pp.xciii-iv.
[28] *Meroure* III, p.164.

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