Interpreting the Visual Dynamics of Religious Manuscripts in England, 1260-1500

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Abstract

In this thesis, I contend that the visual dynamics of religious manuscripts produced in England (1260-1500) had fundamental importance in shaping the cognitive and conceptual responses of readers who were not literate in Latin. I begin by establishing the primacy of Latin paraliturgical materials, used for teaching beginning readers the preliminary skills needed to recite Latin prayers. In Books of Hours, all the visual components of the page combined to inculcate a distinctive mode of reading, close to monastic *lectio*, which was to influence Middle English devotional writing. In my second chapter, I demonstrate that thirteenth-century pastoral writings such as the *Manuel des Péchés* placed readers in intimate contact with modes of reading translated from the Latin, and that this mode of reading endured in popularity into the fifteenth century. My third chapter considers the translation of the French of England of the *Manuel* into Middle English as *Handlyng Synne*, and the transmission of that Middle English text in late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts. *Handlyng Synne* repositions the French of England as a language exclusive to 'clerkes,' and this repositioning creates a space in which Latin becomes almost vernacularised. In the visual dynamics of the *Handlyng Synne* manuscripts, we see evidence of readers who were competent to interpret Latin submerged in Middle English. In Nicholas Love's *Mirror*, paraliturgical Latin again comes to the fore, in visual dynamics that construct a space for Middle English readers on the margins of Latin textual culture. In my final chapter, I look at the late-medieval manuscripts of the romance *Robert of Sicily*, finding in them complex interactions between languages, which shed light on the text's central exploration of the process of translation and of the positions of Latin and Middle English. I conclude that, despite medieval writers' rhetorical distinction of the three main languages of medieval England from one another, Latin models of reading were transmitted from paraliturgical contexts, from texts written in the French of England, into Middle English manuscripts, whose visual contents are constantly in contact with Latin.

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Author's Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my own work, except where it contains work based on input from other scholars, in which case this is clearly indicated by special reference in the text.

Introduction: Interpreting the Visual Dynamics of Religious Manuscripts in England, 1260-1500

The manuscripts of late-medieval England demand to be looked at, pored over and decoded. The most lavish and famous pages of these books are familiar not only to medievalists but also to wider audiences; they have become part of our imagery of literary heritage. We know that communication, whether by means of the images we see or the spoken or written words we interpret, is not transparent. In studies of medieval reading and manuscript culture, recent scholars have sought to reconstruct the ways in which experiences and habits, conventions and the conditions of material culture shape readers' responses.[1] The relationships between medieval England's three main languages, Latin, Middle English and the French of England, are given meaning by these conditions of material culture, by the material and visible manuscript matrices in which texts are recorded. The interactions of script and punctuation, marginal *notae* and rubrics, *ordinatio* and images and all the details that make up the totality of visual content on a manuscript page contribute to this meaning. By analysing these contents of medieval manuscripts, we can begin to reconstruct how readers' linguistic identities were shaped by their reading.

The language most frequently denigrated by medieval writers in England is Middle English, the language of those who are deemed incapable of participating in the book cultures of Latin or of the French of England. The identity of readers of English is therefore the most difficult to define, characterised as it is in negative relation to Latin or to the French of England. I discuss three Middle English texts in relation to those genres of Latin and of the French of England that most closely influence them. These genres of Latin and the French of England are, respectively, those of paraliturgical prayer (especially the alphabetic texts used to teach reading)

1 For example, Arthur Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages. Forming Compilations of Medieval London* (Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Julia Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London* c. *1475-1530* (London: British Library, 2012); Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin, eds.,

and penitential *pastoralia* (specifically the anonymous *Manuel des Péchés*).[2] The Middle English texts are Robert Mannyng's penitential compilation *Handlyng Synne*, a translation of the *Manuel*; Nicholas Love's gospel synthesis *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, translated from the Latin *Meditationes vite Christi*; and the anonymous religious romance *Robert of Sicily*, which has analogues in continental French but no known direct source.[3] Each of the authors of these texts conflates the use of English with lack of education or intellectual simplicity. So, Mannyng observes that he translated *Handlyng Synne* from the French of England for 'lewed men' ('uneducated or lay men') who speak the 'englyssh tonge' ('English language,' ll. 43-44). A century later, Love uses the same rhetoric, explaining that he translates his text from Latin to Middle English for 'lewde men & women .. of symple vndirstondyng' ('uneducated men and women … of simple understanding,' 10: 6-7). The manuscripts of the anonymous *Robert of Sicily* do not include authorial comments on the translation of the text itself, but feature a foolish king whose downfall is directly related to his linguistic incapacity, his failure to understand 'Latyn' and his need for translation into 'langage of his owne tonge' ('speech in his own language,' ll. 37-38). These descriptions of Middle English readers are found throughout medieval manuscript culture. So, Mannyng's later work, the *Chronicle*, was also translated into 'Inglysch' 'not for þe lerid bot for þe lewed' ('not for the learned but the uneducated'), for 'þo … þat þe Latyn no Frankys con' ('those … who do not understand Latin or French').[4] The author of another Middle English pastoral

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[2] No complete edition of the *Manuel des Péchés* exists. There is a partial edition by Frederick Furnivall, *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne", A.D. 1303, with those parts of the Anglo-Norman treatise on which it was founded, William of Waddington's "Manuel des Pechiez"* (London: Kegan Paul, 1901, 1903) EETS OS 119, 123. Reprinted as one volume New York: Kraus Reprints, 1973.

[3] Idelle Sullens, ed., *Handlyng Synne by Robert Mannyng of Brunne*, (Binghamton, NY: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1983); Michael Sargent, ed., *Nicholas Love,* The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*: A Full Critical Edition based on Cambridge University Library Additional MSS 6578 and 6686 with Introduction, Notes and Glossary* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2005); Edward Foster, ed., *Robert of Sicily*, in *Amis and Amiloun, Robert of Cisyle, and Sir Amadace* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997).

[4] Idelle Sullens, ed., *Robert Mannyng of Brunne: The Chronicle* (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 1: ll. 5-8.

text, the *Northern Homily Cycle*, explains the reasoning:

> … bathe klerk and laued man,
> Englis understand kan,
> …
> Bot al men can noht, iwis,
> Understand Latin and Frankis.[5]
>
> ('… both the cleric and the uneducated man/ can understand English …/ but all men cannot, I know,/ understand Latin and French.')

Medieval writers use 'Englishness' as a conceptual category, and exploit it in order to position their audiences against other linguistic, social, educational and geographic groups.[6]

I want to demonstrate that the texts I study are complex and often surprising in the ways in which they make linguistic relationships visible on the page, and the ways in which they construct rhetorical pictures of linguistic relationships that work in harmony or – more often – in tension with their visual dynamics and the modes of reading these invite. A huge amount of recent scholarship has focussed on multilingualism in England, on the interactions of Middle English with Welsh, Scottish, Dutch, continental French and other languages, and above all with Latin and the French of England.[7] Studies of medieval Latin influences on Middle English

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5 Anne Thompson, ed., *Prologue: The Northern Homily Cycle*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), ll. 67-74. Online edition. Accessed 01/06/2012 at http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/tnhcpfrm.html

6 Elisabeth Salter and Helen Wicker, eds., *Vernacularity in England and Wales,* c. *1300-1550* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, eds., *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity* (Philadelphia, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2003); Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren, eds., *The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval Religious Literature*, (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor and Ruth Evans, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280-1520* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999).

7 See Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter with the assitance of Amanda Hopkins, eds., *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain (*c. *1066-1520). Sources and Analysis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); Elizabeth Tyler, ed., *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England,* c. *800*-c. *1250* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Herbert Schendl and Laura Wright, eds., *Code-Switching in Early English* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011); Keith Busby and Christopher Kleinhenz, eds., *Medieval Multilingualism: The Francophone World and Its Neighbours* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010); Jocelyn Wogan-Browne with Carolyn Collette, Maryanne Kowaleski, Linne Mooney, Ad Putter and David Trotter, eds., *Language and Culture in*

hermeneutics have been carried out for the past thirty years by scholars such as Alastair Minnis and Rita Copeland.[8] New work building on this explores the use of Latin in other contexts and in contact with the vernaculars.[9] Studies stress the vitality and variety of texts written in 'the French of England,' not only in the centuries immediately following the Norman Conquest but also later; the term 'the French of England,' coined by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne as a means of challenging the inherently anglocentric terms 'Anglo-Norman' and 'Anglo-French,' is used throughout this thesis.[10]

This wide-ranging interest in multilingualism and the relationships between languages has animated studies of medieval writers' rhetoric of language use. The range of terms used to describe the linguistic texture of medieval manuscript culture reflects its complexity: manuscripts may be 'trilingual' and textual communities 'polyglot'; texts may be 'macaronic'. Putter and Jefferson, in their study of multilingualism, remind us that even to focus on 'trilingualism' requires a 'considerable simplification of the linguistic situation in medieval England'.[11] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne notes the need for yet more vocabulary to capture the distinctive

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Medieval Britain: The French of England c. *1100*-c. *1500* (York: York Medieval Press, 2009); Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); David Trotter, ed., *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain* (Woodbridge and New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2000).

[8] Alastair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: The Scholar Press, 1984). Reissued with a new introductory essay (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages. Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Alastair Minnis, ed., *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late-Medieval Texts and Manuscripts* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987).

[9] Richard Ingham, 'Language-Mixing in Medieval Latin Documents: Vernacular Articles and Nouns,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain*, eds. Jefferson and Putter, 105-122; Alan John Fletcher, 'Written Versus Spoken Macaronic Discourse in Late Medieval England: The View from a Pulpit,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain*, eds. Jefferson and Putter, 137-152.

[10] For discussion of the terminology, see Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'What's in a Name: The "French" of "England,"' in *The French of England*, eds. Wogan-Browne *et al*., 1-13.

[11] Judith Jefferson and Ad Putter, 'Introduction,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain*, eds. Jefferson and Putter, xi-xiv (xi).

character of medieval ‘trans- or intra-lingual’ communication.[12] This work replaces the static hierarchical image of Latin as the language of clerics and authority, the French of England as the language of law and of post-Conquest invaders, and Middle English as the universally intelligible, low status vernacular.[13] However, we still do not know why texts were translated into different languages and transmitted into different linguistic contexts. I contend that the language use in medieval texts is closely, even inextricably, related to their visual dynamics. The positioning of languages on the page, the modes of response the visual dynamics of texts invite, help us to understand how these languages related to one another and what mode of response was expected from readers. By studying the visual dynamics of manuscripts, we can begin to understand how the rhetoric of Middle English writers related to the kinds of linguistic interactions their audiences were exposed to on the manuscript page.

The study of translation and of linguistic interactions is necessarily also a study of the developments of manuscript culture, and vice versa: as texts are written, recopied, translated and transmitted to new audiences, the records of different communities’ language use are found on the pages of manuscripts. Legal records written in Anglo-Saxon gave way after the Norman Conquest to Latin as well as to the French of England.[14] The rise of the French of England in the eleventh century therefore resulted not only in the displacement of one vernacular by another, but in the disruption of a situation in which Latin and vernacular were to some degree interacting on an equal level.[15] Yet, in the newly popular Latin Books of Hours of the thirteenth century, rubrics written in the French of England supplement the core of

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[12] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, ‘What Voice is that Language/What Language is that Voice? Multilingualism and Identity in a Medieval Letter-Treatise,’ in *Multilingualism in Medieval* Britain, eds. Jefferson and Putter, 171-194 (174).

[13] For discussion of this image of linguistic hierarchies, see Wogan-Browne, ‘What’s in a Name,’ 1-13; Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, ‘Preface,’ in *The Vulgar Tongue* eds. Somerset and Watson, ix-xiii.

[14] Michael Thomas Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 3rd edn., 23; Wogan-Browne, ‘Multilingualism and Identity,’ 187.

[15] See Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 23-26.

Latin prayers in Psalters. Works of Middle English pastoral writing seek to replace the French of England of their sources, while anxieties about Middle English readers' access to Latin manuscript culture and to the Latin Bible coexisted with the development of new visual systems to represent innovative Wycliffite hermeneutics or the daring Latinities of *Piers Plowman*.[16] In the fifteenth century, texts translated into Middle English were printed with visual dynamics transplanted from manuscript culture. These interactions between visual communication and linguistic communication demand our attention, especially since communication between different languages and registers of language has generated some of the most innovative recent scholarship on reading in medieval England.

The importance of visual features of the manuscript page is evident from a glance at medieval writers' own works. Middle English texts constantly evoke the written surfaces of books, describing the visual details not only of lines of text, but also of seemingly ancillary features such as glosses, punctuation and rubric. Written text is painted onto the walls of the dreamer's room in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, 'bothe text and glose,' engraved in gold on stones throughout Malory's enchanted landscapes, revealed as cryptic runes in *St Erkenwald*.[17] These details are the common currency of writers who seek to evoke the experience of using books. 'I saw rubrisshes, departed blak and reed,' begins Lydgate, introducing his meditation on the Virgin with a dream-vision image of the page of the Book of Hours.[18] Caxton, eager to promote his printed books, evokes the minute details that give visual impact to a handwritten page as the tired writer slaves over it, his hand gradually varying as

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[16] See Kantik Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Tim William Machan, 'Language Contact in *Piers Plowman*,' *Speculum* 69 (1994): 359-385.

[17] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 3rd edn., 329-346, l. 333; Eugène Vinaver, *Malory: Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 2nd edn., 7 (ll. 33-36); 45 (ll. 16-18); 51 (ll. 22-24); 55 (ll. 38-39); 58 (ll. 13-15); 61 (ll. 38-39); 478 (ll. 38-42; 484 (ll. 13-15); 516 (ll. 30-37); 517 (ll. 22-25); 518 (ll. 43-44); 581 (l. 40); 582 (l. 8); 599 (ll. 29-32); John Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre. *A Book of Middle English*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 201-214 (ll. 51-56).

[18] Henry McCracken, ed., *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Vol. 1, *EETS ES* 107 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., and Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1911), 268-279, l. 18.

it becomes 'wery *and* not stedfast,' his eyes 'di*m*med' by the glare of the 'whit paper,' the pen 'worn' so that its lines become scrawled.[19] Margery Kempe describes the illegible hand of her unsuccessful first amanuensis, his 'lettyr … not schapyn ne formyd as other letters ben' ('letters … not shaped nor formed as other letters are').[20] In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* we are given a whole scene of reading to imagine, as Criseyde shows her uncle where she and her maids have paused in their reading of the tragic story of Amphiorax's death, marking their place with the rubric: 'here we stynten at thise lettres rede' (here we pause at these red letters).[21] In their most vivid form, these visual details of the manuscript page are elevated to symbols of profound significance, with the rubricated letters of medieval books suggesting the blood of Christ's wounds and the stretched parchment page his crucified body.[22]

These vividly visualised details of the written page are exploited for purposes as diverse as religious meditation or pragmatic advertisement of the appeal of a new technology, yet they also have a thoroughly practical purpose, and the ubiquity with which medieval writers describe them reminds us that medieval experiences of reading were not only performative, aural, communal or solitary, but also deeply visual. The modern scholarly methodologies that offer to explain the functions of these components are not entirely the preserve of any one discipline, not palaeography, art history, or literary criticism. I use the term 'visual dynamics' to refer to these interactive systems of visual symbols, and in this thesis, I contend that we need to approach visual dynamics as an essential mode of communication in medieval manuscript culture. The term 'dynamics' reminds us that the interactions between all of these different components, and therefore the contributions each

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19 Quoted by Daniel Wakelin, 'Writing the Words,' in *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 34-58 (34).

20 *The Book of Margery Kempe: Annotated Editon*, ed. Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 47, l. 101.

21 Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Riverside Chaucer* ed. Benson, 471-585 (490, l. 103).

22 See, for example, the poem comparing 'red letter in parchemyn' ('red letters on parchment') to Christ's blood and body, quoted by Kathryn Rudy, 'An Illustrated Mid-Fifteenth Century Primer for a Flemish Girl: British Library, Harley MS 3828,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 69 (2006): 51-94 (56).

individual component makes to the experience of reading the manuscript, are not static or fixed. Conventions of book production and interpretation continually shape and reshape the ways in which the visual dynamics of medieval manuscripts can be read. The skills readers used to decode these visual dynamics were learned from cumulative exposure to different and varying examples in the manuscripts and texts they read. These skills were built up from the earliest stages of education, and transferred from one reading context to another.

When a reader in late-medieval England opened a manuscript book, he or she found pages made up of an array of visual components, of which letters and words were only a part. Many of these visual components are very different from those we find in modern English printed books. Some survive in recognisable form into modern print culture, and others have taken on new connotations or new visual profiles while retaining some connection to their medieval forms. All were related to frameworks of interpretation that were radically different from anything modern English readers encounter.

So, I want to begin by asking what exactly these visual dynamics were, which shaped medieval readers' experiences of their manuscript pages. In order to understand this culture, I need to look at a Middle English manuscript that has had a profound influence on our modern understanding of medieval reading and of Englishness. The 'Ellesmere Chaucer' (San Marino, California, Huntington Library, MS EL 26 C 9) is perhaps the most well known Middle English manuscript that exists.

Figure 0.1 shows the opening page of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.[23] The visual features of the page can be itemised. There is the image of the knight in the right-hand margin. A demi-vinet border surrounds the other three sides of the text, and its style allows us to locate the limner in London. A small header in brown ink at the top of the page provides the title of the section, just as in modern books. The hierarchy of initials marks sections within the text and provides a visual key to their relative distinction. Paraph marks, essentially the same in visual profile as those we can find in modern print culture (¶), appear within the text to mark smaller sections, and also

[23] Figure 0.1 is San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS EL 26 C 9, f. 10r.

draw attention to the Latin textual apparatus in the margin. Each line begins with a capital letter and blank space separates the Latin *incipit* at the top of the page from the Middle English *incipit*, and both from the main text. There are categories that can be used to describe the script (*anglicana formata*), the punctuation (*virgules*), and the style of illumination. The systematic assignment of names and definitions to the features of the page gives us the impression we are familiar with its visual contents.

However, the visual components of this page belong to social, linguistic and performative contexts that are not those of modern English-speaking readers, and whose origins are far more diverse than their neat juxtaposition on the page suggests. Each feature of script or punctuation, each detail of textual presentation or of the textual performance circumstances that prompted it, can be set in its historical context. Features of punctuation have been traced back to the influence of liturgical chant, or to Jerome's methods for splitting the text of the Bible into short verses for easier reading.[24] We can reconstruct the ways in which elements of punctuation and *ordinatio* were first introduced to Latin reading culture to articulate the dense mass of unspatialised letters found in texts of antiquity.[25] Malcolm Parkes explains that letters

> came to be integrated with other graphic patterns involving spaces, letter forms from different scripts in 'hierarchic' distribution (to indicate headings, the beginning of paragraphs and sentences), and signs (such as punctuation) to enable a reader to identify more quickly patterns of syntactical and conceptual significance.[26]

This naming and itemising of visual components is helpful in that it defamiliarises the familiar manuscript page for modern onlookers, and makes prominent those details that are otherwise assimilated without conscious recognition or analysis. The

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[24] Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: The Scolar Press, 1992), 15.

[25] Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, 10; Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[26] Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look At Scribes. The Lyell Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford 1999* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 57.

placing of these visual components in their historical contexts reminds us that they come carrying diverse historical baggage: they originated in languages other than Chaucer's late-medieval English, in scripts other than *anglicana formata*, in performative contexts that vary substantially.

The images of pages from the Ellesmere Chaucer, such as this one, are utterly familiar to medievalists (as well as many non-medievalists), for they are reproduced in contexts outside the usual scholarly journals and monographs. The images of pilgrims in the margins of the text are reproduced on the covers of textbooks; the *Canterbury Tales* is a standard component of undergraduate courses. The same images are reproduced and discussed in scholarly articles.[27] The scribe, labelled 'Scribe B' by Doyle and Parkes in their seminal essay on manuscripts of Chaucer and Gower, has been identified by Linne Mooney as Adam Pinkhurst, the subject of Chaucer's complaint to his scribe.[28] Ever-more detailed studies of these manuscripts and of the scribes who copied them cite their 'authoritative' status, reinforcing their position in the canon, and the more work focuses on Chaucer and Gower, Langland and Hoccleve, the more visually familiar these fifteenth-century manuscripts become to us.[29]

When we look at the manuscript page in Figure 0.1 – this fifteenth-century manuscript page, not Chaucer's contemporary let alone his holograph – we see it through mentally-superimposed layers of Caxton's first print, of subsequent prints,

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[27] For example, see Maidie Hilmo, *Medieval Images, Icons, and Illustrated English Literary Texts. From the Ruthwell Cross to the Ellesmere Chaucer* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004), 160-199; Richard K. Emmerson, 'Text and Image in the Ellesmere Portraits of the Tale-Tellers,' in *The Ellesmere Chaucer. Essays in Interpretation*, eds. Martin Stevens and Daniel Woodward (Tokyo and San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1995), 143-169; Betsy Bowden, 'Visual Portraits of the Canterbury Pilgrims, 1484 (?) to 1809,' in *The Ellesmere Chaucer*, eds. Stevens and Woodward, 171-203.

[28] Anthony Ian Doyle and Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century,' in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries*, eds. Malcolm Beckwith Parkes and Andrew Watson, (London: The Scolar Press, 1978), 163-210; Linne Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe,' *Speculum* 81 (2006): 97–138. See also Jane Roberts, 'On Giving Scribe B a Name and a Clutch of London manuscripts from *c.* 1400,' *Medium Ævum* 80 (2011): 247-270.

[29] Linne Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City. London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature, 1375-1425* (York: York Medieval Press, 2013).

editions, reproductions and commentaries that have followed.[30] Through the fifteenth century, scribes worked to 'complete' Chaucer's unfinished work with additions such as the *Tale of Gamelyn*. Later, printed editions by Chaucer, Pynson and Thynne began to the establish the norms for presentation of English printed text, which have influenced the development of print culture to the present day, by working on manuscripts and texts by Chaucer: their work retrospectively renders the visual dynamics of Chaucer manuscripts less alien to modern readers than those of many contemporary medieval writers.[31] These editions also continued the scribal practice of adapting the text, notably in Thynne's omission of Chaucer's retraction.[32] The process continues into the editions used by modern scholars: in Manly and Rickert's landmark edition Latin rubrics, *incipits* and *explicits* found in many manuscripts are omitted; in the much-used Riverside Chaucer series the Latin *notae* (such as the note 'narratio' in the lower right-hand margin of Figure 0.1, level with l. 38) are absent.[33] Features of the manuscript page, cumulatively judged by generations of scribes and editors to be ancillary or 'inauthentic' (because probably added by Chaucer's scribes) are relegated to the textual notes in editions or simply removed from the page. The process even extends to reproductions of manuscripts:

[30] Modern editorial scholarship on Chaucer looks back to the work of John Manly and Edith Rickert, eds., *The Text of the "Canterbury Tales," Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts*. 8 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940). The current standard edition is *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Benson. Facsimiles of the Ellesmere manuscript have been made by Daniel Woodward and Martin Stevens, eds., *The New Ellesmere Chaucer Facsimile* (Tokyo and San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1995) and, previously, by Alix, Lady Egerton, ed., *The Ellesmere Chaucer: Reproduced in Facsimile*, 2 vols. (Manchester: The University Press, 1911).

[31] See Norman Blake, 'Manuscript to Print,' in *Book Production and Publishing*, eds. Griffiths and Pearsall, 403-432.

[32] Robert Costomiris, 'The Influence of Printed Editions and Manuscripts on the Canon of William Thynne's *Canterbury Tales*,' in *Rewriting Chaucer. Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400-1602*, eds. Thomas Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 237-257; Kathleen Forni, 'Richard Pynson and the Stigma of the Chaucerian Apocrypha,' *The Chaucer Review* 34 (2000): 428-436. See also Stephen Partridge, '"The Makere of this Boke": Chaucer's *Retraction* and the Author as Scribe and Compiler,' in *Author, Reader, Book. Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, eds. Stephen Partridge and Erik Kwakkel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 106-153.

[33] Míċeál Vaughan, 'Creating Comfortable Boundaries: Scribes, Editors and the Invention of the *Parson's Tale*,' in *Rewriting Chaucer*, eds. Prendergast and Kline, 45-90.

in the 1911 facsimile of the Ellesmere manuscript itself, the images of the pilgrims were shifted in position relative to the main text.[34] By the time we come to look at a manuscript like the Ellesmere Chaucer, we have already internalised implicit messages from these editions about which features of the page deserve most attention, and which least.

The effects of these scribal and editorial activities on 'Chaucer's text,' and their implications for our concepts of canonicity, authority and the importance of the material forms of texts have been the subject of a huge amount of recent study, as well as constant calls for new facsimiles and editions.[35] Scholars analyse the ways in which editions of Chaucer have selectively obscured from readers aspects of Middle English modes of reading, and the features of *ordinatio*, rubrics, textual apparatus and punctuation they bring to our attention are contextualised by similar work on *Piers Plowman* and the *Confessio Amantis* and their manuscripts.[36] The implications of post-Chaucerian 'completions' of the text such as the insertion of the *Tale of Gamelyn*, the rearrangements of the fragments, or the omission of the 'Retraction' are, likewise, extended to other elite metropolitan manuscripts.[37] This scholarship

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34 Stevens and Woodward, eds., *The Ellesmere Chaucer*, 16.

35 Notable examples include: Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author. Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books 1473-1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Kline and Predergast, eds., *Rewriting Chaucer*. A selection of influential essays is reprinted together as *Writing After Chaucer. Essential Readings in Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Daniel Pinti (New York and London: Garland, 1998).

36 For example, see Daniel Wakelin, 'Writing the Words,' 34-58; Stephen Partridge, 'Designing the Page,' in *The Production of Books in England*, eds. Gillespie and Wakelin, 79-103; Joel Fredell, 'The Lowly Paraf: Transmitting Manuscript Design in the *Canterbury Tales*,' *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 22 (2000): 213-280; Ardis Butterfield, '*Mise-en-page* in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture,' in *Reading from the Margins: Textual Studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature*, ed. Seth Lerer (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1996), 49-80; Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers. Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton, NJ and Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1993); John Burrow, 'The Structure of *Piers Plowman* B XV-XX: Evidence from the Rubrics,' *Medium Ævum* (2008): 306-312; Siân Echard, 'Last Words: Latin at the End of the *Confessio Amantis*,' in *Interstices: Studies in Late Middle English and Anglo-Latin in Honour of A.G. Rigg*, eds. Richard Green and Linne Mooney (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 99- 121; Judith Tschann, 'The Layout of *Sir Thopas* in the Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Cambridge Dd. 4. 24, and Cambridge Gg. 4. 27 Manuscripts,' *Chaucer Review* 20 (1985): 1-13; John Alford, 'The Role of Quotations in *Piers Plowman*,' *Speculum* 52 (1977): 80-99.

37 Daniel Wakelin, 'Maked na moore: Editing and Narrative,' *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 32 (2010): 365-373; Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages*, 155-254.

has discovered, in the features of the page excluded by earlier editions, rich evidence of Chaucer's 'Latinity', which we can understand in the context of his French and Italian influences, of the trilingualism of Gower and the multilingualism of the late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century London in which *Piers* is partly set and in which Hoccleve worked for the Privy Seal.[38] This approach to medieval English manuscripts uncovers the elements of nationalistic pride in 'Englishness' that has resonated through canon-forming praise of Chaucer (and Gower) from the medieval period onwards.

Much of this work focuses on texts or manuscripts that coincide neatly with the canonical preoccupations of older scholars: on the works of Chaucer and Gower, the manuscripts prepared by a small network of highly skilled scribes and illuminators in fifteenth-century London.[39] Implicitly (and occasionally explicitly), this narrow group of manuscripts and texts embody the paradoxically juxtaposed qualities of conventionality and exceptionality that underlie the concept of a 'canon'. Their visual dynamics and their rhetorics of reading are analysed and compared until they yield similarities from which we can deduce conventions, while scholars repeatedly stress the remarkable innovation, exceptional depth and outstanding cultural impact that makes them worth studying. Rarely do texts and manuscripts not part of this 'canon' receive comparable attention to features of their visual dynamics, and never in the context of building up a holistic picture of visual dynamics across a reading culture.[40] In their anxiety to reveal how medieval scribes

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[38] Theresa Tinkle, 'The Wife of Bath's Textual/Sexual Lives,' in *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture,* eds. George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 55–88 (74); Helen Killick, 'Thomas Hoccleve as Poet and Clerk' (Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of York, 2010), 143-181; Tim William Machan, 'Medieval Multilingualism and Gower's Literary Practice,' *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006): 1-25; Siân Echard, 'Gower's "Bokes of Latin": Language, Politics and Poetry,' *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 25 (2003): 123-156; Mary Davidson, *Medievalism, Multilingualism, and Chaucer* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2000).

[39] The number of specific studies published on these scribes and authors speaks for itself, the most recent being by Mooney and Stubbs, *Scribes and the City.*

[40] Studies that focus on the visual dynamics of 'non-canonical' manuscripts tend to represent their subject-matter as less rewarding and complex than the 'canon'. However, see Joel Fredell, 'Decorated Initials in the Lincoln Thornton Manuscript,' *Studies in Bibliography* 47 (1994): 78-88; Shearle Furnish, 'The *Ordinatio* of Nicholas Love's *Mirrour* in Huntingdon Library, MS HM 149: An East Anglian

and post-medieval editors have shaped our perceptions of canonical texts, these studies have constructed a canon of their own, and the works of the same select group of medieval authors and scribes, the same few manuscripts, have become the default focus of attention when discussing the visual dynamics of manuscripts, and have become visually even more familiar. The English of Chaucer, Gower and Langland, inflected by a rich multilingualism, is still seen as exceptional; the fifteenth-century manuscripts of their texts still interpreted as unusual in the complexity of their visual dynamics. By focussing so much attention on text such as Chaucer's, and on manuscripts such as Ellesmere, we further distort our picture of late-medieval English readers and carry these distortions into our own modern questions of what it means to participate in written culture.

In this thesis, I focus on the reading of religious texts. Medieval religious writing has provided a rich field for studies of language use, focussing on the transmission of Latin texts from monastic and clerical contexts to vernacular lay readerships, on the 'vernacular theology' of the later fourteenth century, and on the late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century debates between Wycliffite and anti-Wycliffite polemicists over the translation of the Bible into Middle English. Manuscripts of religious content and orthodox piety dominate medieval English book culture. Readers were introduced to the concept of the written word through religious manuscripts (the *Pater Noster* or Psalms used to teach beginning readers), so religion and reading are fundamentally linked. It is in religious contexts that the most influential theories of translation originate, and from religious contexts that the strongest impetus for translation comes. Although translation has long been acknowledged as an important issue for our understanding of Middle English book culture – indeed, all of the texts I discuss in detail were originally written in a language other than Middle English – this 'translation' has largely been discussed as a

Manuscript of Nicholas Love's *Mirrour*,' *Manuscripta* 34 (1990): 50-65. Another approach has been to consider the responses of that subset of readers who might be considered 'professional'. For this, see Kelly Parsons, 'The Red Ink Annotator of the The Book of Margery Kempe and his Lay Audience,' in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from the Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe and Gower*, eds. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (Victoria, British Columbia: University of Victoria, 2001), 217-238.

purely linguistic issue, concerning the words of the texts and not the visual dynamics of the manuscripts in which they are found. In order to understand the position Middle English readers took up on the pages of their manuscripts, we need to trace the ways in which these languages interacted with Middle English, not only at the linguistic level, but also at the level of the visual dynamics that were transmitted from one language to another.

I begin by studying the Latin paraliturgical manuscripts whose influence on medieval readers' cognitive and conceptual habits was earliest and, arguably, most profound. These Latin books were used to teach children their letters and to support adults in their daily recitation of prayers, and I argue that we cannot begin to understand how medieval readers were conditioned to decode visual dynamics or interpret linguistic relationships until we understand their reading of the Book of Hours. The focus of my second chapter is the genre of texts written in the French of England whose influence on vernacular book culture most nearly approaches that of Latin paraliturgical material. From the thirteenth century, pastoral texts such as the *Manuel des Péchés* reflected the Church's new eagerness to involve lay, non-Latinate people in the practices of religious learning and the rituals of penitence and the Eucharist. As we will see, these manuscripts were conduits for the visual systems and the mode of reading developed amongst the educated Latinate clergy, and they were transmitted ultimately to both the French of England and Middle English.

In my third chapter, I explore the late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts of a Middle English pastoral text, whose antagonistic repositioning of the French of England as the devernacularised language of the clergy places Middle English readers of the text in contact with a newly vernacularised register of Latin. The Wycliffite and anti-Wycliffite debates that shadow this chapter are brought to the fore in the next chapter, where I discuss how the orthodox polemic written to combat Wycliffism constructed an image of 'lewde,' 'Englyshe' readers.[41] Actual consumers of the text were invited to adopt this image as a posture of exaggerated humility, while the visual dynamics of their manuscripts exploited their familiarity

[41] *Mirror*, 10: 6.

with Latin paraliturgical texts in order to invite them to pass from the English main text to the Latin *locus* of the margin, to enter into the fringes of the Latin textual culture from which they were supposedly debarred. Finally, in Chapter Five, I look at the manuscripts of a text that explores these issues of Latin and vernacular interaction thematically. The short narrative *Robert of Sicily* is placed by scholars on the intersection between religious writing and romance, and in its manuscripts, we find pages on which Latin and the French of England coexist with Middle English.

The texts I discuss reflect the changes of two and a half centuries of religious writing addressed to laypeople in England. Although I focus most of my attention on what have been called 'Middle English readers' by generations of medieval writers seeking to define their audiences, I do not look only at texts written in Middle English, but also (and first) at those written in Latin or the French of England, and I argue that their influence – particularly that of Latin – was inescapable. By studying the visual dynamics of these manuscripts, and comparing across wide linguistic, geographic and chronological ranges, we can begin to form a more complete picture of Middle English reading culture.

Chapter One: Latin Books of Hours and Beginning Readers

In this chapter, I consider the most fundamental influence on medieval readers' responses to their manuscript books: the Latin paraliturgical texts they used for prayer. Psalters and Books of Hours have often been studied for what their imagery and compilation says about devotional identity, but their role in inculcating visual and cognitive habits of response has been neglected. The most basic texts used to teach children to sound out their letters were shaped by the fact that their contents were Latinate, and designed for prayer. The skills children learned were the skills required to sound out the letters, form the words and interpret the visual dynamics of Latin prayer books. The manuscripts of Books of Hours and Psalters contained the written form of the Latin prayers every devout person expected to hear and to recite. The complex visual dynamics of Latin Psalters and Books of Hours placed immense demands on the visual memories of readers, but also enabled readers to perform the Latin texts that had once been the preserve of Latin-literate book users. The same Latin texts were used both in the context of the French of England, and in the context of Middle English. By examining the mode of reading these texts taught, we can begin to reconstruct the habits and expectations of manuscript use vernacular readers brought to their books.

The Alphabet in Latin: Learning to Read in Medieval England

In this section I consider the early teaching of reading in medieval England in order to see what skills and habits were, for medieval book users, normal aspects of the process of reading. This analysis must be set in context: 'reading' is not an easy term to define. The activity of reading is both a series of cognitive and articulatory processes and a cultural construct, which different individuals and societies will perform and conceptualise differently, according to myriad intersecting factors. To modern scholars of medieval book culture, some of the differences that set medieval reading apart from modern English practices are well known.[42] We know that there is no word in Latin or the vernaculars of medieval England that corresponds exactly to our modern word 'literate,' meaning skilled in all the related processes of reading and writing, which enable modern individuals to participate successfully in our print culture. Even when we acknowledge that medieval readers did not necessarily expect to learn to write, we struggle to relate modern definitions of 'ability to read' to medieval ones.[43] The medieval Latin word *literatus* implies not only a person who can read script, but a person who is educated enough to understand Latin grammar.[44] The Middle English verb 'to read' is used to mean both 'to hear' and 'to recite,' and the equivalent is true of the French of England.[45] The verb refers not to the method whereby meaning is produced, by decoding of symbols on the page, but rather, to any conduit through which person gains access to a text. Many people preferred to listen to a text read aloud.[46] The distinctions between *literatus* and *illiteratus* and the overlaps between 'reading' and 'listening' indicate that, for medieval book users, language choice was a far more significant indicator of a

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[42] Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*; Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies. Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011); Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Tudor England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Laurel Amtower, *Engaging Words: The Culture of Reading in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling 1340-1548. Learning, Literacy, and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[43] For discussion of writing as an aspect of medieval literacy, see Sharon Michalove, 'The Education of Aristocratic Women in Fifteenth-Century England,' in *Estrangement, Enterprise and Education in Fifteenth-Century England*, eds. Sharon Michalove and Albert Compton Reeves (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998), 117-139 (119-120).

[44] For an account of the terminology, see Katherine Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Liturgy and Literacy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 1-36.

[45] Coleman, *Public Reading*, 102.

[46] ibid. For a contrasting perspective, see Saenger, *Space Between Words*.

person's position in textual culture than was the method whereby he or she participated in that culture.

We can see how embedded in medieval concepts of reading these priorities were when we look at medieval references to the activity of reading. For example, an early sixteenth-century inscription in a church invites passers-by to respond with prayers for the dead, and differentiates between the prayers of the 'lettered,' and those of people who 'cannot reed'.[47] The inscription invites those who pass by

> To say *De Profundis*, if you lettered be,
> For the soules of Jone my wife and me
> ...
> If thou be unlearned, and cannot reed,
> For our soules and All Christen soules meed, [benefit]
> Say a *Pater Noster*, an *Ave*, and Creed.[48]

All of the texts mentioned here – the *De Profundis*, the *Pater Noster,* the *Ave Maria* and the Creed – are Latin. The implicit difference between them is the length and relative familiarity: the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria* and Creed are short prayers and children learning catechism were required to learn them by heart; the *De Profundis* is a long Psalm. A person who owned a Book of Hours would probably know where to find it, for it is in the Office of the Dead, which is a standard component of that book. Encoded in this distinction of the 'lettered' from those who 'cannot reed' are not only educational differences, but also differences of material wealth (the ability to buy a Book of Hours). The question of *understanding* the Latin is simply not raised: it is enough to recite it, whether from memory or from a book.

Medieval interpretations of what it meant to be able to read were not only different from our own, but also dependent upon the needs of the individual in question. What counted as 'lettered' was open to constant redefinition: to the writer of the sixteenth-century inscription I quote, ability to recite the *De Profundis* was a 'lettered' ability. To bishop Grandisson of Exeter, writing long before him in 1357, the

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[47] Quoted by Moran, *Growth of English Schooling*, 52-53.

[48] ibid.

whole gamut of Latin prayers were used to teach the illiterate, from 'the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria*, [and] the Creed' to 'the Mattins and Hours of the Blessed Virgin'.[49] The first texts Grandisson lists – the Lord's prayer, *Ave Maria* and Creed – are precisely those that the later writer imagined all 'unlettered' people would be able to recite from memory. Grandisson complains that after students had learned to 'read or recite' these prayers, it sometimes became apparent that they had been set to study more advanced Latin texts before they had acquired the necessary skills.[50] As this indicates, children learned their skills for decoding and reciting words from the same texts they were supposed to be learning by heart.[51] Inevitably, it would be difficult to tell whether a learner had acquired the transferable understanding of how to decode the correspondences between graphemes and phonemes, or whether she or he were simply reciting by rote.

Medieval writers' descriptions of the stages of learning to read help us to see why comprehension – so important in modern literacy teaching – is not central to medieval definitions of the practice. Chaucer's much-cited account of the little 'clergeon' ('song-school scholar') and his schoolmate, who can sound out the Latin they are learning to sing but have 'smal grammeere,' ('little grammar') provides us with a picture of how the first stages of education worked.[52] These children were taught to recite Latin prayers, beginning with the simplest texts and progressing to longer ones such as the antiphon *Alma Redemptoris*, which the 'clergeon' learns by heart long before he learned the grammar that would let him understand its contents. The religious message of this little moral story is, of course, that devoutly

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49 Francis Hingeston-Randolph, ed., *The Register of John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, A.D 1327-1369*, 3 Vols. (London, 1894-1899); trans. George Coulton, *Life in the Middle Ages*, 4 vols. Vol. 1 (New York and Cambridge: Macmillan, 1928-1930), 113-114.

50 ibid., 114.

51 For further discussion of these prayers as basic catechistic knowledge, see Norman Tanner and Sethina Watson, 'Least of the laity: the Minimum Requirements for a Medieval Christian,' *Journal of Medieval History* 33 (2007): 395-423.

52 Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Prioress's Tale,' in *The Riverside* Chaucer, ed. Benson, 209-212 (l. 536). See also Zieman, *Singing the New Song*, ix; Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 206.

faithful memorisation and recitation of a Latin prayer has its own powerful effect, despite the child's ignorance of Latin grammar.

More prosaically, but with greater precision, John Wycliffe presents his own account of the necessary stages of learning to read, set out in order. A child first learns his alphabet, then how to form syllables (*sillabicare*), then how to read (*legere*), and only lastly how to understand (*intellegere*).[53] These stratified stages place great value on the skills that would allow a person to decode combinations of letters and pronounce them accurately, separating this process from the later (implicitly more difficult) stage of understanding the recited text. For readers who were educated in Latin (*literatus*), the progression Wycliffe describes is the normal one, but for many readers, formal education would end at (or even before) the stage reached by Chaucer's little 'clergeon' and his schoolmate: with the ability to recite a few Latin prayers, but no more.

The position of Middle English readers is therefore always difficult for us to understand: were they 'lettered' or not? Were they reading, or reciting by rote? Were they participating *in* a Latin culture, albeit at a low level, or were they excluded from it? These are questions modern scholars have often sought to answer, but ultimately the attempt only shows us how variable medieval writers' own assessments of what it meant to be a reader were. Much scholarship over the last twenty-odd years has introduced terminology to expand the binary concept of 'literacy' to something more nearly resembling the spectrum of overlapping – and shifting – definitions advanced in medieval accounts. Medieval literate practices and competencies are diverse, not homogeneous, and it has become commonplace to refer, not to 'medieval literacy,' but to 'literacies'.[54] Following Brian Stock's influential concept of the 'textual community,' scholars have explored the ways in which medieval individuals and

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[53] Rudolf Buddensieg, ed., *John Wyclif, De Veritate Sacrae Scripture* . 3 Vols. (London: Trubner & Co., 1905-1907), 1: 44.

[54] Charles Frederick Briggs, 'Literacy, reading and writing in the medieval West,' *Journal of Medieval History* 26 (2000): 397-420.

groups whose textual practices do not fit modern definitions of literacy were able to participate in medieval book culture.[55]

The implications of the centrality of Latin in medieval interpretations of what it means to read have received less attention. Indeed, many attempts to understand how medieval readers who had not received formal schooling in Latin grammar used their books have focussed on the strategies that stood in for understanding of the Latin content: the 'devotional literacy' described by Margaret Aston; the spectrum of tactile and ritual practices described by D. H. Green and Charity Scott-Stokes; the interpretation of complex iconographies and the engagement with vernacular rubrics or prayers within Latin manuscript contexts.[56] These studies paint a rich and vivid picture of medieval Latin book use by non-Latinate book owners, but they do not help us to understand how medieval readers' early experiences of learning to read in a culture that prioritised Latin paraliturgical texts inculcated fundamental cognitive and conceptual habits.

I want to show that medieval readers – both those who went on to become unquestionably *literatus* and those who did not - were equipped through early education with a highly standardised and very specific set of skills. These skills were ultimately shaped by a culture in which, as we have seen, perceptions of what it meant to read were different from those of modern readers of English. However, although these skills were intended to teach non-Latinate readers how to recite Latin text, they also provided the basis from which all readers interpreted all subsequent manuscripts they encountered, because these skills were learned during the earliest and most important stages of education. In order to understand how readers learned these fundamental skills of sounding out words and decoding the visual symbols of the manuscript page, we need to examine the details of the education process.

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[55] Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 88-240.

[56] Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers. Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 101-134; Dennis Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 115; Charity Scott-Stokes, ed. and trans., *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England: Selected Texts Translated from Latin, Anglo-Norman French and Middle English with Introduction and Interpretative Essay* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 17.

Over the last few decades, several modern scholars have studied medieval education in its various aspects. Moran and Orme have investigated the records for the ways in which early reading education was carried out, both in formal schools and in domestic contexts, and many scholars have studied the texts used in teaching children.[57] Zieman has explored how boys learned to read in song schools, in order to sing in choir, and Saenger has considered the differences between oral and silent reading of the Book of Hours.[58] From this scholarship, we know that schools sometimes taught children their very earliest lessons in reading, as well as the more advanced curriculum of song and Latin grammar that followed.[59] We have records of nuns teaching children to read.[60] However, many children learned their earliest lessons in book use from their mothers, at home.[61] In all contexts, the default expectation was that all readers would begin with the same materials, whether or not they were intended to go on to learn Latin in a more formal context.

A wide range of material media was in use for teaching purposes, testifying to the variety of contexts in which a person might learn to read, and the availability of some form of alphabetic texts to even the relatively poor. The cheapest and most ephemeral materials may have been the most widely used, despite their low survival

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57 Moran, *Growth of English Schooling*; Orme, *Medieval Schools*; Rudy, 'An Illustrated Primer,' 51-94; Michael Thomas Clanchy, 'The ABC Primer: Was It In Latin or English?' in *Vernacularity in England and Wales*, eds. Salter and Wicker, 17-40; Daniel Kline, ed., *Medieval Literature for Children* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg, 'How Margaret Blackburn Taught her Daughters: Reading Devotional Instruction in a Book of Hours,' in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy*, eds. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchinson, Carol Meale, Lesley Johnson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 217-236; Nicola McDonald, 'A York Primer and Its Alphabet: Reading Women in a Lay Household,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval English Literature*, ed. Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 181-197.

58 Zieman, *Singing the New Song*; Paul Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages,' in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Lynda Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 141-173.

59 Moran, *Growth of English Schooling*, 31-40.

60 Orme, *Medieval Children*, 242.

61 Michael Thomas Clanchy, 'Learning to Read and The Role of Mothers,' in *Studies in the History of Reading*, eds. Greg Brooks and Anthony Kendrick Pugh (Reading: University of Reading School of Education, 1984), 33-39.

record: alphabets written on surfaces that could be washed, scraped, or smoothed clean after use. Alphabets were written on whitewashed walls for classes, like the Tudor example that survives on the vestry wall in North Cadbury Church in Somerset.[62] For individuals, there were slates and wax tablets. The latter of these were commonplace for boys in formal schooling, so cannot have been hugely expensive: Moran, in her study of schooling in the York diocese, judges that 'nearly every medieval scholar had a wax writing tablet'.[63] Such tools, the content of which could be erased and re-written, relied upon their owners' ability to write or to access a person who could write, and they could also be used for teaching writing, a much less common skill than reading.

Medieval references suggest that an even more popular, less easily erased teaching tool was the board book. Board books were made of pieces of wood covered with parchment, on which were written the alphabet and the basic prayer texts, and it seems they were one of the standard media for teaching. Robert Holcote, the Dominican theologian, wrote in the first half of the fourteenth century that 'children... are first taught from a book with letters written large, affixed to a piece of wood'.[64] Clanchy observes that, in contrast to other materials, a written booklet (let alone a bound primer) would be 'something of a luxury'.[65] However, this did not mean books were inaccessible, especially in the later Middle Ages. Manuscript copies of the alphabet, written on paper or parchment, were evidently available for commercial purchase throughout the later medieval period. The cheapest – single sheets, small booklets of rolls – would not have been expensive: a child's primer, a booklet of catechistic material and prayers which could have been used for teaching basic

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[62] Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 57.

[63] Moran, *Growth of English Schooling*, 49.

[64] Quoted and translated by Beryl Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), 192.

[65] Clanchy, 'The ABC Primer,' 20.

reading skills, might consist of as few as eight leaves.[66] Psalters and Books of Hours might be extremely expensive and made for aristocrats, but also included manuscripts such as the Bolton Hours (York, Minster Library MS Add. 2), made in York in around 1415 for a merchant family, which features an alphabet.[67]

In short, the experience of learning to read was occurred in a variety of contexts: at home, at schools, and in monasteries. Instruction was provided by parents and by schoolteachers, and was focussed on materials that varied widely in cost. The different materials in use did bring users into contact with slightly different forms of text, with differing visual dynamics. Slate writing tablets still survive, inscribed with the alphabet and the *Pater Noster*.[68] Despite the constraints of the medium concerning reproduction of the finer details of scripts, these survivals indicate that a respectable approximation of cursive script could be achieved. No board books survive, although horn books, their Early Modern equivalents, do. We know from medieval descriptions that parchment was stretched across the wood, and inscribed with lettering similar to that we find in other parchment books, complete with the rubrics, punctuation and other features we might expect there. Children's primers survive, though in small numbers that suggest they were often read to bits. Finally, the texts used for beginning reading found in Books of Hours and Psalters are the most luxurious, elaborated with the same illumination and decoration as other pages of the same books, with little attempt to restrict visual material that might distract.

The material variety may seem to suggest that the experiences of medieval readers were very different from one another, but the text on which this early

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[66] For example, see Paul Acker, 'A Schoolchild's Primer (Plimpton MS 258),' in *Medieval Literature for Children*, ed. Kline, 143-154. I use 'primer' to denote a manuscript of basic prayers, in contrast to a Book of Hours, not refer to a Book of Hours translated into English.

[67] See also McDonald, 'York Primer'; Cullum and Goldberg, 'How Margaret Blackburn Taught'; Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours*, 161; Sarah Rees Jones and Felicity Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and the Public Sphere,' in *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* eds. Anneke Mulder-Bakker and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 215-260.

[68] Clanchy,'The ABC Primer,' 20.

education focussed, the beginners' alphabet, is remarkably standardised, appearing in the same form not only in England, but across Europe. This most basic text of the elementary educational programme is different from the modern alphabet. It is carefully constructed to reflect a specific ideology, and to prepare readers for the specific demands of reciting Latin text and navigating the pages of paraliturgical manuscript pages. A manuscript of prayers and hymns made in France provides a typical example of the alphabet on its opening page (Figure 1.1).[69] The alphabet is found on the first folio, beginning with an elaborate illuminated cross. This cross is the standard beginning of the alphabet, and its value was performative as well as devotional: it invited readers to cross themselves and to recite the invocation 'Cros Christ me spede' ('Christ's Cross help me on my way').[70] This beginning establishes the performative and devotional context in which early reading instruction is placed. After the cross, we find the rows of letters, beginning always with at least two versions of letter **a**, sometimes, as here, with three. The repetition of the letter **a** is thought to be a reference to the convention, established by the Latin grammarians, that the sound of that letter was the most basic phonetic component of language, and should therefore be sounded out prior to recitation of the alphabet.[71] This feature reinforces the performative implications of the initial cross, making it clear to learners that the purpose of learning the alphabet is to learn to recite correctly.

After the double letter **a**, we find the letters of the Latin alphabet. The letter **j** is missing, since it was understood as a visual variant of the letter **i**, and therefore not crucial in an alphabet designed to facilitate phonetic recitation. In the alphabet of Figure 1.1, both **u** and **v** are present, but some alphabets omit one of these, for the same reason. In Latin, these graphemes are each capable of representing two sounds,

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[69] Figure 1.1 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Liturg. E. 40, f. 1r, showing the letters of the alphabet and opening lines of the *Pater Noster*. See Kathryn Rudy and René Stuip, '"Martin fights in July, and he strikes St. Vaast with the font." A Cisijanus and a child's alphabet in Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson Liturgical E. 40,' *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes / A Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 19 (2010): 493-521 (498).

[70] Michael Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things. John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomeus Anglicus'* De Proprietatibus Rerum. *A Critical Text*, 3 Vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1: 40, ll. 4-9.

[71] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 249-250.

a vowel and a consonant, and their usage is determined by their position within a word. Consequently, the omission of one or other grapheme does not affect the phonetic completeness of the beginners' alphabet: all sounds are represented. However, duplicate forms of **r** and **s** are present, both the standard **r** and the 2-shaped variant, and both the standard **s** and the long version.

The letters of the alphabet are followed by the common abbreviation marks (beginning with the last two symbols of l. 4 in Figure 1.1). In this example, these abbreviation marks begin with the common abbreviations for the Latin words 'et' and 'con,' and end with the abbreviations for 'responsus' and 'versus' – useful words for a reader of paraliturgical Latin text. The set of three dots arranged vertically that begins line 5 of Figure 1.1 represent the abbreviation for the Latin word 'est,' which became obsolete in the early Middle Ages but retained its customary position in the alphabet. Tudor evidence suggests that after learners recited the letters of the alphabet joined together with 'and,' they finished the recitation with '… and **z** and "and" per se, "con" per se, tittle,' which – had they understood Latin – would have told them that the single abbreviation symbols stood, *per se*, 'in themselves' for the words 'and' and 'con'.[72] The word 'tittle' referred to the obsolete symbol for 'est'. Many versions of the alphabet end with the words 'est' (glossing the meaning of this symbol) and 'amen,' as in Figure 1.2.[73] Nicholas Orme suggests that, after the purpose of the 'tittle' sign had been forgotten, the last two words of the alphabet were perhaps understood as an affirmation: 'est amen,' as the conclusion of the prayer begun with the opening invocation of the Cross.[74]

The differences between these contents and those we find in modern English alphabets reveal the distinctive ideology of reading the medieval text reflected. The modern English alphabet is made up of the graphemes that can represent all the phonemes in spoken English, either singly or in combination. The aim of early

[72] ibid., 260.

[73] Figure 1.2 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. C. 209, f. 1r (detail), showing the letters of the alphabet and the concluding words 'est amen' (l. 2).

[74] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 251.

teaching of reading is to inculcate phonological skills and the comprehension of text, so that learners may subsequently apply the same skills to all other written material they encounter. One of the most important assumptions about the modern alphabet is therefore that it is a *complete* collection of the characters required to represent the spoken language in writing; no letters are missing. By contrast, the medieval beginners' alphabet contains both letters, and also other contents, such as the initial cross and the abbreviation symbols, which represent whole words and not single letters. The initial cross is comparable to nothing we find in the modern English alphabet, or in modern educational teaching, for it guides the user's gesture (of crossing him or herself), introducing a performative and somatic element into the practice of reading. The letters that follow the cross might initially seem more similar to the modern alphabet. However, unlike the modern alphabet, these letters do not constitute a set of characters sufficient in itself to represent every word in Latin, let alone in the Middle English its users would go on to read in other manuscripts. The omitted alternative letter forms of the pairs **i/j** and **u/v** must be learned for reading Latin. For Middle English, of course, the letters **þ**, **ʒ** and **w** are missing, and the sounds they make are not represented. These Middle English letters appeared in some Anglo-Saxon, or slightly later versions of the alphabet, but became less common as the contents of the alphabet became standardised in the thirteenth century, and the more Latinate form predominated. The standard content of the alphabet therefore demands to be augmented with more characters and symbols at the subsequent stages of learning to read.

The abbreviation signs that follow the letters are, on the other hand, entirely different from anything we find in the modern English alphabet. These signs are of obvious practical use, given that the Latin of paraliturgical books is often heavily abbreviated, and in order to read it, one would need to know how to expand the many abbreviation signs in use. They require a different kind of skill from that which the decoding of correspondences between graphemes and phones requires, for they represent whole syllables that may be formed from the individual letters of the alphabet. The abbreviation symbols therefore introduce readers to the idea that there are ever-expanding ways to represent sounds and syllables with new characters. The following Latin prayer, *Pater Noster*, presents an immediate opportunity to practise the blending of letters into syllables, and therefore provides an easy transition from the beginners' alphabet to the next stage of education, the reading of complete texts. The text as a whole invites readers to expect to augment their knowledge, to move on from one system of visual dynamics to another.

Although the alphabet was designed to prepare readers for the Latin prayers of the Psalter or the Book of Hours, in late medieval England we find it transposed into the Middle English context of primers and prayer books translated from the Latin. In these books, the standardised form and content of Latin beginners' alphabets remains unchanged. Despite the vernacularity of the prayers that followed the alphabet, it is very rare to find beginners' alphabets in English primers that have been 'vernacularised' by the addition of the letters needed for Middle English. Indeed, as Nicholas Orme points out, the English letter **w** did not become a standard component of the alphabet until the seventeenth century.[75] The alphabets of English primers are equally implacably rooted in the visual dynamics of the Latin tradition. In Figure 1.2 the alphabet that introduces the English primer is, at a glance, identical to a Latin alphabet. The same initial cross is there, the same repeated letter **a**, and when we look in detail, we see that none of the letters needed to read Middle English are included. Despite its Middle English context, this remains the Latin alphabet, the alphabet designed for paraliturgical Latin manuscripts of prayers.

It is only very occasionally that we find forms of the beginners' alphabet that begin to adapt the enduringly standardised form and content. Alphabets, or alphabetic sequences of letters in late medieval compilations made by or for domestic households omit the initial cross. For example, the alphabet in Cambridge, University Library MS Ff. 1. 6, scribbled in a sixteenth-century hand onto the bottom margin of the page, does not include these features (Figure 1.3).[76] The initial paraph

[75] ibid., 250.

[76] Figure 1.3 is Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 1. 6, f. 70r (detail), showing a recorded agreement (ll. 1-5) and, below it, the letters of the alphabet (ll. 6-7). See also Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2. 38, f. 10v.

mark may represent a tendency towards the secularisation of the text, which is here translated out of both paraliturgical and Latin contexts. Yet, even here, the explicitly religious phrase 'est amen' (frequently found at the ends of Latin and vernacular alphabets) completes the text in faint brown ink, showing how integral religious content is to the medieval experience of learning to read. Even when scribbled on the verso of a page, underneath a practical note, it still has the form of a prayer.

The alphabet was primarily designed to inculcate skills to enable readers to recite texts with fluent pronunciation long before they understood the words. It habituated users to respond to the manuscript page as a structured system of visual symbols to be decoded, a system whose constituent parts include not only letters and words but also features of *ordinatio*, rubrics, punctuation, visual images, and complete words. The primacy and standardisation of Latin-inflected tools for teaching reading, across the social spectrum and across the chronological period, is hugely important, giving Latin visual dynamics a pervasive influence on both vernacular and Latinate readers.

The Visual Dynamics of Books of Hours Inculcate Decoding Skills

The mode of reading the beginners' alphabet inculcated – the rigorous, performative concentration on visual symbols belonging to a language whose readers did not understand it, the awareness that the visual symbols used to articulate written texts were open-ended rather than comprehensive – had its roots in Latin paraliturgical culture. At the beginning of the period I study in this thesis, in the thirteenth century, the Latinate monastic programme of *lectio divina* or devout, meditative recitation of the Latin programme of prayers at the canonical hours was becoming increasingly popular amongst lay readers. The adaptations of this Latin monastic programme of prayer would give rise to one of the most popular books of the later Middle Ages, the Book of Hours. The Latin Book of Hours joined the Psalter as one of the strongest influences on medieval conceptualisations of what it meant to be a religious reader, as we can see from iconography both within these books, and featuring these books. One aspect of the pages of these manuscripts has overwhelmed the attention of modern scholars (and enthusiasts throughout the post-medieval period): their compelling, aesthetically appealing or bewilderingly fantastic visual images. However, in this section of my chapter, I want to consider how the less-studied totality of visual information on the page, the visual dynamics of the manuscripts as a whole, and particularly their Latin script, invited medieval readers to respond.

From early in the period I discuss, paraliturgical books depicted their users in the acts of prayer and of reading.[77] Of particular importance is the image of the Annunciation, commonly found in churches and often used as a preface to the Matins section at the beginning of a Book of Hours. This image typically shows Mary reading her book as the angel makes his announcement, and it became a common location for portraits of owners, whose book use could be modelled on Mary's (Figure 1.4).[78] Figure 1.4 shows the Virgin Mary, pictured with her book, which is often imagined to be the Biblical prophecy of the birth of the Messiah, or alternatively a Psalter or Book of Hours that mirrors the book in which the image is found. The impact of such iconography is reinforced by the iconography of St Anne, the mother of the Virgin, popularly depicted with an open book, teaching her daughter to read from the Psalter or Book of Hours.[79] This iconography communicates the idea that the primary function of written culture, from the very earliest lessons, was to facilitate Latin prayer.

In the early medieval period, the standard Latin book of prayers was the Psalter, which was used to support the monastic programme of *lectio divina*, and which contained the contents of the biblical Book of Psalms, augmented with New

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[77] Nigel Morgan, 'Patrons and their Devotions in the Historiated Initials and Full-Page Miniatures of 13th-Century English Psalters,' in *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, ed. Fred O. Büttner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 309-322; Amtower, *Engaging Words*, 5-7.

[78] Figure 1.4 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gough Liturg. 3, f. 14v. Figure 1.7 is also from this manuscript.

[79] Pamela Sheingorn, '"The Wise Mother": The Image of St. Anne Teaching the Virgin Mary,' *Gesta* 32 (1993): 69-80; Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 13.

Testament lections and canticles during the Divine Liturgy. The Psalter is difficult to navigate for performance, as the psalms are laid out in their conventional biblical order and not in the order in which they are recited, and the full recitation of the divine Office follows the demanding structure of monastic prayer performed at set times throughout the day. From the thirteenth century, adaptations of this material into a 'Little Office of Our Lady,' an abbreviated and simplified programme that could be recited all in one go by busy laypeople, became increasingly popular.

Books of Hours encapsulate the paradoxical position of lay, non-Latinate readers in medieval manuscript culture. Written in Latin, they are ultimately based on the monastic programme of Latin prayer, yet they were immensely popular, to the extent that they have been called 'books for everybody'.[80] It is difficult to establish reliable data for the numbers and kinds of books medieval people owned.[81] However, studies of wills and inventories suggest that Books of Hours, or at least the simpler primers, were owned by people relatively far down the social scale. The evidence for York, for example, indicates that artisans' wills regularly included primers, and indeed, these were the only books regularly recorded in their wills.[82] Amongst merchant families, Books of Hours were obviously a normal part of life, as references to 'my primer which I use daily,' or survivals such as the Bolton Hours, made for a merchant family in the early fifteenth century, indicate.[83] It is true that wills may well give undue prominence to paraliturgical books, because spiritual books suggested a piety appropriate to this kind of document.[84] Mary Erler notes succinctly that 'these

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[80] Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Boston, MA: David Godine, 1986), 13.

[81] Kate Harris, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: The Evidence for Ownership and the Rôle of Book Owners in Book Production and the Book Trade,' in *Book Production and Publishing*, eds. Griffiths and Pearsall, 163-199 (163-164).

[82] Jeremy Goldberg, 'Lay Book Ownership in Late-Medieval York,' *The Library*, 6th series, 16 (1994): 181-189.

[83] Quoted by Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240-1570* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 23; Rees Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 215-260; Cullum and Goldberg, 'How Margaret Blackburn Taught,' 217-236.

[84] Susan Hagen Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books Privately Owned in England: 1300-1450' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1980) 2 Vols., 9.

were the books most likely to be willed because of their spiritual and economic value'.[85] However, thousands of manuscripts survive, both the very beautifully made and the very simple and unilluminated, demonstrating the popularity of these texts amongst a wide spectrum of Middle English readers.

Many studies of individual Psalters and Books of Hours do confirm that the Latin text need not be the sole focus for book-users: we find images in historiated initials or miniatures articulating significant textual divisions and forming independent and semi-independent narratives of their own, as well as devotional images demanding meditation, such as those of the Wound of Christ.[86] Images add their structures of communication to the written text, marking divisions between groups of psalms or between the Hours of the day. They create pathways through the text, functioning both as markers of individual sections and also as narratives in their own right. They have even been credited with communicating scholarly exegesis of the texts they accompany, to teach viewers in the processes of interpretation found in educated culture.[87] These contents have another purpose, however: to demand and capture intense visual attention from readers. This visual focus on the contents of the manuscript page would have been crucial when readers came to try to navigate through the actual Latin text, whose syllables might be sounded out without comprehension of the meanings of each word.

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85 Mary Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

86 For examples of semi-independent narratives, see Roger Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: George Brazillier, 1997), Plate 11 (21) showing New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 739, f. 20r. For the Wounds of Christ, see Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, Plates 27 and 48, showing London, Lambeth Palace MS 545, f. 78v and Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 40-1950, f. 47r. See also Kathryn Ann Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (London: British Library, 2003); Claire Donovan, *The de Brailes Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-Century Oxford* (London: British Library, 1991); Roger Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Brazillier, 1988).

87 Elizabeth Peterson, 'Scholastic Hermeneutics in Historiated Initials of 13th-Century French Psalters,' in *The Illuminated Psalter*, ed. Fred O. Büttner, 349-59; Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*; Michael Camille, 'Bodies, Names and Gender in a Gothic Psalter (Paris, BNF, ms lat. 10435),' in *The Illuminated Psalter*, ed. Fred O. Büttner, 377-86.

A reader who opened his or her Book of Hours was confronted with a page of Latin text in a layout whose complexities present a formidable challenge (Figure 1.5).[88] In Figure 1.5 the text is visually demarcated into sections – the small, more cursive script at the top of the page, the larger, more formal *textura* beginning at l. 6, the rubric at the bottom of the page that marks the change from Latin to the French of England and labels the following set of prayers with 'Ici commence terce' ('Terce begins here'). Rubricated words, and symbols standing for words, prompt readers to identify the features of the text they recite, with 'Versus' and 'Responsus' in l. 1 and 'oratio' in l. 6. Interacting with these features, a hierarchy of initials denotes sections of greater and lesser importance. The design of this manuscript page follows an immensely complicated set of interacting visual conventions, challenging readers' abilities to decode the relationships of each portion of text to the next, a process that must be achieved in order to recite the texts in the proper sequence and to expand the abbreviations correctly. These complicated visual dynamics draw upon the skills inculcated by the beginners' alphabet, the processes of patient visual concentration and adaptation to the demands of the page.

The script used for paraliturgical Latin books is prized for its aesthetic appeal and the skill it demanded from scribes, and it makes a central contribution to the distinctive visual dynamics of these manuscripts. Latin *textura* originated in monastic *scriptoria*. Albert Derolez, in his important study of this script, suggested that it was fully developed by *c*. 1200, but more recently, Erik Kwakkel has argued that the salient features were not fully developed until the second quarter of the thirteenth century.[89] This pinpoints the development of the mature form of the script during the period when the first Books of Hours emerged. In the most influential studies of the history of *textura*, the development of the script to its mature form in the thirteenth

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88 Figure 1.5 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 231, f. 54r.

89 Albert Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 72; Erik Kwakkel, 'Biting, Kissing, and the Treatment of Feet: The Transitional Script of the Long Twelfth Century,' in *Turning Over a New Leaf. Change and Development in the Medieval Manuscript*, eds. Erik Kwakkel, Rosamond McKitterick and Rodney Thomson (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 79-126 (103).

century has been represented as a triumph of the technology of writing. So, Bischoff traces a movement towards 'discipline, order, and harmony,' while Parkes sees the mature form of the script as the culmination of both aesthetic and practical developments.[90] Scribes, he explains, 'sought to enhance the graphic impact of their writing,' and to emphasise distinctive visual characteristics, resulting in a 'rhythmic and unified' script with 'considerable visual impact'.[91] On a practical level, the property of the script Parkes associates most strongly with 'legibility' is the concentration of the 'essential elements of the different letter shapes … at the same height: that corresponding to the position of the top segment of the letter **x**'.[92] Whereas in cursive scripts these elements are spread more widely up and down the writing space, in *textura*, they are localised. This meant that as readers looked from letter to letter, they did not need to move their eyes up or down the page, so the process could be carried out more quickly (and with less risk of eyeskip). The importance of this aspect of the script is emphasised by serifs, formed by turning the pen at an angle, which mark the tops and sometimes also the bottoms of minims. As Bischoff notes, 'in order to produce rows of shafts all constructed in the same way, it was often necessary to suppress the hair-strokes, and the 'quadrangles' [serifs] touch each other at the points'.[93] These serifs create a 'highly conspicuous … strong sense of a horizontal line,' adding visual prominence to this feature.[94]

We can see immediately why this script was well-suited to the teaching of the alphabet: for beginning readers, painstakingly decoding words letter by letter, it was ideal. However, the characteristic construction of letters from combinations of

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90 Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography. Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 112. First published as *Paläographie des romischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1979). For his description of the chronological development of the script as a whole, see 51-149.

91 Parkes, *Hands Before Our Eyes*, 103-104.

92 ibid., 59.

93 Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, 129.

94 Derolez, *Gothic Manuscript Books,* 74-75.

straight lines results in graphs for different letters sharing the same small number of basic shapes, many of them straight lines. The graphs for **i**, **m**, **n** and **u** are made up of sets of identical shapes, with the strokes marking **u** and **n** apart and distinguishing **i** from the rest reduced to hairlines. The difficulty this homogenisation causes is not great if we decode slowly, letter by letter, but when we glance at whole words, problems begin to present themselves. Scribal errors demonstrate that some readers accurately judged the number of minims present in a word, but failed to distinguish the component letters: so, we find errors of 'uenio' and 'uisi' for 'nemo and 'nisi'.[95] As these errors indicate, familiarity with the script was not an infallible solution to the difficulties presented by homogenised shapes of letters and words.

These errors testify to an important issue we must take into account: the difference between reading letter by letter (as beginners do) and reading whole words (as faster, fluent readers do). As Parkes acknowledges, fluent readers concentrate on the word as a complete image, on the 'bouma' shape that is recognisable without distinguishing individual letters.[96] Whereas cursive scripts provide the visual variation that gives each word its distinctive shape, the restricted number of shapes used to construct letters in *textura* has a knock-on effect on the processing of words. It is possible that the concentration of what Parkes calls 'cues for legibility' at the same height was in fact a necessary development in view of the challenge this homogenisation poses. This is not the only possible effect of the strong linear profile of *textura* on fluent readers. Modern research on printed fonts indicates that the more a font is based on vertical lines, the less it incorporates variation in terms of curves, the more it introduces barely perceptible visual disturbances that

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[95] Parkes, *Hands Before Our Eyes*, 66.

[96] ibid., 67. For use of the term 'bouma' in relation to medieval reading, see Saenger, *Space Between Words*, 19; 21. The term derives from the research of Herman Bouma into visual responses to words and letters, notably Bouma, 'Visual interference in the parafoveal recognition of initial and final letters of words,' *Vision Research* (1973): 767-782; Bouma, 'Word perception and its role in reading,' in *Processing of Visible Language*, eds. Paul Kolers, Merald Wrolstad and Herman Bouma (New York: Plenum Press, 1977), 221-226.

make it slower to read word by word.[97] Arnold Wilkins describes how words with repetitive vertical elements uninterrupted by curved strokes create a visual impression of vertical 'stripes,' as in the word 'mum' (as compared to the word 'over') written in modern fonts.[98] These 'stripes' force readers to slow down imperceptibly. In effect, the script acts as a brake on fluent readers, bringing their reading speed closer to the level of less fluent readers.

We can reconstruct the effect of *textura* by looking at medieval paraliturgical manuscripts. From *c*. 1300 the standardised letter-forms and visual profile of *textura* were becoming familiar to a wider and wider class of book-owning laypeople, to whom the new genre of Books of Hours and the still-popular Psalters were catering (Figure 1.6).[99] Figure 1.6 shows a Book of Hours copied sometime in after 1340, in the *textura* script in its fully developed form. The tall, narrow letters are made up of combinations of straight lines set at angles, with curves reduced to a minimum. The letters are closely juxtaposed, in some cases overlapping or 'biting' each other (as the letters **d** and **e** do in 'impende,' the first word of line 2), compressing the script in the horizontal plane. As a result of all of these things, blocks of text on the page therefore have a tendency to resolve themselves into the appearance of straight vertical and horizontal lines, with little curve. The effect Wilkins describes in modern fonts can be seen in the word 'omnium,' the first word of l. 1, which is made up almost entirely of minims in a repeating vertical pattern. These features are enduring: Figure 1.7 shows a page from a Book of Hours made more than a hundred years later than that we saw in Figure 1.6, yet the visual profile of the script remains very much the same, as do most of the letter forms.[100]

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[97] Arnold Wilkins, Jennifer Smith, Clare Willison, Tom Beare, Alexandra Boyd, Gemma Hardy, Louise Mell, Charlotte Peach, Samantha Harper, 'Stripes within words affect reading,' *Perception* 36 (2007): 1788-1803 (1790, 1802).

[98] ibid., 1789.

[99] Figure 1.6 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Liturg. 104, f. 14r.

[100] Figure 1.7 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gough Liturg. 3, f. 28v (detail).

It is probable, of course, that fluent readers of *textura* became somewhat accustomed to these properties of the script, but I would like to suggest another possibility. Parkes provides a definition of the term 'legibility,' stating: '[t]he principal requirement of any language system is that it must be easy to decode quickly'.[101] This is certainly true of the fonts and scripts amongst modern readers. It is also patently true of many medieval systems for representing language: readers whose motivation for reading is to discover information value speed; readers who seek entertainment value ease, and a certain minimum level of speed is necessary for fluent reading aloud. However, I would argue that speed is not the primary requirement of paraliturgical prayer. *Textura*'s distinctive features may have been motivated by increasing desire for a script whose individual letter forms could be identified at speed, but in its mature form in paraliturgical manuscripts of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there is good reason to believe it mitigated against *overly* speedy reading.

This may seem strange to us, as we are so accustomed to assuming that speed is necessarily and universally a valued aspect of reading. However, I would argue that, in fact, a script that helped readers to process the words on the page more slowly was a distinct advantage, bringing these readers' responses closer to those of monastic Latin literates engaged in *lectio divina*. This helps us to understand how the non-Latinate participated in Latin paraliturgical culture, and sheds light on the relationships between monastic and lay culture. In the thirteenth century, the dissemination of Latin paraliturgical texts to lay and non-Latinate readers was marked by enthusiastic production of texts by clerics and monastics, but also by awareness of the need for the habits of reading and interpretation that non-Latinate readers must use to understand those texts and to perform them correctly. In Latin monastic culture, the reading of Scripture and liturgy, the *lectio divina*, was a process of contemplation during which the devout individual meditated on the words as he

[101] Parkes, *Hands Before Our Eyes*, 59.

read them.[102] The concept of this *ruminatio*, rumination on the Latin words, spread into vernacular lay culture through texts and metaphors comparing the vocalising of written words to 'tasting' and the spiritual benefits of reading to 'sweetness'.[103] Yet, to achieve this slow contemplative mode of reading most successfully, scribes needed to use the visual dynamics of manuscript pages. The visual qualities of *textura* are ideal for this purpose. It is this habit of slow decoding of *textura*, facilitated by the properties of the script and by early education that made this script familiar, which enabled non-Latinate medieval readers to emulate clerics engaged in *lectio divina*.

Books of Hours are frequently discussed for the same aesthetic appeal that has led these manuscripts to be prized (and, at times, dismembered) over the centuries. Yet this approach of analysing the manuscripts' pictorial images, rich decoration or beautiful lettering is in itself a fragmented approach that recognises only part of what medieval readers would have learned to interpret as visually significant in the contents of the page. In order to use a Book of Hours – to read its contents aloud and perhaps connect them to the voice of a priest conducting mass – medieval readers were required to make sense of all the interactions of visual dynamics, to treat the page as a system to be navigated and not merely a surface to be admired. Readers were well-served by their early training, which taught them to sound out words they did not understand, to focus intensely on the page, and to read *textura* in a slow, syllabic mode that resembled monastic *lectio*. The striking similarity of English laypeople's practice to religious reading was recorded by an Italian visitor to England in 1500, who observed that English women went to hear mass every day, taking with them their rosaries and their prayer books to read aloud. He continues, noting with apparent surprise, that these female readers recited the

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[102] See Jean Leclerq, *The Love of Learning and Desire for God,* trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961). Originally published in French as *L'Amour des lettres et le désire de Dieu* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1957).

[103] For discussion of these metaphors in Latin and vernacular theory, see Mary Carruthers, 'Sweetness,' *Speculum* 81 (2006): 999-1013.

Latin prayers verbally 'verse by verse, in a low voice, after the manner of churchmen'.[104]

Paraliturgical Reading Habits for Middle English Readers

The influence of the visual dynamics of the Latin beginners' alphabet and the Latin pages of paraliturgical books on non-Latinate medieval readers cannot be underestimated. The mode of reading these visual dynamics ingrained in readers' expectations from an early age was no superficial imitation of monastic *lectio*, but a series of visual and cognitive processes that encouraged the appropriately slow recitation and intense visual concentration. The skills readers learned included the important lesson, radically different in its implications from the lessons modern readers of English learn from the modern alphabet, that the visual symbols one needs to memorise in order to navigate the written page are various and can always be augmented. They are not a closed system of twenty-six letters required to sound out all the words in one's mother tongue. When we look at the Latin texts of the Book of Hours and the Psalter that medieval readers learned to recite so devoutly, we might wonder how this Latin mode of reading influenced Middle English at all. In this final section of my chapter, I want to look at the ways in which Middle English texts encoded readers' responses to the Latin visual dynamics of their paraliturgical texts, to demonstrate that this central influence was deeply felt.

The primary site for such interaction between Latin and vernacular was, of course, on the pages of paraliturgical manuscripts themselves. Although Latin was the dominant language, vernacular rubrics and supplementary prayers were normal additions. These additions to the Latin texts were encouraged as a result of the popularisation of the Book of Hours, which was itself a development that served the needs of lay non-Latinate readers. The structure of the Book of Hours was not only easier to navigate than that of the Psalter: it also lent itself more openly to augmentation, being a compilation itself. Other materials typically gathered around it

[104] Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 123-124.

are the popular Hours of the Cross, the calendar of saints' days, and lections from the four gospels: all in Latin. One of the earliest surviving Books of Hours, the de Brailes Hours (London, British Library MS Add. 49999), made *c*. 1240, contains captions to its visual images written in the French of England, and by the later medieval period, it was common to find Middle English texts and rubrics used to explain the significance of prayers or indulgences.[105]

The treatment of these texts on the page should help us to understand how readers were primed to interpret the relationships between the Latin and the vernacular. However, a few examples immediately demonstrate that positioning of Middle English relative to Latin was far from standardised throughout paraliturgical books: this was one of the many aspects of the written page that demanded readers' trained skills in decoding new and innovative visual dynamics. Richard Emerson discusses how the famous image of the Three Living and Three Dead in the fourteenth-century de Lisle Psalter (London, British Library, MS Arundel 83, f. 127r) subordinates the Middle English captions to its visual dynamic, with the implication that Middle English readers might recognise in this positioning their own subordinate linguistic status within Latin manuscript culture.[106] However, the implications of this liminal positioning of the vernacular are not necessarily unambiguously negative ones. Alexandra Barratt has convincingly argued that the positioning and textual presentation of English at the beginning and end of a fifteenth-century Book of Hours (York, Minster Library, MS Add. 2) grants the language a privileged status over the Latin it surrounds, and a certain immediacy by right of its position at the beginning of the book.[107] Jessica Brantley suggests that the

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[105] Donovan, *The de Brailes Hours*, 9; Donovan, 'The Mise-en-Page of Early Books of Hours in England,' in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. Linda Brownrigg (London and Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), 147-162.

[106] Richard Emmerson, 'Visualizing the Vernacular: Middle English in early fourteenth-century bilingual and trilingual Manuscript Illustrations,' in *Tributes to Lucy Freeman Sandler: Studies in Illuminated Manuscripts*, eds. Kathryn Ann Smith and Carol H. Krinsky (London and Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 187-204.

[107] Alexandra Barratt, '"Envoluped in Synne": The Bolton Hours and Its Confessional Formula,' in *Interstices* eds. Green and Mooney, 3-14.

images of some Books of Hours may be seen as a form of vernacular dialogue, surrounding the Latin main text.[108] Thus, although the visual dynamics of Books of Hours are unmistakeably determined by their Latin core contents, different manuscripts encourage different interpretations of the relationships of Latin to vernacular, suggesting that neither category of language had a completely fixed status.[109]

These vernacular texts were, when part of the scribe or scribes' plan, often written in textura. In Figure 1.7, we can see how the Latin textura in the top three lines of the text gives way, after the blue initial in l. 3, to Middle English. Yet, there is an inevitable visual difference between the Latin and the Middle English, no matter how carefully the scribe attempted to replicate the same script. The linear impact of the script is broken by the repeated curved marker over the letter **y** (used to differentiate it from the Middle English letter **þ**), as by the diagonal descenders on **y**, **h** and **r** (more frequent in the Middle English than the Latin). We see no words containing so many repeated vertical features uninterrupted by curves or diagonals as we see in the word 'omnium' discussed above; even the four uninterrupted minims of 'piissima' here (the final word of l. 2) is not paralleled in the Middle English. Each language has its own distinctive visual profile, the result of the distribution of different letters. The proportions of ascenders and descenders, minims and curves contribute to the impact of the script. This is because not all letters can be so successfully broken into horizontal and vertical lines as others: the letters **k**, **y**, and **z**, for example, feature curved loops or diagonal lines. This may be because these letters are infrequent in Latin words (they appear in words borrowed from Hebrew and Greek) and never achieved conventional forms that suited the aesthetic of textura. In Middle English, **y** is much more common, and **z** is common in some dialects, while **þ** (like **y**) and **ȝ** (not unlike **z**) are also common. Overall, then

108 Jessica Brantley, 'Images of the Vernacular in the Taymouth Hours,' in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, Volume 10, ed. Anthony Edwards (London: British Library, 2001), 83-113.

109 See Somerset and Watson, 'Preface,' ix-x.

Middle English contains more curved features which appear more frequently; Latin visibly conforms more closely to the lines of vertical strokes Wilkins describes.

Complicating the impact of the main text of a Book of Hours are the texts that surround this main text. The liminal spaces, the beginnings of texts or the margins, the ends of the manuscripts, or even the flyleaves, are always natural sites for *ad hoc* scribbled annotation, not always in *textura* or in Latin. The visual dynamics of the vernacular texts that could be accumulated around the Latin of the main text are less rigorously controlled by convention than the core Latin prayers. English additions to the Latin contents visibly located Middle English readers in the margins and in the spaces not laid out by the scribe for the main text. For example, Figure 1.8 shows the annotations made in the Beaufort Hours in the late fifteenth century.[110] Within the calendar itself, annotations are made in Latin, as we see at ll. 3-4 and ll. 25-26. In the margins, spilling out from the main writing space, there is some Latin (on the left of ll. 16-20 and 28-30), but the majority of text is written in Middle English (in the large bottom margin). Beaufort's manuscript is a *de luxe* production, and the same can also be said of the treatment of marginal and liminal space in more modest books. Their calendars are marked with births and deaths, and owners' names are written into prayers or onto flyleaves, while their margins provide spaces for *ad hoc* collection of Middle English prayers, ownership inscriptions and notes.[111] The scripts used for these additions vary far more than *textura* varies from century to century; they bear immediate, visible witness to multiple uses of the text (as a calendar in which to make family records such as dates of deaths, and as a memorandum book in which to make lengthier notes about political events, as a space for Middle English and as a space for Latin).

The diverse visual dynamics and varied uses of Middle English in Latin paraliturgical books demonstrate that its status was far from fixed, or simple, despite its usual omission from the materials used in early education. In Books of Hours, the vernacular can be interpreted as something that surrounds paraliturgical Latin on

[110] Figure 1.8 is London, British Library, MS Royal 2. A. 18, f. 30v.

[111] Eamon Duffy discusses this in *Marking the Hours*, viii-x. For examples, see his Plates 23, 29 and 39, all of which show manuscripts annotated in the margins in Middle English.

the page, or something that is marginalised by it; as the language of formal and systematised guides to the meaning of the Latin text, or as an intimate register for personal prayers. The flexible connotations and uses of Middle English in the context of Latin pages and Latin visual dynamics, however, only show us one side of this relationship between the two languages. We also need to explore the ways in which Middle English texts represent the Latin of paraliturgical books, and especially, how they represent and exploit the visual dynamics of paraliturgical Latin.

The visual dynamics of the Latin beginners' alphabet are full of potential for exploitation in Middle English as a metonym for the materials people use to learn and to think in general. The material contents of the board book find their way into the imaginary of Middle English didactic poetry. The wooden backing, the stretched parchment, the red rubric and the 'tittles' or abbreviation marks, are all features readily likened to the imagery of Christ's crucifixion.[112] Verses exploring the visual parallels, and attributing ideological implications to them, abound. So, for example, an alphabetic Passion poem stresses the spiritual symbolism of each visible feature of such a book by highlighting the visual similarities. The imagined book is marked with '.V. paraffys … in rose-red' that resemble Christ's wounds, and teach the onlooker the moral lesson of the Crucifixion. The verse continues:

> Red letter in parchemyn
> Makyth a chyld good and fyn
> Lettrys to loke & se.
> Be this bok men may dyvyne
> That Cristes body was ful of pyne
> That deyid on rode tre.
> On tre he was don ful blythe,
> With grete paraffys, that ben wondes. v.[113]

('Red letters on parchment/ make a child good and fine/ to look at and see letters./ By this book men may divine/ that Christ's body was full of pain,/ who died

[112] Mary Spalding, *The Middle English Charters of Christ* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr College, 1914), xxvi-xxviii. See also Laura Ashe, 'The Short Charter of Christ: an unpublished longer version, from Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 6686,' *Medium Ævum* 72 (2003): 32-48.

[113] Quoted by Rudy, 'An Illustrated Primer,' 56. Her source is London, British Library, MS Harley 3828.

on the rood tree. On the wood he was set cheerfully,/ with great paraph marks, that are the five wounds.')

The 'red letter in parchemyn' accords the same spiritual benefit as the sight of Christ crucified, and the 'paraphs,' or paraph marks that articulate the alphabet and early reading materials stand for his 'wondes'. These correspondences are extended to the abbreviation symbols of the alphabet, and the four letters written above Christ's head in images of the Crucifixion (INRI, or 'Iesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum,' Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). Both were known in Middle English as 'tittles,' or titles. The Middle English verse, like the Book of Hours, relies upon close visual awareness: the oval paraph marks recall the wounds, the rubric is red like blood. The idea of the written components of the page as symbols of divine truth, based in Latin *lectio divina*, is both communicated to Middle English readers, and translated into Middle English manuscript culture.

In the Middle English poem, the scribe chooses to write 'v' instead of 'fyue,' a decision that momentarily obscures the rhyme with 'blythe' in the second use of the numeral. Although it is not particularly unusual to substitute numerals for words, this choice is not merely haphazard: the shape of the letter, marked out visually from the rest of the text by a *punctus* on either side, plays on the same sort of visual analogy that the text is describing in relation to the rubricated paraphs, resembling the jagged mouth of a wound. For readers with sufficient awareness of the relevant Latin vocabulary, the scribal decision also has a visual and cognitive priming effect, in conjunction with the preceding word 'wounds': the Middle English word primes readers semantically to think of the Latin synonym, *vulnera*, and the numeral **v** primes them visually to reinforce this association.[114] The Middle English text thus enacts on the page the process it describes with reference to the Latin beginners' alphabet: the process whereby the visual dynamics of a text are imbued with symbolism of Christ's Crucifixion.

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114 For discussion of priming, see Gerry Altmann, *The Ascent of Babel: An Exploration of Language, Mind and Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 65-83.

This visually evocative, but ideologically simple exploitation of the Latin tools of early instruction is only the most basic Middle English response to the visual dynamics of Latin paraliturgical material. Interpretations of the alphabet in Middle English writing give us some sense of how readers related to ideologies behind symbols on the page. Here, the differences between modern and medieval English understandings of the alphabet are crucial. In modern teaching, the alphabet is taken to refer to the twenty-six letters and their established order beginning with **a** and ending with **z**. One of the most important assumptions about the modern alphabet is that it is a *complete* collection of the characters required to represent the spoken language in writing; no letters are missing. In contrast, the beginners' alphabet seems to have had no such clearly defined beginning and end. Its lack of Middle English letters drew attention to the need for non-Latinate readers to supplement its contents, but readers of all linguistic competencies recognised – and exploited – its open-ended composition.

The materials from which Middle English readers typically learned their letters were, by default, incomplete for reading Middle English – even for reading all the abbreviations of Latin – yet the implications of this incompleteness are not easy to determine. We can see that the beginners' alphabets show readers that the process of learning to read is an ongoing task of augmenting and adapting one's memory of visual symbols in use, and for Middle English readers this process was never designed to be complete, or suited to texts in the language these readers spoke, so in this respect the beginners' alphabet stresses Middle English readers' peripheral position in literate culture. Yet, Middle English writers exploit the open-ended, visually complex structure of the beginners' alphabet, exploit the paraliturgical Latin framework of early reading instruction, to their own ends.

So, John Alcock, bishop of Ely in the 1490s, quotes the phrase 'Christ's cross be my speed' and observes 'so beginneth the ABC'.[115] Alcock's identification of the non-graphemic symbol, the cross, was sufficiently common to lead to the Tudor

[115] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 253.

alternative name for the alphabet, Christ-cross row. John Trevisa, writing around a century earlier, concurs

> Croys was maad al of reed
> In þe bigynnynge of my book
> That is clepid God me spede
> In þe firste lessoun þat I took
> Thanne I lerned *a* and *be*
> And oþir lettres by here names.[116]
>
> ('The cross was made all of red,/ in the beginning of my book,/ which is called "Christ speed me"/ in the first lesson that I took./ Then I learned **a** and **b**/ and other letters by their names.')

However, Alcock and Trevisa's descriptions contrast with that which we find in the anti-clerical poem, *Piers the Plowman's Crede*, narrated by a non-Latinate layman who seeks education and fails to find it at the hands of the friars. He declares '*A* and all myn *A-B-C* after have I lerned,' omitting the cross but accurately replicating the doubled letter **a** with which the text begins.[117] Yet another text, a play in which one child teases another for forgetting his lessons, refers to 'Pater,' as the 'first word' of the 'ABC'.[118] These various descriptions of the perceived beginning and ending of 'the alphabet' indicate that, despite the highly standardised content of the beginners' alphabet, the text did not present an image of completeness, and these differing descriptions show how easily the text could be exploited for illustrate different ideas.

Trevisa's description evokes the page of a book, with rubrics and letters, a material object eliciting a performative response. The 'first lessoun' is, implicitly, not only a lesson in reading but also a lesson in recognising the primary importance of the cross, symbolised by its presence at the beginning of the book. By contrast, the omission of the initial cross in *Piers the Plowmans Crede* might be indebted to the

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116 Seymour, ed., *On the Properties of Things*, 40.

117 James Dean, ed., *Piers the Plowman's Crede* in *Six Ecclesiastical Satires* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), ll. 5-8. Online edition accessed on 12/11/11 at http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/credefrm.html

118 Orme, *Medieval Children*, 262.

same developing ideas that the Lollard heretic Margery Baxter was to express in 1429, when she reputedly declared that the only crucifix worthy to be worshipped was the cross formed by stretching out one's own arms in the shape of a cross.[119] The reference to 'pater' as the 'first word of the ABC' presents the text as inextricable from the prayer that follows, and incomplete unless it leads to the learning of that prayer. These differing interpretations of the limits of the beginners' alphabet enable differing ideologies of reading to be grafted into the English descriptions of the text. The standardised text of the Latin alphabet was, then, amenable to shifting interpretations and reinterpretations by vernacular writers.

The written form of the beginners' alphabet, as a visual and material object, enlivens the metaphoric language of Middle English religious writers. It communicates symbolism that related learning to read, to learning to respond in a devotional context; it identifies the learning reader slowly grasping towards the meaning of the symbols on the page with the onlooker at the Crucifixion, painfully struggling to understand the implications of Christ's sacrifice. It is also a witness to the constant presence of Latin paraliturgical culture, as an influence on Middle English readers' visual memories, cognitive processes and ideological frameworks. These Middle English texts accommodate the images and details of Latin paraliturgical reading to their own ideologies. The evocative, precise details – the doubled letter **a** in 'A and all myn A-B-C have I learned,' the comparison of rounded paraph marks to gaping wounds – suggest their readers' intimate familiarity with the written surfaces to which they refer. This register of Latin is absorbed into Middle English as a repertoire of symbols and a habit of meditative reading, and the Latin ideology of *lectio* is transposed, imitated, and interrogated, in Middle English texts.

Conclusion

The Latin texts and manuscripts I have discussed in this chapter were, to judge from surviving numbers and centuries of references, the most widely-owned

[119] Margaret Aston, 'Lollards and the Cross,' in *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England*, eds. Fiona Somerset, Jill Havens, and Derrick Pitard (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 99-104 (108).

and widely-used of all medieval laypeople's books. The influence of the visual dynamics of alphabets, Books of Hours and Psalters was profound. The relationships these texts enact between Latin and Middle English provide the touchstone for medieval readers' subsequent interpretations of that great, ever-shifting linguistic interaction. Latin was inescapable, the language in which reading was rooted. Yet, the primacy of Latin does not indicate the position of Middle English is entirely fixed and marginal. On the pages of Latin Books of Hours, we find that the relative positions of Middle English and Latin are flexible, mutually dependent, and even open to ideological reinterpretations. The incorporation of the tropes of Latin paraliturgical *lectio* into Middle English devotional language and poetry confirms this impression, as it confirms the constant closeness of Latin to Middle English religious reading culture. By analysing the rich and complex visual dynamics of Latin paraliturgical reading culture, we can see the how Latin shaped readers' visual, cognitive and conceptual responses to written text. By recognising the fundamental role these books played in readers' lives, we can examine the vernacular literature of medieval England with new understanding.

Chapter Two: Textual Communities in the French of England: The Manuscripts of the *Manuel des Péchés*, 1260-1500.

The *Manuel des Péchés*, written in *c.* 1260, is one of the neglected texts of medieval England, with its manuscripts and readers virtually ignored by modern scholars.[120] It is not frequently mentioned in recent scholarship that argues for the enduring vitality and influence of the French of England during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[121] Yet the text and its manuscripts are not simple products that soon became outdated, but, I will argue, are crucial to our understanding of the shifting linguistic relationships readers encountered from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. The *Manuel* translates not only content, but also a mode of reading and an ideology of response, from Latin into the vernacular. Its manuscripts anticipate developments scholars have associated with later texts, often in Middle English, and notably the 'pointing' of a standardised text and system of textual apparatus.[122] This enables scribes to adapt their manuscripts to suit differing audiences, while retaining the characteristic qualities of the text. The *Manuel*'s late-medieval circulation links networks of fifteenth-century readers, with a central hub

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[120] Quotations are from *Manuel*, ed. Furnivall, unless otherwise stated. See also Émile Arnould, *Le Manuel des Péchés*: *étude de littérature religieuse Anglo-Normande (XIIIme Siècle*) (Paris, Droz: 1940) and Charlton Laird, 'Manuscripts of the *Manuel des Pechiez*,' in *Stanford Studies in Language and Literature*, ed. Hardin Craig (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1941), 99-123. No studies focus primarily on late-medieval reading of the *Manuel*; Lutton includes some brief comments on one manuscript. See Robert Lutton, 'Vice, Virtue and Contemplation: the Willoughbys' Religious Books and Devotional Interests,' in *The Wollaton Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers*, eds. Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2010), 68-78 (69-72).

[121] For the term 'the French of England,' see Wogan-Browne, 'What's in a Name,' 1-2. She notes that the term helps to counter associations of 'Anglo-Norman' with the Conquest-era past and not with the later Middle Ages.

[122] Parkes' seminal article on the punctuation of text to suit different groups of readers relates to Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, written in the early fifteenth century. See Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, 'Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*,' in *Nicholas Love at Waseda: Proceedings of the International Conference 20-22 July 1995*, eds. Shoichi Oguro, Richard Beadle and Michael Sargent (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 47-59.

in the rural East Midlands and spreading out to Londoners at the forefront of the book trade and to Cambridge scholars, to the culture in which Humanists were making a new fashion out of interest in archaic book culture. That the *Manuel* was popular is evident from its thriving late-medieval readership. It offers an important point of comparison with Middle English. By studying the ways in which this text and its manuscripts construct a position for readers of the French of England within trilingual medieval culture, we can learn more about the relationships between all three languages.

Constructing Textual Communities In The French of England

In the second half of the thirteenth century, the point from which I begin my study, vernacular pastoral literature in the French of England was hugely popular amongst audiences eager for religious material translated out of Latin. Yet, until recently, the French of England has been interpreted largely as a precursor to the 'triumphant' Middle English of the later fourteenth century, and despite powerful challenges to this view, much work still needs to be done to clarify the relationships between the two languages.[123] I begin by looking at the way in which the *Manuel* – as a representative of a much larger group of similar texts written in the French of England in the same period – articulates its audience's position within the reading cultures of medieval England. The text is part of the wave of post-Lateran vernacular *pastoralia* and was written in Yorkshire or Lincolnshire, thriving areas for pastoral outreach in the thirteenth century.[124] Its author has not been securely identified, but in several manuscripts the text is attributed to one William of Waddington, a cleric, and certainly the author possessed clerical education.[125] The extant manuscripts were written in less than a century, between *c*. 1260 and *c*. 1350.[126] The *Manuel*'s author explains he intends to teach 'le lai gent' ('laypeople,' l. 113), who do not speak

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123 For discussion of this older scholarship and of its limitations, see Wogan-Browne, 'What's In a Name,' 1-13.

124 Andrew Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners: Interactions between clergy and laity in a regional context,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 2009); Helen Birkett, 'The Pastoral Application of the Lateran IV Reforms in the Northern Province, 1215-1348,' *Northern History* 43 (2006): 199-219; Jonathan Hughes, 'The Administration of Confession in the Diocese of York in the Fourteenth Century,' in *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Medieval England,* ed. David Michael Smith (York: York Medieval Press, 1991), 90–92.

125 See Matthew Thomas Sullivan, 'The Author of the *Manuel des Péchés*,' *Notes & Queries* NS 38 (1991): 155-157; Hope Emily Allen, 'The *Manuel des Pechie*z and Its Scholastic Prologue,' *Romanic Review*, 8 (1917): 434-462.

126 For dates, see Laird, 'Manuscripts,' 99-123, and Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 66-67. Throughout this thesis, I use sigla available in published work, except when these are modified to avoid confusion with manuscripts of other texts.

Latin, how they might 'les pechiez amender' ('amend sins,' ll. 11-12). However, the text has traditionally been understood as a neat illustration of the decline of an 'Anglo-Norman' work, unsuited to lay readers, following the production of an accessible Middle English version.[127] As production of the *Manuel* ceased in the middle of the fourteenth century, copies of *Handlyng Synne*, the most popular Middle English translation, were produced in nine manuscripts dating from *c*. 1380 to the end of the fifteenth century.[128] This deceptively neat chronology perhaps explains the *Manuel*'s neglect in the recent explosion of work on the French of England.[129]

In order to understand what the *Manuel* manuscripts can tell us about textual communities, we need to see how the text reached out to readers. This is a crucial area of study, for the extant scholarship is lacking. In the 1990s Sullivan forced the argument that the *Manuel*'s use of the French of England and its reliance upon readers' capacity to interact directly with manuscript books precluded a lay audience.[130] His conclusions have been largely discredited, and, more recently, Andrew Taubman and Adelaide Bennett have interpreted the text as a site for interaction between clerics and laypeople, with laypeople playing an active role.[131] However, the rhetoric through which the author of the *Manuel* constructs a model of

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127 See Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 46-50; Lutton, 'Willoughbys' Religious Books,' 69; Matthew Thomas Sullivan, 'The Original and Subsequent Audiences of the Manuel des Péchés and its Middle English Descendants,' (Unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1990), 23-24; Mathew Thomas Sullivan, 'Historical Notes on some Readers of the *Manuel des Péchés* and its Middle English Descendants,' *Scriptorium* 46 (1992): 84-86.

128 See Sullens, 'Introduction to *Handlyng Synne*,' in *Handlyng Synne* ed. Sullens, xii-xlvi (xix-xxii).

129 See, for example, Wogan-Browne *et al*., eds, *The French of England*; Richard Ingham, ed., *The Anglo-Norman Language and its Contexts* (York: York Medieval Press, 2010); Jefferson and Putter, eds., *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain.*

130 Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 11-12. The unreliability of Sullivan's conclusions (though not of his descriptions of manuscripts, which are generally accurate) is explored by Ulrike Schemmann in *Confessional Literature and Lay Education. The* Manuel dé Pechez *as a Book of Good Conduct and a Guide to Personal Religion.* (Droste: Studia Humaniora, 2000), 320-330.

131 See Adelaide Bennett, 'A Book Designed for a Noblewoman: An Illustrated *Manuel des Péchés* of the Thirteenth Century,' in *Medieval Book Production*, ed. Brownrigg, 163-182; Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 70-72. The manuscripts they discuss are, respectively, Princeton, University Library, Taylor Medieval MS 1 (**Ph**), London, British Library, MS Harley 4657 (**B1**) and San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS HM 903 (**Hm**).

reading, rooted in use of the French of England, needs to be examined in detail. Then, we need to see how this rhetoric is given visual context through the presentation of the text in its corpus of extant manuscripts. By exploring these issues, I hope to show how the identity of the *Manuel*'s readership was shaped not by a single language – the French of England – but by the relationships set out between that language and Latin, and, eventually, also Middle English.

The focus of the *Manuel* is entirely characteristic of post-Lateran vernacular *pastoralia*. It seeks to educate non-Latinate laity in the basics of their faith. This focus is shared by works such as the *Miroir* and *Corset* of Robert of Gretham, Grosseteste of Lincoln's *Chateau d'Amour* and Pierre of Pecham's *Lumere as Lais*.[132] The contents of the *Manuel* conform to what has been called a 'syllabus' of catechistic tenets, subdivided into sections for heuristic and mnemonic purposes, and illustrated with brief *exempla*.[133] The core components are sections on the creed, the ten commandments, the seven mortal sins, sacrilege and the sacraments. This overarching structure is flexible, accommodating scribal reorganisations, augmentations and abbreviations, which result in several different versions of the text. Material on confession and on prayer, a sermon on sin, and prayers to the Virgin and Christ circulating in some versions may have been added later.[134] The numbered subsections are punctuated with *exempla*, many translated from Latin, some from the French of England and continental French, drawn from a range of sources.[135] This

[132] See Alexandra Barratt, 'Spiritual Writings and Religious Instruction,' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, *1100-1400*, Vol. 2, eds. Nigel Morgan and Rodney Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 340-366.

[133] See Leonard Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology,' in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. Thomas John Heffernan (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 30-43; Hughes, 'Administration of Confession,' 90–92; Andrew Taylor, 'From Manual to Miscellany: Stages in the Commercial Copying of Vernacular Literature in England,' *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 1-17 (6); Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion,' in *Book Production and Publishing*, eds. Griffiths and Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 317-344.

[134] See Charlton Laird, 'The Character and Growth of the *Manuel des Pechiez*,' *Traditio* 4 (1946): 253-306.

[135] See Sullens, ed., *Handlyng Synne*, 383-387; Laird, 'Character and Growth,' 253-306.

'syllabus,' despite its amenability to augmentation, is strongly associated with the inculcation of standard, non-individualistic interpretations of doctrinal material.[136] It was designed – and its vernacular medium was employed – in order that the widest possible audience could absorb the same basic tenets of the faith.

The mode of reading in which the *Manuel* invites its audience to participate requires translation for the vernacular audience as much as its contents do. This reading process, the author explains in his prologue, was not one of passive rote memorisation of a linear text, but one of active and selective navigation through a complex structure. Unlike 'professionally latinate' monks and clerks whose reading was a timetabled activity, lay readers had to accommodate their reading to the demands of their daily lives, and therefore their need to navigate and personalise the structure of a text like the *Manuel* was great.[137] The mode of reading the *Manuel* author recommends is ultimately based in Latin academic textual culture, relying on the tools of organisation, the *distinctiones* and *tituli* of scholastic rhetoric, that educated churchmen used to structure textual material.[138] In this tradition, the page as a visual system reflects the nature of human memory, an inherently visual structure.[139] The *Manuel* author writes short couplets, with lines averaging seven words, to correspond to the ideal mnemonic length and to the medieval idea that data to be memorised should be small enough to take in at a glance, or

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[136] See Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology,' 33-34; Birkett, 'Application of Reforms,' 200.

[137] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, '"Cest livre liseez … chescun jour": Women and Reading *c*. 1230-1430,' in *The French of England*, eds. Wogan-Browne *et al*., 239-253 (248). See also Bella Millett, 'Women in No Man's Land: English Recluses and the Development of Vernacular Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries,' in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. Carol Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 86-103.

[138] See Richard and Mary Rouse, '*Statim invenire*: schools, preachers, and new attitudes to the page,' in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert Benson and Giles Constable with Carol Lanham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 201-225; Allen, 'Scholastic Prologue,' 434-462.

[139] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 31.

‘conspectus’.[140] He brings together *exempla* that provide strong, evocative, sometimes violent or grotesque images, perfectly according with the recommendations of medieval mnemonic theory.[141] Yet the *Manuel*’s adaptation of Latinate organisational tools to the needs of an audience reading in the French of England was not only practical: it also served to forge readers’ sense of their position within textual culture.

The author of the *Manuel* addresses himself to a readership who, by virtue of their ‘lai’ status and lack of Latin, were excluded from the textual communities in which understanding of these organisational and mnemonic tools circulated. This audience was explicitly instructed to pay close attention to the textual apparatus that structured the text on the page:

> P*ar* perografs *er*t destinctéz,
> Q*ue* n*us* mustre*n*t diu*er*s pechiéz.
> Pur ceo nul trop hastiume*n*t
> Cest escrit ne lise nomeme*n*t
> Dou feiȝe deit rehercer
> Qe sa alme uodera amender,
> La ou il trouera diu*er*s pechiéȝ,
> Sicu*m* il ert pirographés.
>
> (‘It will be marked with paragraphs,/ which show us the different sins./ Therefore, do not read this writing too hastily./ In particular, he should re-read it twice,/ who wishes to amend his soul./ There where you find the different sins,/ there will be paraph marks.’ ll. 71-78)

This painstaking explanation suggests that the addressed audience were not expected to be entirely familiar with textual apparatus such as this. They needed to be told how to use the paraph marks to find the ‘diu*er*s pechiéȝ,’ the various sins. This mode of reading is one during which a reader must be highly conscious of the

[140] George Miller, ‘The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information,’ *Psychological Review* 63 (1956): 81-97; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 102; Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought. Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63, 259. The *Manuel* scribes almost invariably write the couplets as two lines; the exception is Cambridge, University Library, MS Mm. 6. 4 (**C**).

[141] For vivid images as mnemonic tools, see Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 101-105.

manuscript as a material object that is designed to be leafed through and scanned. The author confirms this, noting the text 'Manuel est apele,/ Car en main deit estre porté' ('is called "The Manual," because it is to be held in the hand,' ll. 63-64). The physical dimensions of the page this instruction dictates are also discussed with painstaking care. The text's format is designed to guard against 'ennui' ('boredom,' l. 11523) and to be 'en memorye bien retenu' ('well retained in the memory,' l. 11524); therefore 'L'escrit est petit fet' ('The text is made small,' l. 11521). Taken as a reference to format rather than brevity, this would complete the picture of the *Manuel*'s page design as a reflection of the demands of scholastic *lectio*.[142]

These instructions echo those found in other works of thirteenth-century vernacular *pastoralia*. One of the earliest examples is Angier of St. Frideswide, who translated the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great into the French of England in the years just before the Fourth Lateran Council.[143] He explains carefully:

> …me plout
> Des totes les vertuz les titres
> Destincter par divers chapitres,
> E nis le nom de la persone
> - La ou l'une l'autre araisone -
> De diverses colours noter:
> Car tost porreit li litré errer
> S'il n'eust sein qui li moustrast
> Quoi de quoi qui vers qui parlast.[144]
>
> ('…it has pleased me to pick out the titles of all the miracles in the different chapters and even to note in different colours the name of each person when he speaks to the other. For the reader could too easily go wrong if he did not have a sign that would show him anything about what is being said by whom against whom.')

142 See Schemann, *Confessional Literature*, 230.

143 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Time to Read: Pastoral Care, Vernacular Access and the Case of Angier of St Frideswide,' in *Texts and Traditions of Medieval Pastoral Care. Essays in Honour of Bella Millett*, eds. Cate Gunn and Catherine Innes-Parker (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), 62-77.

144 Quoted and translated by Wogan-Browne, 'Time to Read,' 71.

This passage assumes that readers will need to be told how to use the titles and the colours marking the names of speakers, in deference to their lack of familiarity with this mode of reading, and perhaps also with the common features of textual apparatus. Angier gives the chapter titles in Latin, but for those to whom even this small amount of Latin is unclear, 'En romanz en la marge escrit/ Trovras quei li chapitre dit' ('In the margin, in the vernacular, you will find written what the chapter says').[145] A manuscript of the *Chateau d'Amour* likewise explains the treatment of 'chapitres' ('chapters') and 'titles,' noting 'Les titles primes mis serrunt,/ Ki les chapitres distincterunt' ('The first titles are set out, that distinguish the chapters').[146] The author of the *Lumere as Lais*, writing around 1267, carefully contextualises the function of his Latin-inflected vocabulary of textual apparatus, which includes the word 'distincteisuns' (Latin *distinctiones*, or subsections): 'chescun livre … Est distincté, en bone fei,/ Par chapitres e distincteisuns/ Sicume en rubriche demustrums' ('Each book … is marked out, in good faith, with chapters and subsections set out in the form of rubrics').[147]

The didactic tone of all of these authors is the same: that of breaking new ground for unaccustomed readers. The use of technical terminology such as 'perografs' and 'distincteisuns' and the clarification of the appearance of features of textual apparatus have the ring of jargon, of a specialised vocabulary and mode of communication. The implication flatters the readers of these texts, inviting them to identify themselves as members of an exclusive group, who participate in a mode of reading that would not be intelligible to every speaker of the French of England. Thus, the *Manuel* and its contemporaries do not associate vernacular translation purely with greater accessibility, but also with the construction of a new textual community within the French of England. That community was defined not by what

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[145] ibid., 69.

[146] Robert Grosseteste, *Le Chateau d'Amour*, ed. John Murray (Paris: Librarie Champion, 1918), 27. The manuscript is London, British Library, MS Royal 20. B. 14 (**Roy**), which also contains the *Manuel*.

[147] Glynn Hesketh, ed., *Pierre de Peckham, La Lumere as Lais* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2000), ll. 617-620. See also Barratt, 'Spiritual Writings,' 351.

they could learn – catechistic basics – but what they could decode and respond to, the textual apparatus of the manuscript page.

The Manuscripts of the *Manuel*

In order to understand how the *Manuel*'s rhetorical positioning of its readership through these references to language and to textual apparatus functions, we need to look at the manuscripts themselves. Three representative manuscripts illustrate the spectrum of different modes of response the corpus invited, and help us to see how the readerly identity shaped by the text was articulated by different scribes. The manuscripts of the *Manuel* are highly standardised in their use of textual apparatus, despite the high degree of textual instability. This is not so strange as it may seem, for the prologue's reference to specific features of textual apparatus and the text's structural reliance upon standardised organisational models derived from Latin *lectio* both act as implicit instructions to scribes. By analysing the presentation of the text, we can see how members of the textual community the *Manuel* author envisages were invited to respond, and thus, how their identities as readers of the French of England and of *pastoralia* were shaped.

First we must consider how the features of the manuscript page can shape readers' identities within the linguistic context of the *Manuel* and the wider linguistic context of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. As we saw in the previous chapter, the combination of features of *ordinatio* and textual apparatus on a manuscript page has the potential to invite complex and subtle responses from medieval readers, who were trained from their earliest experiences of reading to develop strong visual memories and to decode complicated visual cues. These skills were necessary for non-Latinate readers attempting to navigate their Latin prayer books. The production of Books of Hours, adapted specifically for laypeople, was on the increase from the late thirteenth century, and lay interest in all forms of Latin paraliturgical book culture was closely related to the vernacular reforms that led to the composition of the *Manuel* itself, for both were means to engage the laity more closely with the life of the Church. So, when readers of the French of England came to look at the pages of *Manuel* manuscripts, they brought with them the training in visual decoding they would have absorbed from this context.

London, British Library, MS Harley 273 (A)

I begin with **A**, which was mostly copied around 1300. The design of the page responds competently to the demands of the text: double columns make it easy for a reader to glance at a narrow line of text in a 'conspectus' or glance, and sections and subsections are introduced with rubricated initials, so that one can easily see where on the page to look in order to find a new topic. The textual apparatus lays out the structure of the text in visible form: the subsections are provided with rubricated titles in the main text column. They give the number and section reference in the French of England, for example, 'La tierce article de la fey' ('the third article of the creed,' f. 114vb, l. 32), 'Le tiers peche mortel est envie' ('the third mortal sin is envy,' f. 138rb, l. 36), or 'Ci comence de *con*fessiun' ('Here begins "Confession,"' f. 176va, l. 38). As we can see, these subtitles vary in terms of the information they provide alongside the number and section: some are informative as well as heuristic, providing details of *what* the third mortal sin is; others merely provide a guide to the section's position within the larger structure of the text. All, however, enable readers to search through the text quickly and efficiently, by scanning down the columns.

This process is further facilitated by the scribe's use of paraph marks, which help to divide the text into even smaller units (Figure 2.1).[148] The only regular marginalia by the original scribe take the form of these paraph marks. They are written in eye-catching alternating red and blue on the opening pages of the first three quires (f. 113r, f. 125r and f. 137r), but elsewhere this time-consuming practice is abandoned in favour of simple red alone. The *Manuel*'s text itself instructs that paraph marks will be found next to the 'pechiéȝ' ('the sins,' l. 117). One might, of

[148] Figure 2.1 is London, British Library, MS Harley 273, f. 113r. It shows paraph marks at column a, l. 14; l. 18; l. 20; l. 22; l. 26; l. 32 l. 36 and l. 36; and at column b, l. 6; l. 8; l. 10; l. 12; l. 22; l. 26 and l. 34.

course, easily interpret this to mean that each of the named sections – not only sins but also sacraments, commandments and so on – would be marked with paraphs calling attention to each numbered subsection. Yet what we find in **A** and across the corpus is a much more extensive use of paraph marks. As across the *Manuel* corpus, the paraph marks do not simply identify the numbered subsections of the text, but also draw attention to multiple smaller subsections of material, such that there are sometimes several to a single column, and a folio is rarely empty of them.[149]

A is not unusual amongst *Manuel* manuscripts in that the features of textual apparatus specified within the text are treated as the basis for a more extensive programme of *ordinatio*; it is not even unusual amongst copies of *pastoralia* written in the French of England. Only one text of those whose prologues I discussed earlier in this chapter survives in a holograph manuscript, the *Dialogues* of Angier in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Fr. 24766, made perhaps fifty years before the *Manuel* was composed. This manuscript features the details mentioned in its prologue, the rubricated titles for subsections and the names of different speakers marked in 'diverses colours' ('different colours').[150] It also features elements not mentioned in the prologue, notably paraph marks, such as those mentioned explicitly in the *Manuel* prologue, but also hierarchies of initials and a table of contents laying out the sections of the text in numerical order.[151] It seems clear that even when the author was his own scribe, the careful detailing of features of textual apparatus in the prologue was only the beginning. The *Chateau d'Amour* of Grosseteste and the *Lumere as Lais* of Pierre de Pecham, whose prologues, as we saw, contain references to systems of textual apparatus similar to those we find in the *Manuel*, circulate in manuscripts contemporary to **A**. In the *Lumere*, we find that the features mentioned

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[149] In **A**, there are 634 paraphs across the whole text (11909 lines), and only two folios of the main scribal stint contain no paraphs: 171v and 178v.

[150] For the titles, see Paris, Bibliothèque National, MS Fr. 24766, f. 20va, ll. 30-31 or f. 20vb, ll. 21-23, and for the different colours used for names, f. 20va, ll. 26-27.

[151] For examples of paraphs, see Paris, Bibliothèque National, MS Fr. 24766, f. 16va, l. 7 or f. 21va l. 39. For initials, see for example one- and two-line initials at f. 20rb, l. 31 and l. 33, or at 21va, l. 26 and l. 32. The table of contents is ff. 3v-8r; numbers are provided throughout beside the rubrics giving chapter titles in the main text. See for example f. 21va, l. 30.

in the prologue to that text, the books marked out into 'distincteisuns' ('marked sections') or subsections 'en rubriche' ('with rubrics') are augmented with running headers, with paraph marks, with hierarchies of initials.[152] In the *Chateau*, we find similar additions augmenting those specific features mentioned in the prologue: paraph marks and regularly alternating red and blue initials.[153] **A**'s copy of the *Manuel* is not, then, unusual in that its scribes exceeded the requirements of the text as regards the provision of textual apparatus, nor can we tell from comparison amongst manuscripts of the French of England which features were considered too obvious to mention, for each text is slightly different.

This process of augmenting the textual apparatus specified in the text continues, in **A**, after the point at which the main scribe ceased his copying stint at the end of the thirteenth century. The last few folios of the manuscript (ff. 181v-190v) were completed some time later, between *c*. 1314 and 1329.[154] The scribe was the Ludlow-based 'Harley Scribe,' active between 1314 and 1329, who wrote the well-known trilingual miscellany, London, British Library, MS Harley 2253. It was almost certainly he who compiled the manuscript as it exists today, adding texts that indicate he may have intended the finished manuscript for a lay household: a French Hours of the Virgin (ff. 59v-67v) and charms relating, amongst other things, to childbirth (ff. 213r-v). However, annotations indicate that he had the manuscript in his possession for some time, and that he read those portions of the *Manuel* he did not copy. At first glance, it seems the Harley scribe is less concerned with textual apparatus than his predecessor. He omits paraph marks and rubric from all but the very beginning of his few folios. He also produces a less consistently organised page

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[152] See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 399. The page features a running header, for example 'le premier liure' ('the first book,' f. 6r) in rubric, a paraph mark (f. 6ra, l. 20), and a hierarchy of one and two-line initials in alternating red and blue (f. 6ra, l. 15, or f. 6rb, l. 21 and l. 27).

[153] See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 132. Initials in red and blue may be seen at f. 23ra, at ll. 1-2, 7-8 and 15-16. There is a paraph mark at f. 23rb, l. 18.

[154] For this scribe's work, see Carter Revard, 'Scribe and Provenance,' in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript. The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 21-109. For annotations and additions see, for example, f. 7r, f. 82r, f. 85v, f. 112v, f. 116v, ff. 190v-197v, ff. 213r-v.

than the original scribe in terms of the regularity of lines, abandoning ruling from f. 184v and writing columns of varying lengths.

Yet other aspects of the Harley scribe's work suggest concern to articulate yet more new textual subsections and to clarify the organisation of the *Manuel*'s material, and he clearly spent time working out the structure of the text, for he drew a diagrammatic description of its catechistic tenets in the subsequent folios (ff. 190v-191v). The Harley scribe adds to the pre-existing textual apparatus of the *Manuel* portions he did not copy, marking in occasional marginal *notae* reading 'ex*emplu*m' to draw attention to this standard structural component of the text.[155] These additions are not unique: most manuscripts of the *Manuel* mark the beginnings of *exempla*, including what is probably the oldest surviving manuscript, London, British Library, MS Arundel 288 (**Ar**, made in the third quarter of the thirteenth century).[156] Taubman argues that the importance of these marks may be seen from their treatment in **Ar**, where they are occasionally found in the main text column like subtitles.[157] The Harley scribe's use of Latin contrasts with the main scribe's use of the French of England for the other verbal features of the textual apparatus, but this, too, is not unique within the corpus of *Manuel* manuscripts. **B1** is like **A** in that it uses Latin *notae* (usually the word 'narratio,' which may be translated as 'narration') to mark *exempla*, but the scribe writes subsection titles such as 'le terce article de la foy' ('the third article of the creed') in the French of England.[158] Other manuscripts use Latin for both subsection titles and *notae* for *exempla*.[159] It is worth noting that the manuscripts in question almost all, like **A**, include some Latin texts as well as texts in

155 For example, see f. 123v, l. 2; f. 125v, l. 32 and f. 131v, l. 29.

156 See Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 73 n. 79. He refers to f. 16r and f. 29v.

157 ibid., 72-73.

158 See f. 6rb, l. 23.

159 Some *Manuel* manuscripts give titles in Latin, for example, **Ar** and Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg. 1. 1 (**G**). **Hm** features lengthy Latin *notae*. See Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 72.

the French of England, and it is possible the Latin textual apparatus is indicative of clerical or monastic ownership and readership.[160]

The Harley scribe's work extends the hierarchy of textual distinctions between sections and encourages readers to analyse the organisational structure of the text. In this, it continues the process of adding elements of textual apparatus, aside from those specified in the text, in order to draw attention to yet more textual distinctions. In order to see how fully the textual apparatus of the *Manuel* might be exploited for these purposes, we need to look at another manuscript of the *Manuel* in which there is still more scribal augmentation of the predetermined features of the page.

London, British Library, MS Royal 20. B. XIV (Roy)

Roy was made towards the end of the thirteenth century, so its scribe was broadly contemporary with the main scribe of **A**. It is a compilation of religious material, with the *Manuel* (ff. 1r-52v) accompanied by other works of *pastoralia,* including the *Mirour de Seinte Eglise* (ff. 53r-65r) and Grosseteste's *Chateau d' Amour* (ff. 87v-95v). All of the contents of the manuscript are written in the French of England. However, despite this uniformity of theme and language, the *Manuel* itself is deconstructed, and the sermon often included in the *Manuel* is displaced to near the end of the volume (ff. 170r-172r). This may indicate that the scribe struggled for continual access to exemplars, and that the belated inclusion of the sermon represents a process of augmentation of the manuscript by reference to a new exemplar, which might be compared to the Harley scribe's provision of apparatus throughout the previously copied section of the *Manuel*. If so, this would suggest that copies of the *Manuel* were in demand, passing quickly into and out of scribes' hands. Another possibility is that the scribe (or the scribe of some earlier exemplar) had

[160] The Latin texts in **A** include two indulgences on f. 7r added by the Harley scribe. **B1** contains the Latin *Disticha Catonis* with a translation in the French of England at ff. 87r-97r. **Ar** contains Latin verse on f. 247v. **G** contains several short Latin texts, for example at ff. 16v, 121v, 402v and 491r.

chosen to separate the two portions of text, rearranging the *Manuel* to his own liking, as the segmented structure invites scribes to do.[161]

Despite **Roy**'s differences from **A**, both in its treatment of structural units of the text and in the linguistic context in which it places the *Manuel*, the features of textual apparatus are similar. **Roy** is provided with all of the features of textual apparatus we saw in **A**: paraph marks, rubricated titles for subsections, and marginal *notae*, such as those added to **A**, marking the *exempla*. However, appropriately given that the texts of **Roy** are written in the French of England, the *notae* marking *exempla* are also in that language and not in Latin. They read 'cunte' ('story' or 'account').[162] Titles are written in the French of England, such as 'ceo su*n*t les article<s>' ('these are the articles [of Faith]').[163] The manuscript is thus less Latinate than **A**. The choice of wording in the *notae* marking *exempla* may also be telling.[164] Whereas the word 'ex*emplu*m,' which the Harley scribe frequently adds to **A** suggests the Latin tradition of sermon *exempla* (and requires a minimal familiarity with Latin in order to expand the habitual abbreviation), 'cunte' does not automatically evoke a Latin tradition. We might take this aspect of **Roy**'s textual apparatus to indicate that the scribe perceived a difference between types of structural division within the text, such that the contents of catechistic tenets required Latin titles, but felt that the *exempla* represented a more entertaining and less scholarly aspect of the text.

Other features of **Roy** strengthen this impression that the mode of reading the scribe envisaged for his audience was less Latinate than that of **A**. In order to understand the ways in which **Roy** structures its readers' responses, we need to look to the work of Malcolm Parkes. Parkes, discussing the treatment of punctuation in

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161 Rearrangement of the *Manuel* text is not unusual. For discussion of the instablity of books of the *Manuel*, see Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 65-7. Taubman notes that, of fifteen manuscripts of the *Manuel* he designates 'long' versions, four including **Roy** do not contain this sermon in the main text: the others are Leeds, University Library, MS 1 (**L**); **Ar** and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Greaves 51 (**O**). He finds only one manuscript, **A**, which both includes the sermon and mentions it in the prologue, which indicates that only the scribe of **A** presented this section of the text as integral.

162 For example, see f. 4va, l. 35 or f. 15ra, l. 12.

163 See f. 5ra, in the margin at ll. 12-13.

164 I am grateful to Daniel Wakelin and Hanna Vorholt for this suggestion.

the manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*, identifies a scribal tradition of 'pointing' text for different audiences, whose effects can be studied when we have a large corpus of manuscripts of the same text at our disposal. Parkes explains that the *Mirror* manuscripts illustrate scribes' awareness of the importance of punctuation to readers' interpretations of text, and he notes that scribes 'acted as primary interpreters of a text for medieval readers'.[165] The same text could be divided into varying numbers of subsections conveying ideas either distinct from one another (separate *sententiae*), or implicitly related, depending upon the use of punctuation. In the late thirteenth-century *Manuel*, we might expect to find nothing so subtle as the punctuational strategies Parkes describes, for the text he refers to was written over a hundred years later. It is true that **Roy** relies on the simple *punctus*, typically used at the ends of lines. However, the paraph marks, so important a structural marker that their presence is mandated by the prologue, serve a function very similar to that Parkes describes. The paraph marks alternate in colour throughout this manuscript, the variation mitigating against eyeskip from one paraph to another and facilitating searches through the sections of the text. These paraph marks are elevated from simple place-markers (as they were in **A**), to a full system of punctuation.

The paraph marks of **Roy** vary in size, some extending over several lines, others taking up only one or two. This treatment of the paraphs in **Roy** is not unique: in several manuscripts across the corpus, the text is provided with hierarchies of longer and shorter paraph marks.[166] The longer paraph marks typically indicate the length of the syntactic unit to which they refer. So, when the scribe employs his lengthiest paraphs, there is usually a *punctus* to be found marking the end of the line at which the tail of the paraph finishes, and often a medial *punctus* indicating a smaller internal subdivision. For example, on f. 7rb, a paraph marks l. 8, and the following text, corresponding to ll. 1295-1302:

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[165] Parkes, 'Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*,' 56-7.

[166] See Nottingham, University Library, Wollaton MS LM/4 (**M**), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 99 (**U**); **O**, and Cambridge, University Library, MS Ee. 1. 20 (**E**).

Crere en nule man*er* deuez
K*e* peche mortel seit p*ar*donez
Sanz repentance *et* co*n*fessiu*n*
Kant o*d* prestre peot parler ho*m*
M*er*ci trouer nul ne poura.
Si en sa uie prier ne la vodra
De li ke ert mu*n*te le bla*n*c chiual
Cu*m* vu*n*t gaba*n*t le lechercheal .[167]

(‘Do not believe in any manner of God who would pardon mortal sins without repentance and confession, such as a man may make with his priest; no mercy shall he find. If he does not want to pray for it in his life, he will mount the white horse, as one who amuses himself in lechery.’)

The tail of the paraph extends beside these lines, ending just over the final line.[168] The paraph thus invites the reader, despite the medial *punctus* at l. 12, to treat the whole passage as a unit that will introduce the subsection coherently. The medial *punctus* is demoted to mark a more brief pause in the text, inviting readers to see the initial imperative statement as inextricably linked to the following illustration of the dangers of disobedience.

This use of the paraph marks creates a sense of hierarchy extending across the subsections of the text: some are introduced with shorter phrases, others with longer passages, inviting readers to devote careful attention to their contents, as if they are more important or complicated. So, for example, the passage in the prologue describing the use of paraphs is marked with a paraph extending for eight lines, covering exactly those lines which describe how those paraph marks are to be used.[169] This long paraph mark testifies to the importance of this section as a unit within the text. Occasionally, numbers written down the margin provide yet another signal to the reader to help him or her navigate through the subsections of the text.

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[167] Furnivall’s text reads ‘lecheral’ and the entry in the Anglo-Norman Dictionary under the headword ‘lecheral’ cites only the *Manuel*, so I assume ‘lechercheal’ is a slip for that word, to be translated as ‘lechery’. See entry under headword ‘lecheral’ in *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, gen. ed. William Rothwell (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1977-1992). Online edition, under revision since 2004, accessed on 07/12/13 at http://www.anglo-norman.net/.

[168] See also f. 26ra, ll. 15-23.

[169] The passage is found at **Roy**, f. 1ra, ll. 12-19. It corresponds to *Manuel*, ll. 71-78.

For example, see Figure 2.2, where in the right-hand margin the scribe writes 'De q*u*<a>tre noblei*s*/ Ke home au*er*a ex/ sun cors' (Of four virtues a man should have in his heart,' 5rb, at ll. 10-12).[170] This is followed by Roman numerals corresponding to the appropriate lines, at 5rb, l. 14, l. 16, l. 20 and l. 24.

This use of the paraph marks, often in conjunction with the *punctus*, sometimes augmented by marginalia, is well judged to help readers understand and interpret the text. These paraph marks separate the *Manuel* into small, manageable passages, and instruct readers not only heuristically but also performatively, showing them which lines are to be taken as subtitles or introductory passages to the rest of the text. This implies that the scribe expected his audience to require more detailed guidance than is provided in **A**, both in terms of performing the text (perhaps reading out loud), and in terms of studying its content, distinguishing between the different levels of significance within the pre-existing structure of sections and subsections. However, this detailed system of textual apparatus also reminds us that the scribe envisaged his audience as active, visual readers of the text, keen to make the subtle distinctions between sections, even if they were not familiar with and skilled in the mode of reading required.

The manuscript as a whole is coherent in its selection and presentation of texts. Dominated by the French of England, its textual apparatus provides careful signals to prompt the desired mode of reading, guiding readers through the structure of the text. Although the *Manuel* was written in the French of England more than a century before the *Mirror*, the scribe of **Roy** 'points' the text with a sophistication not dissimilar to that which Parkes associates with the Middle English *Mirror*. The pattern of similarities and differences between **A** and **Roy** suggests something interesting about the activities of broadly contemporary scribes, working on the same corpus of manuscripts and within a tradition of circumscribed textual apparatus, apparatus whose minimum requirements had been specified in the text itself and designed by its author. These were scribes capable of responding to the

[170] Figure 2.2 is **Roy**, f. 5r. The scribe has written 'ex' as a slip for 'en,' as can be seen from comparison with the main text of l. 10, which reads 'en cors auera' ('he should have in his heart').

author's demands, both explicit and implicit, of augmenting the features of textual apparatus specified in the prologue with extra material suited to their differing audiences' competencies. **Roy** reflects the needs of a readership comfortable with reading in the French of England, but new to this quasi-Latinate mode of *lectio* and new to the features of textual apparatus it required.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 99 (U)

The final manuscript I want to discuss is **U**, written sometime in the first half of the fourteenth century. It is a longer version of the *Manuel* than **Roy**, and in fact the longest version of the text and as long as **A**, with the standard core material on the creed, commandments, sins, sacrilege and the sacraments augmented by the sermon (which we saw was displaced in **Roy**), prayers, and a section on confession. However, the scope of the manuscript as an object is more modest: the text is written in a single column on the page, contrasting with the double columns of the larger compilations **A** and **Roy**. It contains only two texts, the *Manuel* and Grosseteste's *De Principio Creationes Mundi*, both in the French of England. In this context, the *Manuel* is the main text, taking up the first part of the manuscript, which was possibly prepared as a single-text volume before the *De Principio* was added.

The latest of the three manuscripts I discuss, it is also the most thickly filled with textual apparatus, some scribal, some of it apparently added by annotating hands. Many of the features we find in this manuscript are also found in **A** or **Roy**. **U** features the same distinctive elaboration of the paraph mark system to articulate the subsections and augment the minimal punctuation, which we saw in **Roy.**[171] Like **Roy**, these paraphs are in alternating red and blue, militating against eyeskip (Figure 2.3).[172] Their importance to readers is evident from the corrections: missing paraph

[171] See, for example, the paraph extending over four lines on f. 2v, ll. 33-36 or over five lines on f. 10r, ll. 32-36.

[172] Figure 2.3 shows **U**, f. 83r. There are paraphs at l. 18, l. 22, l. 26 and l. 32. The shortest has a tail extending only over one line; the longest extends from l. 32 down the margin to l. 34.

marks were added in brown to supplement the original programme.[173] The colour of the brown ink in which the missing paraphs were added is the same as that of a hand that adds in occasional corrections to the text, indicating that the text was carefully corrected after copying.[174] I do not think the correcting hand is scribal, so we can also liken this manuscript to **A**: written by an original scribe and corrected by a slightly later owner who had access to an exemplar.[175]

It is these corrections on which I wish to focus. They represent a stage of response to the text, not dissimilar to the additions of *notae* marking *exempla* in **A**, but differing from those in that the hand is not that of a scribe completing the text, but of a reader who did not participate in the copying process. An annotator of **U** added to the already frequent paraphs, and added manicules, invariably pointing to paraph marks or initials (Figure 2.3).[176] These manicules emphasise the pre-marked structure of the text, and this contrasts with the more usual role of manicules, that is, to draw attention to an otherwise *unmarked* passage of interest. This distinctive use of manicules is not unique to **U**.[177] It demonstrates that readers of the *Manuel* were reading the text in the selective, segmented fashion recommended in the prologue. This method of annotation also constitutes a visual response to the *Manuel* author's instructions that his text is to be held 'in the hand' ('en main'), that its readers should

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[173] See f. 27r, l. 20 and l. 32, or f. 29v, l. 2.

[174] See, for example, the missing line added at f. 27r, l. 21.

[175] For an example of this hand, see the correction to the right of f. 27r, l. 21. The corrector's graphs of **r**, **a** and **d** are noticeably different from those of the main scribe. The ink colour of the corrections matches that of the paraphs found at l. 20 and l. 32.

[176] Figure 2.3 shows **U**, f. 83r, with a manicule at l. 22, pointing to a paraph. See also See f. 10v, l. 8; f. 90r, l. 1; f. 91v, l. 11; f. 112r, l. 2.

[177] **B1** features frequent manicules, for example at f. 13rb, l. 13; f. 46ra, l. 15 or f. 72va, l. 2. These almost invariably point to paraph marks already in the text, although one substitutes for a missing paraph mark at the beginning of an *exemplum*, on f. 75ra, l. 19. The *exemplum* is not included in Furnivall's partial printed edition, but is attributed to St Augustine and relates to confession. London, British Library, MS Harley 4971 (**H1**) features manicules written (presumably by the limner himself) in the blue ink used for some initials, invariably pointing to paraph marks or initials. See f. 105rb, l. 4; f. 122va, l. 36; f. 122vc, l. 44; f. 124rb, l. 1. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fr. 14959 (**P**), frequently features manicules substituting for paraph marks, for example at at f. 11vb, l. 26; 12vb, l. 4, or 15ra, l. 10. At 58vb, l. 26, we find both a manicule and the word n*arrativ*a (not in the scribe's hand) doubly marking the *exemplum*, as in **U**.

be physically and visually in contact with the text, as if readers wished not only to follow the author's instructions but to demonstrate they had followed them. It is possible that the Middle English translator of the *Manuel*, whose source manuscript has not been securely identified, worked from a manuscript or manuscripts containing these manicules or knew of this tradition of readerly response to the text, prompting his translation of the title as *Handlyng Synne*.[178] These manicules indicate that conventions governing treatment of the *Manuel* manuscript pages were not limited to scribes, and that readers were marking their responses to the *Manuel* text.

This allows us to see **U** as a representing the stages of a dialogue between author (who mandates structural markers in the introduction), the scribe (whose textual apparatus functions as an inscribed interpretation of these authorial words) and the readers of **U**, who annotated the text in conventionalised response to both of these. The manicules suggest that readers of the *Manuel* continued the process we saw in **Roy**, that of distinguishing within the pre-marked sections and subsections of the text, and marking out some passages. The elaboration of this hierarchy of sections and subsections is highly complex, personalised by each stage of the process involving the 'pointing' of the *Manuel* text and the readers' further re-pointing the manuscripts. In marking out sections of special interest in this way, I would argue that annotators of *Manuel* manuscripts such as **U** were not simply providing themselves with a practical reminder of where to find a certain topic: they were also visibly expressing their sense of participation within this textual culture, imitating the practice of their scribes and learning from it.

We cannot be certain whether the scribes of all three of these manuscripts intended their textual apparatus to be decoded by lay readers lacking in Latin literacy. The use of Latin words (albeit simple ones such as 'exemplum') in **A**, combined with the performative qualities of the apparatus in all three manuscripts might indicate that these manuscripts were designed for a Latin-literate cleric to read aloud to his lay, non-Latinate audience. Yet, the same features of textual apparatus could also guide a reader to whom this mode of selective reading was not

[178] This title is significant to the Middle English author; he spends some 35 lines explaining its connotations. See *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 83-118.

second nature, as it would be for a highly educated cleric, while the simple Latin need not be a complete barrier to understanding.

In all three manuscripts, scribes or early readers augment the bare minimum of textual apparatus specified in the text with extra detail. The manuscripts facilitate the selective processes of reading and memorisation envisaged by the author, and simultaneously emphasise order and structure, locating readers' personal responses within a visual system that reminds them of the community of trained readers and scribes from which the *Manuel* originated. The textual apparatus thus reinforces the implications of the *Manuel*'s characterisation of its readers as a special and distinct group amongst readers of the French of England, a group whose members could use a special register of language and could decode text in such a way as to bring themselves into contact with a privileged community of educated penitents. In this context, the presence of annotative markers that display readers' conventionalised responses is the final readerly expression of belonging to that textual community.

The Readership of the *Manuel*

The rapid production of the *Manuel* manuscripts has been taken to suggest the text was promoted by local ecclesiastical authorities, but little of its early provenance, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, is known for certain. Aside from the piece of evidence mentioned above – the hand in **A** identified as that of the Harley scribe – only two other manuscripts can be associated with known individuals in the early years of their circulation.[179] The first is **Ph**, made for Joan de Tattershall, daughter of Sir Ralph FitzRanulph of Middleham in Yorkshire and wife of Robert Tattershall of Lincolnshire. Joan's location and status relate this *Manuel* manuscript to texts written in the French of England such as the *Miroir* and

[179] It is worth noting that Sullivan refers to **H1** and **Ph** as the 'only two' manuscripts with known lay owners in their early circulation; this indicative of his treatment of the evidence, for none of the clerical or monastic owners in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century can be identified by name at all. See Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 12.

Corset, written for the nearby Zouche lord and his wife, Alan and Aline.[180] A similarly aristocratic lay context is suggested by London, British Library MS Harley 337 (**Hf**), which contains several shields labelled in an early fourteenth-century hand.[181] This early fourteenth-century owner adds the relevant names: these include 'Sir Roger de Moltone,' whom Sullivan identifies with the man who asked Mannyng to translate the *Manuel*.[182] A similar, female, model of aristocratic patronage to that of Joan de Tattershall might explain the contents of York, Minster Library, MS 16. K. 7 (**Y)**, whose hagiographic texts Wogan-Browne associates particularly with such readers.[183]

The second manuscript containing names of very early owners is **H1**, which contains a Latin document of 1308 referring to a grant of land made to John de Aldevyhole and his wife Agnes by Simon de Repindon.[184] It is possible that either party might have kept a record of the document, but on balance it seems more likely that the manuscript belonged to John and Agnes, who would have greater need to retain proof of their ownership. The document suggests a similar kind of context to that indicated by the hand of the Harley scribe in **A**, one in which laypeople's vernacular reading-matter was closely connected to, and probably provided by, clerks literate in Latin.

The early ownership of the text by monastic orders is less well attested, although this may simply be due to monastic owners' lack of interest in declaring their ownership visibly. However, there are some clues. **Hf**, whose text of the *Manuel*

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180 See Bennett, 'A Book for a Noblewoman,' 163-182. For the identification of Aline and Alan la Zouche, see K. V. Sinclair, 'The Anglo-Norman Patrons of Robert the Chaplain and Robert of Gretham,' *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 27 (1992): 193-208.

181 See Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 103.

182 These names appear in **Hf** at f. 21r, ff. 18v-195 and f. 15v, and in **U** at f. 158v. See Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 103.

183 See Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Apple's Message: Some Post-Conquest Hagiographic Accounts of Textual Transmission,' in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. Alastair Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 39-54 (47).

184 See f. 128r.

was written *c*. 1314, is bound with a twelfth-century copy of the cartulary of the Benedictines of Canterbury, which may indicate its origins at that house.[185] Sullivan contends that the huge size and learned contents of **G**, copied by a single scribe, could probably not have been prepared outside a large monastic house at the beginning of the fourteenth century, which seems plausible.[186]

What we can reconstruct of *Manuel* manuscripts' circulation to the end of the fourteenth century shows still more lay owners, although the text circulated amongst monastic and clerical readers too. **H1** contains a record of the Earl of Stafford's expenses for the year 1355, copied by his clerk John Bromleye, and a safe conduct for Thomas Beauchamp (d. 1369) on the same folio.[187] In 1361 John Colyford of 'Glametun' – perhaps Galmington in Somerset – records his ownership of **Roy**.[188] The will of Joan Cobham, proved in 1370, records the bequest of 'unum librum vocatum Manuel Peche' ('a book called the *Manuel des Péchés*') to her daughter Joan de Grey.[189] An inventory of goods at Southwell Minster included 'unus liber qui vocatur Manuele peche' ('a book called *Manuel des Péchés*) in 1369; since a chantry at the Minster was founded by one William Waddington, it may be this manuscript had been at the Minster since Waddington's own day.[190] In 1368, the will of Simon de Bredon recorded Bredon's bequest of a *Manuel* manuscript to the Benedictine nuns

185 See f. 1r-11v.

186 Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 111.

187 See f. 27r and f. 33r.

188 The inscription reads: 'Iste liber est Iohannis Colyford de manu eiusdem scriptus apud Glametun anno domini millesimo trisentesimo sexagesimo primo' ('This book is John Colyford's – written in the hand of the same, at Glametun, in the year of our Lord 1361,' f. 172v). This date is certainly too late for Colyford to mean that he is the scribe of the manuscript. Sullivan suggests the identification of 'Glametun' as the modern-day village of Galmington in Somerset. See Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 116.

189 The will, proved 1370, is found here: John Wickham Flower, 'Notices of the Family of Cobham of Sterborough Castle, Lingfield, Surrey,' in *Surrey Archaeological Collections relating to the History and Antiquities of the County*, Vol. 2 (London: Lovell Reeve & Co., 1854), 115-194 (169-176).

190 Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 48-9; Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 99-101. For details of the chantry foundation see Sullivan, 'Author,' 155-7.

of Malling priory.[191] Finally, by the end of the fourteenth century, a copy of the *Manuel* was at either Oxford or Cambridge University, where a student records that he borrowed it from one of the loan-chests.[192] These details suggest that the *Manuel* acquired many aristocratic lay readers but shows, too, that it was certainly not of interest only to the 'lai' and non-Latinate. The pattern suggests it was a prestigious text, not beneath the interest of Latin-literate scholars, nor the notice of magnate families.

It is in the fifteenth century that ownership inscriptions in *Manuel* manuscripts provide us with the most full and interesting sense of the text's circulation. The inscriptions testifying to ownership of the *Manuel* from the end of the fourteenth century onwards are extensive, ranging from pen trials to formulaic *ex libris* inscriptions to deeply personal annotations.[193] This sustained late-medieval popularity is unacknowledged by scholars and did not give rise to surviving late-medieval copies of the text. Robert Lutton, commenting briefly on a single manuscript's presence in a late-medieval layman's library, makes the cautious suggestion that it might have been acquired more by 'accident' than deliberation, and he questions why its owners would have wanted to read the text given the existence

[191] See the bequest of 'Item entitled Manuel de Peche' ('Item called *Manuel des Péchés*'). Frederick Powicke, *The Medieval Books of Merton College* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 82-86 (84).

[192] London, British Library, MS Arundel 372 (**Af**), f. 4r.

[193] See **A**, f. 1*; **Af**, f. 4r; **C**, f. 174r, l. 20 and f. 178r; Cambridge, St John's College, MS F. 30 (**F**), f. 157r, ll. 20-21; **H1**, ff. 3r, 41v and 78r; **Hm**, f. 1r; **Roy**, i^{v}; Stonyhurst College, MS 27 (**S**); **U**, f. 138v and **Z**, f. 103r. For ownership inscriptions in **S** see Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, 177 n 34 and Laird, 'Manuscripts,' 119 n 74; for those in **Hm** see Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 48. Several more manuscripts contain no names, but are annotated in fifteenth-century hands. See **B1**, f. 104r; **E** contains a fifteenth-century table of contents, see Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 112; **G**, f. 329r; London, British Library, MS Harley 3860 (**Har**) and **P**, f. 64r. The flyleaves of **O** are early fifteenth-century documents. **M** contains no internal evidence of the date at which it came into the hands of the Willoughby family, but Lutton concludes that 'given the pattern of the family's book acquisitions,' it was probably acquired between 1460 and 1550. See Lutton, 'Willougbys' Religious Books,' 68. Barratt notes the record of a copy, now lost, in the inventory of the Cistercians of Meaux in 1396. See Barratt, 'Spiritual Writings,' 354. I have been unable to examine Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Palatinus Latinus 1970 (**V**); **Ph** and **L**, but the evidence already indicates that well over half of the extant manuscripts were being annotated and read in this period.

of the more 'accessible' early fourteenth-century Middle English translation, and of other Middle English treatments of the same subject-matter.[194]

The late-medieval interest in the *Manuel* is restricted to the original manuscripts: none survive from after *c*. 1350 and there is no evidence any were made.[195] For lay readers, we can look to the East Midlands, the location of William Waddington's family. It is here that Joan de Tattershall and her husband had their lands in the thirteenth century, in what is modern-day Lincolnshire, and here that a copy was recorded in the inventory at Southwell Minster, about forty miles away across the border in Nottinghamshire, in 1369.[196] By 1370, the de Grey family – who intermarried with the Tattershalls – had a copy, too. Joan's husband Henry de Grey was lord of Codnor, less than twenty miles from Southwell. The network of readers in this area, radiating out from Codnor, was a community brought together not only by geography, but also by intermarriage and ties of loyalty to lords, interactions during daily business such as the witnessing of documents, and shared tastes in reading-matter.

The next copy of the *Manuel* we find in this area is a surviving manuscript, **U**. This manuscript bears an inscription, dated 1454, recording that Dame Margaret Cokefeld gave the book 'wyth crystes blessyng and amene,' ('with Christ's blessing and mine') to one Margaret Byngham.[197] Byngham was the wife of Hugh Willoughby (d. 1448), while Margaret Cokefeld was Hugh's sister-in-law through his first wife, and an eager book-collector who acquired books from local bibliophile Thomas Chaworth.[198] She may be related to the Symon de Kokfeld whose name is written

194 Lutton, 'Willoughbys' Religious Books,' 69. See Wogan-Browne, 'Women and Reading,' 251-252, for readers' preferences for the French of England.

195 Laird dated **Hm** and **L** to *c*. 1350 or later, but subsequent scholarship argues for the first half of the fourteenth century. See Laird, 'Manuscripts,' 109-110 and Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 66-67.

196 Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 101.

197 f. 138v.

198 See Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'The History of a Family Collection,' in *Wollaton Manuscripts* eds. Hanna and Turville-Petre, 3-19; Lutton, 'Willoughbys' Religious Books,' 77.

underneath his shield in an early fourteenth-century hand in **Hf**.[199] Margaret Byngham, the recipient of Cokefeld's copy of the *Manuel*, was Hugh Willoughby's second wife: by 1454, the date of the inscription, she was remarried to Richard Byngham, a lawyer whose family connections linked bibliophiles in the de Grey affinity with Cambridge University and with London.

The gift Margaret Cokefeld gave to Margaret Byngham was not a surprising choice: the Willoughby family, to which both women were related by marriage, may, by 1454, have already obtained **M**. By the time of Margaret Byngham's granddaughter, Sanchia Willougby, it was almost certainly in the family library. Sanchia was married to one John Strelley, from the Nottinghamshire village of Linby. The late fifteenth-century *ex libris* 'Iste liber constat Johanni Strelley de Lyndeby' ('This book belongs to John Strelley of Linby') is found in **F** (f. 157rb, ll. 20-21). The Strelley family were distantly connected to that of another fifteenth-century *Manuel* owner, Walter Hungerford (d. 1449) who owned **Roy**, and whose great-granddaughter married Nicholas Strelley.[200] Strelley, Linby, Wollaton where the Willougby family lived, Bingham and Nuttall where the Cokefeld family lived, were none of them more than twenty miles from Codnor.

The next location in which we find late-medieval readers of the *Manuel* is London, the acknowledged centre of the fifteenth-century book trade. The name of John Pye appears in York, Minster Library, MS 16. K. 13 (**Z**).[201] He was a prominent stationer, who has been identified as the owner of **S**, and he was active in London between 1433 and 1463.[202] He was a known collector and seller of secondhand religious manuscripts, described in the contemporary record as 'the King's stacioner

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[199] f. 15v, top margin.

[200] The *ex libris* in **Roy** reads 'Iste liber constant Walteron Hungerford' ('This Book belongs to Walter Hungerford,' f. iv^{r}).

[201] For the identification of Pye as the owner, see C. Paul Christianson, 'Evidence for the Study of London's Late Medieval Manuscript-Book Trade,' in *Book Production and Publishing*, eds. Griffiths and Pearsall, 107 n 42. The inscription reads 'Joannes Pye' (f. 103r). See Laird, 'Manuscripts,' 119 n. 74.

[202] Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 106-107.

of London'.[203] The content of the *Manuel* perfectly fits Pye's interests in secondhand copies of religious texts, and his association with two *Manuel* manuscripts indicates that the *Manuel* was circulating at the forefront of England's book trade. A third manuscript associated with London readers is **A**, which bears an ownership inscription on f. 1*, reading 'Iste liber constat John Clerk grocero apothecario regis Edwarde quarti post conquestum' ('this book belongs to John Clerk, grocer and apothecary to King Edward, the fourth after the conquest'). Clerk was a London man, warden of the Company of Grocers in 1467 and 1475. He may have had some connection with the Stationers' Company: a John Clerk was associated with the stationer and notary William Chaunt in a document of 1458.[204] In 1444, Clerk's colleague, the grocer John Walden, had brought a complaint against the same John Pye who owned **S** and **Z.**[205] Another older colleague, the doctor John Somerset, who was doctor to King Henry VI just as Clerk was apothecary to Edward IV, also had links to the London book trade, selling his tenement at Le Petre et Poule in Paternoster Row to Peter Bylton, an important contemporary of Pye who, like Pye, appears to have had a special interest in older books.[206]

Two final *Manuel* manuscripts provide us with a third possible satellite location for readers, linked to both London and to readers of the East Midlands. In 1394, a student called William borrowed the *Manuel* manuscript **Af** from the university loan-chest of books at either Oxford or Cambridge, funded by Walter Neel, a wealthy London businessman.[207] The *Manuel* was not beneath the notice of more prestigious members of Cambridge University: in 1447 Hugh Damlett, master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, left his *ex libris* in the *Manuel* manuscript **S**, which was

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203 For his dates and reputation as a secondhand bookseller, see Christianson, 'London's Late Medieval Manuscript-Book Trade,' 101.

204 Christianson, 'London's late medieval manuscript-book trade,' 104 n. 12.

205 ibid.

206 C. Paul Christianson, 'The Rise of London's Book-trade,' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*. Vol. 3, eds. Lotte Hellinga and Joseph Burney Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127-147 (133).

207 **Af**, f. 4r.

to become the property of John Pye later in the century.[208] We do not know how or why he became interested in the *Manuel*, but a copy might have been introduced to the college collections by a previous master of Pembroke, one Thomas de Byngham, rector of Bingham in the East Midlands from 1369 to 1391.[209]

The circulation of the *Manuel* in late-medieval England reveals what may seem to be surprising links between a thirteenth-century text and the cutting edge of the fifteenth-century book trade, between rural families in the East Midlands and powerful London book traders, between educators responsible for the early development of humanism in England and manuscripts made at a time when the simplest Latin tools of textual apparatus needed to be glossed for lay readers. The villages mentioned in connection with the core network of fifteenth-century *Manuel* readers – Codnor, Wollaton, Strelley, Linby, even Bingham which is now a town – are hardly urban centres, nor were they then. They did, however, produce figures who loom large in studies of fifteenth-century book culture and whose associations are not with the provincial past but with the cosmopolitan future, with humanist books and ideas. Circling the edges of the *Manuel*'s late-medieval readership are important figures in fifteenth century reading and educational culture. Thomas Byngham was master of Pembroke College where Hugh Damlett was to read his copy of the *Manuel*. William Byngham, uncle to Richard whose wife Margaret owned **U**, was a famous London rector, friend of Common Clerk John Carpenter, and the founder of Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1437. John Neel was a member of an East Midlands family, later master of St Thomas's hospital in London and friend of William Byngham, and he was also a mentor to the nephew of London stationer John Pye, who owned two *Manuel* manuscripts.[210] An inscription recording his gift (or loan, as it was

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208 See Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, 78; 177, n. 34.

209 A. H. Lloyd, *The Early History of Christ's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934). Reprinted Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, 17-18.

210 See Anne Sutton, 'The Hospital of St Thomas of Acre of London: The Search for Patronage, Liturgical Improvement, and a School, under Master John Neel, 1420-62,' in *The Late Medieval English College and its Context*, eds. Clive Burgess and Martin Heale (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 199-229 (220-221). In addition to her evidence, we know Neel was a close associate of the Byngham family. For example, in 1447 Neel leased land to William's nephew Richard Byngham and in the same

subsequently returned) of a book to the house of Bonshommes at Ashridge, who were instrumental in the dissemination of the *Manuel*'s Middle English translation, may also indicate his interests in the text.[211] These men's origins were in the East Midlands context where the *Manuel* had been circulating the longest, but their later connections were to the London book trade, to pioneers of education and to the universities.

Once we place the *Manuel* in this context, we can begin to understand why the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts with their painstakingly specialised textual apparatus might have been popular with fifteenth-century readers. The *Manuel*'s late-medieval circulation challenges preconceptions about the text – it evidently did have strong fifteenth-century appeal – and about the kinds of geographic locations and linguistic mediums in which dynamic textual communities could take root. The opportunities for further copying of the *Manuel* were there, with exemplars circulating in the most promising locations, and with book collectors in the least commercial reaches of the network of readers demonstrably capable of acquiring and updating old texts and manuscripts.[212] Plainly, however, the owners valued *Manuel* manuscripts not only for the text they contained, but also for their antiquity.

That we can trace the late-medieval owners of the thirteenth and early fourteenth-century manuscripts of *Manuel* so easily is due to their keenness to record their book use, to write *ex libris* notes, to name their books in wills and

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year he was named an executor of the will of one Nicholas Conyngston together with Richard and William Byngham. See *The National Archive*s BCM/H/1/8/1 and *The National Archives*, CP 40/745, rot. 333. I have not been able to tell for certain whether John was related to the Londoner Walter Neel, who founded the loan-chest in which **Af** was located in 1394, but the name raises the possibility.

211 The manuscript in question is London, British Library, MS Royal 15. C. 16. See H. C. Schulz, 'The Monastic Library and Scriptorium at Ashridge,' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 1 (1938): 305-311 (306).

212 Jean-Pascal Pouzet, 'Book Production outside Commercial Contexts,' in *The Production of Books in England*, eds. Gillespie and Wakelin, 212-238 (221). He refers to a rector in Nether Broughton on the Nottinghamshire border, copying for the Findern family. See also George Keiser, referring to Robert Thornton's comparable work in 'Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in Some Late-Medieval English Texts,' in *New Science out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, eds. Richard Beadle and Alan John Piper (Aldershot: The Scolar Press, 1995), 207-226 (208 and 226 n. 3).

dedications, and to communicate with other book owners who did likewise. Visible display was an essential aspect of their book ownership. Instead of interpreting their ownership of thirteenth and early fourteenth-century *Manuel* manuscripts as incidental to the true picture of fifteenth-century reading, we might compare them to the emerging humanists who prized the visual qualities of archaic scripts.[213] *Manuel* manuscripts did not survive through the late medieval period simply because they lay on medieval library shelves gathering dust, in the monasteries or castles of their original thirteenth and early fourteenth-century owners. The *Manuel*'s text and manuscripts invite readers to identify with a textual culture in which readers' responses were constantly solicited, where simple catechistic material gives rise to a textual community conscious of its capacity to interpret the visual contents of the manuscript page. As such, the text played a crucial role in fostering and sustaining thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth-century textual communities reading the French of England.

In a culture where Middle English books were readily available – far more so than in the thirteenth century, when the *Manuel* was written – these readers still preferred to read the French of England. However, the late-medieval ownership inscriptions in *Manuel* manuscripts were not written in the French of England. Several manuscripts feature conventional Latin formulae: for example, versions of the phrase 'iste liber constat …' appear in fifteenth-century hands in **A** (for John Clark), **F** (for John Strelley), **H1** (for John Norton) and **Roy** (for Walter Hungerford). It is possible that all of these man were laymen, raising interesting questions about the shift in perceptions of Latin since the *Manuel* author's confident assumption the

[213] It is worth noting that the famous bibliophile and humanist patron Humphrey Duke of Gloucester owned five manuscripts in French and one in the French of England written between *c*. 1260 and *c*. 1350. They are Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9627-8 (Flanders, French romances, second half of the thirteenth century); London, British Library, MS Royal 19. A. 20 (*Chronique de France*, France, first half of the fourteenth century); Los Angeles, Getty Museum, MS Ludwig 15. 4 (Bestiary, France, end of the thirteenth century); Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 12583 (*Le Roman de Renart*, France?, thirteenth century), and Clitheroe, Stonyhurst College, MS 24 (Henry, duke of Lancaster, *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, England, 1354). Also of note is Duke Humphrey's fifteenth-century copy of a text very similar in content to the *Manuel*, the *Somme le Roi* (Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 570). See David Rundle, 'The Library of Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester.' Research made available online at *Bonae Literae* by David Rundle. Accessed on 29/11/13 at http://bonaelitterae.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/humfrey-manuscript-list-0910.pdf.

language was inaccessible to 'lai gent' ('laymen). In **U**, even Latin – which has the sanction of convention and of its presence in the textual apparatus of many *Manuel* manuscripts – is avoided. The highly personal dedication of the book by one owner to another is written in Middle English. As this dedication reminds us, the late-medieval readers of the *Manuel* did not necessarily read manuscripts written in the French of England because the language was the most accessible to them.

The appeal of these *Manuel* manuscripts lay in their age, at least as much as in their language: they belonged, visibly, to an older book culture. The cachet these manuscripts had amongst their fifteenth-century East Midlands owners may also have been social. Families like the Bynghams and Willoughbys were increasingly successful members of the minor gentry; their social status was rather lower, and of more recent origins, than that of earlier patrons such as Joan de Tattershall. Finally, it is important to note that this interest in thirteenth and early fourteenth-century manuscripts written in the French of England is a regional issue: the *Manuel* readers in the East Midlands were unmatched in number by readers in any other location. As we will see in the next chapter, the situation in the West Midlands appears to be very different, with copies of the *Manuel* there superseded by Middle English translations and by newer manuscripts visibly promoting the use of Middle English. It would seem that the East Midlands retained a critical mass of readers interested in the French of England. This gave the community its distinctive linguistic identity, as readers circulated manuscripts written in the French of England and reliant on Latin models of *lectio*, even as, for some of them, Middle English and Latin were the languages in which they recorded their book ownership.

Conclusion

The manuscripts of the *Manuel* help us to reconstruct a series of reading cultures dating from *c*. 1260 to the late fifteenth century. The French of England functions as a conduit for the transmission of Latin modes of reading outside the narrow culture of Latin-literate clerical and monastic (and mostly male) readers. The meticulous and detailed descriptions of decoding of textual apparatus we find in the *Manuel* and in contemporary works of *pastoralia* written in the French of England indicate that the audiences these texts sought were new to these modes of reading, yet they also serve to inculcate in these readers a sense of their ground-breaking roles as readers. In the manuscripts themselves, we see this rhetoric skilfully reinforced by the textual apparatus, which facilitates a mode of reading not dissimilar to the selective Latinate *lectio* from which the author derives his structure. The treatment of textual apparatus we see in the corpus, and the use of features of *ordinatio* to 'point' the same text for readerships of differing competencies, foreshadow the better-known scribal activities associated with later Middle English texts. The later circulation of the *Manuel* in the fifteenth century is important, proving the seldom-acknowledged popularity of the text. However, it also demonstrates to us that the *Manuel* was popular – and its representation of a mode of religious reading in the French of England was popular – in large part because both were associated with the past, rooted in the aristocratic culture of the thirteenth century.

<u>Chapter Three: Visualising Middle English Reading in *Handlyng Synne*</u>

Robert Mannyng's Middle English *Handlyng Synne*, translated from the French of England of the *Manuel*, is known for its antagonistic distinction of Middle English reading culture from the reading culture Mannyng associates with the language of his source.[214] This antagonism is echoed by many of Mannyng's contemporaries and contributes to a picture of the two languages that has influenced much modern scholarship.[215] Post-medieval scholars and medieval writers, including Mannyng, often represent Middle English as the language of greatest accessibility.[216] In the previous chapters, we have seen how texts written in Latin and in the French of England shaped the experiences of generations of medieval book users, continuing to engage readers into the later Middle Ages. In this chapter, I explore not only Mannyng's rhetorical positioning of Middle English within the trilingual culture of fourteenth-century England, but also the ways in which his text and its extant manuscripts treat Latin and the French of England. Finally, by analysing this text and its manuscripts, I explore the ways in which the paradigm of these three languages as distinct and hierarchically related is exploited by scribes copying the 'Middle English' manuscript page.

Handlyng Synne and Middle English Pastoral Writing

214 All quotations are from Sullen's edition of *Handlyng Synne* unless otherwise stated.

215 See John Thompson, 'The *Cursor Mundi*, the "Inglis tong," and "Romance,"' in *Readings in Medieval English Romance* ed. Carol Meale (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 99-120; Anne Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of Narrative* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 21-60; Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 47-56; Wogan-Browne *et al*., 'Authorizing Text and Writer,' in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, 1-24.

216 For discussion of medieval authors' characterisations, see Somerset and Watson, 'Preface,' ix-xiii. For post-medieval scholarship, see Turville-Petre's characterisation of Mannyng's decision whether to write in Middle English or in the French of England as a straight choice between addressing 'the ruled' or 'the ruler': Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Politics and Poetry in the Early Fourteenth Century: The Case of Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle*,' *The Review of English Studies* 39 (1988): 1-28 (1).

Handlyng Synne is one of three Middle English translations of the *Manuel des Péchés*.[217] The prologue to the text offers an unusually detailed account of its author's background, further augmented in his other known work, a Middle English version of the *Chronicle of England*, also translated from the French of England.[218] It is from these sources that we know his name: in *Handlyng Synne* he announces himself as 'Robert of Brunne,' and in the *Chronicle* he refers to himself as Robert Mannyng.[219] The toponymic 'Brunne' has usually been taken to refer to Bourne in Lincolnshire, although Nunburnholme in Yorkshire (then called Brunne) has also been suggested.[220] Evidently, wherever he grew up, Mannyng was living and working in Lincolnshire when he translated the text, for he dedicates his work to

> … alle crystyn men vndyr sunne,
> And to gode men of brunne,
> And specyaly alle be name:
> Þe felaushepe of symprynghame.
>
> ('… all Christian men under the sun,/ and to good men of Bourne,/ and especially, all by name,/ of the fellowship of Sempringham.' ll. 57-60)

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217 The others are the late fourteenth-century *Of Shrifte and Penance*, surviving in only one manuscript, and the fifteenth-century *Instructions to His Son* by Peter Idley, surviving in seven. See Klaus Bitterling, ed., *Of Shrifte and Penance: The Middle English Prose Translation of "Le manuel des péchés"* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998) and Charlotte D'Evelyn, ed., *Peter Idley's Instructions to His Son* (London: H. Milford, 1935).

218 For discussion of Mannyng's biographical details, see Sullens, 'Introduction to the *Chronicle*,' in *Chronicle* ed. Sullens, 1-76 (13-22). This is more up-to-date than the information in her edition of *Handlyng Synne*. See also Andrew Taubman, 'New Biographical Notes on Robert Mannyng of Brunne,' *Notes and Queries* NS 56 (2009): 197-201; Matthew Sullivan, 'Biographical Notes on Robert Mannyng of Brunne and Peter Idley, the adaptor of Robert Mannyng's "Handlyng Synne,"' *Notes and Queries* NS 41 (1998): 302-304; Ruth Crosby, 'Robert Mannyng of Brunne: A New Biography,' *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 57 (1942): 15-28.

219 *Chronicle*, 1: l. 4.

220 Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 52.

The Gilbertine fellowship at Sempringham in Lincolnshire was a double house of monks and nuns, the Mother House of the Order.[221] It attracted aristocratic members, and would have been a linguistically rich environment, with people who, like Mannyng, spoke in Latin, the French of England, and Middle English. As the only English-founded monastic Order, the Gilbertines ruled that its members speak in English for the benefit of those who could not speak Latin, and therefore English and Latin were the primary languages of Sempringham.[222] As we saw in the previous chapter, the *Manuel* retained an active audience in the East Midlands well into the fifteenth century and production of manuscripts was certainly not on the wane during the period in which Mannyng made his translation. It seems probable Mannyng intended to exploit this local popularity, and simultaneously to promote Middle English, the primary vernacular of the Gilbertine Order.

His translation of the *Manuel*, with its structure of catechistic topics punctuated by illustrative *exempla*, retains the organising principle of the original.[223] The Middle English text is organised into five main sections, on the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the sin of Sacrilege, the Seven Sacraments, and the practice of Shrift.[224] Mannyng made omissions and additions to his original, adding seven entirely new *exempla*, a number of digressive passages, and almost doubling the section on the Sacrament of the Altar.[225] His changes indicate that he knew the *Manuel*'s original Latin sources well, for he adds several minor details not

221 See Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order,* c*. 1130*-c*. 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

222 ibid., 119–120. See also Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988).

223 The extent and implications of Mannyng's changes to the *Manuel* have been much discussed. For the most recent view, which stresses the similarities between the two texts, see Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 49-50, 64-6. See also Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 1-12, 126-137, 158-173; Fritz Kemmler, *'Exempla' in Context: A Historical and Critical Study of Robert Mannyng of Brunne's* Handlyng Synne (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1984), 10-15.

224 For discussion of the differences, see Durant Robertson, Jr, 'The Cultural Tradition of *Handlyng Synne*,' *Speculum* 22 (1947): 162-185 (162).

225 Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 126; Jennifer Garrison, 'Mediated Piety: Eucharistic Theology and Lay Devotion in Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*,' *Speculum* 85 (2010): 894-922.

found in *Manuel* manuscripts.[226] He is fond of giving dialogue to the characters in his *exempla*, introducing a new structural element to the text that is rarely found in the *Manuel*.[227] Mannyng's alterations to the *Manuel* are, then, a mixture of the scholarly and the digressive or entertaining. Their cumulative result is long, rambling, often repetitive subsections that contrast with the small, manageable and discrete subsections of the *Manuel*.

These changes have been taken, in combination with Mannyng's choice of the 'accessible' vernacular of Middle English, to imply that the text was intended to invite a less intellectual and studious response than the *Manuel*.[228] If we accept Richard and Mary Rouse's interpretation of *distinctiones*, which I discussed in the previous chapter and which stresses the importance of 'units … small enough to serve for reference purposes,' then it follows that the structure of *Handlyng Synne* is moving away from its ultimate Latin model, and diversifying from the mode of reading that Latin model facilitates.[229] Joyce Coleman puts forward the theory that *Handlyng Synne*'s main intended audience was one of listeners who would have heard portions of the text read aloud piecemeal, distanced from the manuscript page that was so important for shaping readers' responses to the *Manuel*.[230] Older scholarship echoes this, interpreting *Handlyng Synne* as less 'dull' and 'dry' than its source, intended for listeners who were unable, or disinclined, to read.[231] In this interpretation of the text, the Latinity Mannyng displays is understood as communication exclusively

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226 For analysis of Mannyng's alterations to the *Manuel* and his use of the Latin sources, see Kemmler, '*Exempla' in Context*, 93-121.

227 Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 9.

228 Kemmler, '*Exempla*' *in Context*, xxii, xiii–xvii.

229 See Richard and Mary Rouse, '*Statim invenire*,' 201-225.

230 Joyce Coleman, 'Handling Pilgrims: Robert Mannyng and the Gilbertine Cult,' *Philological Quarterly* 81 (2002): 311-317.

231 Sullens, 'Introduction,' xv; Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 9 and 126.

addressed to the clerical mediators of the manuscripts, rather than the lay listeners.[232]

The internal evidence of *Handlyng Synne* provides clues as to the mode or modes of response Mannyng envisaged from his Middle English readership. The initial picture is one of oral culture, of an audience who would prefer to listen to 'talys & rymys' which are performed '[y]n gamys, yn festys, & at þe ale' ('tales and rhymes … in games, in feasts, and at the ale,' ll. 46-47). Throughout the text, however, Mannyng subtly but steadily denigrates oral culture, including several *exempla* warning against spoken charms and carols, against unguarded speech and oaths.[233] He gives a more positive impression of another form of non-written communication, that is, the experience of witnessing signs and miracles. Several *exempla* describe vividly visual miracles, such as the soul of a forgiven man being made visible as a dove entering his mouth, the flaying of a thief's flesh to the bone as a symbol of his wrongdoing, and the experience of a priest who becomes able to see his congregation's sins and virtues on their faces during the Mass.[234] The dramatic and revelatory aspects of these *exempla*, with their emphasis on the state of the soul made visible in the body, convey Mannyng's sense of the authority and eloquence of witnessed miracles, and might also be said to foster the expectation that readers will seek to decode visual symbols. This leads us to consider the final mode of response Mannyng invites: focus on the written page itself.

The frame of reference to written culture in *Handlyng Synne* is extensive. So, for example, Mannyng exploits the trope of sacramental covenant as a legal charter, explaining 'bapteme ys charter of ryght' ('baptism is a charter of rights,' l. 9817).[235] He describes the punishment of two women who interrupt the mass, and whose

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232 The most recent analysis is by Kate Greenspan, 'Lessons for the Priest, Lessons for the People: Robert Mannyng of Brunne's Audiences for *Handlyng Synne*,' *Essays in Medieval Studies* 21 (2005): 109–121.

233 For example, see Mannyng's *exempla* against witches' charms (ll. 499-562), against oaths (ll. 689-760) and against carol-singing during Mass (ll. 8940-9249).

234 These *exempla* are found at *Handlyng Synne* ll. 171-328; ll. 2221-2352; ll. 10165-10256.

235 See Spalding, *The Middle English Charters of Christ*, xl-xlii.

words of gossip are secretly recorded by 'a fende/ Wyþ penne & parchemen yn hende' ('a devil,/ with a pen and parchment in his hands,' ll. 9284-9285). As Michael Clanchy has observed, it is Mannyng who first imagines this demon as a scribe, and therefore a member of a manuscript culture.[236] The same image is used in one of the *exempla* Mannyng translates from the *Manuel*, which describes a man who sees angels and demons bringing books, with his sins and virtues, as he lies in his deathbed.[237]

The importance of direct contact with the manuscript book is reinforced by Mannyng's instructions to his readers. In *Handlyng Synne* as in the *Manuel*, it is evident that the audience were expected to be able to study their manuscript at length, repeating the process of selecting passages and pages from which to begin. Mannyng warns:

> Þou mayst nat, with onys redyng,
> knowe þe soþe of euery þyng.
> Handyl, hyt behoueþ, oft syþys
> To many maner synnes hyt wryþys.
>
> ('You may not, with a single reading,/ know the truth of everything./ It behoves you to handle it many times:/ it relates to many kinds of sins.' ll. 127-130).

Mannyng does not translate his source's precise references to details of *ordinatio*. He replaces that passage with a subtly different instruction:

> Whedyr outys þou wylt opone þe boke,
> Þou shalt fynde begynnynge on to loke.
>
> ('Wherever you choose to open the book,/ you will find a starting-point at which to look.' ll. 121-122)

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236 Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 189-190. See also John Ganim, 'The Devil's Writing Lesson,' in *Oral Poetics in Middle English Poetry*, eds. Mark Amodio and Sarah Gray Miller (New York: Routledge, 1994), 109-123.

237 See ll. 4365-4514.

The mode of reading by 'handlyng' the manuscript does not preclude some analytical cross-referencing of its contents, albeit presented as an *ad hoc* activity Mannyng chooses to invite at certain points, rather than a constant possibility for a reader. So, for example, in his warnings against receiving the Eucharist in a state of sin, Mannyng observes in passing 'Y touched langer of þys outrage,/ Whan y spak of sacrylage' ('I touched on this outrage at more length,/ when I spoke of sacrilege,' ll. 10281-10282). The word 'sacrylage' refers to one of the five main sections of the text, and so it provides both a general sense of the context in which readers may already have met the idea, and the subsection of the manuscript in which more details could be found. Similarly, when Mannyng discusses the fifth sacrament, he refers back to the first main section of the text as a whole: 'yn þe ten comaundemens,/ Y wene y touched of þys' ('In the "Ten Commandments"/ I think I touched on this,' ll. 11155-11156). These references are typical of Mannyng's habit of referring readers back to materials found elsewhere in the text, references that imply he expected an audience able to keep previous material in mind or to search though the pages to find it.

These instructions, the relaxed and rambling structure of *Handlyng Synne*, and Mannyng's acknowledgement of his audiences' extra-textual modes of religious response, combine to distance *Handlyng Synne* from the orderly, visually guided model of *lectio* set out in the *Manuel*. The changes are not large or dramatic and the two texts are substantially similar, but the difference of emphasis invites us to question what difference translation into Middle English makes. This leads us to consider Mannyng's rhetoric of 'English' writing. From the outset, Mannyng defines his audience in terms of their linguistic requirements: 'For lewed men y vndyr toke/ On englyssh tonge to make þys boke' ('For uneducated [or lay] men I undertook,/ to make this book in the English language,' ll. 43-44). Its purpose, according to his prologue, was 'to shame þe fende & shewe oure synne' ('to shame the devil and reveal our sins,' l. 4) and to 'clense' the soul with 'shryfte of mouþe' ('oral confession,' l. 98). This simple justification echoes that of the *Manuel*, which declares itself designed for the penitential education of 'lai gent' ('lay men'). However, Mannyng contrasts his primary audience, 'lewed' 'englyssh' readers, ordinary 'men,' to 'clerkes' who speak 'frenshe'. In the first discussion of the readerships of French and English, Mannyng explains that 'men' call his book 'handlyng synne' (l. 80) in 'englyssh tonge' (l. 78), but 'Yn frenshe þer a clerk hyt sees,/ He clepyþ hyt manuel de pecchees' ('When a cleric sees it in French,/ he calls it *Manuel des Péchés*,' ll. 81-82).

Mannyng repeatedly presents the French of England as the language of doctrine and religious practice, the language the clergy use to discuss these matters. He begins the section on sacrilege by explaining the title, 'Sacrylege – frenshe hyt ys - / Menyng of mysdede or mys' ('"Sacrilege" – it is French – / meaning a misdeed or crime,' ll. 8599-8600). Similarly, he notes that the seventh sacrament is what 'clerkes calle … oynement/ On englys hyt ys anelyng' ('clerics call … "anointing,"/ in English, it is "anelyng,"' ll. 11240-11241). The English word 'anelyng' does indeed mean 'anointing,' but the phrasing aligns the word whose origins are in the French of England, 'oynement,' with 'clerkes' and opposes these terms to the 'englys' word. He explains that 'bapteme' (from the French of England) is 'crystenynge … on englys oure spekyng' ('christening … in English, our language,' ll. 9503-9504). This rhetoric distances the French of England from the readers Mannyng addresses and associates it with clerics and with religious learning, with clerisy.

Mannyng's rhetorical repositioning of the French of England is far from unique in Middle English pastoral texts written in the early fourteenth century. The author of the *Cursor Mundi* asks what is written for the benefit of the reader who 'na frankis can' ('knows no French').[238] The author of the *Northern Homily Cycle* declares that his Middle English audience have greater need of his text than 'klerkes that in thair mirour lokes,' ('clerks who look at their *Mirror*') and the word 'mirour' refers to his source, written in the French of England, Robert of Gretham's *Miroir des Evangelies*.[239] These authors construct a space for their translations, explaining – or

[238] Richard Morris, ed., *Cursor Mundi (The Cursor o the World): A Northumbrian Poem of the XIVth century,* EETS OS, 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 101. 3 volumes in 7 parts. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1874-92). I: 22 (l. 240).

[239] See Thompson, ed., *Northern Homily Cycle,* 67.

perhaps positing – that there was a need and an audience for Middle English versions texts that already existed in the French of England.

Mannyng's characterisation of a devernacularised register of the French of England calls into question the status and the function of Latin. Mannyng draws heavily on Latin sources, notably the *Vitas Patrum* and the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, and his citations of these texts' titles are often in Latin.[240] Yet it is the references to the Bible that are the most telling and consistent. Mannyng's references to the Bible indicate that this book was familiar to his Middle English readership, both as an object and as a source of religious material. He uses it as a convenient example of a large codex in his *exemplum* of the man whose sins are presented to him in books and visualising a 'moche boke … So gret … and so orryble/ Þer yn was more þan yn a byble' ('a large book … so big … and so awe-inspiring/ there was more in it than in a Bible,' ll. 4471-4474). The biblical *exemplum* 'syre Ely' is one of those Mannyng adds to the *Manuel*'s original selection of tales.[241] Mannyng also refers to biblical passages, using citation conventions that are precise. He makes no association of the Bible with restricted clerical readership, and does not describe the text in terms of its language at all. His references are repeated, and addressed to a general readership: 'Yn þe byble hyt telþ þat toucheþ swych þynges/ Yn þe holy boke of kynges' ('In the Bible it tells of that which relates to these things,/ in the holy book of *Kings*,' ll. 4925-4926), 'Yn þe byble men rede þys/ Yn þe ferst boke of Genesys' ('In the Bible men read this,/ in the first book of *Genesis*,' ll. 435-436), or 'Yn þe byble *men* mowe hyt se/ Yn þe story of Iosue' ('In the Bible men may see it,/ in the story of Joshua,' ll. 11379-11380). It is noteworthy that, whereas Mannyng refers to most of his Latin sources in Latin – perhaps reminding non-Latinate readers that the textual culture is beyond their linguistic capabilities – he refers to the Bible in Middle English, as if it contained texts to which his readers would have ready access.

This implication is reinforced by Mannyng's translation practice. He includes lengthy Latin quotations of a line or more in two places in the text, and these are the

240 For example, see l. 170, l. 1366 or l. 10006. For the extent of Mannyng's reliance on Latin sources, see Sullens' list of the sources of *exempla*, in *Handlyng Synne*, 283-287.

241 See ll. 4923-5044.

only quotations of such length in the whole text that are not given in Middle English. Whereas, as we saw, even short words whose origins are in the French of England are translated with an explicit reminder of the language of their origin ('frenshe hyt ys'), the Latin is translated merely by juxtaposition. So, for example, Mannyng quotes the lines 'Quem lapis ille tegit, sandalia viliter emit;/ Estuat in baratro, pessimus ille latro' ('He whom this stone covers, wickedly bought the bishopric;/ he burns in the abyss – he, the worst of thieves,' ll. 11121-11122). Neither the Latin nor the *exemplum* in which it is found is taken from the *Manuel*, and Mannyng makes no mention of the language of this quotation, nor does he suggest its association with clerics or its difficulty for Middle English readers. The translation – no doubt necessary – is tacitly provided in the following lines:

> "He þat þys stone hyleþ on lyche,
> Wykkedly boghte hys bysshopryche.
> Yn helle he welleþ yn pyne gref,
> For alþerwerst þan was he þefe."
>
> ('"He whom this stone covers, alone,/ wickedly bought his bishopric./ In hell, he suffers pain and grief,/ for then he was the worst of all thieves."' ll. 11123-11126)

By choosing not to use this passage of translation as an opportunity to comment on linguistic competencies, Mannyng allows his readers to interpret their linguistic position relative to the Latin as they so choose. This contrasts radically with the constant and explicit alignment of the French of England with clerisy.[242]

Mannyng's second work, the *Chronicle*, offers further insights into Mannyng's rhetorical positioning of these three languages relative to one another. In this translation from the French of England, Mannyng presents his language use as the normal, the most accessible, form of the vernacular: 'simple speche … þat is lightest

[242] This practice seems to be habitual. Thea Summerfield has noted that, in the *Chronicle*, too, long quotations are all almost invariably given in Latin, even though Mannyng translates from the French of England, so that Latin is presented as a familiar secondary language whose presence in an English context is natural. See Thea Summerfield, '"Fi a debles," quath the king': Language Mixing in England's Vernacular Historical Narratives, *c.* 1290-*c.* 1340,' in *The French of England*, eds. Wogan-Browne *et al.*, 68-80 (71-72).

in mannes mouth' ('simple speech … that is lightest in a man's mouth').[243] In contrast with *Handlyng Synne*, however, the language against which he defines this 'simple speche' is not the French of England but 'strange Inglis' ('strange English').[244] He expands on this description of 'strange Inglis' in terminology that suggests Francophone origins for that register of language. He rejects 'ryme couwee' or tail rhyme, 'strangere,' which may mean alliterative verse, 'enterlace,' which probably refers to an abab rhyme scheme, and 'baston' or stanzas.[245] 'Ryme couwee,' or *rime couvé*, is in the French of England, 'baston' is taken from the French of England for 'stave,' and 'enterlace,' presumably from *enlacer*, to entwine, appears in the Middle English dictionary only in this context of Mannyng's *Chronicle*, so is presumably another borrowing from the French of England.[246] These terms denote textual ornamentation – and the first and last also evoke complex visual patterns on the page – but also imply that such ornamentation is intrinsic to the French of England rather than to Middle English. These lines suggest that Mannyng's primary concern is not that his translation might be un-idiomatic, but rather, that the French of England is qualitatively different from (and less accessible than) Middle English.

This element of Mannyng's rhetoric, and this terminology, is not unique to *Handlyng Synne*. The same terms are adopted by Richard Rolle in his introduction to the Middle English Psalter, which may have been written in Mannyng's own lifetime, for Rolle died in 1349, just over a decade after Mannyng finished the *Chronicle*. Writing not far from Mannyng in Yorkshire, Rolle likewise rejects 'straunge ynglis' in favour of a Latinate register of language that he sees as 'lightest and commonest,' explaining: 'In þis werke .i. seke na straunge ynglis, bot lightest and commonest. And

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243 *Chronicle*, 1: ll. 73-74.

244 ibid., l. 78.

245 ibid., I: 85-86 and 89. For discussion of Mannyng's terminology see Melissa Furrow, *Expectations of Romance. The Reception of a Genre in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), 20-21.

246 See entry under headword 'enterlace' in *Middle English Dictionary*, gen. eds. Hans Kurath and Robert E. Lewis (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1956-2001). Online edition accessed on 01/01/13 at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=byte&byte=50293560&egdisplay=open&egs=50294035

swilk þat is mast lyke til þe latyn' ('In this work, I see no strange English, but the lightest and commonest, and such that is most like Latin').[247] Rolle's attempts to relate Latin and Middle English are better known than those of Mannyng, and Nicholas Watson, who reminds us what was at stake for a writer participating in this debate in the middle of the fourteenth century, sees Rolle's larger project as an 'invention of authority' for a Latinate cleric writing in Middle English.[248] These writers construct a space in which Latin is almost vernacularised, blending into Middle English and simultaneously dignifying it. In Mannyng's work, both Middle English and Latin contrast with this supposed clerical register of the French of England.

Although Kemmler observed, almost thirty years ago, that Mannyng is deeply reliant on Latin sources, and imports Latin phrases more than his source, the relation of these Latin elements to the 'englyssh,' 'lewed' audience Mannyng addresses has been little considered.[249] We cannot, I think, simply assume Mannyng intended every Latin phrase and reference as an aside to clerical *prelectors*: the tone of easy familiarity with these Latin texts, and his references to 'men' reading the books of the Bible suggest that he envisaged his audience imagining themselves as part of a book culture that extended into Latin religious reading, even if in reality they would only acquire a passing familiarity with these texts in translations and paraphrases similar to Mannyng's own. This reminds us of the linguistic context of the Gilbertine priory where Mannyng worked, where English and Latin were often used in combination, and where it was the French of England that was the more alien language. Comparisons with Mannyng's references to the French of England in the *Chronicle*, and with Rolle's later extension of the same ideas about Latinity, help us to understand how Mannyng exploited this linguistic rhetoric in order to convey his position as an author and his audience's position as readers. Latin lent authority to

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[247] Henry Bramley, ed., *The Psalter or Psalms of David and Certain Canticles: with a Translation and Exposition in English by Richard Rolle of Hampole*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), 4-5.

[248] Nicholas Watson, *Richard Rolle and the Invention of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-30.

[249] See Kemmler, *'Exempla' in Context*, 11-12.

Mannyng's Middle English, but that authority was dissociated from potentially exclusionary connotations by the treatment of this new register of Latinate Middle English as the language of ordinary people.

The Manuscripts of *Handlyng Synne*

In order to understand how the visual dynamics of *Handlyng Synne* manuscripts shape readers' responses to the model of distinctively 'English' reading Mannyng purports to provide, we need to look in detail at their pages. Manuscripts of *Handlyng Synne* written within Mannyng's own lifetime do not survive. We know from Mannyng's prologue that he began to write in 1303, and worked for fifteen years, finishing around 1318. He provides a date of completion for his later translation, the *Chronicle*, which tells us he was still alive and working in 1338.[250] However, no manuscript of *Handlyng Synne*, or of the *Chronicle*, survives from Mannyng's lifetime. A flood in Sempringham in 1349 destroyed many of the library's books, and may in part account for the lack of manuscripts.[251] Consequently, although the dates of the *Chronicle* demonstrate that Mannyng lived long enough to have supervised the copying and transmission of *Handlyng Synne* had he so wished, we have no contemporary manuscript evidence to tell us about the early history of either of his works. Like other Middle English religious texts written during the burst of enthusiasm for vernacular *pastoralia* in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries – the *Cursor Mundi*, for example, or the immensely popular *Pricke of Conscience* – *Handlyng Synne* was much copied in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and its nine manuscripts date from *c*. 1380 onwards.[252]

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[250] *Chronicle*, 2: ll. 8360-8361.

[251] Raymond Biggar, 'Review of *Handlyng Synne* by Robert Mannyng of Brunne; Idelle Sullens,' *Speculum* 62 (1987): 969-973 (969). See also Ryan Perry, 'The Cultural Locations of *Handlyng Synne*,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Queen's University of Belfast, 2004), 68.

[252] See Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409,' *Speculum* 70 (1995), 822-864 (834-835).

The shelfmarks and sigla of the extant manuscripts are below, with details of approximate chronological order.[253]

V: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. Poet. A. 1, *c*. 1390-1400.[254]

S: London, British Library MS Add. 22283, *c*. 1400-1410.[255]

B: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 415, *c*. 1390-1400.[256]

H: London, British Library, MS Harley 1701, *c*. 1400.[257]

F: Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. b. 236, *c*. 1400-1420.[258]

D: Dulwich College Library, MS 24, early fifteenth century.[259]

O: New Haven, CT, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS Osborn a. 2, *c*. 1440-1450.[260]

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253 Editions have been made from three of these manuscripts, other than the editions by Sullens and Furnivall, based respectively on **B** and **H**. The text of **V** is edited by Carl Horstmann as 'Septem Miracula de Corpore Cristi,' in *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS,* part 1, *EETS OS* 98 (1892; reprint 1987), 198-221. The text of **O** is edited by Susan Schulz as 'An Edition of Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, New York University, 1973). The text of **A** is edited by Shuffelton as 'The Knight Who Forgave His Father's Slayer,' in *Codex Ashmole 61*, 81-83. Facsimiles of **V** are available on CD Rom as *A Facsimile Edition of the Vernon Manuscript. A Literary Hoard from Medieval England*, ed. Wendy Scase with software by Nick Kennedy (Oxford: Bodleian Library Digital Texts, 2012) and in print as *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Poet. a. 1*, ed. Anthony Ian Doyle (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987).

254 A reference to the earthquake of 1382 makes a date earlier than the late 1380s unlikely for **V** (f. 411rb).

255 **S** copies most of the same contents as **V**, though it is now incomplete. It was copied after **V**, but probably only a few years after. For the length of time copying would take, see Anthony Ian Doyle, 'Codicology, Palaeography, and Provenance,' in *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript. The Production and Contents of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. poet. a. 1*, ed. Wendy Scase (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 3-25 (10-11). He judges that 'Scribe B's share of the two volumes would have occupied about four years, if he were doing nothing else, and perhaps even twice as long' (11).

256 Sullens dates **B** to *c*. 1400 on paleographic grounds. It is certainly earlier than **H**, therefore might be closer to *c*. 1390. See Sullens, 'Introduction,' xxv.

257 **H** is a copy of **B**, and therefore later. See Sullens, 'Introduction,' xxv.

258 The determination of **F**'s date depends on which interpretation of its relationship to **B** we accept, whether it is a copy of **B** or of **B**'s exemplar. I do not think it is possible to be certain, and therefore a wide date of *c*. 1400-1420 should be assumed. On palaeographic grounds, Sullens suggests *c*. 1400 'or a little later'. See Sullens, 'Introduction,' xxvii; Perry, 'Cultural Locations,' 134-135.

259 Sullens, 'Introduction,' xx.

260 ibid., xix.

Ci: Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii. 4. 9, not before the 3rd quarter of the fifteenth century.[261]

As: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, *c*. 1500.[262]

These surviving manuscripts preserve different quantities of Mannyng's text. The most complete copies are **B** and **H**, with **F** only less complete by the accidental omission of a couple of pages.[263] All three manuscripts are closely related textually. The next longest witness is **O**, which contains 8724 lines. It is acephalous and atelous, but there is reason to think it bears witness to what was originally a more complete version of *Handlyng Synne*, or to a recension in which new material was added from the *Manuel*, for it includes interpolated material from the *Manuel*.[264] **D** may once have been intended as a complete copy as well. The manuscript begins at the first line of *Handlyng Synne*, is titled 'Le Manuel des Peches' (the full title of Mannyng's source in the French of England), and ends with a catchword at the bottom of the final page, suggesting the scribe intended to continue his work.[265] Three of the remaining manuscripts contain shorter extracts, treated as sections within longer works not written by Mannyng. **V** interpolates Mannyng's section on the Eucharist into the *Northern Homily Cycle*, and **S**, its sister manuscript, replicates this.[266] **Ci** contains

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261 Sullens wrongly dates **Ci** to the early fifteenth century ('Introduction,' xx), but Edwards dates the script to 'not before the third quarter' of the fifteenth century. See Edwards, 'The Contexts of the Vernon Romances,' in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), 159-170 (163 n. 18).

262 For the date of **As** see George Shuffelton, ed., *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), 3.

263 **F** lacks ll. 4279-4318, ll. 4679-4718 and ll. 12233-12312. This corresponds exactly to **B**, f. 27vb, f. 30rb and f. 77v.

264 This material consists of an *exemplum*, titled by Sullens 'The Tale of the Drunked Priest,' which translates *Manuel* ll. 5377-5414. In **O**, the material is interpolated after the line corresponding to l. 6546 in Sullens' edition.

265 **D** corresponds to ll. 1-2894. I have seen reproductions of images from this manuscript, but have not made a full examination. I rely on Sullens' description ('Introduction,' xxvi), and on Furnivall's edition which includes the textual apparatus and variants from **D** in the notes.

266 **V**, ff. 197rc, l. 22–199rb, l. 65; **S**, ff. 2vb, l. 7-4rc, l. 76. This corresponds to ll. 9899-10818.

Mannyng's text on the ten commandments, with a continuation following it.[267] Finally, **As**, the shortest witness to the text at just 113 lines, consists of a single *exemplum*.[268] In order to explore the modes of reading these manuscripts invite, and the position in which they place Middle English readers of Mannyng's text, I will consider in detail three manuscripts, which represent the diversity of the corpus as a whole: **V**, **B** and **Ci**.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. A. 1 (V)

I begin with **V**, probably the oldest of the extant manuscript witnesses to *Handlyng Synne*. It is an exceptional manuscript, physically the largest late-medieval codex to survive, containing no fewer than 370 texts. Most of these are in Middle English, but there is also material, especially titles and textual apparatus, written in Latin and in the French of England.[269] A huge amount of scholarship has been devoted to it.[270] The extract of *Handlyng Synne* in **V** is taken from the section on the Eucharist. This material is incorporated into a version of the *Northern Homily Cycle*, with no explicit indication that it was ever part of a longer work. This is the section Mannyng augmented most substantially with original material not translated from

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[267] **Ci**, ff. 97r, l. 1 – 142r, l. 29. This corresponds to ll. 147-2988. The author of the continuation is not known, but Sullens observes that the text of it also features in London, British Library, MS Harley 3954, ff. 78v-81r. See Sullens, 'Introduction,' xliii n. 22.

[268] **As**, ff. 26v-27v, corresponding to ll. 3799-3912.

[269] For example, the 'Proverbs of Prophets' at f. 307rb contains verses in the French of England alongside the Middle English; the 'Parvus and Magnus Cato' following it at f. 309va is trilingual. Examples of titles of Middle English texts written in the French of England and in Latin include 'La Estoirie del Evangelie en engleis' ('The history of the Evangelist in English,' f. 105ra) and 'Speculum vitae' ('Mirror of life,' f. 231va).

[270] In addition to the facsimiles, the major studies are two collections of essays: *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript. The Production and Contents of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. poet. a. 1*, ed. Wendy Scase (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013) and *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990).

the *Manuel*.[271] It was once thought the section might have been intended as a separable sermon, although Jennifer Garrison argues convincingly that *Handlyng Synne* as a whole bears witness to the importance of the topic.[272] However, **V** and its copy **S** are not unique in distinguishing this section from the remainder of *Handlyng Synne*.[273] This treatment of Mannyng's text supports the hypothesis that the Middle English text was well suited to selective reading and recopying by clerics. Here, the text is not mined as raw material for a sermon, but recompiled into a pastoral collection, a collection whose declared purpose is 'sowlhele' or 'salus anime': the health of the soul.[274]

The mode of reading this copy of *Handlyng Synne* invites is not dissimilar to that which the *Manuel*'s textual apparatus invites, in terms of the eye movements across the page and through the structure of the material. The text is written in triple columns of short lines, with paraph marks in alternating red and blue segmenting the columns, and with rubrics drawing attention to the *exempla*. However, the vast, triple-columned pages of **V** and the discursive textual structure of *Handlyng Synne* combine to place considerable demands on readers, against which textual apparatus mitigates. The rubricated subsection titles are largely incorporated into the main text column, reducing the extent to which readers must track into the margins, and mitigating against eyeskip between the lines of the main text. The paraph marks that articulate minor subsections within the text, alternating red and blue, are very frequent: indeed, if we compare **V** with **A**, the preferred manuscript of the *Manuel* in Furnivall's edition, we find there are substantially more paraphs per line than in that

[271] In *Handlyng Synne* this section is 919 lines long; in the *Manuel* manuscript **A** (Furnivall's base text), it is 377 lines.

[272] Homer Pfander first suggested that the Eucharist section was intended as a separable sermon. See 'The Popular Sermon of the Medieval Friar in England' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, New York University, 1937), 30; Garrison, 'Mediated Piety,' 894-922.

[273] In **F** the section on the Eucharist alone has running titles. See Sullivan, 'Audiences,' 202.

[274] These titles are provided in Middle English and Latin (but not in the French of England, indicating its precarious status within the manuscript) at f. i[ra]: the book is 'cald in latyn tonge salus a*nim*e and in englyhs tonge sowlehele' ('called in the Latin tongue "Health of the Soul" and in English "Soul-Healing"').

manuscript.[275] The mode of reading **V**'s extract of *Handlyng Synne* invites is the same as that invited by the manuscript as a whole. The huge compilation demands selective reading. It cannot be taken in as a linear narrative, and even individual pages are literally too large to take in at a glance, but demand to be broken into more manageable sections. Heuristic tools including a Table of Contents, and rubrics similar to those in *Handlyng Synne* are important features of the manuscript. This is a compilation, and a witness to *Handlyng Synne*, designed to accommodate readers with great care.

When we take these features of textual apparatus into account, the extract of *Handlyng Synne* concerns three scribes: Scribe A, identified as the senior scribe working on the manuscript in a supervisory role, who wrote the rubrics of these folios; Scribe B, who copied the vast majority of text in the manuscript, including the text of *Handlyng Synne* and the *Northern Homily Cycle* into which it is interpolated, and the scribe who copied the list of all the texts in the manuscript, which Scase labels the 'Table of Contents'.[276] The interactions of these scribes help us to understand the treatment of the *Handlyng Synne* extract, and in particular, the way in which it reflects attitudes towards the status of Middle English within this trilingual manuscript. The context in which the extract is placed, the *Northern Homily Cycle*, is of course Middle English, with Latin and Middle English rubrics provided for the *exempla*. Scase notes that it is the habit of the scribe who wrote the Table of Contents to translate the Latin portions of rubrics into Middle English, and this is what he does with the title given to *Handlyng Synne*. Scribe A titled the extract 'septem miracula de corpore christi' ('Seven miracles of the Body of Christ').[277] In **V**'s Table of Contents,

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275 The paraphs of **V** are not evenly distributed, but for every 8.8 lines of text in **V** there is a paraph (there are 919 lines and 105 paraphs); in the *Manuel* manuscript **A**'s section on the Sacrament of the Altar there are 14.5 lines for every paraph (377 lines and 26 paraphs).

276 For discussion of the scribes' division of labour, see Doyle, 'Codicology, Palaeography and Provenance,' 3-25. For discussion of the rubrication and Table of Contents, see Scase 'Rubrics, Opening Numbering, and the Vernon *Table of Contents*,' in *Making of the Vernon Manuscript* ed. Scase, 97-124.

277 This is generally taken to be simple inaccuracy, like the retention of one of Mannyng's cross-references, which occurs in **V** at f. 198rb, ll. 6-7 (corresponding to l. 10282). Perry offers the alternative possibility that the scribe might have interpreted the final description of the Eucharist itself as a 'miracle,' and included it in the total. See Ryan Perry, 'Editorial Politics in the Vernon

however, it is given the Middle English title 'Seuene Miracles þat bitydde by godes body' ('Seven mircles that occurred through God's body,' f. ii^{r}). Scase notes that the scribe who wrote the Table of Contents 'does not translate the text of the Bible'.[278] This decision is significant in the context of growing ecclesiastical unease about Wycliffite Bible translation at the end of the fourteenth century.[279] However, Scase argues that the manuscript as a whole promotes the use of the vernacular, much as Mannyng himself does.

In **V**'s text of *Handlyng Synne* itself, the *exempla* are all provided with rubricated titles, offering brief summaries of their content. These are sometimes in Latin and sometimes in Middle English, just like the rubrics for *exempla* in the *Northern Homily Cycle*.[280] The mixture of languages appears random. However, these titles for *exempla* are not unique: we find Latin titles in **S** and in **O**, although both manuscripts are less consistent than **V** in their completion of rubrication, so some *exempla* are missing titles. In **S**, only the first two *exempla*, titled in Latin in **V**, are provided with Latin titles, although these are not the same as those in **V**.[281] In **O**, titles are written sometimes in brown ink, sometimes in rubric, according to the

Manuscript,' in *Making of the Vernon Manuscript* ed. Scase, 71-95 (79-80). The text of **S** was copied from **V**, but the their textual apparatus differs. **S** lacks the title **V** gives to the section and simply features two blank lines after the previous passage from the *Northern Homily Cycle*. See **S**, f. 2vb, l. 7.

278 Scase, 'Rubrics, Opening Numbering, and the *Table of Contents*,' 117.

279 The unauthorised translation of Biblical text was legislated against by Arundel in 1409, too late for **V** to have been subject to the law, but **V** has often been interpreted as an orthodox response to Wycliffism. For Arundel's legislation and its impact, see Fiona Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation at the Turn of the Fifteenth Century: Ullerston's *Determinacio*, Arundel's *Constitutiones*,' in *The Vulgar Tongue*, eds. Somerset and Watson, 145-157. I discuss **V** and Wycliffism further in the latter part of this chapter.

280 Latin rubrics are provided for four *exempla*, reading 'Narratio cuiusdam religiosi' ('Story of a certain religious man,' f. 197va, l. 52); 'Narratio p*re*sbiter p*ar*ochialis' ('Story of a parish priest,' f. 197vc, l. 53); 'Narratio felicis presbiteri' ('Story of Felix the presbiter,' f. 198rb, l. 52) and 'Narratio bede' ('Story by Bede,' f. 198vb, l. 12). The remaining two are titled in Middle English, 'hou a man of souþfolk was saued þorou a masse' ('How a man from Suffolk was saved by a Mass,' f. 198rc, l. 51) and 'Of a man þ*a*<t> was closed in a myne' ('Of a man who was shut in a mine,' f. 199ra, l. 63).

281 They read 'Quod corpus ch*rist*i est ueracit*er* in sacramento altaris realiter et non figurative' ('What the body of Christ is, truly, in the Sacrament of the Altar: really and not figuratively,' f. 2vc, ll. 30-32) and 'Q*uo*d p*ro*pter peccat*um* occult*um* co*mmun*io non debet negari' ('How, because it is a mortal sin, the Eucharist should not be denied,' f. 3rb, ll. 21-22). Unfilled spaces are left for the remaining titles.

preferences of the various scribes, but the format is the same as that of **V**: each subtitle begins with the word 'narratio' ('narration').[282] **Ci** occasionally provides marginal *notae* marking the *exempla* or 'historia' ('stories') in Latin, with brief descriptions of the contents similar to those of **S** and **V**, though shorter.[283] Since **D** typically marks *exempla* with the single Latin word 'narr*atio*,' we have five manuscripts using Latin apparatus to mark *exempla* and four providing what we may understand as titles.[284] This practice may well derive from Mannyng's source, the *Manuel*, since *exempla* are marked with Latin *notae* in several manuscripts.[285] It seems likely, therefore, that it is the Latin titles that were original to *Handlyng Synne* and present in **V**'s exemplar, and that Scribe A, finding some of these missing, or insufficient, simply skimmed the main text and added his own Middle English summary. It would be natural for him to summarise in English text he had just read in the same language; moreover, his practice here would reflect what Scase feels to be the wider motivation of the manuscript: to promote the use of Middle English, albeit within a context where Latin was also used.

The textual apparatus of **V** echoes the treatment of Latin words and quotations in the text as a whole, in its casual mixing of Latin and Middle English. The judicious use of paraphs and titles as heuristic tools would help readers to navigate the vast pages of **V** and to select portions within its enormous volume of texts. This apparatus suggests that the linguistic blurring is unlikely to be the product of carelessness or haste on the part of the careful Scribe A, but rather, that it is indicative of his sense of how his readers would move from one language to the other, without difficulty.

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282 For example, 'narratio de quod*am* monacho' ('story of a certain monk,' p. 18, l. 11) or 'Narratio de s*anct*us Deui' ('Story of St Dewi [David],' p. 242, l. 24).

283 In **Ci**, several *exempla* are marked with 'hist*oria*' or longer Latin titles. I discuss these below.

284 For example, see f. 20v, at l. 17. This corresponds to l. 2697.

285 See *Manuel* manuscripts **A**, **Ar**, **G** and **Hm**. Longer examples similar to those of **V**, **S** and **O** are found in **Hm**, for example, 'Narratio de monache qui cogitauit furtum facere,' ('Story of a monk who thought about stealing,' f. 14v). Quoted by Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 71.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 415 (B)

B is the most complete witness to *Handlyng Synne*, and the preferred manuscript of the current edition, at 12638 lines. The text of *Handlyng Synne* is written entirely by one scribe, who also copied the second of the manuscript's two texts, a pseudo-Bonaventuran Life of Christ titled *Meditations on the Supper of Our Lord*. The manuscript is a less extensive production than **V**, its close contemporary. It is about 280 x 190 mm, rubricated throughout, with no images, and illuminated only with two initials with purple pen-flourishing, one at the start of each text (less illumination than the closely related **F** and **H**).[286] The treatment of the text on the page forms the basis of Sullens' partly modernised textual apparatus in her edition, and has, accordingly, played an important if indirect role in influencing subsequent scholarship.[287]

The immediate visual impression is of uniformity, with regular rubricated brackets marking the couplets and the unvarying phrase 'a. tale' marking *exempla* (Figure 3.1).[288] The manuscript is provided with rubricated subsection headings within the main text column, and it has running headers, also in rubric.[289] These rubrics are positioned either in the margins of the pages or at the beginnings and ends of sections, and given the length of Mannyng's subsections, this means that the

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[286] See f. 1ra, ll. 1-4 and 80ra, ll. 10-13. By contrast, **H** contains illuminated initials at all the major divisions except the beginning of the Ten Commandments. See f. 1ra, ll. 1-3; f. 20va, ll. 22-24; f. 57rb, ll. 22-24; f. 63rb, ll. 18-20 and f. 75ra, ll. 31-33. **F** contains shields and illuminated borders described by Perry, Ryan Perry, 'The Clopton Manuscript and the Beauchamp Affinity: Patronage and Reception Issues in a West Midlands Reading Community,' in *Essays in Manuscript Geography. Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Wendy Scase (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 131-160 (137-138).

[287] Sullens chooses to retain **B**'s distinctive mode of marking *exempla*, although this is not typical of the corpus as a whole; she also includes modernised and expanded running headers. Crucially, she does not include textual apparatus in her listing of the variants across the corpus.

[288] Figure 3.1 is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 415, f. 28r, showing the marginal *nota* 'a tale' at column b, l. 11. For further examples, see f. 7vb, at ll. 39-40; f. 39va, at l. 17 or f. 57rb, at l. 13.

[289] For example, running headers read 'The þredde comaundement. þou shalt kepe þyn halyday' ('The third commandment: Thou shalt keep the Sabbath,' at ff. 6r-7r), or 'The fyþe dedly synne. ys Coueytyse.' ('The fifth deadly sin is Covetousness,' at ff. 34r-41r).

text column is infrequently interrupted by them. The main text forms a block of almost completely undifferentiated text broken only by small blue and red initials.[290] The scribe rarely errs in his patient provision of the *notae* and, on the rare occasion one is omitted, a different fifteenth-century hand adds the words ‘a tale’ in their proper place.[291] Most of this textual apparatus is peripheral to the main text, relegated to the almost-blank margins and to the beginnings and ends of long sections, so that it forms a subordinate pattern.

The *notae* marking the *exempla* alert readers of the text to the shift from exposition to narrative. This function is particularly suited to the needs of those reading aloud, who might perform the two types of material in different ways. We saw in **V** that this textual apparatus could carry information about the subjects of the *exempla*, thus performing an heuristic function, and facilitating the mode of non-linear, selective *lectio* associated with the text in that manuscript. **B** does not exploit this heuristic potential, for all the *notae* are identical. It would be a difficult manuscript for a preacher, searching for specific *exempla* to illustrate a sermon, to use: Mannyng’s already discursive, repetitive material is provided with only the most basic heuristics in the form of the running headers, and these are of limited use given the length of Mannyng’s sections and the diversity of (often repetitive) material he subsumes under each category. Instead, **B** invites undirected browsing through the text, such as Mannyng describes in his prologue.

The language of **B**’s textual apparatus is almost exclusively Middle English. The ‘a. tale’ *notae*, the running headers and rubricated subsection titles are all in Middle English. **B** is not unique in this: its direct copy **H** and sister manuscript **F** contain almost exactly the same textual apparatus (**F** lacks running titles, except in the section on the Eucharist), and all three manuscripts use Middle English. Given that, as I observed in the discussion of **V**, Latin titles or *notae* are likely to be the original version of the textual apparatus as Mannyng took it from the *Manuel*, it

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290 For example, see f. 70vb, ll. 5-7.

291 See f. 30va, l. 25.

would appear that **B** or an exemplar of **B** deliberately anglicised this feature of the text.

B is not, however, entirely anglicised: Mannyng's Latin quotations in the main text still feature, and the longest of these are visibly marked out by the scribe. The first of these scribal markers reads 'vers*us*' ('verse'), and is underlined in red just like the marginal *notae* marking the *exempla*.[292] This refers to the quotation reading 'Que*m* lapis ille teg*i*<t>. sa*n*dalia vilit*er* emit/ Estuat in baratro. Pessimus ille latro'. The medial *punctus* draws attention to the internal rhyme, and the marginal Latin *nota* augments this punctuation, alerting readers to the fact that the Latin quotation might require a different performative treatment when reading aloud, just as the regular *notae* marking the *exempla* call attention to the shift from exposition to narrative. This treatment in **B** is noteworthy, because **O** – the only independent manuscript that parallels this section – does not mark the Latin at all, not even by a change in script.[293] The other long Latin quotation in *Handlyng Synne* – there are only two that are longer than a few words – is a Latin song sung by the cursed dancers of Colbek, three lines long.[294] In **B**, this Latin passage is not marked with a marginal *nota*, but all three lines are bracketed together on the left in brown ink, and provided with a triple red bracket on the right.[295] While both of these Latin quotations are distinct from their surrounding texts because of their format (in the first case, verse with an internal rhyme; in the second, a song quoted as direct speech), similar lines in Middle English are not distinguished from their surroundings visually, so it is clear that it is the combination of the code switch with the shift in register that the scribe wishes to mark.

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[292] See f. 70v, ll. 3-4 for the quotations, and the margin to the left for the annotation.

[293] See **O**, p. 243, ll. 27-28. **O**, unlike **B**, features a *formata* script for some textual apparatus, for example the title on p. 18, l. 11, but this is not a consistent feature in use by all of its scribes. **H** does not mark these lines (f. 73vb, ll. 31-32). I have been unable to examine **F**.

[294] f. 57va, ll. 13-15. This corresponds to ll. 9051-9053.

[295] **H** also marks these lines with a triple bracket on the right (f. 60rb, ll. 25-27), but with no other marker. I have been unable to examine **F**.

The treatment of the Latin quotations within the main text of *Handlyng Synne* by the scribe of **B** suggests that he was conscious of the difficulties unmarked Latin passages within a Middle English text might present. His otherwise rigorous Anglicisation of the textual apparatus may result from the same anticipation of readers' linguistic competencies or preferences.[296] Instead of the heuristic, Latinate apparatus of **V** (and of the *Manuel* tradition), we have performative, almost entirely Middle English apparatus, which accommodates the difficulty of reading a text including code-switches into Latin verse. The mode of reading this manuscript invites is perhaps more suited to the characteristics of the text Mannyng wrote than **V**: although it articulates the distinctions between Latin and Middle English more rigidly than **V**, it promotes the use of Middle English as a language of instruction and authority through its apparatus. The difference is perhaps simply the result of scribes differentiating between the kinds of apparatus desirable for a short extract interpolated into a longer text in a larger compilation, and the kinds of apparatus required for the complete work that dominates its manuscript context.

Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii. 4. 9 (Ci)

Ci is the latest of the three manuscripts I discuss in detail. Although the extract from *Handlyng Synne* is a small proportion of the entire text, **Ci** is largely made up of even shorter texts, and so the extract dominates, taking up ff. 97r-142v of the total 197 folios. Many of the texts in **Ci** deal with the catechistic tenets that form the subdivisions of *Handlyng Synne* (and even duplicate aspects of the short extract found here). Prose texts on the commandments and the seven deadly sins are found at ff. 60v-61v, on the sacrament of the Eucharist at f. 95r, on shrift and again on the sins at f. 142v, and on the sacraments at f. 177r. The manuscript also includes further catechistic and didactic material, a life of St Edmund, texts relating to the lives of

[296] I exclude **As** from consideration, given its length.

Christ and Mary, a couple of lyrics, and the hagiographic romance *Robert of Sicily*.[297] This mixture most resembles the contents of the religious miscellanies **V** and **S**, albeit on a far smaller scale than those massive compilations.

Ci is written by two scribes, on paper.[298] It is relatively small, at dimensions of 240mm x 165mm. Its pages are unruled but for the margins, and it features a couple of drawings but none of the professional illumination of **V** and **S**, **B**, **F** or **H**.[299] Its *ad hoc* mode of production is evident: we find blank pages and scribal notes directing readers to displaced portions of text.[300] This level of disorganisation is similar to that of **O**, whose four scribes were inconsistent in their use of textual apparatus and whose illumination or rubrication is incomplete, and to **As**, whose amateur scribe made false starts in his copying.[301]

The extract of *Handlyng Synne* begins at the top of a new page, with a three-line historiated initial in brown ink (f. 97r, l. 1). Above this, a rubricated title reads ‘P*r*<i>mu*m* mandatu*m*’: the ‘First Commandment’. Throughout the text, the titles for each subsection take the same form, that of numerical labels in Latin, although they are placed in the margins and sometimes written in rubric, sometimes in the scribe’s ordinary brown ink.[302] This textual apparatus is the Latin version of what we found

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[297] For the full contents, see Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances* (Münich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976), 100-103.

[298] ibid., 100-101.

[299] See f. 68v, which contains a drawing illustrating the lyric ‘Erthe toc of erthe,’ and f. 97r, the opening of the *Handlyng Synne* extract, which features an initial letter T historiated with a face (ll. 1-3).

[300] For example, f. 96v, preceding *Handlyng Synne*, is blank but for the first two words of the *Handlyng Synne* extract ‘The fyrst,’ written in the centre of the top margin as if copied as a title in error. The scribal note and disorganised text I discuss below.

[301] For example, in **O**, some of the titles for subsections and *exempla* are rubricated (see p. 10, l. 19 or p. 11, l. 9), while others are not (see p. 18, l. 11). Throughout the manuscript, spaces and guide letters are left for initials, but these have not been illuminated or rubricated (for example, see p. 10, ll. 20-21 or p. 235, ll. 27-28). In **As**, the scribe, Rate, copied a text on the ten commandments as item 6 (ff. 16v-17r), then began to copy the same text again as item 14, before abandoning this duplicated material as a false start (f. 22v).

[302] For example, on f. 107r, at l. 26 ‘3 mand*atum*’ is written in brown ink; on f. 115v at l. 3, ‘5 mand*atum*’ (‘5th commandment’) is written in rubric.

in **B** and its copies, although, unlike **B**, **Ci** does not provide running headers. Latin subsection titles are found elsewhere in the *Handlyng Synne* corpus, in **O** (sporadically, and usually within the main text column rather than the margins), and in **D**, consistently and with brief Latin summaries of the commandment's meaning added.[303] **As**, **S** and **V** are all too short to require subsection titles, but of the six remaining manuscripts, **Ci**, **D** and **O** use Latin titles and **B**, **F** and **H** use Middle English. Since the former group of three are not directly textually related to one another while the latter three are extremely closely related, it would seem likely that the Latin titles are original and the English a departure. In addition, the *exempla* in **Ci** are also marked with marginal Latin *notae*, and I established with reference to **V** that these *notae* are likely original to *Handlyng Synne*. In **Ci** the *notae* typically begin 'hist*oria*' ('story').[304] Some contain no more than that word, but we also see descriptive titles such as 'hist*oria* p*er* sabato' ('story on the sabbath') on f. 108v, at l. 3 or 'hist*oria* q*u*<a> iur*amentum*' ('tale concerning oaths') at f. 105v, l. 24 (Figure 3.2).[305] The terminology for *exempla* is not consistent: on f. 128r, at l. 23 we find 'narr*ati*o,' the term often used in the *Manuel*, which denotes an *exemplum* such as a preacher might use in a sermon. This apparatus, as a whole, makes **Ci** the most Latinate of the manuscripts I have considered, equalled across the corpus only by **S** and **O**.

The Latin of **Ci** extends beyond the textual apparatus of *Handlyng Synne* and beyond the Latin phrases in its main text. The manuscript as a whole suggests that, at least initially, it was written by a scribe whose habit was to treat Latin as the language in which authoritative portions of text such as titles, *notae*, and formal scribal *explicits*, should be written. Scribe A copied the majority of the manuscript,

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[303] For example, see **O**, p. 245, l. 1, 'sextu*m* sac*r*<a>mentu*m* matrimoniu*m*' ('the sixth sacrament: matrimony'). In **D**, examples include 'Primu*m* mandatu*m*. Non habebis deos alienos coram me' ('The first commandment: Have no other gods but me'), or 'Memento vt sabbatu*m* sanctificies. Tercium mandatu*m*' ('Remember to keep the sabbath holy'). These are quoted in *Manuel* ed. Furnivall, 6 and 29.

[304] See, for example, f. 102v, at l. 17 or f. 105v, at l. 24.

[305] Figure 3.2 shows **Ci**, f. 108v. The marginal subtitle for the *exemplum* is split across the left and right margins at l. 3.

including *Handlyng Synne*, and completes his last copying stint at f. 190r, l. 9 with 'Nunc finem feci da michi quod merui' ('Now I have made an end; give me what I deserve'). He also uses Latin in the titles of texts, even though these texts are written in Middle English: for example, a saint's life is titled 'narrat*i*o de s*anc*to Edwardo' ('the story of St Edward' f. 94r, at ll. 1-3). Scribe B, who adds small amounts of material in blank spaces left by A on f. 95v-96r and f. 190r-197v, does not replicate these linguistic habits. He leaves a much less professional-sounding note to the reader towards the end of his copying stint (now crossed out), and it is in Middle English: 'Turne to the begynnyng of þ*is* book and þer schall ɜe fynde the ende of this matier' ('Turn to the beginning of this book and there you will find the end of this text', 195r, ll. 34-35). He refers to the folios now bound as ff. 196-197, presumably once at the front of the book. His additions to the manuscript lessen the impact of Scribe A's Latin, and give the impression it gives of being a manuscript compiled *ad hoc* for personal use.

In the text of *Handlyng Synne*, Latin is the language through which order is imposed in a manuscript whose copying processes were not orderly. It is through the Latin section titles that readers are invited to relate the Middle English main text to the 'syllabus' of catechistic tenets the clergy taught the laity. Yet the small size of the Latin script, and the inconsistent use of rubric and brown ink – as well as the haphazard mixture of one-word *notae* with longer, more descriptive examples – give this Latin the appearance of annotation, of personal notes made by the scribe to himself as he worked (Figure 3.2).[306] This impression fits with the appearance of the manuscript as a whole, with Scribe B's awkward insertions of material into spare space. A couple of unique textual variants in **Ci** suggest anxiety concerning Middle English encroaching on the territory of Latin. When Mannyng refers to a source, **BDFH** (the other manuscripts that include the same section of text) all include the line 'Of holy wryt þe englyssh y toke,' ('I took the English from Holy Writ,' l. 1365) and the acknowledgement this 'sacred writing' is Gregory's *Dialogues*. **Ci** moderates this to the less controversial 'of holy wrytte wytnesse I took' ('I took witness of Holy

[306] Figure 3.2 shows **Ci**, f. 108v. The marginal subtitle to the *exemplum* at l. 3 is written in a much smaller script than the main text, and split awkwardly across the left and right margins.

Writ,' f. 116v, l. 2), which avoids possible confusion with English 'Holy Writ' of the Wycliffite Bible. As a whole, the manuscript suggests production in a context where Latin carried connotations of greater professionalism and organisation than the scribes could achieve. The manuscript contrasts with **V** and **B**, which in their different ways suggest an interest in the promotion of Middle English. It is possible that the scribes who made **Ci** were keen to associate Latinity with the roles of book production and textual organisation, to shore up their authority within a context of pastoral outreach to the laity; it is equally possible that **Ci** simply represents the oldest and most Latinate version of the textual apparatus Mannyng wrote, not updated as I conjecture it was in **V** and **B**.

The contribution these features of Latin apparatus and page design make to the mode of reading and to the construction of readers' sense of linguistic identity in *Handlyng Synne* is almost invariably overlooked. In her edition of the text – the resource through which most scholars initially access the text – Sullens imposes a regularised apparatus largely based on **B**, but, although she provides a complete list of the variants for the main text, she excludes the apparatus from consideration and she italicises Latin quotations, following modern practice, leading scholars with no sense of the differences between the manuscripts or of the significance of the spectrum of visual interactions between Latin and Middle English across the corpus. Yet this is not merely an editorial issue. We need not only to know the verbal content of the Latin apparatus, but also to see how it is incorporated into the visual dynamics of the pages. The impact of **V**'s mixture of Latin and Middle English derives from its location within thoughtfully designed pages, which optimise readers' chances of navigating the sections of the text, and therefore reassure us that the slippage from Latin to English is not a matter of carelessness but a reflection of the scribe's sense of the two languages' interdependence. The sparing, anglicised *notae* in **B** cast the catechistic syllabus into greater prominence than the contents of the *exempla*, and we can only recognise the scribe's awareness of the performative demands of unmarked code-switches into Latin by placing the minimal markers on the two Latin quotations in the wider context of the rigorously uniform pages. The Latinity of **Ci** –

more extensive than that of the other two manuscripts – takes on its distinctively annotative quality when we recognise that the script is small, inconsistently rubricated, and part of a manuscript whose second scribe jotted notes to his reader (perhaps himself) when he ran out of normal usable space.

These features of the three manuscripts I discuss give us a vivid sense of the different priorities of scribes working on the same basic text across almost a century. The scribes' presentation of the text might be characterised as a form of visual rhetoric, reflecting their sense of the positions of Middle English readers. As such, this rhetoric engages in dialogue with Mannyng's own verbal rhetoric. The relative positions of the three languages of the text – the French of England Mannyng exploits as a concept, the Latin he interpolates and which the scribes of the text variously augment or adapt, and the Middle English of the main text - are subtly reimagined in each of the manuscripts, revealing the complexities of relationships between the three languages of medieval England, which in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries are so often reduced to a 'censored' Middle English, a repressive clerical Latin and a marginalised French of England.

Constructing 'Middle English' in the Late Middle Ages

In order to understand how Mannyng's verbal rhetoric and the visual rhetoric of his surviving manuscripts combine to inform Middle English readers' sense of their position within book culture, we need to establish the linguistic contexts in which these manuscripts circulated. *Handlyng Synne* and its surviving manuscripts give us glimpses into the changes occurring over a very long period of time: from 1303, when Mannyng began to write, until the very late fifteenth century, when the latest manuscript, **As**, was copied. As we have seen, there are similarities between members of this corpus of manuscripts, notably in terms of their shared interest in articulating relationships between Middle English and Latin. By examining the ways in which the manuscripts interact with their wider contexts, we can begin to understand how the linguistic hierarchies posited by Mannyng and visualised on *Handlyng Synne*'s manuscript pages shaped the experiences of readers.

The pattern of dissemination of *Handlyng Synne* from Sempringham is difficult to reconstruct, because of the gap in the manuscript history between *c*. 1317, when Mannyng claims he finished writing, and *c*. 1390, when **V** was probably begun. Mannyng's Gilbertine context does, as I suggested earlier in this chapter, provide a partial context for his hostility to the French of England, for the Order's primary vernacular was Middle English. Working backwards from what is known of **V**'s provenance, we can shed light on some of the fourteenth-century networks of book owners who were in contact with the Gilbertines. The existence of these networks cannot prove how *Handlyng Synne* came to be copied into **V**, but they can show how the linguistic identities of readers within the early fourteenth-century Gilbertine ambit, and within the ambit of **V**, were shaped.

V was made in the West Midlands. It was once thought to be the product of a religious house, perhaps Bordesley and Stoneleigh in Warwickshire, although these are now thought probably not wealthy enough. [307] Lichfield Cathedral, over the border into Staffordshire, has been the subject of the most recent consensus, and here there was an established scriptorium of secular clerks.[308] Simon Horobin notes that the argument for placing **V** in this *milieu* is strengthened by annotations in both **V** and its sister manuscript **S** in the hand of one John Scriveyn, a 'freelance scrivener' in the Lichfield area who worked on legal documents and literary texts, for laypeople and for secular clerics. Lichfield was the bishopric to which Richard Scrope was appointed in 1386, and he has been suggested as the instigator behind the compilation of texts.[309]

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[307] For discussion of these theories, see Simon Horobin, 'The Scribes of the Vernon Manuscript,' in *Making of the Vernon Manuscript* ed. Scase, 27-47 (27-8).

[308] ibid.

[309] ibid. See also Jeremy Catto, '1349-1412: Culture and History,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, eds. Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 113-132 (125).

V is, as observed previously, closely related to the slightly more Latinate **S**, whose owner has not been securely identified.[310] Research into shared texts in other manuscripts, and into the scribal hands that feature across several manuscripts, has associated several other manuscripts and their owners with **V**. The contemporary Oxford, University College MS 97 is linked to **S** by the texts they share (which are not found in **V**); this manuscript was owned by the scribe William Counter, whose patron was the wealthy Warwickshire man, William Beauchamp.[311] **V** itself contains an annotation in the right-hand margin of f. 329v explaining that Scriveyn copied several pages of the text for one Thomas Henley, whom Doyle identifies as a secular priest who, like Counter, was under the patronage of a magnate family, in this case the Hollands and the Countess of Kent.[312] These were wealthy lay patrons, and their clerics would have been able to access texts through powerful networks of influence. Scase, discussing the wider context of **V** and the possible candidates who might be identified as its patron, suggests William Beauchamp as the likeliest option.[313]

However, in order to understand the position of *Handlyng Synne* in **V**, we need to look not only to its context in which it, as a finished product, was read and annotated, but also to the earlier period in which it was being prepared and during which its exemplars were yet to be sourced. Scase suggests that the precedents for **V** as a compilation should not be sought in Middle English manuscript culture, but in the culture of scribes who copied trilingual manuscripts, dominated by the French of England. She cites as an example Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg. 1. 1 (**G**), made in *c*. 1330, noting its West Midlands provenance.[314] This manuscript contains

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310 The possibility has been raised that a very faint annotation in **S** at f. 91v could be read as 'Joan Bohun,' although whether this means Bohun owned, consulted, or was merely known to the owner is uncertain. See Doyle, *Vernon Facsimile*, 14-16.

311 See Doyle, 'Codicology, Palaeography and Provenance,' 20.

312 ibid., 14.

313 Scase, 'Some Vernon Analogues and Their Patrons,' in *Making of the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Scase, 247-268; see also Scase, 'Patronage Symbolism and *Sowlhele*,' in *Making of the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Scase, 231-245.

314 Scase, 'Vernon Analogues,' 248-249.

the *Manuel*, Mannyng's source. She argues we should interpret **V** in this context, as a compilation promoting religious material in Middle English within a trilingual context just as, sixty years earlier, **G** promoted the French of England within a trilingual context.

Scase's approach of looking backwards to manuscripts produced in the early fourteenth century also helps us to understand how *Handlyng Synne* might have come into this *milieu*. Both Scrope, who has been suggested as the instigator of the production of **V**, and William Beauchamp, a likely candidate for its owner, had familial connections to Lincolnshire and to the Gilbertine houses that dated back to the period in which Mannyng was writing. Scrope's aunt married Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Ingham, only a few miles from Sempringham.[315] Luttrell owned the well-known 'Luttrell Psalter,' (London, British Library, MS Add. 42130), which has been described as a tool for learning Latin.[316] Their daughter, Scrope's cousin, was a nun at Sempringham Priory itself.[317] On the same side of the family, Scrope's uncle was a prebendary at Lincoln Cathedral, and his will of 1383 includes books bequeathed to Scrope.[318] The northern associations of some texts in **V** have been taken as suggestive of Scrope's Yorkshire background, and these include the *Northern Homily Cycle* into which *Handlyng Synne* is interpolated. Given that there are other East Midlands associations for **V**, these familial links suggest we might look to Scrope's connections in Lincolnshire for the exemplar of this copy of *Handlyng Synne*.[319] It is

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315 For Luttrell's not always cordial relationship with the Gilbertines of Sempringham, see Joyce Coleman, 'New Evidence About Sir Geoffrey Luttrell's Raid on Sempringham Priory, 1312,' *The British Library Journal* 25 (1999): 103-128.

316 Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 162.

317 Coleman, 'New Evidence,' 121.

318 Dorothy Owen, *The Medieval Canon Law: Teaching, Literature and Transmission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 13.

319 Walter Hilton, author of the *Scale of Perfection* (ff. 343r-353r) was a Nottinghamshire canon. In addition, Scase notes that Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson A. 389, which Doyle argues was copied at Lichfield at around the same time as **V**, contains some text (ff. 81r-84r) in Nottinghamshire dialect. See Scase, 'Vernon Analogues,' 263; Doyle, 'The Shaping of the Vernon and Simeon Manuscripts,' in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript* ed. Pearsall, 1-13 (7-9).

possible that the thriving East Midlands readership of *Manuel* manuscripts also had an influence, demonstrating to Scrope that the French version of the text was popular.

Beauchamp's familial connections link him notable bibliophiles. Guy de Beauchamp, William's grandfather, donated books to Bordesley Abbey, which are frequently cited in studies of aristocratic book ownership, offering us a pattern of the kind of literary patronage a foundation like Sempringham might also expect, during the period in which Mannyng was writing.[320] Guy's niece Margaret and her husband owned the de Lisle Hours, whose contents have a strong penitential flavour not dissimilar to that of *Handlyng Synne*.[321] The manuscript includes the famous poem of the 'Three Living and Three Dead,' which is written not only in Latin and the French of England, but also in Middle English. This manuscript was bequeathed to Margaret's daughters Audere and Alborou, nuns at the Gilbertine house of Chicksands.[322] Finally, by the end of the fourteenth century at the earliest, the famous Psalter made for Lincolnshire lord Geoffrey Luttrell (Scrope's uncle by marriage) had come into the hands of William de Beauchamp's wife's family, who wrote obits in it at ff. 1r-12v. In addition to this evidence of familial interest in Middle English and the Gilbertines, Thomas Beauchamp, William's father, may have owned a manuscript of the *Manuel*, for a safe conduct for him is found on one of its pages.[323]

The daughters of Margaret de Beauchamp were not the only women in the family to be associated with the Gilbertines. There was a strong connection between the Beauchamp family and the double monastery of Shouldham in Norfolk, with several female members nuns there, including William de Beauchamp's aunts,

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[320] See Madelaine Blaess, 'L'Abbaye de Bordesley et les livres de Guy de Beauchamp,' *Romania* 78 (1975): 511-518.

[321] For Margaret's relationship to Guy de Beauchamp, and comparison of the de Lisle Hours to *Handlyng Synne*, see Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, 14 and 157-158.

[322] ibid., 17-18.

[323] The manuscript is **H1**. See f. 33r.

Katherine and Margaret, widow of Guy de Montfort.[324] More distant relatives with Gilbertine connections include Eleanor le Despenser, great-niece to William's grandfather Guy of Warwick and a nun at Sempringham until her death in 1351. The presence of these women within English-speaking Gilbertine monasteries strengthens the implications of the Middle English included in Margaret de Beauchamp's prayer book. All of this evidence indicates that the Beauchamp family were familiar with paraliturgical Latin, but interested in vernacular books and closely connected with monasteries promoting the use of Middle English.

The Scrope and Beauchamp contexts in which we might place **V** help us to see how its distinctive positioning of Middle English relative to Latin (with the French of England almost invisible) might have been understood. These family associations with the patronage of Gilbertine houses, with the production and dissemination of manuscripts, and with interest in Middle English, provide examples of the kind of networks in which a text like *Handlyng Synne* might have circulated in the years for which we have no surviving manuscripts. They indicate that we should not be surprised to find *Handlyng Synne* outside its original Gilbertine context, nor in the form in which it survives in **V**, a context of Latin-inflected Middle English piety. The fact that aspects of Latin manuscripts – Psalters and Books of Hours – circulating in the Scrope and Beauchamp families in the fourteenth century have been compared to *Handlyng Synne* in terms of their imagery is an important reminder of the familiarity of such Latin to lay readers who also relied upon the vernacular for understanding. William Beauchamp's interest in Lollard texts and Lollard sympathisers might be related to his interest in Middle English rather than heresy, to his familial links to the Gilbertine Order, whose promotion of Middle English far predates Wycliffe. Indeed, the character of **V** as a whole – often interpreted in the context of Wycliffism and of the need to promote an orthodox compilation of Middle English texts – may be better understood when we look at the networks of book ownership in which possible patrons participated. In these, Middle English had always been important, and

[324] Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries* c. *1275 to 1535* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 7 and 26-27.

interactions between lay and monastic members of families, between Latin and vernacular in manuscripts belonging to these families, were common.

The culture in which **B** was made, just a few years later than **V**, initially seems a complete contrast. **B** contains *ex libris* inscriptions (one now erased) showing that it was owned by the house of the Bonshommes canons of Ashridge, in Buckinghamshire.[325] The scriptorium of the Bonshommes seems the likeliest location for the copying not only of **B** itself, but also of **H**, copied directly from **B**. The scribe of **H** was evidently local to the Ashridge area, for his dialect indicates the manuscript was also made in Buckinghamshire.[326] How Ashridge acquired its exemplar for **B** is uncertain. The members of the order were priests, so had an obvious interest in pastoral outreach, and their library is known to have contained another book with associations similar to those of *Handlyng Synne*. This is a fourteenth-century copy of the *Oculus Sacerdotis* of William of Pagula, Oxford, Trinity College MS 18, which contains evidence of Lincolnshire provenance and possible association with the Lincolnshire Gilbertines of Catley Priory.[327]

If Lincolnshire associations provide one possible explanation for the transmission of *Handlyng Synne* to the Bonshommes, London provides a context for other features of its production and use. The relationships between **B** and the other two substantially complete copies of *Handlyng Synne*, **F** and **H**, are extremely close: **H** was almost certainly copied directly from **B**, while **F** might be another direct copy, or might be a copy from **B**'s exemplar.[328] The texts were not designed to be exact replicas from the outset: **B** has forty lines per page, whereas **H** has 38 and **F** 37. This

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[325] "Liber doune de Asshrugge' ('Book of the House of Ashridge') is found on f. iii^{v}. A similar inscription, now erased, is found on f. 91v. For this inscription, see Sullens, 'Introduction,' xlii n. 18.

[326] See *An Electronic Version of A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, ed. Angus McIntosh, M. L. Samuels, Michael Benskin, with the assistance of Margaret Laing and Keith Williamson. Revised and supplemented Version 1.1 by Michael Benskin and Margaret Laing, webscripts by Vasilis Karaiskos and Keith Williamson (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2013). First published Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986. LP 6630. Accessed on 01/01/14 at http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html. Hereafter *eLaLME*.

[327] See Schulz, 'The Monastic Library,' 306; Taubman, 'Clergy and Commoners,' 56.

[328] See Perry, 'Cultural Locations,' 110-162 (esp. 135).

scribal work was not the end of the production process. Perry suggests that **F** was 'probably decorated, if not also transcribed, in London'.[329] **F** also contains a C-text of *Piers Plowman*, and Perry has noted that its putative first owner had a London house.[330] Linne Mooney identifies the illumination of **B** as 'metropolitan'.[331] **H** also contains illuminated initials, which I judge likewise suggest metropolitan provenance.

Ashridge can also be linked to the West Midlands, where **V** was made: in Ashridge's church was buried the heart of St Thomas de Cantilupe, the Hereford saint, whose name was written into *Manuel* manuscript **A**.[332] It is possible that the traffic of manuscripts from Ashridge to London, suggested by the metropolitan illumination of **F** and **H**, was not one-way. Although the Bonshommes had historically antagonistic relationships with St Thomas's hospital, by the fifteenth century Neel was in a position to donate a book to the Bonshommes, which was subsequently returned (perhaps after copying).[333] Indeed, twelve manuscripts once the property of Ashridge still survive.[334] The house was evidently in good contact with several different areas of the country, including the important book-producing locations of London and the West Midlands.

In **B**, annotations made in the early sixteenth century show interest in the role of preachers, and especially in the sacrament of ordination and the practice of

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329 Perry, 'Clopton Manuscript,' 140.

330 Horobin argues that the C-text of *Piers* was largely copied in London. Throckmorton, whom Perry identifies as the initial owner of **F**, was a London man. **B** is associated with the London book trade through John Neel's interaction with Ashridge. See Horobin, '"In London and opelond": The Dialect and Circulation of the C Version of *Piers Plowman*,' *Medium Ævum* 74 (2005): 248-269; Perry, 'Clopton Manuscript,' 131-160.

331 Private communication, 09/11/10.

332 See **A**, f. 5v, line 4.

333 This manuscript is London, British Library, MS Royal 15. C. 16. See Schulz, 'Monastic Library,' 306. Neel was also a satellite member of the cultural networks surrounding *Handlyng Synne*'s source, the *Manuel*. See Chapter 2.

334 Schulz, 'Monastic Library,' 307.

confession.[335] In particular, the section on the fifth sacrament, that of priesthood, contains several of these annotations in an early sixteenth-century hand.[336] Many of these annotations mark passages concerning the correct behaviour of people in authority. One of these marked passages quotes the Biblical aphorism of Solomon: 'Wo þe land*e* þ*er* chyld ys kyng*e*' ('Woe to the land where a child is king,' f. 69va, l. 25); this Biblical quotation is often associated with Henry VI.[337] These annotations suggest that **B** remained in its non-lay context, for the passages marked would be of interest to the Bonshommes canons whose duties included pastoral outreach.

However, the language of these annotations is not, as we might expect in a monastery, Latin. We find 'Beleu no wiche craffte' ('Believe in no witchcraft') in the margin of f. 17ra, opposite ll. 7-8. The same hand writes 'þ<e> prid of weme*n*' ('The pride of women') on f. 22va, in the margin by l. 3. In the margin of f. 28rb at ll. 11-14, another note (it might be by the same annotator using a thicker-nibbed pen) is placed directly underneath the scribal marginal note 'a. tale,' continuing 'of one in desperacion'. Elsewhere, the name 'baltasar' is corrected to Nebuchadnezzar, an odd 'correction' since the *exemplum* in question is the story of Belshazzar's feast.[338] In addition, a late fifteenth-century hand writes 'grosteste' by Mannyng's tale of Grosseteste, on f. 30va, l. 27. The brief annotations pick out themes of the subsections, or topics of the *exempla*. The presence of these *notae* suggests that perhaps, to the annotator, the original minimal apparatus was insufficient, and more detail in Middle English was required. These annotations suggest that **B** was read, in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in much the way that **V**'s textual apparatus originally encouraged that manuscript to be read: with Middle English comments adding to the main text and helping readers to navigate the contents.

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335 These are found at f. 69rb, l. 36, and f. 69va, l. 7, 25, 29, and 70ra l. 29, marking lines concerning, respectively, temporal rulers, clerks, kings, husbands over wives, and priests.

336 I am grateful to Simon Horobin, who provided a second opinion on the date of this hand.

337 The quotation is *Ecclesiastes* 10: 16.

338 See **B**, f. 59rb, the l. 38. The line once read 'and baltasar hys name hyght' ('and he was called Belshazzar'), but the word 'baltasar' has been crossed out. Beside it is written 'note well Nabygodny/sore' ('note well Nebuchadnezzar'). This corresponds to l. 9358.

The community in which **Ci** was produced and read was evidently less prestigious than Lichfield Cathedral, the home of William Beauchamp, or the well-stocked library of the Bonshommes. Yet, of all three manuscripts, **Ci** is the only one to contain several ownership inscriptions naming individual people. One inscription declares the manuscript to be 'the boke of S*er* William Trew. I[n] witnesse wher*e* for I tho*m*as bareyle hauyng knowlage ther*e* off haue putt to my*n* signe' ('the book of Sir William Trew. In witness to which, I, Thomas Bareyle, knowing this to be so, have set my signature,' f. 195v). It sounds as if the book was in the process of being borrowed, since the note constitutes a signed witness statement of Trew's ownership, as if to pre-empt its permanent alienation. Baker suggests that the manuscript was probably prepared by members of the secular clergy 'for the private devotional reading of the pious family of such clergy'.[339] This seems unlikely, given not only the title 'ser,' which suggests a priest, but also given that the other names recorded indicate ownership by several unrelated people. Later scribbles on the same page refer to 'John Cuttyng' of 'Worsted,' and record that 'This is the boke ser Rob*er*t Hawe'.[340] Worsted is a village a few miles to the north-east of Norwich, and Doyle observes that one Robert Hawe was a rector of Thetford, around than thirty miles from Norwich, from *c*. 1473 to 1491.[341]

How this Norfolk community acquired the exemplar for *Handlyng Synne* is uncertain. It is possible that exemplars directly from Sempringham were circulating in **Ci**'s area of Norfolk. **Ci** shares text – the continuation of *Handlyng Synne* itself – with London, British Library MS Harley 3954. This manuscript was once thought contemporary with **Ci** and now judged to be from the early fifteenth century; it was

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339 Joan Baker, ed., *Robert of Sicily*. Online edition. Miami, FL: Florida International University, 1996-8). Accessed on 03/01/14 at http://www2.fiu.edu/~bakerj/MacIndex.html.

340 Guddat-Figge records that these names were first deciphered by F. A. Foster in his edition of *The Northern Passion. French Texts, Variants and Fragments, etc.,* II. *EETS OS* 147 (1916 for 1913, reprinted 1971), 13-14. See Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 102.

341 Anthony Ian Doyle, 'A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in English in the 14th, 15th and Early 16th Centuries with Special Consideration of the Part of the Clergy therein.' 2 Volumes (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1953), 146.

made not far away, in south Norfolk.[342] A third manuscript located in this area and owned by a canon of Thetford priory contains some text written in a Lincolnshire dialect, demonstrating that – at least in the late fourteenth century when this manuscript was made – texts or scribes from the area in which *Handlyng Synne* had been written were located in the area in which **Ci** was to be copied.[343]

Other possibilities may also be considered. There were numerous religious houses in the area, notably that at Thetford, and the Gilbertine house of Shouldham, where, as we have seen, members of the Beauchamp family who may have owned **V** were nuns. The texts in **Ci** suggest further geographic associations: **Ci** contains an extract from Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* (ff. 95r-v), a text very often associated with London. This makes us think of **BFH**, which were also associated with limners or patrons with London connections. **Ci**'s relationship to London, British Library, MS Harley 3954, which contains the other witness to the continuation of *Handlyng Synne* found in **Ci**, provides a link to another London text: Harley 3954 contains a mixed A and B text of *Piers Plowman*, and Horobin comments on the difficulty the Norfolk scribe may have had in sourcing an exemplar of the London-centric B text.[344] It is possible that these manuscripts together indicate the regional networks to which Norfolk scribes had access in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Thus, although we cannot associate **Ci** with the sorts of well-connected book owners who are associated with **V**, nor with the resources of a monastic library such as we find at of Ashridge, with its connections to the Beauchamp affinity and to London educators, we can place the manuscript in a regional network where exemplars were often sourced from outside the local area. The linguistic context of

[342] Simon Horobin, 'Harley 3954 and the Audience of *Piers Plowman*,' in *Medieval Texts in Context*, eds. Graham Caie and Denis Renevey (London: Routledge, 2008), 68-84 (69).

[343] This manuscript is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 99. Horobin discusses the association of this manuscript with London, British Library, MS Harley 3954: See Horobin, 'Harley 3954,' 77. Margaret Laing notes the presence of Lincolnshire dialect words in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 99 at ff. 18r-27r. See Laing, 'Dialectal Analysis and Linguistically Composite Texts in Middle English,' *Speculum* 63 (1988): 83-103 (94, n. 25).

[344] See Horobin, 'Harley 3954,' 68-84.

the *Handlyng Synne* extract in **Ci** is different from **V** and **B** not simply because its owner was a cleric, but also because the connotations of Latin and Middle English shifted over the course of the fifteenth century. In **Ci**, the short Latin lyric beginning 'Cur in hac miseria miseri moramini' ('Why do you stay in this vale of misery?' f. 69r, ll. 1-4) was translated into Middle English (ll. 5-8) perhaps as much as fifty years after the manuscript was made, demonstrating that **Ci** remained in the hands of Latin-literate readers.[345] Even later, an annotator crosses out the word 'pope' (for example, at f. 87v, l. 6), demonstrating that the manuscript was still being read after the reformation. These sixteenth century annotations might be compared to those in **B**, and it is revealing to notice that while Middle English of **B** is augmented by Middle English *notae*, the Latin of **Ci** is translated.

When we glance at these three manuscripts of *Handlyng Synne*, or at the corpus as a whole, the linguistic identities constructed on the page seem very disparate, ranging from **V**'s casual interplay of Latin and Middle English to **B**'s almost complete Anglicisation of the apparatus, to **Ci**'s Latin annotations. The role of Latin in Mannyng's hierarchy of languages seems the most protean, attracting almost no explicit comment in his description of the languages of 'clerkes' and the 'lewed' but interpolated into the text constantly. However, when we reconstruct the wider communities of scribes and readers – the clerics of Lichfield, sponsored by aristocratic patrons and a bishop from a book-owning family; the Bonshommes of Ashridge with their links to networks of book ownership in the West Midlands, London and Lincolnshire; the parish priests of **Ci**'s Norfolk, sourcing exemplars from a surprisingly wide area – we can better understand how this Latin relates to Middle English and to the French of England, and how it shapes the identity *Handlyng Synne* invites readers to adopt.

As Wendy Scase argues, **V**, which gathered together many northern and Midlands texts, was made in a region well-known for earlier compilations written predominantly in the French of England; *Handlyng Synne* itself was transmitted from an area where, as we saw in the previous chapter, the *Manuel* remained intensely

345 For discussion of the hands, see Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 102.

popular throughout the fifteenth century. Both of these facts bring Mannyng's antagonistic repositioning of the French of England to life. The community in which **B** was made was clearly in contact with West Midlands readers, but its members were also influenced by the proximity of and traffic from London, where Middle English was in the process of becoming the language associated with the most popular texts – Chaucer's works, *Piers Plowman*, Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. In **B**, too, we see the influence of increasingly sophisticated attention to textual apparatus, which promoted Middle English visibly, in conjunction with illumination of a notably English style and with Latin carefully marked out for ease of performance.[346] In **Ci**, these two distinct, but not dissimilar attitudes towards Middle English that we see in the earlier manuscripts have shifted; we find more Latin and a more cautious attitude towards English reading. The corpus of manuscripts as a whole demands that we interpret the linguistic rhetoric Mannyng constructed in the early fourteenth century as an invitation to scribes and readers, a suggestive positioning of Middle English relative to Latin and to the French of England, which invites reinterpretation.

Conclusion

Handlyng Synne, constantly cited and anthologised as a distinctively, even polemically 'English' piece of writing, depends upon both the French of England (as a construct) and Latin (as a matrix language) to construct a own model of 'englyssh' religious reading. In the extant manuscripts, Latin – which Mannyng incorporates tacitly into his text without overt comment on its status relative to Middle English – takes on a variety of more and less visible roles. Mannyng's verbal rhetoric, defining Middle English through contrast with the French of England, is placed in dialogue with the visual rhetoric of the manuscripts, which interweave Latin and Middle English, offering different and complementary models of linguistic relationships. It

[346] For discussion of metropolitan illumination as a mark of pride in 'English' manuscript production, see Kathleen Scott, 'The Illustration and Decoration of Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*,' in *Nicholas Love at Waseda*, eds. Oguro, Beadle and Sargent, 61-86 (75-76).

has been argued that code-switching denotes participation in the group practice to which the languages refer, expressing a 'sense of belonging'.[347] Mannyng's attempts to construct a Latinate Middle English – perhaps a project shared by other near-contemporary writers such as Rolle– involve code-switches whose function is inclusive, markedly contrasting with the exclusionary connotations he attributes to the French of England. The sense of Middle English as a distinct language is broken down by the manuscript pages, which all find different ways in which to represent Mannyng's reliance upon the Latin textual culture he inherited from the *Manuel*. It is Mannyng's notoriously hostile rhetorical repositioning of the French of England as the language of 'clerkes' that ultimately makes this possible, and which separates the issue of lay usurpation of clerical prerogatives from the issue of vernacular access to Latin textual culture.

[347] Herbert Schendl, 'Code-Switching in Late Medieval Macaronic Sermons,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain,* eds. Jefferson and Putter, 153-170; Jefferson and Putter, 'Introduction,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval England*, xi-xiv (xvii).

Chapter Four: Praying in Latin in the Middle English Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*

In this chapter I focus on Nicholas Love's English translation of a Latin religious text, the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, and its role in the culture of reading in fifteenth-century England.[348] The text of the *Mirror*, witnessed by forty-nine surviving originally complete manuscripts and several further extracts, has been the subject of increasing scholarly interest in recent years.[349] It is polemically orthodox, explicitly opposed to Lollardy. The *Mirror* manuscripts provide crucial insights into the ways in which the relationship of Middle English to Latin might be constructed, and contested. By studying these manuscripts, we can gain new perspectives on orthodox late-medieval manuscript culture, the place of the *Mirror* it, and above all on the position of Middle English readers within the linguistic encounters of the fifteenth century.

Latin and Middle English: Two Distinct Cultures in Post-Wycliffite England?

[348] Page and line references are to Sargent's edition of the *Mirror*, unless otherwise stated.

[349] There are over sixty manuscript witnesses to the *Mirror* in total. Elizabeth Salter pioneered the study of the text in her doctoral thesis. See Elizabeth Salter, 'Nicholas Love's "Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ,"' *Analecta Cartusiana* 10, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1974). An important collection of essays was edited by Oguro, Beadle and Sargent, *Nicholas Love at Waseda*. The *Mirror* is a constant theme of the collection of essays edited by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh, *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). Several further collections have recently been published or are forthcoming, the result of a large project and a conference on Middle English Lives of Christ in 2010, 'Mapping Late Medieval Lives of Christ,' at Queen's University Belfast, June 10-13. The collections are: Ian Johnson and Alan Westphall, eds., *Opening The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Middle English Lives of Christ* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013); John Thompson, Ian Johnson, Stephen Kelly, Ryan Perry, Allan Westphall, eds., *Geographies of Orthodoxy* (in preparation, contracted with Brepols) and Ryan Perry and Allan Westphall, *The English Passion: An Analytic Survey of the Middle English Pseudo-Bonaventuran Tradition* (in preparation, contracted with Brepols).

In the culture of Middle English religious writing in the early fifteenth century, the implications of Wycliffite and Lollard heretical writings were highly important.[350] Wycliffe's firm belief in the need for an English Bible, accessible to all without the 'glosing' or interpretation of Latin-literate clerics, sparked controversy and much debate over the role of translation and over the competencies of non-Latinate readers.[351] The *Mirror*, translated into Middle English from Latin, participates in this debate. Its author reflects upon what is involved when a text is transmitted from one (Latinate, monastic) reading culture to another, defined by its readers' use of Middle English.

The text from which the *Mirror* was translated is the Latin *Meditationes Vite Christi*, or 'Meditations on the Life of Christ'.[352] Modern scholars debate the actual author, and date, of the Latin text, but in the late-medieval period it was confidently attributed to the thirteenth-century Franciscan theologian Bonaventure, whose name was a byword for this kind of affective meditation on the Life of Christ.[353] The *Meditationes* is addressed to a Poor Clare, a woman who was evidently competent in reading Latin. The text, like all Lives of Christ, is deeply dependent on Latin textual culture. Its subject matter is drawn from synthesis of the gospels, from apocryphal accounts such as the second-century Gospel of James, as well as from more

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350 See Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change,' 822-864 and Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation'.

351 See Mary Dove, *The First English Bible: The Text and Context of the Wycliffite Versions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-67.

352 The edition of the *Meditationes vitae Christi* used in this chapter is by Mary Stallings-Taney, ed., *Iohannis de Caulibus,* Meditaciones Vite Christi *olim S. Bonaventuro attributae* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997).

353 For the date of the *Meditationes* see Sarah McNamer, 'Further Evidence for the Date of the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*,' *Franciscan Studies* 50 (1990): 235-261; Mary Stallings-Taney, 'The Pseudo-Bonaventure *Meditaciones vitae Christi: Opus Integrum*,' *Franciscan Studies* 55 (1998), 253-280; Dávid Falvay, 'St. Elizabeth of Hungary in Italian Vernacular Literature: *Vitae*, Miracles, Revelations and the *Meditations on the Life of Christ*,' in *Promoting the Saints: Cults and their Contexts from Late Antiquity until the Early Modern Period. Essays in Honour of Gábor Klaniczay for his 60th Birthday,* eds. Ottó Gecser, József Laszlovszky, Balázs Nagy, Marcell Sebok, Katalin Szende (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 137-150; Péter Tóth, 'From the Apostle James to Pseudo-Bonaventure: New Light on the Date and Authorship of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*,' Paper presented at the conference 'Mapping Late Medieval Lives of Christ,' Queen's University Belfast, 12/06/10.

contemporary revelatory literature.[354] The stories of the life of the Virgin and of Christ are laid out in seven sections, corresponding to the days of the week, and readers are invited to visualise the scenes as they are described, to engage imaginatively and emotionally with the narrative.

The popularity of the *Meditationes* was immense. Versions were translated into numerous languages and circulated throughout Europe and in England. Aside from the *Mirror*, there are at least nine Middle English translations of all or part of the *Meditationes*, in upwards of thirty manuscripts altogether.[355] One of these even refers to the *Mirror* in its prologue.[356] Several of these versions pre-date the *Mirror*, and all testify to the importance and the vitality of the pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition of Lives of Christ in late-medieval England.[357] However, none of these other English Lives of Christ survives in close to the number of manuscripts in which the *Mirror* survives, and none has been credited with the same influence on fifteenth-century reading culture. The *Mirror* therefore demands particular attention.

The *Mirror* was written by the Carthusian monk, Nicholas Love, prior of the recently-founded house of Mount Grace near York. A manuscript of the *Meditationes* owned by Mount Grace still survives, now Ripon Cathedral MS 6, and may have been the source Love used for his translation, which he completed around 1409.[358] In Love's translation, the content of the Latin *Meditationes*, already a suitable vehicle for

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354 Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 9.

355 Sargent, 'Introduction,' in *Mirror*, ed. Sargent, 1-163 (17-18). George Keiser, 'Middle English Passion Narratives and their Contemporary Readers: The Vernacular Progeny of *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,' in *The Mystical Tradition and the Carthusians*, ed. James Hogg, *Analecta Cartusiana* 130 (Salzburg: Institut für englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1996), 85-99.

356 James Hogg, ed., *The* Speculum Devotorum *of an Anonymous Carthusian of Sheen, edited from the Manuscripts of Cambridge University Library, Gg.I.6 and Foyle, with an Introduction and Glossary*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 12 (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg 1973).

357 Ian Johnson, 'Prologue and Practice: Middle English Lives of Christ,' in *The Medieval Translator: The Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages*, ed. Roger Ellis (D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1989), 69-86.

358 Anthony Ian Doyle, 'The Study of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*, Retrospect and Prospect,' in *Nicholas Love at Waseda*, eds. Oguro *et al*, 163-174 (165).

promoting orthodox devotion, is augmented and adapted, with a lengthy 'proheme' detailing the mode of contemplation suited specifically to Middle English readers. A scrupulously orthodox new section on the Sacrament of the Eucharist opposes the contemporary heretical attacks on that sacrament, and many interpolated passages and marginal *notae* are directed 'contra lollardos,' against the Lollards.[359] The *Mirror* thus adapts its pseudo-Bonaventuran Latin source in light of the contemporary controversies, and, as we will see, the nature of this adaptation has been understood by modern scholars as a crucial source of insight into the status of Middle English and the purpose of translation in the fifteenth century.

The *Mirror*, like the other vernacular texts I have discussed, contains a prologue (the 'proheme') in which its author characterises his audience's religious needs and capacities primarily in terms of their distance from other, more educated textual cultures. Whereas Mannyng distinguished his audience primarily from 'clerkes' who read in the French of England, Love notes that his Latin original was written for a 'religiouse woman' ('religious woman') who read 'latyne' ('latin,' 10: 11); this neatly pre-empts any suggestion that the translation of the text into Middle English made a book culture previously exclusive to clerics accessible in Middle English. The term he uses, 'lewed,' seems familiar to us from *Handlyng Synne*. In the early years of the fifteenth century, the trope of the 'lewed' reader of 'Englysch' was well established.[360] However, it was also becoming central to a theological debate in which English was presented not only as a language through which religious teachings could be made accessible, but as a language categorically inferior to Latin, precluding subtle or complex theological expression.[361] As a result – and as a tacit

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359 The proheme is found at *Mirror* 9-13, including Love's translation of the *incipit* to the *Meditationes*. The Treatise on the Sacrament is found at *Mirror* 223-239. The *notae* 'contra lollardos' are found at 25: 27-28; 90: 39-42; 132: 34-38; 138: 1-2; 142: 19-20 and 151: 19-20.

360 See Somerset and Wason, 'Preface,' ix-xiii; Thompson, 'The *Cursor Mundi*, the "Inglis tong," and "Romance,"' 99-120.

361 See, for example, Thomas Palmer, '*De Translatione Sacrae Scripturae in Linguam Anglicanam*,' in *The Lollard Bible and other Medieval Bible Versions*, ed. Margaret Deanesly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 418-431; Geoffrey Martin, ed. and trans., *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

refutation of Wycliffe's demands for an English Bible – the *Mirror* declares that such 'Englysche' readers require a 'symple' text 'more pleyne … þan is þe gospell' ('more plain … than the gospel is,' 10: 8-9). English is thus doubly secondary and subordinate to Latin: not only is the text of the *Mirror* a simplified translation; it is also a translation of a text that simplified and clarified the gospel even in its Latin form. As a translation, the *Mirror* treats its source with freedom, omitting portions and incorporating new material, both original and borrowed.[362] Accordingly, Love notes that the contents are altered in the *Mirror* 'as it semeth to þe wryter hereof moste spedefull & edifyng to hem þat bene [of] symple vndirstondyng' ('as it seems, to the writer of this text, most useful and edifying to those who are of simple understanding,' 10: 11, 21-22). This adaptation is de-intellectualising in its aims: in that, Love is emphatic. He describes his English readers as being in need of texts that provide 'mylke of lyзte doctryne' ('milk of light teaching,' 10: 15) rather than intellectual theologies requiring 'grete clargye' ('great clerisy,' 10: 16). The term implies clerical learning is not to be translated, but entirely avoided.

The model of reading Love promotes as ideal is ultimately concerned with emotion and visualisation, not language, and is therefore translatable to the 'lewed'. Readers are instructed to 'sette in mynde þe ymage of crystes Incarnacion passion & Resurreccion' ('to place in your mind the image of Christ's incarnation, passion and resurrection,' 10: 26-27), to focus on scenes from Christ's life that may be visualised. Love translates Bonaventure's Latin *incipit*, which advocates this mode of imaginative visualisation of scenes:

> make þe in þi soule present to þoo þinges þat bene here writen seyd or done of oure lord Jesu, & þat bisily, likyngly & abydyngly, as þei þou herdest hem with þi bodily eres, or sey þaim with þin eyen don.
>
> ('make yourself present in your soul to those things, which are here written, said or done by our Lord Jesus, and do that eagerly, affectionately and constantly, as if you heard them with your bodily ears, or saw them done before your eyes.' 12: 41-13: 3)

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[362] For differences between the *Mirror* and its source, see Michelle Karnes, 'Nicholas Love and Medieval Meditations on Christ,' *Speculum* 82 (2007): 380-408 (388–394).

This passage translates the model of reading from the pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition into Middle English as an alternative to intellectual contemplation of divinity, a concept much less amenable to imaginative engagement.

Yet, despite Love's rhetorical distancing of his readership from Latinity and from modes of reading that require the intellectual skills proper to the Latin-literate clergy, the text is not monolithically Middle English. It should come as no surprise, now that we have seen how Latin is incorporated into texts written in the French of England and in Middle English, to find that the *Mirror*'s English readership were placed in close contact with elements of Latin textual culture. Latin textual apparatus and quotations from the Bible and Latin *auctoritates* are important parts of the *Mirror*, although their intended audience is debated amongst scholars, some of whom see this Latin text as evidence Love hoped to address a readership of monastic novices, and not the laypeople the text went on to reach in large numbers.[363]

Love's rhetoric in this prologue, and the mode of reading he imagined for his audience, have been the subject of much debate amongst modern scholars, especially in recent years, as part of the attempt to reconstruct the ways in which the late-fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Church interrogated the relative positions of Latin and Middle English, of the clergy and the increasingly literate laity. In order to understand the position of the *Mirror* in late-medieval English book culture, we need to understand the wider context in which it was written. In the last decades of the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe and his followers put forward a new ideology of reading, which carried the potential for the radical re-shaping of old hierarchies between Latin clerics and Middle English readers. By translating the Latin Vulgate wholesale into Middle English and separating it from interpretative interpolations, Wycliffite writers were, potentially, giving Middle English readers the autonomy to educate themselves directly from the Word of God. In response, orthodox clerics cited the incapacity of uneducated, non-Latinate readers and the crude Middle

[363] For the suggestion of a readership of novices, see Anthony Ian Doyle, 'Reflections on Some Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Myrrour* of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ,' *Leeds Studies in English* NS 14 (1983): 82-93 (82). The lay circulation of the text is discussed later in this chapter.

English language for the task.[364] By 1409, when Love finished the final draft of his translation from Latin to English, Wycliffite ideology had made a visible contribution to English manuscript culture, and the orthodox anti-Wycliffite representatives of the Church had responded with legislation restricting first Wycliffite preaching, then unauthorised new translations of the Bible into English.[365] The conflict had the potential to re-shape not only the religious responses of Middle English laypeople, but also their sense of their position in textual culture.

In the first decade of the fifteenth century, when Love was preparing his translation, the Church was clarifying its position on the production and dissemination of English translations of the Bible. In 1407-1409, Archbishop Arundel promulgated legislation including the ruling that any new translations of the words of Scripture into English must be examined by the Church authorities, and that unauthorised copies would be banned.[366] In 1410, Love submitted his translation – with its proportion of scriptural material – to Arundel, to be authorised according to the law. A Latin note attached to many manuscripts of the *Mirror* would appear to confirm this picture of the text as part of an organised effort against Lollardy. It records that Arundel ordered that the text should be widely published, 'ad fidelium edificacionem, & hereticorum siue lollardorum confutacionem' ('for the edification of the faithful and the refutation of heretics or lollards,' 7: 19-20). So, the same legislation that banned the Wycliffite Bible is used to cement the authority of the *Mirror*, reinforcing the idea of the two texts as competitors for the same readership.

This perception of antagonism between Wycliffite writings and Love's *Mirror* – between those who wanted the Bible in English and those who wanted it restricted to Latin-literate readers – has shaped modern scholarship on the text. It has been suggested that the *Mirror* gained its large lay readership because it was seized upon

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364 For the influence of and responses to Wycliffism in English culture, see Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 390-445.

365 See Ghosh, *Wycliffite Heresy*, 147-173. Ghosh discusses the visual influence of Wycliffite manuscripts on the *Mirror* at 169-173.

366 The seminal article is Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change,' 145-157.

by Archbishop Arundel as a suitably orthodox work conveying a repressively negative characterisation of English readers' abilities. The idea that the *Mirror*'s popularity might have been as a substitute for the Wycliffite Bible was put forward a century ago by Margaret Deanesly.[367] Later, Elizabeth Salter described the text as 'a weapon of orthodoxy to combat Lollard doctrine'.[368] Salter suggests that it was Archbishop Arundel whose patronage of the text amounted to 'publication,' and Arundel who exercised his powerful control over the dissemination of the text in manuscripts. More cynically, David Aers suggests that the inherent qualities of the *Mirror* suited it to Arundel's exploitation. The *Mirror* was 'part of a piety well suited to block off any critical, ironic reflections of the faithful'.[369] This characterisation paves the way for Nicholas Watson's famous article on censorship and cultural change, in which he argues that the text was 'designed to divert lay readers from doctrinal inquiry and to remind them of their childlike dependence on the clerics who think for them'.[370] Watson interprets the Memorandum as evidence that the *Mirror* was co-opted by Arundel in order to silence both heresy and orthodox religious innovation.

These interpretations, despite their differences, have in common the idea that they consider Arundel as the 'publisher' and disseminator of the *Mirror*, choosing to promote Love's translation to a lay English readership to serve his own political ends. More recent interpretations of the *Mirror* have attributed much more agency to Love as promoter and disseminator of his own work, questioning the idea that Arundel exercised substantial control over the dissemination of books in early fifteenth-century England. Fiona Somerset argues that Arundel's Constitutions hardly

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[367] Margaret Deanesly, 'The Gospel Harmony of John de Caulibus, or S. Bonaventure,' in *Collectanea Franciscana* II, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Manchester: British Society of Franciscan Studies, 1922), 10-19.

[368] Elizabeth Salter, 'The Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* and Related Texts,' in *Middle English Prose: Essays on Bibliographical Problems*, eds. Anthony Edwards and Derek Pearsall (New York and London: Garland, 1981), 115-128 (117).

[369] David Aers, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity: English Writing 1360-1430* (London: Routledge, 1988), 115.

[370] Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change,' 822-864.

constituted the 'draconian censorship' suggested by Watson, and that the *Mirror*'s orthodox polemic was not so much exploited by Arundel as deliberately constructed by Love, as a politically expedient response to the climate, a form of 'opportunistic … theatrical orthodoxy'.[371] Somerset's view of Love as an astute and canny writer, well aware of the need to construct his authorial *persona*, has been echoed in other recent work. A conference on 'Mobility, Movement and Use of Manuscripts and Printed Books, 1350-1550' held at York in 2011 saw scholars of the *Mirror* including Michael Sargent, Toshiyuki Takamiya and Vincent Gillespie suggest we might think of Love seeking out, and even shaping the direction of, Arundel's legislative agenda.[372]

This focus on Arundel and Love's exploitation of the *Mirror* as a tool of orthodoxy tacitly presumes a rather passive Middle English readership at best, and a silenced and disenfranchised one at worst. Scholarship on the *Mirror* manuscripts is still preoccupied with the fundamental question of who Love's audience were, and what they sought from his text. We do not know the identities of all the extant manuscripts' owners, still less whether they represent the group or groups Love intended to reach. Love retains the *Meditationes*' preface with its explicitly monastic instructions to a Latin-literate reader, and this strengthens the implications of the Latin textual apparatus as evidence for the possibility that Love originally intended the *Mirror* for an audience such as novices of the Carthusian Order, not yet fluent in Latin.[373] The quotation Love uses about 'mylke of lyȝte doctryne' is ultimately taken from a text addressing monastic novices, too.[374] This then leaves us with the crucial

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371 Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation,' 154.

372 Vincent Gillespie, 'The Bounds of Probability: Another Look at English Carthusian Transmission of Vernacular Spiritual Writings,' paper presented at 'Mobility, Movement and Use of Manuscripts and Printed Books, 1350-1550,' Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Early Book Society in Collaboration with the Twelfth York Manuscripts Conference, University of York, 07/07/11.

373 Doyle, 'Reflections on Some Manuscripts,' 82.

374 Theodore Berkeley, trans., *The Golden Epistle: A Letter to the Brethren at Mont Dieu by William of Saint Thierry* (Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1971), 174, 69. For further discussion of Love's adaptation of this passage, see Karnes, 'Nicholas Love and Medieval Meditations,' 387.

question as to why the *Mirror* so rapidly became popular in the very different, lay-dominated contexts of its early manuscripts.[375]

Scholarly speculations on this issue – on the nature of the appeal the *Mirror* had to the readers of the manuscripts it reached – raise as many questions as they answer. Kathleen Scott and Joanna Laynesmith argue that an important function of *Mirror* manuscripts was visual display of religio-political allegiance, symbolised amongst other things by the distinctively English illuminations often found therein.[376] Kantik Ghosh and Anne Hudson consider how Love's representation of his Latin sources may have been influenced by Wycliffite ideologies of textual presentation, and Ghosh concludes the *Mirror* manuscripts represent a reactionary and 'hesitant' response to this aspect of Wycliffism.[377] This scholarship shows the *Mirror* manuscripts functioning as polemic, whether through successful display of 'Englishness' or 'hesitant and uncertain' attempts at subversion of Wycliffite visual dynamics.[378] This scholarship invites us to question why readers of the *Mirror*, characterised in emphatic terms as 'lewde' and 'symple,' chose to display polemic that did not flatter them, and was, perhaps, less successfully convincing than the heretical material it attempted to supplant.

The final strand of scholarship on the *Mirror* manuscripts and their readers concentrates on the *Mirror* manuscripts' manipulation of the reading experience for the purposes of communicating orthodox messages to different audiences. Elizabeth Salter, Malcolm Parkes and, more recently, Ian Johnson have discussed the punctuation and 'punctability' of the *Mirror* as a text: that is, on the extent to which

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375 Sargent, 'Introduction,' 40-41; Doyle, 'Reflections on Some Manuscripts,' 82.

376 Scott, 'The Illustration and Decoration of Manuscripts of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*,' 61-86; Joanna Laynesmith, 'The Piety of Cecily, Duchess of York: A Reputation Reconsidered,' in *The Yorkist Age. Proceedings of the 2011 Harlaxton Symposium*, eds. Hannes Kleineke and Christian Steer (Donington: Shaun Tyas and Richard III and Yorkist History Trust, 2013), 27-43. See also Carol Meale, '"oft siþis with grete deuotion I þought what I mi3t do plesyng to god": The Early Ownership and Readership of Love's *Mirror*, with Special Reference to its Female Audience,' in *Nicholas Love at Waseda*, eds. Oguro *et al*, 19-46.

377 Hudson, *Premature Reformation*, 439, 173; Ghosh, *Wycliffite Heresy*, 173.

378 Ghosh, *Wycliffite Heresy*, 156.

the text is well-suited to 'pointing' or repunctuating by scribes with specific audiences and specific interpretative priorities in mind.[379] This work identifies a flexibility in the highly standardised *Mirror* text, picked up in studies of certain individual manuscripts and the scribal or editorial deviations from the norm that they represent.[380]

This scholarship, despite differences of emphasis between individual scholars, reflects a common concern with the *Mirror* as polemic, primarily to be understood within a context of antagonism between the representatives of orthodoxy and heresy. The rhetoric Love uses, the disparaging comments about English readers' 'lewde' capacities and the Latinate reading he idealises, seems to support the idea of a binary distinction between Latin and English, and between the words of the 'gospell' and the 'more pleyne' paraphrases of that text. Yet, as we have seen, medieval writers' rhetoric demarcating one language from another – whether Latin from the French of England in the *Manuel* or Middle English from the French of England in *Handlyng Synne* – is frequently qualified or given new complexity by the rhetoric of the manuscript page. The qualities scholars have identified in the *Mirror* – its immensely powerful capacity to signify orthodoxy merely as an object; its textual accommodation of differentiated modes of response from readers – have been explored in the context of Love's Middle English. However, Love also writes the *Mirror* in Latin, not only adopting a model of ideal reading - the inherently mediatory rather than exclusionary model of emotional engagement with Christ as a suffering human – from the Latin, but also incorporating large amounts of Latin into and around the main Middle English text. In order to understand how the *Mirror*

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379 Elizabeth Zeeman (Salter), 'Punctuation in an early manuscript of Love's *Myrrour,*' *Review of English Studies,* NS 7 (1956): 11-18; Parkes, 'Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*,' 47-59; Ian Johnson, 'Vernacular Theology/Theological Vernacular: A Game of Two Halves?' in *After Arundel*, eds. Gillespie and Ghosh, 73-88.

380 For discussion of the adaptation of specific manuscripts to particular audiences, see Ryan Perry, '"Some sprytuall matter of gostly edyfycacion": Readers and Readings of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*,' in *Opening the Pseudo-Bonaventuran Middle English Lives of Christ*, eds. Ian Johnson and Allan Westphall (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 79-126; Shearle Furnish, 'The Editorial Truncation of Nicholas Love's *Mirrour* in Huntingdon Library, MS HM 149,' *Manuscripta* 41 (1997): 19-31; Furnish, '*Ordinatio* Huntingdon Library, MS HM 149,' 50-65.

manuscripts functioned within fifteenth-century book culture, we need to move beyond the binary model of English and Latin set out in Love's rhetoric, to explore the contributions made by Latin to Love's model of Middle English reading.

How Latin and English Intersect on the Manuscript Page

In this section, I want to consider how the readerships of *Mirror* manuscripts were invited to navigate the interactions of Latin and Middle English as they were presented on the page. What kind of Latinity did Love envisage amongst his readership when he wrote his polemical statements about the inferiority of 'Englysche' readers? For the audience Love claims to address in his proheme – the 'lewde,' who could not read Latin, or at any rate who could not read the Latin *Meditationes* – the language of the *notae* and the language and accessibility of the texts and concepts to which they refer must be a primary issue. These *notae* were Love's own innovation – the Latin *Meditationes* is not annotated – and they represent a spectrum of different kinds and complexities of Latin.[381] In his edition of the text, Sargent divides the *notae* into six types: 'simple identifications of the underlying biblical narrative … quotation of a text cited from scripture … of non-scriptural *auctoritates* … topical notes … e.g. "Paupertas Christi" … editorial notes … and various forms of "nota" [or] "nota bene"'.[382] This usefully identifies the content and function of the various *notae*, but only provides a very incomplete sense of how readers might navigate each different *nota*, for within each category many different levels of grammatical complexity or familiarity of content may be found. In order to shed light on the ways in which the *Mirror* manuscripts invite readers to position themselves in relation to Latin and to Middle English, I want to explore the treatment of these *notae* and of the marginal space they inhabit on the page.

The manuscripts of the *Mirror* are divided into three recensions, which Sargent characterises as a final authoritative revision α, an early authoritative draft

381 Ghosh, *Wycliffite Heresy*, 170.

382 Sargent, 'Introduction,' 132.

β, and a scribal version, γ. Each recension has distinctive characteristics, not only of text but also of the treatment of Love's *notae* and, to some extent, of the visual dynamics of the page. By comparing these manuscripts and the differing production and reception contexts to which they bear witness, we can gain a clearer picture of how Love's text was used to reflect the positions of Middle English and Latin in polemically orthodox fifteenth-century book culture.

Oxford, Brasenose College, MS D. 9 (Bc)

Bc was made in the very early years of the fifteenth century, possibly before Love made his final revision of the text after submitting a draft to Arundel for approval. The original and early owners of the manuscript are not known, although a monogram in the lower border of f. 5r provides the letters 'N' and 'L'. Doyle and Parkes identified **Bc** as one of several manuscripts written by the 'Delta scribe,' who also worked on copies of the Trevisa's *Polychronicon*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and Guy de Chauliac's *Cyrugie*.[383] This places **Bc** centrally within the networks of professional metropolitan book making, which have been the subject of intense scholarly interest, and Kathleen Scott's identification of the illumination of **Bc** as metropolitan in style strengthens this association.[384] In this, **Bc** is representative of much of the *Mirror* corpus, which has strong associations with London and with professional networks of book making.[385] Whether the owners of **Bc** were wealthy laypeople, or monastics or clerics, it seems clear that in order to acquire this early

[383] The relevant manuscripts are Cambridge, St John's College, MS H. 1 and London, British Library, MS Add. 24194, containing the *Polychronicon*; London, British Library, MS Royal 18. C. 22, containing *Confessio Amantis*, and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS anglais 25, containing the *Cyrugie*. See Doyle and Parkes, 'Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and *Confessio Amantis*,' 163-210.

[384] Scott notes that only three illuminated *Mirror* manuscripts can be identified as non-metropolitan: Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 6686 (**A2**); London, British Library, MS Add. 11565 (**Ad4**); Glasgow, University Library, MS Gen. 1130 (**Gl**). See Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 75.

[385] See Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 75, and Michael Sargent, 'What Do the Numbers Mean? Observations on Some Patterns of Middle English Manuscript Transmission,' in *Design and Distribution of Late Medieval Manuscripts*, eds. Connolly and Mooney, 205-244 (237-244).

copy, they must have had strong connections to other *Mirror* owners and probably to Mount Grace itself.[386]

However, we would be wrong to assume that, because **Bc** is associated with a prolific and professional copyist, it must have reached its first owner as an impersonal finished product, as modern printed books reach their owners. Rather, we have evidence that at least one person painstakingly annotated and corrected **Bc** after it was copied, and Malcolm Parkes suggests this was a common part of the transmission process of Carthusian books.[387] Parkes has argued that this manuscript may have been 'prepared for use as an exemplar,' resulting in the excision of its interpolated passages from the *Meditationes de Passione* and the correction of its punctuation to bring it more into line with that of the α recension.[388] In its carefully corrected form it was used as an exemplar for another early copy, London, British Library, MS Add. 30031 (**Ad3**).[389]

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386 Owners of the early *Mirror* manuscripts include laypeople connected to Mount Grace, such as the families of Joan Holland who owned Tokyo, Takamiya, MS 8 (**Tk2**), and of Margaret Neville, who probably owned **Mu**, who included the patrons of the foundation. One early *Mirror* copy is known to have belonged to a female religious, Sybille de Felton, abbess of Barking (this is the Foyle manuscript (**Fo**), currently in private hands, once at Maldon, Beeleigh Abbey). The *ex libris* of Mount Grace itself appears in Cambridge, University Library, MS 6578, f. 2v. Carthusian connections of the manuscripts remained strong. Three manuscripts of the *Mirror* from later in the century were copied by a Carthusian monk, Stephen Dodesham: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 15. 16 (**Tr1**); Glasgow, Hunterian Library, MS T. 3. 15 (**Ht**) and Oxford, Bodleian Library Rawlinson MS A. 387b (**Ra**). A further manuscript, Glasgow University Library, MS Gen. 1130 (**Gl**), from the middle of the fifteenth century, may also be associated with a Carthusian house. See Anthony Ian Doyle, 'Stephen Dodesham of Witham and Sheen,' in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M.B. Parkes*, eds. Pamela Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot: The Scolar Press, 1997), 94-115 (102) and Carol Meale, 'Early Ownership and Readership,' 19-46.

387 Parkes, 'Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*,' 58-59.

388 Parkes, 'Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*,' 58. Elizabeth Zeeman (Salter) first identified the interpolation of the *Meditationes de Passione* in **Fo**. See Zeeman, 'Continuity and Change in Middle English Versions of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*,' *Medium Ævum* 26 (1957): 25-31 (25-26). Jason Reakes expands on this analysis, identifying four more *Mirror* manuscripts in which the *Meditationes de Passione* was interpolated: in addition to **Bc**, he cites Tokyo, Takamiya, MS 20 (**Tk3**); **Tk2**, and London, British Library, MS Add. 30031 (**Ad3**). See Reakes, 'The Middle English Prose Translation of the *Meditaciones de Passione Christi* and its links with Manuscripts of Love's *Mirror*,' *Notes and Queries* 27 (1980): 199–202.

389 Parkes, 'Punctuation in Copies of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*,' 58. For the later ownership of **Ad3** (Kent gentry), which may indicate an earlier lay provenance for **Bc**, see Meale, 'Early Ownership and Readership,' 27.

Bc is evidently a carefully designed and carefully maintained product, and may have been made with a specific final owner in mind, as well for use as an exemplar for later manuscripts. The treatment of Latin and Middle English in this manuscript reflects the complexity of the *notae* as Love first conceived of them, in his initial draft. Like most of β recension, the manuscripts based on Love's early draft, **Bc** contains a large number of marginal *notae*, 545 in total, placing substantial demands on readers.[390] Many of the *notae* are citations of *auctoritates*, for a high number of citations is a characteristic quality of the β recension not shared by the α or γ groups.

The first *notae* of the *Mirror* in virtually all manuscripts – and **Bc** is typical – are *notae* relating to the erudite Latin sources Love relies upon in his proheme: St Paul, St Augustine, St Bernard, St Gregory.[391] These *notae* are formidably Latinate in two ways: they are grammatically complex, and they refer to books that would be difficult for many readers to source and access. Examples in **Bc'**s proheme include, for example, 'Aug*ustinus* de agone xp*isti*ano' ('Augustine, *On the Christian Struggle*,' f. 5r, at ll. 20-21) and 'No*t*<a> b*er*nard*us* de m*artir*ib*us*' ('Note: Bernard on the martyrs,' f. 7r). These *notae* require readers to detangle Latin grammar of some complexity, as well to expand abbreviations correctly, and once this has been done, unless readers were able to access the Latin texts in question, the *notae* would achieve no more than to demonstrate that Love had sources in mind, and would not explain what point those sources made. The cumulative result is to convey a strong sense of Latin textual culture surrounding and authorising the Middle English, which would be impenetrable to readers not fluent enough in Latin to understand the grammar of the *notae*. Indeed, a glance at the first few pages of **Bc** would suggest that the page can be divided into two areas, separated on the first page of the manuscript

390 For full details of *notae* across the corpus as a whole, see Sargent's descriptions of manuscripts, 'Introduction,' 104-142.

391 I dicuss exceptions below.

by a border, and each, thereafter, the locus of a different language: the Middle English main text and the Latin margins (see Figure 4.1).[392]

However, this initial impression of strictly demarcated Latin and Middle English, occupying different areas of the page, and of this exclusionary register of Latin referring to inaccessible texts, is relaxed in the body of the manuscript. In the proheme, all Latin except for the opening quotation from St Paul is relegated to the margins.[393] In the main text of the *Mirror*, however, scribe of **Bc** tends, like most β recension scribes, to incorporate Latin direct speech and especially the words of Christ into the main text. These Latin quotations are written in rubric, distinguishing them visibly from the main brown text, but also implicitly treating their Latin as more part of the English narrative than the Latin *notae* placed in the margins.[394] Thus, **Bc** conveys to its readers that Latin is not to be treated as a monolithic and impenetrable block of text surrounding Middle English, but rather, that some Latin text from the Bible can speak, as it were, directly to a Middle English reader.

Bc is able to achieve this effect because much of the Latin quoted in the main text of the *Mirror* would have been extremely familiar even to non-Latinate readers. As we saw in the previous chapters, in Books of Hours and Psalters owned by laypeople, Latin liturgical prayers are juxtaposed with vernacular rubrics and visual and verbal elaboration, and scriptural passages are juxtaposed with extra-scriptural prayers. Latin passages from the Bible make up much of the liturgy and form the basis of common prayers such as the *Ave Maria*, the *Miserere* or the *Magnificat*. Lections, read during the church service, canticles, and above all the psalms, were all drawn from the Bible and found in Books of Hours and Psalters. Over the course of

[392] Figure 4.1 is **Bc**, f. 5r, showing the Middle English text of the *Mirror* surrounded by a border on four sides, and with the *nota* 'N' and a Latin *nota*, 'Aug*ustinus* de agone *christi*ano' ('Augustine, *On the Christian Struggle*') in the margin outside this border at l. 6 and ll. 20-21

[393] The Latin quotation is *Mirror* 9: 4-6.

[394] The corrector of **Bc** underlines and brackets these portions of text, to indicate that they were to be placed in the margins of subsequent copies. For example, see f. 98v, ll. 4-5; 11-12; 13-14; 15-16; 19-20 and 24-25.

the Church year a listener would hear many sections at the appropriate times.[395] So, even a reader who was not grammatically fluent in Latin might understand or at the very least recognise these quotations from their liturgical context.

That this strategy was part of Love's plan is evident from the text itself, which presumes a certain amount of familiarity with Latin liturgical quotations.
Love truncates his Middle English quotations after a few words, indicating that readers are expected to fill in the remainder of well-known texts from memory. For example, in the account of Mary's meeting with her cousin Elizabeth, Love quotes in English the opening words of Elizabeth's greeting her cousin: '*Blessed be þou amonge women & blessed be þe fruyt of þi wombe …*' ('Blessed be thou amongst women, and blessed be the fruit of thy womb …' 32: 9-10), then adds 'and so forþ in þe wordes of þe gospelle' ('and so on, in the words of the Gospel,' 32: 11). He applies the same method of quotation to Mary's reply, providing the first few lines quoted in English and then cutting off the quotation with a reference to the context in which the readers of the *Mirror* would have known it '… and so forþ seying & fulfillyng þat Canticle of gostly ioying & louyng, þat is *Magnificat* as it is contyned in the gospell' ('… and so on, reciting and completing that Canticle of spiritual rejoicing and loving, which is "Magnificat" as it is embedded in the Gospel text,' 32: 27-29). Love evidently assumes these words to be familiar to his readership from the liturgy ('þat Canticle'), in this case of Evensong, and known to be part of 'the gospell'.

This threading of the familiar Latin text through, and alongside Middle English paraphrase gives rise to one of the most innovative uses of the space of the manuscript page, which we see in Figure 4.2.[396] The page shows the beginning of Love's section discussing the prayer *Ave Maria*, in the context of the Annunciation. We see Latin words relegated to the margin, where they spell out the Latin prayer *Ave Maria*, which every beginning reader was required to learn by heart. It is possible to read this prayer by scanning down the left-hand margin, although the scribe has made a minor error in the first Latin quotation at ll. 2-3, incorporating the word

[395] Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 22-23.

[396] Figure 4.2 is **Bc**, f. 17v.

‘resurrecio’ (‘resurrection’), which provides a thematic gloss, into the left-hand margin instead of placing it on the right in sequence with his other thematic glosses on the passage. In the main text, and picked out in rubric, are the Middle English translations of each line, such as ‘Oure lord is wiþ the’ (‘Our Lord is with thee,’ l. 2). The rubrication of these lines enables readers to pick out the whole Middle English prayer, spread across the page, and fit it together like a jigsaw, for **Bc** is only approximately 260 by 190 mm, small enough that a viewer can take in the pages at a glance. A third reading process is the standard left-to-right option, taking in the main brown text and the rubrics in sequence, melding the Middle English words with their Middle English gloss. Finally, the use of rubric in both main text and margin invites readers to keep crossing from one to the other, matching each rubricated line with its familiar Latin version.

The layout is dynamic, enabling more than one possible reading process, and enabling different interpretations of the relative positions of Latin and Middle English. The familiarity of the marginal Latin quotations to non-Latinate readers suggests the permeability of Latin textual culture, rather than a fixed and absolute boundary between this and English. The separation of Latin and English on the page might appear to signify binary separation such as the most ardent anti-Wycliffite might approve, but in practice, the process of reading Love’s text invites constant movement from main text to the margins and back again, so that readers cross into the Latinate space demarcated initially as a locus of impenetrable authority.

That this design was an important part of the reading experience is clear from what we can reconstruct of the scribal activities that went into the making of **Bc**. The production of the manuscript required several stages of work from the scribe. The manuscript’s text and design – in particular the system of *notae* written in red and marked with blue paraphs, and the main text written in brown ink and punctuated with red and blue paraphs – was demanding to copy accurately. On several pages we find double *virgulae* in brown ink, left by the scribe to remind himself where to return to write in the rubricated *notae*, and further *virgulae* in red ink, made during the copying of the rubricated *notae*, remind the scribe where to return to write in the blue paraphs.[397] In a few places the scribe has used the wrong colour ink, writing *notae* in brown ink instead of red, and paraphs in red instead of blue, testifying to the difficulty of the work, and possibly to the number of stints of correction he undertook.[398] Finally, corrections to the main text are made throughout the manuscript are made in a blackish ink, darker than that of the original text, and therefore it is easy to see where punctuation, as well as text, has been corrected. Missing paraph marks are added in dark ink, then overlaid with red or blue to bring them fully in line with the original design of the page).[399] These features, indicating at least two stints of rubrication and correction of the manuscript, reflect the painstaking, time-consuming care of the scribe, or scribe, limner and annotator, if these were different people.[400]

These corrections indicate that exploiting the visual design of the text – for example, in the *Ave Maria* section– was an important priority. Yet, the painstaking corrections demonstrate that the visual design was not merely, or perhaps even primarily, an aesthetic concern: it was practical. The manuscript page was both an aesthetic object, and one that would be readily memorised. The mode of reading it invites is intense concentration on a manuscript page vivid with colour and movement, leading to the internalisation of sacred text, which Love represents as exemplary reading. The manuscript balances its scholarly Latinate citations of *auctoritates* with registers of Latin that are more familiar and liturgical, and with pages that encourage dynamic, memorable interactions between Latin and English.

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397 For example, we can see the red *virgulae* visible under the blue paraphs in the margin of f. 26v, at l. 19 and l. 28.

398 For examples of *notae* written in brown ink, see f. 52r, l. 27; f. 61v, l. 17; f. 69r, l. 1. The accompanying paraph marks are in the usual blue. In one case, at f. 52v, l. 8, the scribe has written the *nota* in brown but has marked it with two red dots, presumably as a correction. For red paraphs instead of blue, see f. 60v, line 7 (which may represent another stint of correction as the red ink is of a slightly brighter colour than that elsewhere on the page), and f. 86r, l. 22. In both cases, the accompanying *nota* is in brown ink instead of the usual red.

399 See, for example, f. 16r, l. 9, for a black mark under a paraph, and f. 35v, l. 1, for a black paraphs not filled in with blue or red.

400 I judge the hand in which the marginal *notae* are written to be the same as that of the main script, but it is possible features such as paraph marks and corrections to punctuation were carried out by at least one other person.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Museo 35 (Mu)

Mu was made at some time in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, after Love's submission of the text to Arundel. The α recension, to which it belongs, represents Love's final draft of the text, and many of its revisions concern the number, type, and position of the Latin *notae*. As Love revised his text, he reduced the total number of *notae*, but increased the proportion that were placed in the margins, moving the Biblical quotations that we find in the main text in β recension manuscripts like **Bc** into the margins. This change in textual presentation, as well as text, may be credited to Love, or at least Love working with a scribe, for the annotations of what is probably Love's own copy of the α draft in Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 6578 (**A1**) indicate his close control over the changes.[401] The result was to make the visible distinction of Latin from Middle English much more absolute than it is in **Bc**, where some Latin is found in the main text, and to convey the clear message that the two areas of the page – margin and main text – each represent a different language. However, on a practical level, the incorporation of Biblical quotations in Latin into the main page dilutes the complexity of the marginal material, for these quotations are amongst the most familiar and easily understood Latin phrases.

The α recension manuscript I concentrate upon exploited these changes to the full, as we shall see. Unlike **Bc**, it carries signs of who its first owners were. Many scholars accept Margaret Neville, wife of Thomas Beaufort, as the most likely owner, although Joan Beaufort is also a possibility.[402] The scribe of **Mu** has not been identified, but the main limner of **Mu** was expert and prestigious, and his work is known elsewhere. His work demonstrates that, like **Bc**, **Mu** is the product of

[401] For the annotations of **A1** and their implications for Love's role in the production of manuscripts, see Doyle, 'Reflections on Some Manuscripts,' 83-85.

[402] For arguments for Joan's ownership, see Catherine Innes-Parker, 'The "Gender Gap" Reconsidered: Manuscripts and Readers in Late-Medieval England,' *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: An International Review of English Studies,* 38 (2002): 239-269 (257-258).

professional, organised copying. Just as the Delta scribe's hand links **Bc** to copies of the works of Trevisa, Gower and de Chauliac, so too the limner's work in **Mu** links it to copies of several other manuscripts. His work appears in the Admiralty Ordinances copied for Thomas Beaufort, husband of Margaret Neville, one of the two women identified as probable owners of **Mu**.[403] He also worked on copies of Hoccleve's *Regement*, a text with similar associations with the Lancastrian dynasty to those acquired by Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.[404] His hand appears in the copy of de Chauliac's *Cyrugie* that was copied by the Delta scribe who wrote **Bc**.[405] In addition to this, much of this limner's work is paraliturgical, including the famous Bedford Hours.[406] This limner would have been intimately familiar with the preparation of Latin paraliturgical books for aristocratic laypeople, and well aware of how these books catered to their audiences, who might not have a good grammatical understanding of Latin. These identifications of limner and probable owners allow us to locate **Mu** in a thriving reading culture of aristocratic laypeople, whose Middle English reading matter was fashionable, politically astute, often annotated in Latin, and prepared by a limner well aware of how his patrons' Latin paraliturgical books were made.

However, **Mu** betrays signs that the context in which it was copied was not one in which communication between scribe and limners was perfect and conscientious. The manuscript was originally intended to be a costly and richly illuminated object, but its programme of illumination is incomplete, and towards the end of the *Mirror* text, some of the rubrication was discontinued.[407] The text is

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403 The Admiralty Ordinances are found in London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian MS B. 22. See Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 72.

404 London, British Library, MS Arundel 38 and London, British Library, MS Harley 4866. See Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 72.

405 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS anglais 25. See Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 72.

406 The Bedford Hours is London, British Library, MS Add. 42131. Other paraliturgical books include Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Don. D. 85 and London, British Library, MS Stowe 16. See Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 72.

407 There is no red underlining of quotations from p. 208, to the end of the text at p. 218.

marked with demi-vinet borders containing six-line initials at each daily division, as well as pen-flourished paraphs in blue and gold at the smaller subsections. The *notae* are typically written in brown ink and underlined in red, with red underlining in the main text identifying quotations and *auctoritates* (Figure 4.3).[408] Throughout the text, *notae* are marked with brown hairline marks by the scribe, evidently as a signal to the limner.[409] However, only one quire – the third, beginning at p. 27 – contains gold and blue pen-flourished paraph marks beside the beginning of each marginal *nota*, covering the marks left by the scribe.[410] Perry argues that this quire represents the beginning of the work carried out by the main limner, and that the preceding two quires are the work of a different hand, whose quality 'whilst high, does not appear to be in the same style or artistic quality of those which begin on p. 27'.[411] If so, then the main limner followed the scribe's instructions for only one quire before discontinuing his practice, although he used gold paraphs within the main text throughout the manuscript.

While the more copious use of gold leaf in **Mu** – in regular paraphs as well as in borders and initials – suggests the greater amount of money spent on this manuscript than on the smaller and less lavish **Bc**, inconsistencies in the programme of *ordinatio* indicate that less time and care was spent on the treatment of the Latin quotations in **Mu**.[412] The absence of scribal underlining of quotations towards the end of the manuscript indicates a further lack of rigorous care applied to the details of the visual dynamics. **Mu** is an expensively produced manuscript, and these minor details do not detract from its visual appeal. However, whereas the inconsistencies in

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408 Figure 4.3 is **Mu**, p. 15. It features *notae* in the right margin at ll. 2-4, ll. 12-14, ll. 17-19 and ll. 27-30, corresponding to underlined text at l. 2, l. 12 and l. 17 and ll. 27-28. The passages, and the *notae*, are *Mirror* 29: 27-30: 26.

409 For example, see Figure 4.3, at the lines given above.

410 For example, see p. 28, in the left margin at l. 5 and l. 7, or p. 29 in the right margin at l. 27.

411 See Ryan Perry, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Museo 35: Manuscript Description,' in *Geographies of Orthodoxy. Mapping Middle English Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ, 1350-1550*. Online Project, principal investigator John Thompson. Belfast: Queen's University, 2007-2010. Accessed on 5/11/13 at http://www.qub.ac.uk/geographies-of-orthodoxy/resources/?section=manuscript&id=9.

412 For gold paraphs, see Figure 4.3, showing **Mu** p. 15, l. 2, l. 17 or l. 35. For borders, see p. 29 or p. 37. For initials, see p. 13, ll. 28-30 or p. 33, ll. 30-35.

the presentation of the *notae* in **Bc** indicate a scribe (or any combination of scribe, rubricator and corrector, if these were roles carried out by different people) who was striving to maintain the most accurate and up-to-date version of a text as it was in the process of being rewritten, the inconsistencies of **Mu** suggest a far more casual and haphazard interruption to the copying process.

Many of the standard *notae* of the *Mirror* are missing in the opening folios of **Mu**, in the folios that contain the proheme. The proheme of **Mu** contains only six *notae*, in comparison with the 15 in **Bc** and the 16 Sargent publishes in his text, whose *notae* are based an α recension manuscript contemporary with **Mu**, **A1**.[413] Small *virgulae*, clearly visible to the left of the *notae* when not covered by the limner's paraph marks, indicate that the scribe copied the main text first and then returned to copy the *notae* into their marked places. There are no marks to indicate where the missing *notae* should have been written, so evidently either the scribe was working from an exemplar that was missing them, or he decided at an early stage to omit them. This omission, in this early, prominent position, concerning *notae* that cite erudite Latin texts, is telling.

As the text of the *Mirror* progresses, the *notae* diversify, and we begin to find examples that evoke a simpler and more accessible register of Latin, possibly familiar to Middle English readers. These *notae* are simple summaries of subject matter or of the exegetical framework in which the narrative or passage might be placed. These include such comments as 'no*t*<a> paup*er*ta/tem marie' ('note on the poverty of Mary,' p. 19, at ll. 18-19) or 'Ex*emplu*m cont*r*a gulam' ('example against greed,' p. 79, ll. 22-23), or 'nota contra superbiam' ('note against pride,' p. 54, ll. 8-9). In **Mu**, this familiar and grammatically simple Latin gains prominence within the marginal spaces as a result of the removal of more complex citations of *auctores*.

[413] Part of the opening page of **Mu** is torn away, and based on the missing text, it is conceivable that **Mu** originally included 7 *notae* in the proheme, with the *nota* 'Poule' (*Mirror*, 9: 8) on the missing portion. While some α recension manuscripts do contain fewer *notae* than others – Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 634 (**Bo3**), for example, contains none at all – the omission of these particular *notae* in **Mu** is strange given its high number in the manuscript overall. **A2**, the α recension manuscript Sargent treats as most authoritative after **A1**, also contains the *notae* missing in **Mu**.

These phrases would be relatively easy to translate and simple to understand: their grammar is not complex, and their content is such as is often found in annotations to catechistic handbooks written in Middle English. We have seen similar Latin *notae* in both the late thirteenth-century *Manuel*, where they function as subsection titles, and in the early fourteenth-century Middle English *Handlyng Synne*. They are part of the standard programme of catechistic tenets, ultimately derived from Latin programmes of education for laypeople, and would have been familiar to many readers who were incapable of understanding Latin grammar outside the context of penitential *pastoralia* or paraliturgical prayer.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 131 (Bo1)

Bo1 was made sometime in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, probably after 1431.[414] It is a miscellany, dominated by the *Mirror* but also including various prayers in Middle English and Latin and various Middle English devotional, meditational and political works.[415] *Mirror* manuscripts containing as many separate texts as **Bo1** are rare: only a handful of those that contain a complete text of the *Mirror* are accompanied by more than one or two short texts. Two of those that do are **Fo**, which contains several short Latin items and shares with **Bo1** a copy of the *De remediis contra temptaciones* of William Flete, and *Handlyng Synne* witness **Ci**, whose extract of the *Mirror* is part of a larger miscellany whose penitential character, discussed more fully in Chapter Three, matches that of **Bo1**.[416] Neither of these manuscripts was owned by a layperson: **Fo** belonged to Sybille de Felton, abbess of Barking, and **Ci** to a parish priest, and so Doyle has suggested that **Bo1** might have

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[414] The anonymous Yorkist poem *Kings of England* (ff. 140v-144r) allows us to give a *terminus post quem* of 1429, for it mentions the coronation of Henry VI. Kate Harris judges the manuscript to be at the late end of the range of dates, around 1450. See Harris, 'Ownership and Readership: Studies in the Provenance of the Manuscripts of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*' (Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of York, 1993), 77 n. 7.

[415] For a full description of the contents of **Bo1**, see Sargent 'Introduction,' 135-136.

[416] For a full description of **Fo**, see Sargent, 'Introduction,' 126-131.

been made for a religious.[417] It represents the most Latinate of the *Mirror*'s three recensions. I want to suggest an alternative possibility for the Latinity of **Bo1**, to show that it relies upon a familiarity with certain specific Latin texts not dissimilar to those the owner of **Mu** might have known.

The scribe who wrote **Bo1** signs his name, 'quod John Morton' ('so said John Morton,' f. 121v, l. 26), and the same name appears in a letter of confraternity bound into the manuscript and concerning John and Juliana Morton. Several attempts have been made to identify the John Morton who signs **Bo1** (and who may or may not be the same John Morton who is mentioned in a letter of confraternity bound into the manuscript). It was once suggested he was the scribe of a copy of the *Gestis Romanorum* mentioned in a York will of 1431, which includes a bequest to Joan Beaufort of Gower's work.[418] It would be tempting to believe that this will referred to the scribe or owner of **Bo1**, for the reading matter of Cecily Neville, Joan Beaufort's daughter included a book of 'Bonaventure … in English,' likely the *Mirror*.[419] However, the Beaufort connection (if it exists) must be more distant: it is probably too early for the testator himself to be the owner or maker of **Bo1**, nor can the 'John' he refers to as a scribe be John Morton, as was once thought.[420]

However, the Morton family certainly knew other book owners in York. Another John, who died in 1434, is probably the father of the man mentioned in

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417 Doyle, 'Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings,' II: 65-6.

418 See John Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 27. For the will, see James Raine, Sr, James Raine, Jr, and John Clay, eds., *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry of York*. Vol. 2 (London: J. B. Nicholas, 1855), 13-15.

419 See Meale, 'Early Ownership and Readership,' 31.

420 Friedman interpreted this will to refer to two men named 'John Morton': the testator and his brother, seemingly also called John, whom Friedman identified as the scribe of **Bo1**. See Friedman, *Northern English Books*, 27. However, this is a mistranslation: Morton the testator leaves *Gestis Romanorum* to the scribe 'Johanni fratri suo' ('his brother John,' that is, the brother of the man Morton has just mentioned, William Alne), and not to 'Johanni fratri meo,' 'my brother John'. For further discussion of the identity of Morton, see Doyle, 'Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings,' 1: 68-70. The testator is thought to be too early to be the scribe mentioned.

Bo1.[421] He was an important member of the city's political elite, representing the city of York at Parliament in 1415 and 1421, and serving as mayor in 1418.[422] This John Morton's peers amongst the city politicians include William Alne (mayor in 1415) and Nicholas Blackburn (mayor in 1412).[423] A few years later, a John Morton is mentioned in the will of the book-owning John Wyndhill, presumably a relative of the Wyndhill family mentioned in the documents bound into **Bo1**.[424] The names of these men – Mortons, Blackburns, Alnes – appear alongside each other in civic office.[425] All three were members of parliament for York, and Alne's term in Westminster immediately preceded that of Morton. This may explain the sourcing of the exemplar used for **Bo1** some years later, since Alne had a relative in the London Carthusian house, in the centre of the *Mirror*'s network of transmission. Alne's brother Robert was a cleric, and his will of 1440 refers to 'Johanni Alne, monacho ordinis

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421 In his thesis, Doyle established that the John Morton who died in 1434 could not be the John mentioned in the letter of confraternity, for his wife was called Margaret. See Doyle, 'Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings,' 1: 68-70. For the suggestion he was our John Morton's father, I am grateful to Zachary Stone, who discusses the possibility in 'Quod John Morton: Anthologizing Nicholas Love in the North,' paper presented at 'Mobility, Movement and Use of Manuscripts and Printed Books, 1350-1550,' Twelfth Biennial Conference of the Early Book Society in Collaboration with the Twelfth York Manuscripts Conference, University of York. 3/07/11.

422 For Morton's time as mayor, see David Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late-Medieval Yorkshire, 1389-1547* (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), Appendix 3, 279. For Morton and his associates, see *The House of Commons, 1386-1421.* Vol. 1 (Introductory Survey, Appendicies, Constituencies), eds. John Roskell, Linda Clark and Carole Rawcliffe (Wolfeboro Falls, N. H: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992), 747-750. For William Alne in particular, see *The House of Commons, 1386-1421.* Vol. 3 (Members, A-D), eds. John Roskell, Linda Clark, Carole Rawcliffe (Wolfeboro Falls, N. H: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992), 30.

423 See Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, Appendix 3, 269-270.

424 John Wyndhill made bequests to one of our John Mortons and who also made a bequest of *Piers Plowman* to John Kendall, presumably well known to Morton as Morton's bequests were 'in custodia Johannis Kendale' ('in the custody of John Kendall'). See Raine *et al.*, eds., *Testamenta Eboracensia* 2, 32-35 (34). Stone discusses this in his paper, 'Quod John Morton'.

425 In 1429 John Morton and Nicholas Blackburn were amongst the witnesses to a document concerning William and Robert Alne. London, *The National Archives*, DDSC/158. Accessed on 15/11/13 at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=047-ddsc&cid=20-1#20-1.

Cartusiensis London, cognato meo' ('John Alne, a monk of the Carthusian Order in London, my relative').[426]

The son of John Morton the mayor, who is chronologically the best-placed candidate to be our scribe and the husband of Juliana in 1438, grew up in this circle of York politicians and book users. His father's friends the Alnes may have been the source of his exemplar for **Bo1**; certainly, they show how both books and men could travel easily between London and York, between the lay and religious members of families, helping us to understand how a copy of the *Mirror* might have been acquired from the main centre of its production in London. In his own generation, this younger John's York contemporaries included John Dautre, whose will was proved in 1459.[427] Dautre had evidently inherited several books from his father, including 'librum meum Bonaventura' ('my book of Bonaventure'), which, if it is not a copy of Love's *Mirror*, must be a copy of something none too dissimilar.[428]

Morton, and **Bo1**, can therefore be placed in a context in which book ownership was common, and closely related to the practical business of civic government. It is perhaps no surprise that Morton's family document, his letter of confraternity, ended up bound into his copy of the *Mirror*. The same pragmatic attitude might be identified in the production of the text. The manuscript itself shows us that Morton was working in a very different context from those that produced **Mu** and **Bc**. While those manuscripts are illuminated, written on good quality parchment and reflect the expense of good materials, **Bo1** was evidently a cheaper product. The text was written mostly on paper, with parchment used for the outside of quires, perhaps to protect them before they were bound, and possibly indicating that the

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[426] For Robert's will, see Raine *et al.*, eds., *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 2: 78-9. For details of Robert and William's relationship to each other, see Roskell *et al.*, eds., *The House of Commons*, 30.

[427] For John Dautre's will, see Raine *et al.*, eds. *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 2: 230-234.

[428] Comparison of the wills of Dautre father and son reveal several repeated titles, and John Dautre even notes in his will that one of his books 'fuit patris mei' ('was my father's,' 232). Intriguingly, he also mentions Thomas Morton (233), referring to the cleric of that name who may well be related to our Morton family. For the will of Thomas Dautre, his father, see Raine *et al.*, eds., *Testamenta Eboracensia* 2, 59-61. These will provide us with an analogy for the passing down of books of 'Bonaventure' from father to son, which may have accounted for **Bo1** also.

scribe was not certain he would be able to afford binding immediately. Quotations in the main text are underlined in red, and rubric is used for section titles and a few subtitles or names, but there is little other variation in the colours employed for textual apparatus: features such as paraph marks that are provided in blue or gold in **Bc** and **Mu** are in plain brown ink in this manuscript. The scribe begins by copying the *notae*, but, as the text progresses, he abandons this practice. These features would facilitate a far speedier copying process than that involved in **Mu** or **Bc**, as, with *notae* largely omitted and rubric minimised, the scribe would seldom need to change his pen or, indeed, to copy as much text as in the other versions. **Bo1** is unusual in this: Scott notes **Bo1** as one of the 'divergent' manuscripts that do not fit into any of the different levels of decorative and illustrative detail she describes.[429] The combination of Morton's professional ruling and quiring practices with his practical measures to save money and protect his quires during the copying process suggests he was a professional preparing a quick copy of the text, probably for his own or his family's immediate use.

The treatment of the textual apparatus in **Bo1** provides us with insight into the mode of reading the scribe envisaged for the text. **Bo1** is not unique in having so few *notae*, but it is unusual, even within the γ recension, where *notae* are fewer than in the other recensions and often (as in β) subsumed into the main text.[430] The manuscript has only 71 authorial marginal *notae*, several of them positioned oddly in relation to the main text, and concentrated in the early portions. Paraph marks were omitted during the copying process, and have been inserted in a darker ink into the rather insufficient spaces within the text.[431] The matching ink colour indicates that the *notae* were added at the same time. These *notae* placed rather different demands on readers from those of either **Bc** or **Mu**, despite their smaller number, and not only

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429 See Sargent, 'Introduction,' 135 and Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 71.

430 **Bo3** has no *notae*; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 31 (**Ha**) has only 29, and in **Tr2** the scribe makes some 244 *notae*, but then gives up almost entirely after the Thursday section. For details of *notae* and their distribution, see Sargent, 'Introduction,' 104-142.

431 For example, see f. 31r, ll. 2, 3, 6, 11, 16, 23, 29 and 34.

because it is difficult for readers to know how to interpret a textual feature that is so rapidly abandoned. While both **Bc** and **Mu** use colour to help readers match the marginal *notae* to the portion of the main text to which they relate, **Bo1** uses only a darker brown ink than the main text, the same ink in which corrections are made and paraphs marking new sections are inserted. As a result, the function of the paraph marks relating to *notae* is less immediately apparent than is the function of the rubric in **Bc** and **Mu**; it would be easy not to realise how they relate the *notae* to the text, especially for readers whose Latin was not fluent. Whereas in **Bc** and **Mu** it is quite easy to understand that the Latin *notae* are designed to be important, even integral features of the text, those in **Bo1** could be taken for scribal annotations, notes by the scribe to himself, so if **Bo1** reached a wider audience than its own scribe, this wider audience might simply have ignored the *notae*.

The logic behind **Bo1**'s treatment of the *notae* may be related to its scribe's context, to the audience for whom he was working or the source from which he had acquired his exemplar. If Morton were copying for an audience of limited linguistic competencies, he might have decided that Latin *notae* were an over-complication; if he lost access to his exemplar at this stage, equally, he might have been forced to stop. Neither possibility strongly suggests the kind of organised copying we might expect of a monastic scriptorium or a commercial scribe, nor does this recall the rigorous care and good connections of the scribe of **Bc**, who sourced a second exemplar from which to correct the *notae* of his original version of the text. However, the presence of the dark-ink paraph marks suggests a second scribal stint of annotation, so all care was not abandoned.

The most eye-catching displays of Latin in this manuscript are concentrated in the exposition of the *Ave Maria*, and in the Latin prayer that follows it. Throughout his copying of the *Mirror*, the scribe of **Bo1** uses an approximation to *textura* for the Latin quotations subsumed into the main text, a rare decision within the *Mirror* corpus (Figure 4.4).[432] The Latin prayer on this page is marked out visually from the

[432] Figure 4.4 is **Bo1**, f. 16r. The Latin prayer is ll. 20-29. **Tk2**, belonging to Joan Holland, is written entirely in '*textura* of a kind common in English scriptural manuscripts.' See Doyle, 'Reflections on Some Manuscripts,' 86.

surrounding text by the plentiful use of rubric to highlight the initial letters of lines of the prayer. The script visually evokes the paraliturgical context in which many of the liturgical quotations of the *Mirror* would have been known to devout readers. Thus, although the Latin is grammatically complex, it would be easy even for non-Latinate readers to deduce that its function is that of prayer, and not that of citation of *auctores*, like the more complex *notae*. The Latin prayer contributes to make the γ recension the most Latinate version of the text, and Morton treats the Latin prayer as an important element of the text. This element of **Bo1**, in the context of the scribe's preference for a thrifty, speedy mode of copying, suggests that while Morton dismissed the Latin *notae* with their connotations of an exclusive textual culture, he valued the role of Latin prayer.

The manuscripts I have discussed above demonstrate that, despite the *Mirror*'s reputation amongst scholars as a polemically English text, and despite Love's rhetorical address of 'Englysche' readers, Latin plays a crucial role in shaping the variety of responses the text can accommodate in each of its different manuscript incarnations. The scholarly, highly demanding Latin *notae* of **Bc**, and the manipulation of different registers of Latin interacting with Middle English on a rigorously designed and corrected page, reward scholarly attention and memorisation. In **Mu**, Latin and Middle English are more visibly demarcated into main and marginal texts, and the complexity of the Latin is diluted, with familiar liturgical quotations in the margins and some of most impenetrable *notae* are omitted. **Bo1**, the latest of the three manuscripts and witness to the only non-authorial recension, reflects its very different production context. It omits much of the Latin marginal *notae*, but also tacitly testifies to the centrality of Latin prayer through its treatment of the *Ave Maria* passage.

Latin and English in the Textual Communities of the *Mirror*: Models for Readers

These three manuscripts demonstrate that relationships between Latin and Middle English were important – and dynamic, not static – elements of the *Mirror* that attracted generations of scribes and readers to continue Love's work redefining and reproducing the text. Love's revisions of the *Mirror* indicate that, from the earliest drafts of the *Mirror*, Latin was an important and highly visible element of the text on the page. In his later work, Love adapted the model of closely juxtaposed Latin and Middle English that we see in **Bc**, but it would be incorrect to interpret this as an attempt to distance Middle English readers from Latin. Rather, as we can see in **Mu**, the revised text invites a specific kind of response from readers whose Latin was limited, a mode of response in which the familiarity of paraliturgical quotations enables readers to find a space within the portion of the page demarcated as Latinate. The recension represented by **Bo1**, and thought to be scribal, may be seen as a response to Love's own articulation of the relationship between Middle English and specific registers of Latin.

The prominence of the Annunciation section of the *Mirror* in each of the analyses of *Mirror* manuscripts made above is not coincidental to my study of Love's linguistic rhetoric. Brantley has argued that it was particularly characteristic of Carthusian readers to engage in imaginative construction of images of ideal reading, using the visual contents of their books.[433] In the *Mirror*, this passage invites that mode of imaginative response. The section is the site of major textual variations, indicating its provocative importance not only to Love (who revised it substantially in the α version from his earlier draft in β), but also to the unnamed early reader who was the scribe or scribes responsible for the γ recension. In the corpus as a whole, we find evidence that scribes and readers interpreted this section of the text as crucial. In Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Eng. 98 (**Ry2**) annotations are concentrated in the sections on Mary as a role model; London, British Library, MS Add. 19901 (**Ad1**) features manicules drawing attention to passages of similar content.[434] In the

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[433] Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 14-15.

[434] For example, amongst its annotations, **Ry2** marks the passage on St Cecilia as an example of perfect readerly devotion (f. 2r or *Mirror,* 12: 6-7), the passages on Mary's early life (f. 6r-7r or 20: 4-

large compilation of devotional material in Cambridge, University Library, MS Hh. 1. 11 (**Hh**), the Annunciation section and sections on Christ's birth are extracted from the main text.[435] In Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 18. 1. 7 (**Sc**) we find the Coronation of the Virgin as a full page miniature, with the patrons of the manuscript depicted praying beneath her.[436] This unusual choice of opening miniature for a Life of Christ, which draws comment from Kathleen Scott, reflects the Virgin's importance as a model of reading throughout the text.[437]

The suitability of the Virgin, and especially the Virgin Annunciate, as a model for Love's audience is made clear in this much-annotated section of the text. The Annunciation is presented as an ideal act of reading. Love pictures how the angel appeared to Mary:

> þat was in hire pryue chaumbure þat tyme closed & in hir prayeres, or in her meditaciones perauentur redyng þe prophecie of ysaie, touchyng þe Incarnation.
>
> ('Who was in her private chamber at that time, enclosed and at her prayers, or perhaps her meditations, reading the prophecy of Isaiah, relating to the Incarnation.' 23: 13-16)

The text that Mary reads in Love's *Mirror* is explicitly identified as scriptural: the 'prophecie of ysaie' ('the prophecy of Isaiah,' 23: 15). This characterisation of Mary's reading-matter as scriptural is not original to Love, but nor is it based on the *Meditationes* or the biblical description of the Annunciation, neither of which

21: 26), the Annunciation passages and Mary's perfect meekness (f. 9r or 24: 40-25: 2), the passage explaining meekness is more important than virginity (10r or 26: 19-25 and 26: 38-27: 7), and the passage on the need for enclosure of the soul in silence (16v or 36: 19-20). **Ad1** marks passages on Mary's meekness (8r or 27: 21), her miraculous labour (f. 13r or 38: 22), the Holy Family as a model of the perfect life (f. 16v or 46: 30), Mary and Joseph's sorrow at losing the child Jesus (f. 22r or 58: 24-25), and advice for those leading a spiritual, enclosed, or mixed life (f. 23r or 60: 20-26, f. 37v or 96: 34-38, f. 46v or 21: 18-30, and f. 47r or 122: 5-12).

[435] See ff. 1r-8v.

[436] See f. 12v. For discussion see Scott, 'Illustration and Decoration,' 64.

[437] ibid.

describe Mary's occupation at all.[438] It is a provocative characterisation, given Love's insistent description of his audience as 'Englysche' readers unable to understand Latin and unable to participate in the more complex modes of reading open to Latin-literate readers.

Love adds to the Latin *Meditationes* a passage based on the *Revelations* of Elizabeth of Hungary, which involves Mary describing her education in the temple and explaining that 'I was taght & I lerned of þe lawe of my lord god' ('I was taught and I learned the Law of my Lord God,' 20: 6). The phrasing here paints Mary's education as decidedly different from that of a secular woman in the late Middle Ages, as she participates in the traditionally masculine and Latinate practice of teaching the 'Law of … God'. The paradox of Love's presentation of this Latin-literate, Scriptural, virginal reading as an ideal to 'English' readers is unmistakeable once we connect it with Love's other image of saintly female reading.

After characterising his own 'symple' readership in the proheme, Love translates the incipit to the *Meditationes,* which brings his readership into contact with their first image of a devout reader, in the form of St. Cecilia, whom the author of the *Meditationes* used to motivate his own addressee*,* a Poor Clare. In Love's translation, the passage reads:

> Amonge oþer vertuese commendynges of þe holy virgine *Cecile* it is writen þat she bare alwey þe gospel of criste hidde in her breste, þat it may be undirstand þat of þe blessed lif of oure lord Jesu criste **writen in þe gospele**, she chace certayne parties most deuoute. ...
> In þe same manere I conseil þat þou do.
>
> ('Among other virtuous praise of the holy virgin Cecilia, it is written that she always carried the Gospel of Christ hidden in her breast – by which, it may be understood that, from the blessed life of our Lord Jesus Christ **written in the Gospel**, she chose certain most devout parts. … I counsel you to act in the same way.' 11: 23-32; my emphasis)

[438] For discussion of the iconography of the Virgin Annunciate reading and its exemplary function for Middle English readers, see Susan Groag Bell, 'Medieval Woman Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture,' in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages,* eds. Judith Bennett, Elizabeth Ann Clark, Jean O. Barr, B. Anne Vilen, and Sarah Westphal-Wihl. 5th edn. (Chicago, IL, and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989) 135-161 (154-155).

Cecilia's book-use is explicitly scriptural, implicitly Latinate. Love's description of the saint stresses that her reading is to be identified with the monastic practice of ruminatio, a Latinate and monastic activity, rather than with oral prayer. Cecilia, Love explains, reads the accounts of Christ's life repeatedly and thoroughly, 'niȝt and day' ('night and day'), 'with a likyng & swete taste gostly chewyng in þat manere þe gospell of crist. she set & bare it euer in þe priuyte of her breste' ('with a pleasant and sweet taste, chewing spiritually in that way upon the gospel of Christ, she placed and carried it forever in the enclosure of her breast.' 11: 27-31). This description and Love's identification of Cecilia's book as the 'gospel' renders her practice apparently inimitable by Love's readership, who require English text 'more pleyne þan … þe gospell.' Cecilia's identity as a 'virgine' incorporating the 'gospel' into her heart foreshadows Mary's enclosure in her 'pryue chaumbre' reading the prophecy of Isaiah, the Bible.

The Carthusian context in which the *Mirror* was written provides an important source of information about the ways Love's Order conceptualised the boundaries between monastics and the laity, onto which Latinity and Middle English are mapped in the proheme to the *Mirror* with its reference to the original 'religiouse' addressee. In theory, the Carthusians were a strictly enclosed order, dedicated to solitary prayer, and traditionally their interactions with the laity had been limited to the production of books. Scholars habitually attribute to English Carthusians the practices specified in their Rule, and the accompanying attitudes, with Jessica Brantley's study of English Carthusian book use stating that the monks 'performed liturgical celebrations as a community only rarely, and always according to their especially sober rite'.[439] However, at the time when Love was writing, the English Carthusians had begun to be notorious for their interest in laypeople's religious

[439] Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness,* 12. See also Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 17; Perry, '"Some Sprytuall Matter,"' 85 n. 18.

practices, sometimes attracting reprimands from the Grand Chatreuse.[440] This interest was not limited to book production – although Love's own house was to become the keeper of the only manuscript of Margery Kempe's work, indicating a transmission of manuscripts in the reverse direction – but also included more immediate contact with and adoption of lay practices.

This is most clearly demonstrated through Carthusian liturgical practices. The Coventry Charterhouse, despite repeated criticism, used the secular form of the Office of Our Lady.[441] Founded towards the end of the fourteenth century, it was dedicated to St Anne, a saint who exemplified the 'mixed life,' and the London Charterhouse – itself dedicated to the Salutation of the Virgin – was improved with an altar to St Anne at around the same time. The London Charterhouse even admitted laypeople, including women, to attend mass. After censure from the General Chapter, instead of excluding the women from the Charterhouse entirely, the monks decided to dedicate an altar to St Anne at their outer boundary, so that women could be 'plaulatim excludi ab ecclesia' (shut out from the church little by little), while still able to hear the Mass there.[442] The London Carthusians explained, as Love was to explain a few years later of his text, that they aimed to stir up the 'devotion' of the laity, and like Love, their solution was to bring laypeople (in this case literally) into proximity with Latinate monastic practice. This distinctively English Carthusian context brought together a long-standing tradition of monastic book production with new and daring interactions with the English-speaking laity, and it helps contextualise the *Mirror*'s own construction of models of reading.

In **Bc**, as we saw, the *ordinatio* of the *Ave Maria* prayer offers multiple models for demarcating Latin from Middle English or for blurring the boundaries between

[440] William Hope, *The History of the London Charterhouse from its Foundation until the Suppression of the Monastery* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1925), 51; Joseph Gribbin, 'Aspects of Carthusian Liturgical Practice in Later Medieval England,' *Analecta Cartusiana* 99, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Anglistik Und Amerikanistik Universität Salzburg, 1995), 28.

[441] Gribbin, 'Aspects of Carthusian Liturgical Practice,' 28.

[442] Hope, *History of the London Charterhouse*, 49; Vincent Gillespie, '*Cura Pastoralis in Deserto*,' in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael Sargent (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), 161-182 (170).

the two languages: one can focus either on the distinction of one language from the other through the carefully designed interplay of rubricated quotations with English exegesis, or one can focus on the spatial continuity of the main text, which incorporates both languages together. In **Mu** and **Bo1**, we have the evidence of the annotations of readers and the activities of limners, adding to and engaging with the work of the scribe. In **Mu**, the margins of this manuscript are, as I have demonstrated above, constructed as a space for the visible display of Latin, but a Latin that is modified from the scholarly contents of **Bc** to a more accessible, paraliturgical register. This Latin space is also a space for the display of readerly identity. The margins of **Mu** are personalised: p. 1, roundels in the margins contain the letters 'M' and 'N,' which invite scholars to identify the owner as Margaret Neville, and a shield is also found in the bottom margin of the unnumbered page before p. 1, on which the proheme is copied. As a result, the laywoman who read the text would see symbols of her own identity set in the Latin context of the margins, just as the Virgin's identity as the mother of Christ is, in the *Mirror* narrative, enacted within the context of Latin reading of the Bible. A further sign of the way in which the Virgin functioned as a model for the readers of this manuscript is found in a rare non-scribal marginal annotation. An annotation within the Monday section of the text, made in a fifteenth-century hand different from that of the main text, reads 'maydenhede' ('virginity').[443] This annotation relates to the imitability of the Virgin for a married laywoman, since it highlights the portion of text where Love explains that the humility of the Virgin was more important than her virginity: 'virginite is a faire v*er*tue. bot mekenes is more necessarie'.[444] The annotation brings Middle English into the Latin-dominated space of the margin, but its positioning in the same portion of the page as the shields also shows us how the reader of the *Mirror* formed her sense of identity. The privilege to transgress into the Latinate space of the margin is represented in this manuscript as an individual privilege, associated with social status rather than linguistic competency or monasticism.

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443 **Mu**, p. 12, in the left margin at l. 21.

444 **Mu**, p.12, l. 22. This is *Mirror* 27: 5-6.

The non-authorial *notae* in **Bo1** shed light on the Latinity of the owners of the manuscript. On f. 9v, there is an annotation in the top margin reading 'loque*n*do, cogita*n*do *et* ope*r*ando,' ('speaking, thinking, and doing') translating a phrase from the first line of that page, which describes how Mary prayed with 'teres and mekill affliccio*u*n spekyng *and* thankyng *and* doyng*e*' (l. 1, corresponding to 21: 13-14).[445] The phrase is an accurate translation, but it is also a quotation, derived from confessional prayer.[446] This reinforces the suggestion, already evident in Morton's treatment of the main text, that Latinity in this manuscript was chiefly associated with prayer and the recitation of prayer, with the annotator carefully matching the Middle English phrase to the Latin he would have known from reciting prayers.

The context of **Bo1** helps us to understand its treatment of readerly identity in this mixed Latin and Middle English context. In 1418, John Morton the mayor (probably the owner of **Bo1**'s father) was responsible for diverting money from the unlicensed Dominican guild of the Holy Trinity, to St. Anne's chapel at Foss Bridge.[447] Morton's action may indicate not only devotion to St. Anne, but also perhaps friendship with Nicholas Blackburn, since Blackburn had founded a chantry in the chapel.[448] A window in All Saints' Church in North Street shows the Blackburn family kneeling below St Anne, mother of the Virgin, as she teaches her daughter to read. The Blackburn women's practice is implicitly paralleled to that of the saint. The Bolton Hours, made in about 1415 for members of the same family, bears witness to a similar devotion to St Anne and a similar interest in familial book use. Morton's contemporary John Dautre, owner of a book of 'Bonaventure,' both inherited and bequeathed several family books, which suggests that the familial use of books we see memorialised by the Blackburn family a generation earlier was revisited here. The links between lay and religious members of York's civic elite demonstrate that a

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[445] I judge this to be a non-scribal annotation: the letter **g** in this hand is more pointed than that of Morton.

[446] See Susan Boynton, '*Libelli Precum* in the Central Middle Ages,' in *The History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Roy Hammerling (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 255-318 (299).

[447] See Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power*, 132.

[448] ibid., 31-32.

layman in this circle could easily access the texts in **Bo1**. This was a community in which not only were Morton, Alne, Blackburn and Bolton men well able to source texts through their links to religious houses, but also, their wives' names crop up in connection to Latin paraliturgical book ownership. Theirs was a mode of book use and of linguistic interaction that involved – indeed, memorialised – the whole family, men and women, as a group. It was not the rigorous education in Latin book culture of the monastery, and which we see in the marginal *notae* of **Bc**, but a Latin of prayers to be recited and remembered.

The Annunciation passage is perhaps the closest Love comes to discussing the theology he judges to be beyond the capacities of his 'lewde' audience: the 'godhede' ('divinity,' 10: 25) of Christ. This liminal moment of Christ's incarnation represents the very limit of the theological understanding of Love's addressed audience, and it is no surprise that the section reflects other much-questioned limits: the limits of Love's readers' linguistic capabilities and the limits of their ability to emulate a saintly, quasi-monastic figure, both of which in turn reflect debates in the wider fifteenth century context about the status of Middle English and of the laity. The Annunciation section, therefore, invites us to question the implications of the proheme, to question whether it is to be taken as literally and unproblematically as most scholars have taken it. The instability of this section is reflected in the shifting Latinities of the three manuscripts. Taken together, I would argue that these manuscripts, with their ambiguous mixtures of Latin and Middle English set out on their pages, enabled readers to take on Love's characterisation of 'Englysch' reading as 'lewde' as if it were a posture of humility, rather than a literal description of their disenfranchised status.

Conclusion

Late-medieval English Carthusian attempts to engage with the laity involved the performance of Latin in contexts accessible to those lay listeners. In the same way, Love's attempts to attract Middle English readers resulted in the production of manuscripts in which the Latin was proximate to Middle English, both conceptually (as the register of liturgical Latin associated with saintly women readers) and visibly, on the page. In the wider context of the fifteenth century, then, the *Mirror* provides readers with a means of placing themselves in proximity to Latin textual culture while claiming a certain orthodox humility, a means of affirming their orthodoxy whilst also participating in Latin modes of reading. Like other Carthusian attempts to reach out to the laity, the *Mirror* pays lip service to the idea that monastics and the laity, Latin and Middle English, are entirely separate and binary categories, while devoting much of its energy to showing the Middle English laity how to form devotional identities grafted onto Latinate monastic modes of reading and prayer.

Chapter Five: Reading Latin Across Middle English Romance Manuscripts, *c.* 1380-1500

In this chapter, I want to show how Middle English readers in the fifteenth century participated in manuscript cultures that rewrote distinctions between Middle English and the other languages of medieval England. The dominant language of the manuscripts I discuss is Middle English, but it is a Middle English constantly quoting, evoking, slipping into and borrowing words from Latin, and even at times from the French of England. I focus on a short religious romance, *Robert of Sicily*, whose thematic preoccupations with language use, clerical-lay interactions and vernacular identities represent, in microcosm, the concerns of this thesis.[449] Using this text as a basis, I will explore the ways in which linguistic interactions are represented in the visual dynamics of whole manuscripts, and across related types of manuscripts, which bring together different texts with multiple systems for representing the positions of Latin and vernacular. The manuscripts I focus on are miscellanies. In modern scholarship on fifteenth-century English manuscript culture, they are overshadowed by the more visually appealing manuscripts of works of Chaucer, Gower, Langland, Hoccleve and Lydgate, which were produced in the much-studied networks of London scribes and illuminators working for wealthy, often aristocratic patrons. My interpretation of these manuscripts aims to reconfigure the current scholarship on fifteenth-century English book culture, to show that complex interactions between Latin and the vernacular, and coherent use of visual dynamics to shape these interactions, were possible even in manuscripts which, we will see, have been dismissed as 'amateurish, 'idiosyncratic' or 'haphazard'.

[449] *Robert*, ll. 89-110. In addition to Foster's edition, I am indebted to Baker's online parallel-text edition of all ten manuscripts. Baker, ed., *Robert*. Accessed on 01/10/10-01/01/13 at http://www2.fiu.edu/~bakerj/MacIndex.html. See also Joan Baker, 'Editing the Middle English Romance *Robert of Sicily*: Theory, Text, and Method,' *Text* 10 (1997): 161-179.

Robert of Sicily and the Latin of Middle English Manuscripts

The short narrative *Robert of Sicily* is usually categorised as a peripheral member of the genre of Middle English romances, as a religious or 'penitential' romance.[450] Perhaps because of its religious content, it has largely escaped the recent and dramatic change in scholarly attitudes towards Middle English romance, exemplified by the work of Nicola McDonald, Laura Ashe, Ad Putter, Jane Gilbert and others, who have discovered in Middle English romances a range of subtle, complex, self-interrogating and often subversively religious themes, which force us to reconsider the genre's importance in studies of late-medieval reading.[451] The text of *Robert* is unusual in that it survives in no fewer than ten manuscripts, eight of them complete, which is suggestive of high popularity. This alone would make it an ideal basis from which to study the contribution of romances and the manuscripts in which they are characteristically found to the cultures of religious reading I have discussed in this thesis. In addition, *Robert* is deeply layered with liturgical and scriptural allusions, with suggestive parallels to contemporary religious and political debates, and its complexity has not been recognised.

The Middle English text tells the story of Robert of Sicily, a chivalrous king beset by the sin of pride, whose downfall is predicated on his failure to acknowledge the greater might of God. The text describes his abrupt downfall, slow and painful attempt to learn contrition, and eventual restoration to power and dignity as a reformed and saintly king. The details of the plot are simple. Robert attends church to hear the service of Evensong, but is distracted by thoughts of 'worldes honoure'

[450] Andrea Hopkins, *The Sinful Knights: a Study of Middle English Penitential Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 179-195. For the generic associations of the text, see Edwards, 'Contexts of the Vernon Romances,' 159-170; Stephen Powell, 'Multiplying Textuality: Generic Migration in the Manuscripts of *Roberd of Cisyle*,' *Anglia* 116 (1998): 171–197.

[451] Nicola McDonald, ed., *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England. Essays in Popular Romance* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004); Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjević and Judith Weiss, eds., *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010); Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert, eds., *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000); Neil Cartlidge, ed., *Heroes and Anti-Heroes in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).

('worldly honour,' l. 33). He hears a phrase from the *Magnificat*, the Latin canticle always sung during that service, in which the pregnant Virgin sings of God's mercy towards the humble and power over the mighty. Robert does not understand the crucial Latin words 'deposuit potentes de sede,/ et exaltavit humiles' ('he [God] has cast down the powerful from their seat,/ and raised up the humble,' ll. 40-41). He demands a Middle English translation from his cleric, but rejects this as well, affirming his own power. As punishment, an angel strips Robert of his throne and his identity, leaving him abject and humiliated, begging amongst the dogs in his one-time court and dressed as the court fool. The punishment eventually teaches Robert humility, and when he acknowledges the justice of his fate, the angel returns Robert's throne to him. The narrative ends with a description of Robert's devout service to the Church, and of the quasi-hagiographic account of his life which he causes to be written down and preserved in St Peter's chuch in Rome.

The blend of religious themes and romance tropes we find in *Robert* evidently accounted for its popularity amongst medieval readers of romances, and the narrative has many analogues. The mixture of tropes - the chivalric honour of King Robert, the courtly culture in which he participates with his crusader brother, the obtrusive narrator who recounts the story – are skilfully blended with penitential and hagiographic elements. Robert suffers for his sins and, redeemed, becomes almost a saintly figure. This recalls other popular Middle English romances: we think of *Sir Isumbras* or *The Erle of Tolous*, while the exploration of loss and redemption, alienation and suffering reminds us of *Sir Orfeo* or *Guy of Warwick*. Medieval readers evidently recognised these parallels, for the text appears in manuscripts that contain other romances, including *The Erle of Tolous* and *Guy of Warwick*.[452] *Robert* is thought to have been composed in its Middle English form in the early fourteenth century, but it survives only in manuscripts dating from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[453] Its basic plot of the proud king punished is part of a much larger

452 Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2. 38 (**Cf**) contains both of these. Other romances are also found in London, British Library, MS Harley 525 (**H5**), and in **V** and **S**.

453 For the origins of the text in Middle English, see Lillian Hornstein, '*King Robert of Sicily*: Analogues and Origins,' *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 79 (1964): 13-21.

tradition of related narratives, written in Latin and several European vernaculars.[454] The popular Latin *Gesta Romanorum* provides perhaps the most well known version, placing a similar narrative in company with the Crescentia cycle narrative that forms the basis for the romance *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, with a story related to *Sir Isumbras* and to the saint's life of *St Eustace*, and with an *exemplum* that concerns the romance hero Guy of Warwick.[455] An early analogue written in the French of England and known as *Robert le Diable* features several of the tropes of the Middle English narrative, likewise describing a sinful king whose penitence involves living as a fool, and who becomes saint-like in his latter years.[456]

However, *Robert* has been inexplicably unpopular with modern scholars of Middle English romance. This is especially true of recent scholarship, and the more surprising when we consider the direction studies of Middle English romance have taken. Middle English romance has, over the past decade, been the subject of a large amount of scholarship seeking to rescue the genre from perceptions of its popularity as evidence of a lack of literary value and interest.[457] This scholarship has begun to uncover suggestive and even innovative parallels drawn in Middle English romance narratives between religious encounters depicted in romances, and contemporary religious debates. Nicola McDonald suggests that the comic episode in *Beves of Hamtoun* (ff. 102v-133v in **Cf**) where the giant refuses baptism on the grounds of his size raises disquieting issues about the limits of the Christian Church, the inclusivity

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[454] ibid.

[455] Hermann Oesterley, ed., *Gesta Romanorum* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1872), trans. Charles Swan, revised by Wynnard Hooper (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905).

[456] Eilert Löseth, ed., *Robert le Diable, roman d'aventures*, (Paris: Didiot, 1903). See Judith Weiss, 'Ineffectual Monarchs: Portrayals of Regal and Imperial Power in *Ipomedon, Robert le Diable* and *Octavian*,' in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 55-68.

[457] For analysis of this, see Nicola McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction,' in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. McDonald, 1-21; Jane Gilbert, 'A Theoretical Introduction,' in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, eds. Ad Putter and Jane Gilbert (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), 15-38.

of the Body of Christ.[458] Diane Vincent reads the Middle English *Turpines Story*, with its central debate over the Creed, in the context of fifteenth-century English heresy, and Suzanne Conklin Akbari discusses the *Siege of Melayne*'s parallels with Eucharistic debate.[459] Neil Cartlidge suggests that Middle English romance's representations of heroism and anti-heroism offer more challenges to stable ideas of morality and virtue than has been seen.[460] Corinne Saunders, discussing the genre as a whole, places romance firmly in the contemporary religious context, shaped by 'the powerful institution of the Church' with its 'Latin literature' and 'clerical discourses', and reflecting the 'marked cultural change' and 'dynamism' of the medieval period.[461]

These reappraisals of romance should prompt us to reassess *Robert*'s highly religious narrative, but so far it has been almost completely ignored by those scholars who seek to rehabilitate romance as a genre, and to find discussion of it, we often have to look to work that characterises romance in general in negative terms, or which predates the interpretations of romance as topical and innovative. *Robert* has been dismissed as a blandly pious and didactic work. Helen Cooper argues that the traditionalism of *Robert* and similar narratives provides an anodyne alternative to religious innovation or heresy, while Andrea Hopkins contends that the narrative evokes a stylised and outdated image of religious penitence, distant from late-medieval readers' interests and experiences.[462] John Thompson refers to the text in passing as 'conventionally pious,' while Carol Meale, equally casually, groups it with

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458 Nicola McDonald, 'Too Much! Or, Why Romance is "Good to Think,"' paper presented at 'Think Romance! Re-Conceptualizing a Medieval Genre,' 32nd Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval Studies, Fordham University, New York, 01/04/12.

459 Diane Vincent, 'Reading a Christian-Saracen Debate in Fifteenth-Century Middle English Charlemagne Romance: The Case of *Turpines Story*,' in *Exploitations of Medieval Romance*, eds. Ashe *et al*., 90-107; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*,' in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. McDonald, 22-44.

460 See Cartlidge, 'Introduction,' in *Heroes and Anti-Heroes*, ed. Cartlidge, 1-8.

461 Corinne Saunders, 'Introduction,' in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*,' ed. Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 1-9 (1).

462 Helen Cooper, 'Romance After 1400,' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 690-719 (699); Hopkins, *Sinful Knights*, 32-69.

'hagiographic romances' and offers no further comment.[463] Many more recent studies of Middle English romance simply do not mention *Robert* at all, or mention it only very briefly. With ten extant manuscript witnesses, *Robert* surely fulfils at least one definition of 'popular,' yet in Putter and Gilbert's *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance* the text is mentioned four times, three times in footnotes referring to the contents of romance manuscripts and once as an item in a list of 'didactic' or 'penitential' romances.[464] This neglect of *Robert*, I will argue, is indicative of a gap within in the scholarship on Middle English romance, which reflects more general scholarly assumptions about the kinds of manuscripts that are worth studying, and about the contexts in which the work of shaping linguistic identity occurs.

These reappraisals of Middle English romance as a genre have tended not to focus on studies of manuscripts, sometimes explicitly avoiding traditional questions of 'manuscripts, editorial problems, and textual history'.[465] Yet, many passing references to *Robert* are references to its manuscript contexts. Thompson and Meale refer to it in order to demonstrate that manuscripts of orthodox religious contents might contain pious romances; Gilbert notes its presence in one of the four largest compilations of romances; Nicola McDonald observes that it occurs alongside the unusual Middle English romance *The Seege of Troye*.[466] Since the publication of several facsimiles of fifteenth-century romance miscellanies in the 1970s, manuscripts such as those in which we find *Robert* have often been damned with faint praise. Robinson and McSparran, editors of a facsimile of one of the *Robert* manuscripts, suggest that the compilation was 'ideally suited to the instruction, edification and entertainment of well-doing, devout readers of modest intellectual

[463] Thompson, 'The *Cursor Mundi*, the "Inglis tong," and "Romance,"' 118; Carol Meale, '"gode men/ Wiues maydnes and alle men": Romance and Its Audiences,' in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. Meale, 209-226 (222).

[464] Putter and Gilbert, *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, 1; 32 n 5; 32-3 n 10; 197 n5.

[465] ibid, vii.

[466] Thompson, 'The *Cursor Mundi*, the "Inglis tong," and "Romance,"' 118; Meale, 'Romance and Its Audiences,' 222; Gilbert, 'Theoretical Introduction,' 32 n 5; 32-33, n 10; Nicola F. McDonald, '*The Seege of Troye*: "ffor wham was wakened al this wo?"' in *The Spirit of Medieval English Popular Romance*, eds. Putter and Gilbert, 181-199.

accomplishments'.[467] Commenting on the general picture of romance manuscript production, Judith Weiss and Rosalind Field note that, for modern scholars, the ephemerality of romance manuscripts places them on 'the margins of medieval literary culture'.[468]

This terminology echoes the broader survey of Edwards and Pearsall, who cited the beginning of the fifteenth century as the period at which production of Middle English manuscripts changed, 'from isolated and scattered production in different parts of the country' to 'the beginnings of routine commercial production in London'.[469] This overview of English book production in the fifteenth century implicitly represents romance manuscripts, which were seldom metropolitan or commercial products, as reactionary and backwards-looking. The terminology piles up in the scholarship: romances are 'provincial' and isolated from the organised copying of London books. Their scribal and compilational features are 'idiosyncratic' and 'irregular,' their makers and readers 'outside outside the charmed circle' of courtly book culture.[470] While many scholars of romances have begun to look away from manuscript study, many scholars of manuscript culture have traced patterns of innovation in fifteenth-century book production that exclude romances.

[467] Frances McSparran and Pamela Robinson, eds., *Cambridge University Library MS Ff. 2. 38. A Facsimile* (London: The Scholar Press, 1979), vii.

[468] Rosalind Field and Judith Weiss, 'Introduction,' in *Romance Reading on the Book. Essays on Medieval Narrative Presented to Maldwyn Mills*,' eds. Jennifer Fellows, Rosalind Field, Gillian Rogers and Judith Weiss (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996) 11-21 (18).

[469] Anthony Edwards and Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts,' in *Book Production and Publishing*, eds. Griffiths and Pearsall, 257-278 (257-258).

[470] For discussion of 'provincialism', see Michael Johnston, 'Romance Production and the Canon,' paper presented at at 'Think Romance!' 31/03/12; Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices: Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2. 38 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61,' *The Journal of the Early Book Society for the Study of Manuscripts and Printing History* 15 (2012): 85-100; Lynne Blanchfield, '"An Idiosyncratic Scribe": A Study of the Practice and Purpose of Rate, the Scribe of Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1991); Arthur Bliss, ed., *Sir Orfeo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), xvii. For 'irregular', see Derek Brewer and Arthur Owen, eds., *The Thornton Manuscript (Lincoln Cathedral MS 91), Facsimile* (London: The Scholar Press, 1977), vii. For positioning outside 'courtly' *milieux*, see Richard Beadle and Arthur Owen, eds., *The Findern Manuscript. Cambridge, University Library MS Ff. 1. 6. Facsimile* (London: The Scholar Press, 1977), xii.

More recent work has begun to tackle some of the assumptions that underlie this scholarship. The expectation that London must have had cultural, as well as political, significance throughout the medieval period has been challenged, although fifteenth-century manuscripts of Gower, Chaucer, Hoccleve and Langland produced in London are still central to many studies of late-medieval book culture.[471] Provincial manuscript culture is still associated not only with isolation but also with scribal idiosyncrasy and unprofessional modes of book making, but we know of interactions between London to other areas of the country.[472] Nevertheless, Michael Johnston recently argued, as London became a centre for the copying of the works of Chaucer, Gower and Langland for 'urbane' audiences, its scribes came to reject romance and the genre was 'pushed to the margins' to take up an 'inferior cultural position'.[473]

In the fifteenth century many codices containing Middle English romances were copied for lay readers. With the exception of the remarkable early fourteenth-century Auchinleck manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' MS 19. 2. 1), written in London in the 1330s, the largest surviving codices of Middle English romances date from this century. These include the two miscellanies copied by Robert Thornton, which contain nine and four romances respectively, the compilation now Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2. 38 with its nine romances, and London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. 2 with its eight romances. These manuscripts, and others less well known, preserve Middle English romances alongside a variety of other material, chiefly Middle English texts of religious and didactic contents.

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[471] For London book culture, see Ralph Hanna, *London Literature, 1300-1380* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For other important areas for book production, see Scase, ed., *Essays in Manuscript Geography*; Felicity Riddy, ed., *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991).

[472] Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London*, 39.

[473] Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire Romance Codices,' 91.

Much of the scholarship that focuses on these elements of romance manuscripts, which are excluded from editions as external to the main text, is scholarship considering ownership and dissemination, geographic location and the relationships of readers. Scholars have lifted the names and doodles of scribes and owners from manuscript pages, relating these snippets of information to geographic, familial and scribal networks.[474] Increasingly we are aware of (for example) Robert Thornton's Yorkshire as a location in which romance exemplars were found and copied, we know about the possible links between codices of romances copied in late fifteenth-century Leicestershire, and we have a sense of the priorities of the group of women whose names and hands appear in Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 1. 6 and who placed romances alongside texts of Chaucer and Lydgate.[475] However, even this scholarship rarely approaches to detailed analysis of the visual contents of romance manuscripts. I want, in this chapter, to show that the visual dynamics of the manuscripts of *Robert of Sicily* are worth exploring, not only as records of textual communities or evidence of the diversity of regional book production, but as coherent systems of communication, through which readers and scribes expressed their sense of their position within Middle English book culture and in relation to the concerns that *Robert* raises for religious readers.

Robert survives in ten manuscripts, two of which contain either fragmentary or substantially rewritten versions of the text, and eight of which contain complete versions.

T: Oxford, Trinity College MS D. 57, end of the fourteenth century (440 lines).[476]

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474 For example, see Demelza Jane Curnow and Ad Putter, 'Textual and Familial Relationships: The Place of the Michigan Fragment in the Evolution of *Sir Eglamour*,' in *People and Texts: Relationships in Medieval Literature*, eds. Thea Summerfield and Keith Busby (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 51-66.

475 Rosalind Field, 'Without Honor in His Own Country? Robert Thornton and Stonegrave,' Paper presented at the Forty-Eighth International Congress on Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 10/05/13; Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire romance codices,' 85-100; Kara Doyle, 'Thisbe Out Of Context: Chaucer's Female Readers and the Findern Manuscript,' *Chaucer Review* 40 (2006): 231-261.

476 For date and description, see Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 296-297.

V: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Eng. Poet. A. 1, *c*. 1380-1400 (444 lines).[477]

S: London, British Library MS Add. 22283, *c*. 1390-1400 (444 lines).[478]

H: London, British Library, MS Harley 1701, *c*. 1400 (476 lines).[479]

Ad: London, British Library, MS BL Add. 34801, *c*. 1417-1432 (23 lines).[480]

H5: London, British Library, MS Harley 525, s.xv^{med} (472 lines).[481]

Dt: Dublin, Trinity College MS 432b, Part III, after 1461 (72 lines).[482]

Ci: Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii. 4. 9, not before the third quarter of the fifteenth century (374 lines).[483]

Gc: Gonville & Caius College, MS 174/95, Part 4, s.xv^{ex} (470 lines).[484]

Cf: Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2. 38, s.xv^{ex}-s.xvi^{in} (516 lines).[485]

These manuscripts range in date over more than a century. The earliest are collections of religious materials: **T**, and **V**, **S** and **H**. Written later in the fifteenth century, **Ad** is a fragment and **Dt** a substantially rewritten version unrelated to the other manuscripts. **H5** contains the *Siege of Troy* and *Speculum Guy of Warwick*, with *Robert* presumably included as another narrative with romance associations. **Ci** is a miscellany dominated by an extract from *Handlyng Synne*. So, five of these six manuscripts with complete texts of *Robert* – **T**, **V**, **S**, **H** and **Ci** – show signs of having

477 For date and description, see Scase, *Making of the Vernon*, ix-xxiv.

478 ibid.

479 For date and description, see Chapter Three.

480 For date and description, see Lilian Hornstein, 'King Robert of Sicily: A New Manuscript,' *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 78 (1963): 453-458.

481 For date and description, see Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 184-186.

482 For date and description, see Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 116-118 and Raluca Radulescu, 'Pious Romances Turned Political: the Case of *Isumbras*, *Sir Gowther* and *Robert of Sicily*,' *Viator* 41 (2010): 333-359.

483 For date and description, see Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 100-103 and Chapter Three.

484 For date and description, see Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 81-82. These contents, and the construction of the manuscript, are more fully described in Baker's edition.

485 For date and description, see McSparran and Robinson, eds., *CUL Ff. 2. 38*, xxi-xxv.

been written or owned by clerical or monastic owners, who read Latin texts alongside Middle English and often annotated their Middle English texts with Latin *notae* requiring considerable grammatical knowledge to decode. The sixth manuscript, **H5**, contains three Middle English romances or related texts: the *Siege of Troy*, *Robert*, and the *Speculum Guy of Warwick*, which provide no firm evidence of the owner's identity or background. The final two manuscripts, **Gc** and **Cf**, are compilations of miscellaneous material in Middle English, the combinations of which suggest they were written for domestic lay households. In them, *Robert* shares space with explicitly religious and didactic material.

The geographic associations of these manuscripts are varied. None was made in London, but several other major centres for manuscript production are represented. **T** was made in Kent or Sussex, **V** and **S** in the West Midlands, and **H**'s dialect indicates it was produced in Buckinghamshire. The fragment of *Robert* scribbled on the flyleaf of **Ad** may, like the main texts of the manuscript, be associated with Norfolk and with the Duke of Norfolk for whom it was apparently originally made. The dialect of one of the texts in **H5** sampled for *eLALME* is identified as Bedfordshire, about ten miles from the dialect location of **H**.[486] **Ci** was made and used in Norfolk (like **Ad**), and **Dt** contains a list of fifteenth-century mayors of Northampton.[487] **Cf** has a Leicestershire provenance: specifically, *eLALME* places some of its texts it near Market Bosworth.[488] **Gc**, written in a mixed Midlands dialect, is annotated in a sixteenth-century hand with the marginal word 'Sproxton,' possibly

486 *eLALME* gives the Linguistic Profile 8190, in Bedfordshire. Accessed on 02/01/14 at http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html.

487 **Ci** contains references to Norfolk owners at f. 195v. A document relating to Norfolk in *c.* 1300 was once part of the manuscript and is now Cambridge, University Library, Document 799, as is recorded on the flyleaf of **Ci** in a note dated 25/11/1920. In her online edition, Baker describes the coat of arms on f. 6r of **Ad** as belonging to the Mowbray family, and notes that its main texts relate to the office of Earl Marshal fulfilled by the family. See Baker, ed., *Robert*. Accessed on 5/01/14 at http://www2.fiu.edu/~bakerj/MacIndex.htm. The list in **Dt** is found at ff. 82v-85v. *eLALME* gives the Linguistic Profile 4074, in Northamptonshire. Accessed on 01/01/14 at http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html.

488 *eLALME* gives the Linguistic Profile 531, near Market Bosworth. Accessed on 02/01/14 at http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html.

referring to the village in Leicestershire.[489] These diverse geographic associations indicate that *Robert* was a popular text, not associated with one specific region.

However, despite its varied geographic associations, there is an overarching pattern to the transmission of *Robert* in these manuscripts. In its early extant manuscripts **V**, **S** and **H**, *Robert* circulated in Latin-literate, probably monastic or clerical contexts, and these manuscripts all contain Latin texts (though in the case of **H** added sometime after the originals).[490] The provenance of **T** is not known, although Joan Baker argues for a 'monastic provenance,' based on the textual contents and the religious theme of some pen drawings.[491] These early manuscripts indicate that *Robert* had a strong association with monasteries or clerical communities, such as that at Lichfield Cathedral. This picture begins to change with the later manuscripts. The coat of arms in **Ad** associates the text with the Mowbray family, and texts relating to the office of Earl Marshal suggest it was made for John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. No owner of **H5** has been identified, but its contents – the *The Seege of Troy*, *Robert* and the *Speculum Guy of Warwick* – suggest to me lay rather than clerical or monastic ownership. **Ci** was probably made by local clerics, and owned by parish priests. The ownership of **Dt** is not known, but its list of Northampton mayors suggests its owner was interested in local civic life, and probably a layman.[492] These manuscripts indicate that copies of *Robert* were, increasingly, moving out of monastic communities or the *scriptoria* of secular clerics, and reaching individual laypeople and their parish priests. The latest two manuscripts, **Cf** and **Gc**, bear the hallmarks of having been prepared for domestic lay use.[493] This transmission process parallels the narrative's internal concern with the

489 See **Gc**, p. 460, bottom margin.

490 I discuss the provenance and the Latin contents of of **H**, **S** and **V** in Chapter Three.

491 These contents are the *South English Legendary* (ff. 1r-157r), the *Canticum de Creatione* (ff. 157v-165r), *Robert* (ff. 165r-167r) and the *Lamentacio Sancte marie et beati Bernardi* (ff. 167r-169v).

492 ff. 82v-85v.

493 For **Cf**, see Felicity Riddy, 'Temporary Virginity and the Everyday Body: Le Bone Florence of Rome and Bourgeois Self-Making,' in *Pulp Fictions*, ed. McDonald, 197-216 (199). I judge that **Gc** may also be

transmission of material from Latinate clerics to Middle English laypeople. The presence of *Robert* within these manuscripts raises questions about the mode of reading the text invites, and how the narrative's thematic interest in the Latin *Magnificat* and in clerical-lay disagreements over translation relates to lay Middle English readers.

The visual dynamics of *Robert* are substantially similar in all of its eight complete manuscripts. The text is in verse, set out in couplets, usually marked with brackets. The most striking markers are reserved for the spaces at the beginnings and ends of the text. Most of the eight complete manuscripts provide – or intended to provide – some form of title or, more usually, *explicit*, marking the transition from *Robert* to the text around it.[494] Similarly, scribes typically mark, or left space to mark, the beginning of the text, even when the space is cramped.[495] The most unusual is **T**, which features a rubricated two-line initial historiated with a pen-work drawing at the opening of *Robert* (Figure 5.1).[496] The text preceding *Robert* in **T** is written right up to the rubricated initial, with no spare space left free. **Gc** likewise suggests scribal concern to mark this opening despite other evidence of economy: its rubricated

placed in this domestic lay context, given its similarities of content to **Cf** and other similar manuscripts, discussed below.

[494] **T** is untitled; its *explicit* reads 'explicit hic s*anc*ti cicilie vita Rob*er*ti' ('Here ends the life of saint Robert of Sicily,' f. 167ra, l. 29. The title in **V** reads 'Her is of kyng Robert of Cicyle/ Hou prode dude him begyle' ('Here is [a story] of King Robert of Sicily: How pride tricked him,' f. 300rc, ll. 58-59). **S** is untitled and has no *explicit*. The rubric of **H** is missing, but space was left for a title at f. 92ra above l. 1; there is no explicit. **H5** is untitled and has no *explicit*. **Ci** is untitled; its *explicit* reads 'here endyth kynge Roberd of Cysyle' ('Here ends *King Robert of Sicily*,' f. 93v, l. 27). **Gc** is untitled; its *explicit* reads 'explicit Kyng Robert of Cesyle' ('Here ends *King Robert of Sicily*,' p. 468, l. 36). **Cf** is untitled and lacks an *explicit*, but space was left for one. (f. 257vb, after l. 16).

[495] **V** begins with a five-line demi-vinet initial (f. 300rc, ll. 60-64); **S** with an eight-line champ initial in gold, blue and red (f. 90vc, ll. 81-88). The scribe of **H** left space and a guide letter for a three-line initial that was never completed (f. 92ra, ll. 1-3). **H5** and **Ci** both begin with a three-line rubricated initials (**H5**, f. 35r, ll. 1-3 and **Ci**, f. 87v, ll. 1-3).

[496] Figure 5.1 is **T**, f. 165ra (detail), showing the opening of *Robert* at l. 11.

initial is written in pale red ink that may have been diluted.[497] In **Cf** the first line is written in display script (Figure 5.2).[498]

These titles, *explicits* and initials suggest that the scribes of *Robert* were concerned to distinguish the text carefully from its surroundings, doing so with relatively expensive illumination in the wealthy production contexts of **V** and **S** (the amount of gold leaf needed for these large manuscripts would be expensive compared to the cost of materials for manuscripts such as **T** and **Gc**), but making efforts to provide an eye-catching effect even in the contexts of the space-conscious **T** or the cheaply produced **Gc**. In combination with the shortness of the text, the visual dynamics of *Robert* urge readers to look from the narrative to the textual material that surrounds it. As we see, often, this process sometimes results in the navigation of a code-switch, from the Middle English of *Robert* to the Latin *explicits* of **T**, **Gc** and **Ci**. Yet, despite the interest in code-switching in the liminal spaces of these manuscripts, none of the eight complete manuscripts marks the Latin phrase 'deposuit potentes de sede/ Et exaltavit humiles' in any visual way. The Latin quotation from the *Magnificat* around which the narrative pivots, the only Latin quotation in the text, is invariably written in exactly the same script as the surrounding Middle English text, with no visual markers to draw attention to it.[499] This consistent visual incorporation of the Latin into the surrounding Middle English exacerbates the effect of the linguistic code-switch, for it provides no warning to readers of the linguistic shift from one language to the other. This may have been less of an issue for medieval readers, since the modern convention of distinguishing quotations and languages was not consistently maintained in medieval English manuscripts. However, enough work has been carried out on medieval code-switching to suggest unmarked code-switches could shape readers' responses and

[497] p. 455, ll. 1-4.

[498] Figure 5.2 is **Cf**, f. 254r, showing the opening of *Robert* at l. 6.

[499] **V**, f. 300va, ll. 20-21; **S**, f. 91ra, ll. 31-32; **H**, f. 92rb, ll. 2-3; **T**, f. 165ra, ll. 52-53; **H5**, f. 35v, ll. 14-15; **Ci**, f. 88r, ll. 14-15; **Cf**, f. 254v, ll. 13-14; **Gc**, p. 457, ll. 2-3.

might indicate difficulty or (assuming scribes anticipated readers fluent enough to cope with that difficulty), high levels of fluency.[500]

The positioning of *Robert* within manuscripts where Middle English and Latin are conspicuously juxtaposed calls into question the way in which readers were invited to respond to its central episode of Latin quotation and translation. There is little to contextualise the Latin code-switch. As Nicole Eddy observes with reference to **V**, 'the most characteristic trait of romance annotation is its very absence,' so the visual dynamics of romances demand readers look beyond their boundaries for help.[501] However, in studies of certain fifteenth century texts and manuscripts, the presentation of Latin quotations has been extensively analysed. Machan observes that the wide variety of bibliographic codes employed in medieval manuscripts (such as the rubrics and display scripts we can see in the manuscripts of *Robert*) habituated medieval readers to use visual markers as a helpful clue to the presence of code-switching.[502] Judith Jefferson argues that the lack of visual markers for code-switching in medieval manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* (in contrast to later copies) is evidence of audiences who were accustomed to switching from one language to the other, and did so fluently and competently, without needing visual markers to guide their reading.[503] In order to understand what is at stake when we set out to analyse the visual dynamics of seemingly disorganised, inconsistent manuscripts such as those of *Robert*, we need to examine the narrative itself, and uncover the complex implications of its seemingly simple representation of vernacular pride punished and Latin clerical authority displayed.

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500 For example, see Tim William Machan, 'The Visual Pragmatics of Code-switching in Late Middle English literature,' in *Code-Switching in Early English*, eds. Schendl and Wright, 303-36; Judith Jefferson, 'Scribal Responses to Latin in the Manuscripts of the B-Version of *Piers Plowman*,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain*, eds. Jefferson and Putter, 195-210.

501 Nicole Eddy, 'Marginal Annotation in Medieval Romance Manuscripts: Understanding the Contemporary Reception of the Genre,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Notre Dame, 2012), 42.

502 Machan, 'Visual Pragmatics of Code-switching,' 306.

503 Jefferson, 'Scribal Responses to Latin,' 195-210.

Reading the Latinities of *Robert of Sicily*

The short narrative of *Robert of Sicily* – under 600 lines even in its longest version – inhabits the space between *exemplum*, hagiography and romance. The narrative depicts the punishment of pride that results from a chivalrous romance hero's failure to understand the lesson of the *Magnificat*, which communicates a virtue more important than the 'honour' valued in knighthood. Yet it has been interpreted as a space-filler to round off a manuscript, as a placeholder within lists of longer and more interesting romances, and the *Magnificat* quotation has widely been taken as no more than a simple theme, conveying only its most obvious surface message.[504] However, we start to look for complexities within the narrative, we find it is layered with topical allusions to liturgical and scriptural modes of reading and performance, with subversive parallels to contemporary debates and events.

The crude ignorance of King Robert contrasts provocatively with the rich intertextuality of the narrative itself. The narrative describes Robert's preoccupied thoughts as he sits in church, and explains how Robert suddenly becomes aware of the Latin words he is hearing mid-way through the canticle. The narrator identifies the canticle for readers – 'in magnificat he herde a vers' – and then quotes the Latin as Robert heard it. The passage reads:

> The vers was this, I telle the:
> Deposuit potentes de sede,
> Et exaltavit humiles.
> This was the vers, withouten les.
>
> ('The verse was this, I tell you: "He has cast down the powerful from their seats,/ and raised up the humble."/ This was the verse, without lies. ll. 39-42)

Robert's cleric translates these lines of the *Magnificat* for his king, who misinterprets because he does not recognise the wider context from which the passage is taken,

[504] However, for more detailed discussion, see Joan Baker, '*Deposuit potentes*: Apocalyptic Rhetoric in the Middle English *Robert of Sicily*,' *Medieval Perspectives* (1997): 25–45.

and replies: ‘no mon lyveth in no lond/That my wil can withstonde’. In this reply, he cements his downfall, demonstrating both his arrogance, and his failure to participate in the central textual culture – the culture of the liturgy – that binds Christian faithful together.

For Middle English readers of the narrative, the broad context of the *Magnificat* does not depend upon exact grammatical understanding: it is a common feature of medieval traditions and images. Although the *Magnificat* is not one of those basic prayers, like the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria* or Creed, which were frequently translated into English or learned in English, the text was available in Middle English in a small number of translations. Richard Rolle's Middle English *Psalter*, which was exempt from Arundel’s censure in the *Constitutions* banning translation of the Bible into English, includes the *Magnificat* in its usual place as one of the canticles of the Psalter. The Wycliffite Bible provides an extremely literal, un-idiomatic translation of the Latin, as do several English primers.[505] Yet, more importantly, many paraphrases describing the Visitation (the scriptural event in which the passage is embedded) provide versions of its text and content. Love’s *Mirror*, for example, refers to the *Magnificat* in its description the meeting of the pregnant Virgin Mary with her cousin Elizabeth, and it is only the most widely-copied of the many vernacular verses, plays and prose accounts to do so.[506]

The quotation from the *Magnificat* around which *Robert* is structured is unique to the Middle English version of the narrative. The closest surviving version to the Middle English text, according to Hornstein’s study, is the early fourteenth-century French *Li dis dou Magnificat* by Jean de Condé, which probably shared a source with the Middle English version.[507] Here, the *Magnificat* lines form the central theme of the text, but they do not provide the ultimate context of the king’s display of

[505] For examples of the primers, see London, British Library, MS Add. 17010, Cambridge, St John's College, MS G. 24, and Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd. 11. 82, which include the texts for Vespers.

[506] *Mirror*, 32: 25-29.

[507] Hornstein, ‘Analogues and Origins,’ 15-16.

arrogance and punishment for it. The narrative of King Robert's downfall and eventual redemption is, by means of scriptural and liturgical references, constructed as a narrative of learning how to respond correctly to texts, a process of learning how to read, but also a process of developing a linguistic identity. The *Magnificat* text, which is central to the narrative, is only the first of a series of references and allusions to the Bible and the liturgy, to the words and the iconography of paraliturgical books. Scriptural narratives and apocryphal accounts based on the Bible inform the frame of reference in *Robert*, from the story of Solomon, the archetypal proud king, to the story of the fallen angels with disobeyed God.[508] Hornstein interprets Robert as a reflection of the biblical Solomon, the archetypal proud king; Penelope Doob claims that the Middle English version's unique reference to Nebuchadnezzar makes explicit a parallel that was is implicit in some earlier versions.[509] The details of these allusions are neatly judged to reinforce the similarities between Robert and the transgressors of the Bible, inviting readers of *Robert* to interpret the text through references to that text.

For clerics or monastics, the two Latin lines might have evoked a specific context and practice. They are quoted in the liturgically-influenced, sanctioned disruption of the church's services in the 'Feast of Fools,' or New Year celebrations. During these celebrations, a 'Lord of Misrule' might carry the precentor's staff during the church service, and, when the lines 'deposuit potentes de sede' were sung, he was deprived of this emblem of office.[510] The Latin lines give rise to the name for the feast as 'Festum "Deposuit"'. It has been argued that the entirety of the Feast of Fools tradition constitutes a performance of the literal sense of the *Magnificat*, a

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[508] ibid., 17-18.

[509] ibid; Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89; Penelope Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1974), 91-94.

[510] Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2011).

liturgically-sanctioned depiction of the high made low and the low made high.[511] This description could have been written to apply to the story of *Robert*, the fool-king who is stripped of his kingship during the singing of the *Magnificat*, and who loses all signs of his office. The narrative of *Robert* exploits the precedent for distinguishing these two Latin lines from their surrounding context of the *Magnificat* and associating them with a narrative of deposition.

The image of the fool-king who denies God is found elsewhere in liturgical book culture. The image of Robert made, 'lych a fool, a fool to be' ('like a fool, a fool to be,' l. 155), evokes a liturgical image which is part of the visual vocabulary about those who deny divine authority. The fool recalls the words and the iconography, popular in the medieval Psalter, of Psalm 53, which opens with the words, 'Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus' ('The fool has said in his heart: "There is no God"'). This psalm is particularly memorable because Psalm 53 is one of the traditional divisions of the Psalter, marked with a historiated initial, which commonly shows a fool.[512]

Some of these allusions and references, rooted as they are in scripture and in liturgical performance or iconography, might seem exclusionary towards lay readers of *Robert*, and more suited to the monastic readers with whom the text was strongly associated in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. However, just as *Robert* draws on liturgical feast traditions centred on these lines of the *Magnificat*, so too we find a later medieval exposition of the *Magnificat* drawing on *Robert* to illustrate the meaning of the liturgical text. An early fifteenth-century collection of poems composed by the priest John Audelay includes a meditation on the *Magnificat* in Middle English with a Latin refrain 'Magnificat anima mea dominum' ('My soul magnifies the Lord').[513] The poem is spoken in the voice of the Virgin Mary and almost exclusively based on scriptural content, but one verse stands out, instructing listeners to:

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511 John Southworth, *Fools and Jesters at the English Court* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), 52-53.
512 For example, see the Psalter now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. G. 184, f. 43v.

513 Susanna Fein, ed., *John The Blind Audelay, Poems and Carols (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 302)* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009).

Thenke on Kyng Robart Sesel:
He went no lord had be bot he,
Yet sodenlé downe he felle
And was put into a folis degré!
An angel was set apon his se,
Fore he had these verse in his scornyng —
Deposuit potentis de sede —
And sayd in heven ther was no Kyng.

('Think of King Robert of Sicily:/ he thought there was no Lord but himself,/ yet suddenly he fell down/ and was put into a fool's place!/ An angle was set upon his throne,/ because he held these verses in scorn –/ "He cast down the powerful from their seats" –/ And said there was no King in heaven.' ll. 49-56)

These lines are almost certainly a reference to the Middle English *Robert of Sicily*, conforming closely to its content. It is clear that *Robert* both drew upon, and subsequently became part of, a tradition of treating these lines of the *Magnificat* as emblematic of the humbling of fools and the punishment of the arrogant. The connotations of the *Magnificat* quotation in *Robert* build on and contribute to an established awareness in medieval culture of the significance of its central message. Both for Latinate clerical readers, then, and for readers of Middle English, the figure of Robert and the lines of the *Magnificat* are associated with the performance of failed authority, with images drawn from the Psalter and from paraliturgical paraphrases.

For scripturally literate readers of *Robert*, a final parallel elevates the lines from the *Magnificat* from an apt theme relating to pride, to a more specific depiction of specifically *linguistic* and scriptural act of transgression. The angel-king commands that Robert be 'shoren everichdel' ('shaved all over') and dressed like 'an ape' (ll. 154-157). The ape has been associated with sin, or repentance, in medieval iconography, as Hornstein observes.[514] Here, the line also recalls the apocryphal story, based on the biblical account of the Tower of Babel, which records that the men who tried to build the tower to reach the heavens were thrown into the desert

[514] Hornstein, 'Analogues and Origins,' 19.

where they were transformed into apes.[515] Robert, transformed into an ape-like figure in penance for his sin, echoes this story in more ways that one: his arrogant challenge of God echoes the challenge the builders of the Tower posed, in trying to reach up to the heavens with a man-made structure. The linguistic confusion with which Babel is synonymous underlies Robert's misunderstanding of Latin and the confusion that arises from his need for translation.

These connotations strengthen the topicality of *Robert* in its early manuscripts, those written from *c*. 1380 to 1400, for the conflated imagery is not layered in such a way as to suggest that Robert's failure to understand his cleric's translation is linked – as, in orthodox polemics, Lollardy was linked – to the inferiority of the vernacular and the superiority of Latin. The scriptural allusions also function as a means of separating the audience of *Robert* itself into those who can understand and those who cannot, those who recognise the linked associations of imagery that deepen Robert's crime from mere disobedience to quasi-Lollard linguistic failure, and those who cannot. The deposition of the king in *Robert of Sicily,* a political coup carried out by religious, not secular forces and with its origins in disagreement over the interpretation of the Latin *Magnificat*, a passage from the Bible, calls to mind the religio-political associations of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381.[516]

In his arrogant rejection of his clerk's words, Robert evokes the propagandist fears of anti-Wycliffite polemicists, demanding a vernacular translation of the Latin of the liturgy, but unable to interpret its message correctly. The narrator provides translation and exegesis of the 'vers' ('verse') of the *Magnificat* the king hears, but the king responds 'al your song is fals and fable' ('all your song is false, and a fable,' l. 50). The language of this narrative draws attention to the rhetoric with which romance's fictionality is denounced in other medieval writing. Religious writers, especially those writing pastoral literature in the early fourteenth century when *Robert* was probably composed, dismissed romance as 'but fantoum' ('nothing but a

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515 ibid., 18-19.

516 Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 1-48.

phantom').[517] Yet, it simultaneously draws attention to concerns more recent and topical for the late fourteenth-century copyists who prepared the earliest extant manuscripts of *Robert*. The modes of writing denounced in Wycliffite ideology, and the terminology used to describe these modes of writing, have been much studied, and both the format, 'vers,' in which many romances are written and the connotations of fictionality, 'fable.' have been identified as components of a possible 'Lollard sect vocabulary'.[518] Nicholas Watson notes that 'Wycliffites insisted on prose, not verse, which they associated with *fable*'.[519] In the figure of Robert, denouncing 'fables' out of ignorance, we find a parody of the would-be religious attacks on romance by pastoral writers, which conflates these writers with Wycliffites.

The reasons for *Robert*'s popularity at the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth may, indeed, result from its openness to interpretation in the context political as well as religious issues raised in contemporary culture. Concern with kingship has been identified by modern scholars as characteristic of the 'Ricardian' literary writers, Chaucer, Gower and Langland, a response to Richard's preoccupation with his image, his authority, and his status as divinely sanctioned ruler.[520] Recently, Raluca Radulescu has stressed the political topicality of *Robert of Sicily* in its late-medieval context, considering the suggestive parallels between the deposition and re-appearance of Robert as king, and the rumours surrounding the death of Richard II.[521] She singles out for comment the rewritten manuscript copy found in **Dt**, which contains material referring to recent battles and English kings and which she suggests was 'adapted to suit a politically-minded

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517 *Cursor Mundi*, ll. 1-2; l. 92. See also Furrow, *Expectations of Romance*, 30.

518 Nicholas Watson, 'Lollardy: the Anglo-Norman Heresy,' in *The French of England* ed. Wogan-Browne *et al*, 334-346.

519 ibid., 338; Anne Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 165-180.

520 Samantha Rayner, *Images of Kingship in Chaucer and His Ricardian Contemporaries* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 160-162; Lynn Staley, *Languages of Power in the Age of Richard II* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 2005), ix; Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 142.

521 Radulescu, 'Pious Middle English Romances Turned Political,' 333-359.

audience during the Wars of the Roses', but in fact her argument fits the original narrative with its subtler layers of scriptural and liturgical connotation much better.[522] Robert is readable as a composite figure, evoking Wycliffite rants against romance and demands for English translation even as his narrative obliquely parallels the struggles of kings to maintain their divinely sanctioned authority.

Robert's intertextual frame of reference offers a model of English reading that constantly looks outwards to other languages – chiefly Latin – and to other modes of communication. Embedded in the text, we can trace layers of allusion to the social and cultural contexts in which texts were performed and interpreted. The oldest of these – the centre of the narrative – is the *Magnificat* itself, its scriptural origin (shared by *Robert*'s other references to biblical passages) and its liturgical performance. Layered over this is the monastic custom of the Feast of Fools. The representation of Robert as an ape-like, hubristic misuser of language evokes the imagery of the Tower of Babel, a reference most likely to be caught by Latin-literate clerics or monks. The iconographic representations of fools as deniers of God and disrupters of clerical authority that we find in the Psalter would be securely familiar to clerics and monks, but also accessible to laypeople who could decode the common imagery attached to Psalm 53. Images of Robert's story with connotations inextricable from these had permeated vernacular culture by the later Middle Ages, as the Audelay poem demonstrates. Finally, by the time manuscripts of *Robert* survive, perhaps most of a century after the poem was written in its Middle English form, the narrative had become entangled with even more contemporary concerns, which were certainly not limited to the clergy or the monasteries: the nature of kingship and the role of the Church; translation into the vernacular; the politicisation of textual interpretation.

Robert's layering of connotations is palimpsestic; it is overwritten by contemporary events that happened during the lifetimes of its late-medieval scribes. The interpretative and performative responses to texts it evokes range from those originating in monastic or clerical culture, in Latin liturgical performance and

[522] ibid., 356.

scriptural interpretation (and its institutionalised parodies), to more widespread political and pastoral concerns that affected ordinary laypeople in late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. The potential of the narrative to accommodate these topical interpretations may explain its popularity from *c*. 1380 onwards. As the narrative moved from monastic contexts to a wider audience including laypeople, some of its connotations probably became more submerged and less obvious; changing religious and political situations in fifteenth-century life would have imported other implications to complicate the seemingly simple narrative. *Robert*'s layered connotations demonstrate the weight of significance that rests of the Latin lines within the text, and the importance of surrounding texts and images in shaping the ways in which different readers could interpret those Latin lines.

The Visual Dynamics of Latin in Fifteenth-Century Romance Manuscripts

The visual dynamics of the manuscripts of *Robert* invite readers to interpret its central narrative in the context of other interactions between Latin and Middle English, other depictions of Latinity or of Middle English piety, which locate *Robert* within a succession of textual cultures across the fifteenth century. These manuscripts of *Robert* are marginalised in modern scholarship not only for their romances and their 'provincial' geographic associations, but also for their production values, characterised as messy, often crude, and inexpert. I want to look in detail at three manuscripts of *Robert*, one from its early group of religious manuscripts, and two from the latter part of the fifteenth century, which together represent the spectrum of models of reading the narrative attracted over the course of its manuscript history.

The three manuscripts I discuss have been dismissed, denigrated or overlooked by scholars in past years. Of the early copies of *Robert* made in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, **T** is described as 'artless'.[523] Guddat-Figge describes the hand of **Gc**, written later on, as 'informal' and its current state as

523 Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue*, 296.

‘scruffy’.[524] Joan Baker, whose online edition of *Robert of Sicily* provides a careful description of the booklet, judges the scribe’s textual presentation to be ‘amateurish,’ while his hand is ‘exceptionally poor’ and ‘irregular’.[525] Elsewhere she refers to the manuscript as ‘idiosyncratic’.[526] The version of the ‘Complaint of God’ in **Gc** has been edited by Edvard Borgström, who notes that the scribe's corrections and omissions are ‘confusing’.[527] **Cf**, probably the most well known of these three manuscripts as a result of its reproduction in facsimile by McSparran and Robinson, was judged by them to be for readers ‘of modest intellectual accomplishments’.[528]

The terminology used to describe these three manuscripts and their visual dynamics is echoed in scholarship on other fifteenth-century compilations of romances. So, for example, the editors of the facsimile of Robert Thornton’s Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91 argued that Thornton’s hand was probably not that of a trained scribe, and noted the ‘unevenness of presentation and irregular make-up’ that characterises the manuscript.[529] John Thompson comments on Thornton’s ‘haphazardly informal’ attitude towards to the presentation of texts in the other manuscript he copied, London, British Library, MS Add. 31042, and notes the ‘limited sense of continuity’ he creates through his use of *incipits* of juxtaposed materials.[530] Scholarly analyses of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61 repeat the term ‘idiosyncratic’ to characterise the scribe’s practice and his treatment of texts. Shuffelton’s edition refers to Rate’s ‘peculiar habits’ and ‘relaxed attitude towards error,’ and refers to the drawings found throughout the manuscript as ‘doodles’,

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524 ibid., 81.

525 Baker, ed., *Robert*. Accessed on 15/10/13 at http://www2.fiu.edu/~bakerj/MacIndex.htm.

526 Baker, ‘Editing the Middle English Romance,’ 175.

527 Edvard Borgström, “The Complaint of God to Sinful Man and the Answer of Man by William Lichfield,” *Anglia* 34 (1911): 498-525 (508-525).

528 McSparran and Robinson, eds., *Ff. 2. 38*, vii.

529 Brewer and Owen, eds., *Thornton Manuscript*, vii.

530 John Thompson, *Robert Thornton and the London Thornton Manuscript. British Library MS Additional 31042* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1987), 47-48.

while Johnston calls its appearance 'remarkably haphazard' and describes the scribal signatures found throughout the manuscript as evidence of its 'peculiar production patterns'.[531]

Across this scholarship, we can see the repetition of similar terms – 'haphazard,' 'informal,' 'idiosyncratic' – which purport to describe the lack of convention and similarity of these manuscripts to others, but which, by their repetition, prompt us to seek just such similarities. By taking **T**, **Cf** and **Gc** as representative examples of fifteenth-century manuscripts dismissed by scholars for their visual dynamics, I hope to demonstrate scribes, even in manuscripts such as these, were quite capable of constructing models of reading that extended across their manuscripts and which placed narratives such as *Robert of Sicily* in context. Since the interactions of Middle English and Latin and the connotations of the Latin *Magnificat* are central to the plot of *Robert*, it is this that I focus on in the manuscripts.

Oxford, Trinity College, MS D. 57 (T)

T, probably the earliest extant manuscript witness to *Robert*, was made *c*. 1380. It was written in double columns, by a scribe who fitted his texts closely into the available space: Figure 5.3 shows *Robert* crammed into the space underneath the ending of the previous text, its introductory initial 'P' marking the beginning of the text.[532] However, despite this, the manuscript retains the signs that it was carefully planned. Its visual dynamics are designed to produce an effect of continuity from text to text, as the regularly spaced paraph marks, alternating blue and red, feature throughout the entire manuscript.[533] They bind the texts – the *South English Legendary*, the *Canticum de creatione* ('Song of Creation'), *Robert*, and the *Lamentacio*

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[531] Shuffelton, ed., *Codex Ashmole 61*, 5; Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire Romance Codices,' 90.

[532] Figure 5.3 is **T**, f. 165r, showing the initial 'P' at ll. 11-12.

[533] See, for example, f. 34r, l. 3; f. 131v, l. 4 or 165ra, l. 5.

de sancte Marie et beati Bernardi ('Lament of Saint Mary and Saint Bernard') – together into a unified whole.

The manuscript visibly announces its strong ties to the Latinate religious culture in which it was probably made. Latin is frequently used as textual apparatus, to label the saints' lives of the legendary, and in the *explicits* to texts, including that of *Robert* itself.[534] The initial that introduces *Robert* creates a nicely judged visual impression of distinction of this text from its surroundings, which detracts from the overall impression of continuity. Within the 'P' of the first line, the rubricator has drawn an image of a face that looks like a monk with a tonsured head.[535] It is the only initial in the whole manuscript to be treated in this way, and it recalls the historiated initials more often found in illuminated manuscripts.[536] Moreover, the monastic image foreshadows the central conflict of the narrative, between Robert and his cleric, as it invites readers of the narrative to identify, from the start, with Robert's Latinate interlocutor. In Kent, the area in which **T** can be located, Wycliffism was a concern, and this small initial might act as a reminder of clerical control over the dissemination of texts.[537] Thus, it creates a suggestive parallel between the romance narrative's faraway Sicily, where Robert's cleric attempts to bring Latin textual culture to the ignorant king, and the contemporary world in which the Middle English manuscript was made.

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534 See, for example, f. 167r, l. 29, where to the right of the Latin *explicit* to *Robert* is the title to the following item, 'lamentac*io* s*anc*te marie *et* beati Bernardi' ('The lament of St Mary and the Blessed Bernard'), contrasting with the Middle English of both texts. See also the the Latin marginal *notae* to the *South English Legendary*, such as 'vita s*anc*ti theophili' ('The Life of St Theophilus,' f. 57r, at ll. 6-7).

535 f. 165r, ll. 11-12.

536 See, the historiated initial in **V**, f. 265rc, ll. 49-71, at the beginning of *The Pricke of Conscience*. For historiated initials in manuscripts of Middle English romances more widely, see Murray Evans, discussing the Auchinleck manuscript in *Rereading Middle English Romance: Manuscript Layout, Decoration, and the Rhetoric of Composite Structure* (Quebec: McGill-Queens University Press, 1995), 11. It is worth noting that in **Ci**, while *Robert* is given no historiated initial, the longer text of *Handlyng Synne* (discussed in Chapter Three) opens with an initial letter 'T' historiated in brown ink with a face (**Ci**, f. 97r, ll. 1-3).

537 For Wycliffism in Kent, see Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 121.

The visual dynamics of **T**, then, invite readers to interpret *Robert* as an integral part of the religious content, but also tempts us to see it as a distinct kind of text, differentiated from the more sombre saints' lives and didactic verses by its unique, historiated initial. The location of *Robert* in this Latin-inflected manuscript of Middle English, where code-switching between main English text and Latin *explicits* or *notae* is commonplace, gives context to the code-switch within the text where the cleric explains the meaning of the Latin *Magnificat* lines to the arrogantly ignorant king. The manuscript as a whole encodes respect for the Latin-literate reader.

Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 174/95 (Gc)

Transmitted from the largely monastic *milieu* of the earlier manuscripts, *Robert* is found in manuscripts suggestive of lay domestic ownership in the late fifteenth century. **Gc**, a small booklet of texts similar in theme to the larger romance codices of the fifteenth century, is usually overlooked by modern scholars. At present, it is bound together with other miscellaneous material, none of it obviously related to **Gc** itself and much of it post-medieval.[538] The medieval booklet that constitutes **Gc** is a single quire of twenty leaves, worn and discoloured at beginning and end as if it had circulated unbound for some time. It contains only seven items: two Lydgate texts on the Mass and devotional practice (pp. 451-455) followed by *Robert* (pp. 456-468), the 'Complaint of God' by Litchfield (pp. 469-480), a devotional text (pp. 481-482, l. 13), an alphabetic Passion poem (pp. 482, l. 14-483), and the satire on worldly wealth, 'Sir Penny' (pp. 484-486).

As Figure 5.4 provides example, the scribe signs his name, Fisher, several times.[539] In this case, he writes 'q*uo*d fysshar' ('said Fisher'). The texts of **Gc** are all

[538] The manuscript is made up of eight parts, dating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. See Baker, ed., *Robert*. Online edition accessed on 03/02/13 at http://www2.fiu.edu/~bakerj/MacIndex.htm.

[539] Figure 5.4 is **Gc**, p. 455, showing the end of Lydgate's 'On Kissing Stones in Churches'. The signature is at l. 33. The other signatures are found on p. 459, l. 35 and p. 483, l. 28. The name is also found on p. 458, l. 37 (in the bottom margin), in a different hand, which I would date to the early sixteenth century.

separated with *explicits*.[540] The initial letters of each line are also highlighted in rubric, and rubricated brackets are used to mark couplets, although the red ink is often smudged, perhaps through carelessness, perhaps because it was watered down to make it go further.[541] Some other visual markers also feature in the margins of the manuscript: in the bottom margin of the first page (p. 451), below the text of Lydgate's *Interpretacio Misse*, the word 'Ih*esu*s' is written in red, with hairline brackets around it. Though written in rubric rather than illuminated, it recalls the use of the Holy Name monogram in the borders of professionally-illuminated manuscripts, which is not uncommon: we find it in several manuscripts of Love's *Mirror*, for example. It provides a formal distinction of the opening of the manuscript and its first text. The *explicit* on p. 455 augments this impression of attempted formality, for it is a common Latin tag: 'explicit expliceat: ludere scriptor eat' ('may the *explicit* be finished: let the scribe go to play'). Other *explicits* are also written wholly or partly in Latin, including that of *Robert*: 'explicit Kyng Robert of Cesyle' ('Here ends *King Robert of Sicily*,' p. 468, l. 37). These highly visible elements of the short booklet – prominently placed in the margins, in the liminal spaces between texts, written in rubric or marked with red ink – appear as the scribe's strenuous attempt to imitate professional scribal practice and display his Latinity, and this aim contrasts with the amateurish level of skill he displays.

This Latinity might suggest that **Gc** primes its readers to anticipate the Latin of the *Magnificat* in *Robert*, that, like **T**, it positions its readership within a culture where Latin tags and phrases are standard components of a Middle English textual

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540 For Lydgate's 'Interpretacio Misse,' the *explicit* reads simply 'explicit' (p. 454, l. 33). For Lydgate's 'On Kissing Stones in Churches' (see Figure 5.4), it reads 'q*uo*d fysshar. explicit expliceat: ludere scriptor eat' ('may the *explicit* be finished: let the scribe go to play,' p. 455, l. 33). For *Robert of Sicily*, the *explicit* reads 'explicit Kyng Robert of Cesyle' ('Here ends *King Robert of Sicily*,' p. 468, l. 37). For Lichfield's 'Complaint of God,' the *explicit* reads 'Explicit tractatus compilatus p*er* Mag*istru*m will*iel*m*us* lychefelde doctorem Theologie' ('Here ends the treatise compiled by Master William Lichfield, doctor of theology,' p. 480, ll. 20-22). For the devotional text, the explicit reads 'explicit' (p. 482, l. 13). For the Passion poem, the *explicit* reads 'explicit alphabetu*m* fysshar' ('The end of the alphabet. Fisher,' p. 483, ll. 27-28). For 'Sir Penny,' the *explicit* reads 'explicit de dynario Johanne magistro' ('The end of "Master John Penny,"' p. 486, at l. 34).

541 For the use of red ink see, for example, p. 458, l. 2, where a blot of red ink has smudged the bracket, or p. 469, ll. 34-35, where the ink from a rubricated three-line initial has smeared across the page.

culture. However, the treatment of *Robert* itself soon dispels this impression. The opening page of *Robert* is headed with the word 'Ih*esu*s' in rubric: it is identical to the opening page of the booklet, where the same word is written above the beginning of Lydgate's *Interpretacio Misse*. However, whereas the early word stood alone, potentially either Latin or Middle English, as a monogram, here it is the beginning of a longer phrase. Written across the tops of the following pages are three more words, written in rubric and enclosed in hairline brackets or three-sided boxes. Together with 'Ih*esu*s' they form a simple prayer: 'Ih*esu*s mercy, lady helpe' (Figures 5.5-5.8).[542]

This odd little prayer distinguishes *Robert* from the other texts in the manuscript, marking it out in the most visible – and unconventional – way. Indeed, these marginal words actively frustrate expectations of conventional textual presentation, for at a glance they resemble running headers, yet it is evident that their function is not heuristically related to the main text of *Robert*, but devotional. The prayer is, in itself, perfectly conventional. It is strongly associated with church interiors, perhaps indicating the context from which this scribe gleaned his sense of how to pray; it is also found on a fifteenth-century stamped binding made for the dean of Salisbury Cathedral.[543]

This short prayer, then, contrasts with the Latin in other sections of the manuscript, and its effect, placed here at the beginning of the text of *Robert*, is to anglicise the marginal space of the manuscript, which is so often a location for Latin textual apparatus and which, in this manuscript, was previously taken up with the professional Latin *explicit* to the Lydgate poem. Where the monastic scribe who produced **T** in the late fourteenth century primed his readers to associate the text

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542 Figures 5.5-5.8 show **Gc**, pp. 456-59. The words are found in the top margins of each page, above the main text of *Robert*.

543 For the association of this phrase with church interiors, see Madeleine Gray, 'Images of Words: Iconographies of Text and the Construction of Sacred Space in Medieval Church Wall Painting,' in *Sacred Text – Sacred Space. Architectural, Spiritual and Literary Convergences in England and Wales*, eds. Joseph Sterrett and Peter Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 15-34 (25) and Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 76. For the binding, see Geoffrey Hobson, *English Binding Before 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16. First published Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929.

with the representatives of the Church, **Gc** creates a distinction between the preceding texts (associated with Latinity and an opportunity for the scribe to display his identity as 'scriptor') and *Robert*, associated with Middle English prayer. The text of *Robert*, as it appears in this version, includes details to reinforce this impression. A unique textual variant labels Robert's clerical interlocutor not as a mere 'clerk' but as 'doctore' (p. 456, l. 36): by definition, one who is learned in the Latin of the Church, which emphasises the gap between his knowledge and that of the ignorant king and, implicitly, the English readers of the narrative. A scribal slip suggests that Fisher was not wrong to perceive a distance between himself and a skilled translator in Latin. He copies the word 'magnificat' with an extraneous 'n' and an erroneous 'g', to produce the mangled Latin 'mangnifigat'. This is shown in Figure 5.9.[544] The unintentional mangling of the crucial Latin word of *Robert* undermines the scribe's attempts at Latinity elsewhere, which may simply have been copied verbatim from his exemplar, as tags that struck him as presenting an impression of formal closure to his texts. The miscopied word confirms the impression that Middle English is, to this scribe, the natural language of prayer. Whereas **T** invites readers to identify with Robert's cleric in the translation debate, **Gc** visibly announces its location in a community of readers who would sympathise with the proud king's failure to understand, if not the arrogance of his response.

The interactions of Latin and Middle English on the pages of **Gc** suggest that both languages were important aspects of the scribal identity Fisher wished to project, and this projection of identity provides us with the final distinctive aspect of Fisher's treatment of *Robert*. As we have seen, the text is marked, not in the *explicit* but medially, with the scribe's signature, one of several scattered through the manuscript. Michael Johnston has suggested that similarly frequent scribal signatures are a 'peculiar' practice not associated with conventional manuscripts, and certainly they imply an intimacy between scribe and reader that might not exist between participants in a commercial agreement.[545] In the Lydgate *explicit* the

[544] Figure 5.9 is **Gc**, p. 456 (detail, showing ll. 35-38).
[545] Johnston, 'Two Leicestershire Romance Codices,' 90.

scribe's name is attached to the formal Latin tag: 'quod Fysshar'. In *Robert*, however, it is visually linked, both by positioning in the margin and by the use of rubric, to the Middle English prayer: it stands almost as a conclusion to that text (Figure 5.10).[546] The highly unconventional positioning of these words contrasts with the professionalism of the Latin *explicit*, but also suggests that, to Fisher, *Robert* was not only a locus for Middle English, but specifically a locus for personalised prayer, for prayer that displayed the scribe's identity as a penitent seeking help and mercy from Christ and the Virgin. Reading this text on the margins of *Robert*, we are invited to reconsider the central episode of the poem, looking not at the difficult Latin of the *Magnificat* but at the subsequent events.

The narrative of *Robert* presents identity as something that can be lost through sin and regained through devout penitence, and while the narrator never explains how it is that a person ignorant enough to misunderstand the *Magnificat* could become sufficiently scripturally literate to compare his situation to that of the biblical king Nebuchadnezzar, it is not unusual for saints' lives to show highly devout illiterates becoming able to understand the Bible through grace. Similarly, the English plea written across the tops of the pages of *Robert* associates the scribe's identity with prayer and supplication. The Middle English romance becomes a space for a distinctively Middle English mode of pious reading. In **Gc**, the scribe marks the pages of *Robert* with his name and his prayer, literally writing himself into the narrative, as if to model himself on the king who achieved saintly status by a devout contrition that overcame his vernacular ignorance.

Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff. 2. 38

The contrasts between **Gc** and **T**, reflecting the gap of perhaps a century and differences between the scribes, are put into context by the final manuscript I want to consider. **Cf** is the most well known of these three manuscripts and often studied for its romances, although *Robert* is rarely mentioned. The manuscript was probably

[546] Figure 5.10 is **Gc**, p. 459. The name is written in rubric in the bottom margin, enclosed in a hairline box.

begun around 1479-1484 (the date of its earliest watermark). It is a large compilation, with some 43 – or, arguably, 44 – texts and 247 folios.[547] It was originally unbound, and made up of two booklets, copied by the same scribe who employs the same textual presentation throughout.[548] It begins with religious items, penitential *pastoralia* and catechistic materials, then saints' lives and pedagogic texts. Following these, and making up the bulk of the manuscript, is a sequence of ten texts: *The Erle of Tolous, Syr Egyllamore of Artas, Syr Tryamowre, Octavian, Sir Bevis of Hamtoun, The Seven Sages of Rome*, *Guy of Warwick, Le Bone Florence of Rome, Robert of Sicily* and *Sir Degare*. This collection of romances is one of the largest in Middle English manuscript culture, and the careful organisation of the material into generic groups suggests the compilation was planned with care.

The scribe of **Cf** leaves no personal marks of ownership on the manuscript (though many sixteenth-century hands added notes in its margins), and his script is sufficiently neat to suggest he may have been a professional, not the owner working for himself. The texts are separated from one another by spaces left blank and by *explicits*, written in the same display script the scribe uses for the first few words of each new text, after its rubricated initial (Figure 5.2).[549] The pattern of display script *incipits* and *explicits* is consistent throughout the manuscript, creating a sense of continuity to bind together its large number of texts. However, across these liminal texts the languages the scribe uses vary, apparently at random. In the example in Figure 5.2, the Latin 'explicit' is followed by words in the French of England, which begin the title of the Middle English romance, 'Le Bone Florence,' ('The Good Florence'), and the text concludes in English 'of Rome' (p. 254rb, ll. 4-5). Similar code-switches between Middle English and Latin recur throughout the manuscript. So, we find Middle English alone, as in 'here endyth the Eele of Tollous and begynneth syre Eggyllamore of artas' ('Here ends the *Earl of Tolous* and begins *Sir*

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[547] Evans treats *Guy of Warwick* as two separate items, 'Guy' and 'Heraud'. See Evans, *Rereading Middle English Romance*, 88-9.

[548] Felicity Riddy, 'Temporary Virginity,' 199.

[549] Figure 5.2 is **Cf**, f. 254r, showing an *explicit* surrounded by blank space at column b, ll. 3-4, and a rubricated initial and opening line of display script at l. 5.

Eglamour of Artois,' f. 70v), as well as the simple Latin 'explicit,' as in the *explicit* to *Le Bone Florence* preceding *Robert*. The word 'explicit' has, in this manuscript, almost crossed the permeable boundary between Latin and Middle English. This *explicit* presents Latin and Middle English blended together, interchangeable in function with the monolingual *explicits* elsewhere. It is a casual treatment of Latin suggestive of a reader accustomed to Latin tags within English texts.

From the beginning of the manuscript, the texts in **Cf** confirm the importance of a particular kind of Latin, for many of them are translations of Latin paraliturgical or penitential materials. They include the translation of the Office of the Dead known as 'Pety Job' ('Little *Job*'), the *Mirror of Vices and Virtues*, a translation of the Penitential Psalms, texts on the works of mercy and the seven deadly sins (14), on the virtues, the creed and the sacraments.[550] The paraliturgical texts would, in their Latin forms, be standard components of the Book of Hours, while the penitential works on mercy, sins and virtues, the creed and the sacraments are not unusual to find in primers, and are basic components of early instruction in penitential practice. The visual dynamics of these texts place Middle English and Latin in surprising parity. Latin quotations are copied in an eye-catching and enlarged formal script (used either for the whole quotation or the first few words), which recalls the *textura* of paraliturgical books. However, the scribe also uses this script for the Middle English words that articulate the important sections of his penitential texts, so it is not unique to Latin.[551]

Through this use of the same script, Latin quotations are put on a par with important pieces of Middle English, suggesting that some registers of Middle English are as important as the Latin. That the function of the formal script is not primarily to mark a linguistic distinction but to distinguish different modes of communication within a text is evident from other elements of the scribe's practice. In *Robert*, as we know, the Latin quotation is written in the same cursive script as the Middle English

550 For number and sequence of items in the manuscript, see McSparran and Robinson, eds., *CUL Ff. 2. 38*, xxi-xxv.

551 For example, f. 15va, ll. 5-6; f. 32va, l. 34; f. 33va, l. 20.

that surrounds it, but the same is true of the Latin quotations from the Office of the Dead in 'Pety Job'.[552] It is worth noting that 'Pety Job' is one of those early fifteenth-century texts in which, Vincent Gillespie argues, anti-Wycliffite authors responded to the challenges of Lollardy with a 'self aware turn to a Latinate English vernacular' in which the 'membrane between the registers and lexis of clerical Latin and those of the English vernacular … [became] increasingly permeable'.[553] In **Cf**, that membrane is so 'permeable' that the languages are visually indistinct. It seems likely that, for readers of **Cf**, the familiarity of these quotations was such that the code-switch was not difficult to negotiate, marked or unmarked.[554]

This paraliturgical Latinity is not merely a matter of quotations and paraphrases. Hanna and Riddy have identified parallels between the contents of **Cf** and the iconography and devotional identities expressed in paraliturgical books.[555] The contents **Cf** suggest what we might call a paraliturgically literate reader: not necessarily a reader well-versed in Latin grammar, but a reader whose understanding of the texts found in the Psalter or Book of Hours was strengthened from reading Middle English explanations, paraphrases and narratives that take these texts as their subject.[556] However, this pious practice is reinforced by more pragmatic skills that owners of **Cf** probably had. **Cf** is thought to have been made for a merchant's family, and its range of sources – from texts in Northern dialects to the popular Litchfield poem 'Complaint of God,' which originated in London – suggests easy access through mercantile networks. Felicity Riddy has compared the

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552 Susanna Greer Fein, ed., 'Pety Job,' in *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998). Accessed on 13/06/12 at http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/pety.html.

553 Vincent Gillespie, 'Chichele's Church: Vernacular Theology in England After Thomas Arundel,' in *After Arundel*, eds. Gillespie and Ghosh, 3-42 (35).

554 See Machan, 'Visual Pragmatics of Code-switching,' 303-336

555 Hanna, *London Literature*, 138; Riddy, 'Temporary Virginity,' 197-216.

556 In this, I reject the assessment of **Cf** and *Robert* put forward by Edwards, 'The Contexts of the Vernon Romances,' 159-170. Edwards judges *Robert* was 'clearly seen as a secular work'. For another perspective questioning the division of **Cf**'s contents into the 'secular' and the 'religious,' see Evans, *Rereading Middle English Romance*, 87-89.

manuscript to the Yorkshire mercantile Bolton Hours, with its mixture of Latin and Middle English, and the casual linguistic mixing in the liminal spaces of a **Cf** evokes the pragmatic use of languages in business letters, such as those set amongst mercantile and gentry families in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries – the Paston letters, the letters of the Plumpton, Stoner and Cely families. In these letters, Latin is as the standard formal means of conclusion, and the standard form for giving the date, while smatterings of French are, naturally, standard in the addresses of letters to be sent abroad. We are looking at readers and writers whose main language was English but who naturally reached for words and phrases in other languages. **Cf** reflects the expectations of a Middle English reader who was fluent, even casual in his or her language-mixing, a reader who was trying to become scripturally and liturgically literate by reading paraphrases and expositions of Latin texts.

The three manuscripts I discuss here represent over a century of the copying of *Robert*, in manuscripts typically dismissed as 'haphazard' and 'idiosyncratic'. These terms imply that features such as 'provincial' production, unusually positioned prayers or imperfectly copied Latin could not coexist with visual dynamics that drew readers to make complex interpretations of their texts and to locate themselves within rich and multilingual exchanges between Latin and Middle English, Latin, Middle English and French, and many different registers of each. However, when we look at the layered connotations of *Robert* as a narrative, we can see that the text would admit subtle readings, and when we look in detail at these three manuscripts, we can see that the visual dynamics of each draw out different aspects of the text and relate these to differing modes of reading invited by the manuscripts as composite objects. These manuscripts represent three distinct modes of response to the text: engagement with the translation debate and its liturgical connotations, sharped by the echoes of topical religious controversy in **T**, a devout empathy with Robert as an exemplar of penitence in **Gc**, and an awareness of the need for paraliturgical education even in the context of Middle English romance in **Cf**.

Their readers were also invited to decode three very different attitudes towards the relative positions of Latin and Middle English. In **T**, Latin is the natural language for textual apparatus, the language of the clergy. In **Gc**, it is used to display professional identity and connote formal scribal practice, sometimes mixed with Middle English, and replaced, in the anglicised margins of *Robert*, with a more personal register of language for use in prayer. In **Cf**, Latin and Middle English are almost equivalent in important quotations, in *incipits* and *explicits*, visually blending into one another, and mixed casually with the snippet of the French of England in the title of the romance preceding *Robert*.

The 'idiosyncrasy' with which manuscripts of fifteenth-century romances are so frequently charged is an implication that these scribes were not merely prone to error, but also isolated from the sort of textual community in which London scribes learned their use of conventions. In order to assess the truth of this, we can look from these manuscripts of *Robert* to other 'provincial' romance manuscripts of the fifteenth century that attract similar scholarly terminology. The manuscripts of Robert Thornton (Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 91, which I will call **L1**, and London, British Library, MS Add. 31042, which I will call **L2**), made perhaps fifty years after **T** and forty years before **Gc** and **Cf**, provide good examples. So does the Leicestershire codex, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61 (**As**), which shares a paper stock with **Cf.** In these manuscripts, we find distinctive features we have seen before. These three manuscripts exhibit the sort of confidence with Latin we see in **T**, and include Latin texts as well as Latin *incipits* or quotations.[557] However, although this confident Latinity resembles that of **T**, in other ways they align themselves with **Gc** and **Cf**, the manuscripts produced for domestic lay households, and the manuscripts that have received most scholarly denigration.

The scribe of **As** signs his name, Rate, in the conclusions to multiple texts, using the formula 'amen quod Rate' which is exactly like Fisher's frequent signature

[557] See, for example, **As**, f. 21v (Latin proverbs); **L1** f. 195r-196r (Latin meditations'Meliora sunt' and 'O quam delectabile,' attributed to Rolle); **L2**, f. 80r (bilingual lyric 'O florum flos').

of his name, ‘quod Fisher’.[558] Robert Thornton’s signatures are more grandiose: a typical Latin example is ‘R Thornton dictus qui scripsit sit benedictus amen’ (‘May Robert Thornton, who writes this, be blessed. Amen,’ **L1**, f. 98v and f. 213r).[559] The code-switching of **Cf** in the *incipts* and *explicits* is similar to that of Thornton, who enjoys juxtaposing his Middle English texts with Latin titles or *explicits* and vice versa.[560] Thornton and the **Cf** scribe both use small amounts of the French of England in incompletely translated titles of romances, alongside their Latin and Middle English.[561] **L1** even includes a fragmentary motto written in the French of England on one page.[562] What emerges from the comparison is that these scribes were happy to write in what seems to us odd or stilted phrases in Latin or the French of England; they were happy to blend together the languages they used in macaronic forms, and their varying linguistic competencies did not prevent them from associating trilingual or bilingual practice with the spaces in the manuscript where they were most able to display their own identities. In the case of Fisher, this display is would-be professional, and Middle English is reserved for the display of personal, devotional identity, but in **Cf**, **L1** and **L2** paraliturgical Latinity is as part of Middle English, part of the natural mode of expression.

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558 See, for example, **As**, f. 16v, l. 16 or f. 22v, l. 7.

559 See also **L2**, f. 49v, ‘Amen amen per charite/ And louynge to god þerfore gyfe we/ R Thornton’ . Transcribed by Susanna Fein, ‘The Contents and Organizing Features of the Thornton Manuscripts,’ Paper presented at the Forty-Eighth International Congress on Medieval Studies. Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 10/05/13.

560 See, for example, ‘Memento homo quod cinis es et in cinem reuerteris’ (‘Remember, man, that you are dust and will return to dust,’ **L1**, f. 297r) as a title to the lyric ‘Erthe toc of erthe’; or ‘A Preyere to þe Wounde in Crystis Syde’ (‘A prayer to the Wound in Christ’s side,’ f. 278v) as a title to the hymn *Salve plaga lateris nostri redemptoris*. See Phillipa Hardman, ‘Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of “Household Miscellanies” in Late Medieval England,’ in *Women and Writing*, c. *1340*-c. *1650*, eds. Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), 15-33 (24).

561 **Cf**’s ‘explicit le bone Florence of Rome’ is discussed above; a similar mixture of languages features in **L1**’s ‘Here endes Morte Arthure writen by Robert of Thornton’ (‘Here ends *The Death of Arthur* written by Robert of Thornton,’ f. 98v).

562 Fein transcribes this as ‘Espoyez Thornton ygl En espyrance may [...]’ (f. 53r). Fein, ‘Contents and Organizing Features,’ Paper presented 10/05/13.

By recognising and acknowledging the conventions that link these supposedly 'idiosyncratic' manuscripts to one another, and the attempts at coherent effect that give meaning to these scribes' apparently 'haphazard' or 'peculiar' practices, we can begin to reassess the reading cultures in which *Robert of Sicily* was copied in the fifteenth century. Medieval England was scattered with readers – in 'provincial' locations, reading 'idiosyncratic' manuscripts of Middle English romances modern scholars neglect – whose book use was far from monolingual or simplistic. These manuscripts reach out to a wider context of fifteenth-century English book culture, echoing the practices of other scribes who copied romances and left signatures mixing Latin and Middle English, Middle English and scraps of French, on the pages of their miscellanies. The 'provincial' associations of these manuscripts have been taken as evidence of their isolation, their distance from the rich multilingualism of fifteenth-century London and its highly standardised, carefully planned manuscripts. However, the visual dynamics of these manuscripts prompt readers to engage in subtle and sophisticated interpretations of what has always been considered by modern scholars to be a simple, even simplistic, Middle English text.

Conclusion

These manuscripts demonstrate that subtle and complex engagements with the shifting linguistic relationships that characterised Middle English reading culture were not exclusive to manuscripts such as the London-made Ellesmere Chaucer, whose visual content is so frequently reproduced and celebrated. The 'provincial' readers of 'idiosyncratic' books were also reading and writing a plurilingual form of English, in which different registers of English play off one another across the margins of manuscripts and are caught up with Latin and the French of England. As *Robert* was transmitted from monastic houses to clerics to lay domestic readers, new and varying connotations of the central linguistic exchange were reflected in the visual dynamics of its manuscripts. These manuscripts invite us to recognise a multiplicity of contexts in which the narrative of *Robert* is embedded, from the Latin-inflected religious atmosphere of **T**, to the intimate English prayers and would-be professional Latin scribal tags of **Gc**, to the paraliturgical linguistic mixing of **Cf** with its plural Latinities shading into registers of Middle English. They demonstrate that medieval books dismissed by scholars for their 'idiosyncratic' or 'amateurish visual dynamics communicate the linguistic relationships of medieval England in coherent, systematised, and often rhetorically sophisticated ways.

Conclusion: Interpreting the Visual Dynamics of Religious Manuscripts in England, 1260-1500

When we look at medieval manuscripts, we see them as witnesses to texts, as material products, as aesthetic objects, as symbols of the culture in which they originated. The text of a manuscript provides evidence of copying and miscopying, scribal annotations and readers' own marginalia in response to the words on the page. The construction of a manuscript tells us about the ways in which the text was laid out and copied, corrected and annotated, and its material form shows us how it was intended to be held, touched, leafed through, gathered around, chained to a library or laid on a shelf or placed on a *prie-dieu*. As aesthetic objects manuscripts encode and display the values of the people who made them and the people who used them. These many ways of interrogating medieval manuscripts bring us into a sense of ever-closer contact with the readers for whom they were made. Yet we still struggle to understand what modes of reading these manuscripts were designed to invite, what habits and expectations their readers brought to them, and above all, how readers interpreted their position within the complex interactions of languages that characterised medieval England's religious book culture. In this thesis, I have used the visual dynamics of religious manuscripts made in England between 1260 and 1500 to explore this question and, I hope, to open up new interpretations of the texts and manuscripts I discuss.

These texts and manuscripts often lie on the periphery of scholarship on medieval religious reading in England, and are all but forgotten outside the religious context. They have variously been excluded from consideration of 'English' reading practices, overshadowed by more excitingly heterodox books, neglected in favour of 'canonical' texts, dismissed in comparison to more aesthetically pleasing works. Yet, when we look at the modes of reading these texts and manuscripts communicated to readers over two and a half centuries – modes of reading that retained a remarkably continuous reliance on inclusive registers of Latin – we find they are far from simple or crude. Despite the immense popularity of manuscript studies, my thesis demonstrates that we need to pay a great deal more attention to the visual dynamics of manuscript books, not as isolated features of the page or interesting quirks of scribal practice, but as the fundamental system through which medieval readers first learned to navigate their books and with which their responses were constantly and cumulatively structured.

From early lessons in paraliturgical Latin reading, Middle English book users learned to respond to the written page as a complex and sophisticated system of visual symbols, designed to communicate ideologies that were at once deeply personal, and fundamentally communal, rooted in the recitation of the liturgy. In the *Manuel* and contemporary works of vernacular pastoral literature, a mode of scholastic *lectio* is translated to lay and non-Latinate readers, deputising for the interpretative role of the Latinate cleric. In *Handlyng Synne*, the French of England is repositioned as the language of 'clerkes', the language of inaccessible religious instruction. This enables Mannyng and his late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century scribes to present a collaborative combination Latin and Middle English, which offers an alternative to the increasing anxieties about Latinity and English readers emerging as a result of Wycliffite and anti-Wycliffite debates. In Love's *Mirror* the tension between authorial rhetoric and visual dynamics is even more carefully orchestrated, and far more explicitly positioned in relation to anxieties about Wycliffism and the status of Latin and Middle English. Yet the visual dynamics of the *Mirror* manuscripts construct the margins as a *locus* of Latinity, displaying not only academic Latin but also Latin made up of quotations from the psalms, canticles and lections, from the most accessible portions of the Bible that often found in Books of Hours. The eye-catching familiarity of these quotations invites readers to look across from main text to margin and to renegotiate the spatial relationship that initially placed Latin outside of the boundaries of the Middle English text and, implicitly, outside the capacities of Middle English readers. In the manuscripts of *Robert of Sicily* the intimacy with which Latin and Middle English interact on the page is still deeper, surrounding and contextualising a narrative that explores questions of textual interpretation and transmission thematically. The miscellanies demonstrate the importance of studying the visual dynamics of texts across manuscripts, showing how registers of Latin, Middle English, and even the French of England are woven together to construct coherent – if grammatically errant – reflections of their readers' identities as participants in religious book culture.

The chronological and linguistic scope of this thesis has made it possible for me to trace these patterns of continuity and gradual change. Scholars often invoke the landmark events which, if they are not credited with directly enacting a separation between one period and another, are certainly treated as symbols of a rapidly-changing culture: the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215; the plague of 1349; the death of Chaucer in 1400; the promulgation of Arundel's *Constitutions* in 1409; the advent of printing in English in 1473-1474. The impact of these dates and events is constantly subject to revision, with new period boundaries offered and, sometimes, accepted.[563] In my study, I have attempted to show how influences develop across long periods of time, especially when we consider the transmission of modes of reading from Latin, to the French of England, to Middle English. Scholars such as Vincent Gillespie and Fiona Somerset have vigorously challenged the once-popular picture of fifteenth-century orthodox religious writing as a genre stifled by the 'censorship' of Arundel's anti-Wycliffite legislation.[564] Scholars of Middle English romances, notably Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Diane Vincent, have uncovered subversive and innovative responses to topical religious issues in the Middle English romances so popular in the fifteenth century.[565] Yet although this scholarship pushes

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563 For example, see the dates used in Gillespie's *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*, which, her reviewer comments, may surprise traditonalists but which attempt more accurately to reflect the developments of print culture by analysing the period from 1473-1557. The review is by Anne Coldiron, 'Alexandra Gillespie: *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate and Their Books, 1473-1557*,' *Speculum* 83 (2008): 438-440 (438).

564 See Gillespie, 'Chichele's Church,' 3-42; Somerset, 'Professionalizing Translation,' 145-157.

565 See Vincent, 'Reading a Christian-Saracen Debate,' 90-107; Akbari, 'Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*,' 22-44.

the boundaries of our understanding of reading cultures in medieval England, the manuscripts I have discussed here are still often overlooked, and the importance of Latin within 'vernacular' reading culture is underestimated.

The interactions between Middle English and the French of England I explored in this thesis are invariably contextualised by Latin. Latin modes of reading and Latinate clerical authors controlled the transmission of pastoral texts written in the French of England and Middle English in the late thirteenth century; Latin is incorporated into Mannyng's Middle English as the French of England is devernacularised; Latin code-switches in *incipits*, *explicits* and the liminal spaces of fifteenth-century manuscripts provide the spaces in which snippets of the French of England survive. However, the most important contribution that the French of England makes to the Middle English of translators like Robert Mannyng is in its potential to be repositioned in rhetoric.

The rhetoric of the medieval writers I discuss is reliant on sharply-drawn distinctions between Latin and vernacular, between a devernacularised register of the French of England and Middle English, but these distinctions are often reshaped, qualified or rejected outright by the visual dynamics of manuscripts, which construct their own relationships between the languages on the page. Modern scholars of Middle English have characterised the status of the language in medieval England as 'embattled,' 'defensive,' 'apologetic and assertive at the same time'.[566] More recently, studies of the French of England have disrupted the neat hierarchies between those two languages, and vernacularity in the French of England too is recognised as 'inherently unstable'.[567] This terminology evokes Middle English writers' own rhetoric. It reminds us of Mannyng's references to the 'lewed' and of Love's descriptions of English readers who 'cannot þenke bot bodyes and bodily þinges,' and conjures up the image of the foolish king Robert misunderstanding the

[566] Somerset and Watson, 'Preface,' x; Blumenfeld-Kosinski *et al*., eds., *The Vernacular Spirit*, 2; Wogan-Browne, 'What's In a Name?' 4, 212; Salter and Wicker, eds., *Vernacularity in England and Wales,* 2.

[567] Carolyn Collette, 'Aristotle, Translation and the Mean: Shaping the Vernacular in Late-Medieval Anglo-French Culture,' in *The French of England* eds. Wogan-Browne *et al*., 373-385 (374).

Magnificat. It seems to reflect the very anxieties and criticisms of Middle English – and monolingualism – that medieval writers express.

This rhetoric, and these representations of vernacularity and multilingualism tempt us to see Latin as a language of clerical authority, of arid grammatical and theological precision impossible in the vernacular, of monastic self-enclosure and ecclesiastical censorship. If the vernacular is embattled and protean, it is tempting to conclude that the language against which it defines itself is inherently stable and unchanging. If the scholarly rhetoric used to praise multilingualism dwells on its capacity to provide access to Latinate material, then it is difficult not to assume that the natural state of Latin textual culture is to be exclusionary. Despite the increasing scholarly recognition that Latin (like Middle English or the French of England) has its own internal plurality of registers, that Latinate 'censorship' may have been more nominal than actual, it is still commonplace to consider Latin as the binary opposite of the vernacular.[568] Like many other organising binaries – elite and popular, professional and amateur, metropolitan and provincial – it is loaded with accumulated assumptions about value.

Many studies of language use in medieval England used to argue, and many still rest on the assumption, that medieval Latin was a monolithic language, conveying authority and transmitting the ideology of ecclesiastical control whenever it appeared on the page. This Latin is the language of which Knighton and the anti-Wycliffite polemicists spoke: the *lingua angelica* whose grammatical categories elevated it above all vernaculars and distinguished its users from the uneducated laity.[569] It is this idea of Latin that animates Love's rhetoric of 'lewed' Englishness, and which is visible in those *notae* that do not contain familiar liturgical phrases, but

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[568] See, for example, Melissa Furrow, 'Unscholarly Latinity and Margery Kempe,' in *Studies in English Language and Literature. 'Doubt Wisely': Papers in Honour of E.G. Stanley,* eds. M. Jane Toswell and Elizabeth Tyler (London and New York: Routledge 1996), 240-251; Green and Mooney, eds., *Interstices*.

[569] Geoffrey Haward Martin, ed. and trans., *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 243. See also Jesse M. Gellrich, *Discourse and Dominion in the Fourteenth Century: Oral Contexts of Writing in Philosophy, Politics and Poetry* (Princeton, NJ, and Chichester: University of Princeton Press, 1995), 39-122, esp. 167.

exclusionary Latin references to texts inaccessible to Middle English readers. In *Robert of Sicily*, Latin is quite literally a *lingua angelica*, the language that demarcates the ignorant and arrogant king from the angel who usurps his throne. Yet, the narrative of *Robert* illustrates the way in which no sooner has this *lingua angelica* been literalised in the quotation from the *Magnificat* and the usurping angel's appearance than the paradigm of Latin and Middle English shifts: the king learns to interpret scriptural parallels to his own life through the strength of his contrite faith, while the narrative elides mention of the Latinity of Scripture as the barrier to his learning. *Robert* is only a short narrative, yet it offers its readers a space in which to construe the language of Latinate exclusion and also set it aside in order to participate in the inclusive paraliturgical Latinity submerged within the text.

Many of the registers of Latin I have found in the pages of manuscripts made for non-Latinate or imperfectly Latinate readers may be placed somewhere near the vernacular on a spectrum of linguistic positions. Their visual dynamics shape understanding in vernacular texts, acting as bridges for conceptual transfer from one language to the others. Over the period I study, laypeople became more and more able to control and articulate their own responses to written texts, first responding to structures laid out by clerical interpreters, then gradually adapting these structures to their own particular needs and ideological positions, and eventually participating in the processes of compiling, copying, and annotating their own manuscripts with the richly intertextual, multilingual and deeply personal material we find in fifteenth-century Household Books.

The terminology used to describe linguistic interrelationships in medieval England, much of it taken from modern linguistics – trilingualism, code-switching – often seems inadequate to describe the situations we find in medieval manuscripts. In a pre-dictionary society, it is difficult to tell whether the linguistic mixing we identify as code-switching (for example in *Handlyng Synne*, in **Cf**, in Robert Thornton's manuscripts, in the Chaucer manuscripts to which I compare these latter two) truly drew on two lexicons conceptualised as distinct, as Latin and Middle English, or whether we are looking at Latinate words anglicised. This issue, as Judith

Jefferson notes in her recent essay on *Piers Plowman*, causes persistent problems for editors of medieval texts, who must decide whether or not to apply modern bibliographical codes to distinguish words of Latin origin from Middle English.[570] Modern editors' decisions (inevitably standardised across an edition) do not always map neatly onto the decisions of medieval scribes tackling the same problem in their manuscripts.

The permeability of linguistic boundaries on the page is constantly in tension with the rhetorical exploitation of these boundaries in medieval writers' rhetoric, as the example of *Handlyng Synne* most forcefully demonstrates. We need to theorise the communicative properties of these silent systems of the manuscript page, to understand how they interact with writers' rhetoric and with the background of linguistic, aesthetic and cognitive habits and expectations each reader – medieval and modern – must bring to the activity of reading. In my introduction, I observed that, insofar as scholars have studied the features of visual dynamics, their work has been dominated by a small, select corpus of manuscripts and texts. Current studies of the canonical texts I discussed in my introduction represent their distinctive 'Englishness' as the product of interactions between different languages and different registers of language in a multilingual metropolitan book culture. Chaucer's integration of French and Italian influences 'enriches' his Middle English narratives; Gower's trilingual work is closely allied to his engagement with Lancastrian politics of English nationhood; the Latinity of *Piers* is inextricable from his metropolitan expressions of the English lay disenfranchisement in the late fourteenth century.[571]

In contrast, the Middle English texts I have studied in this thesis are often seen as both less canonically 'English', and more monolingual. Studies of *Handlyng Synne* and the *Mirror* dwell on their antagonistic rhetorical positioning of Middle English in contrast to the French of England and Latin, citing Mannyng's description of his

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570 Jefferson, 'Scribal Responses to Latin in the Manuscripts of the B-Version of *Piers Plowman*,' 195-210.

571 Davidson, *Medievalism, Multilingualism, and Chaucer*; T. Matthew M. McCabe, *Gower's Vulgar Tongue. Ovid, Lay Religion, and English Poetry in the* Confessio Amantis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011).

‘lewed’ English readers. Studies of *Robert* stress its ‘provincial’ isolation from a London constructed as the definitive arena for linguistic mixing in the fifteenth century. However, I have shown that, when we compare these texts to one another and to the Latin paraliturgical books in which religious reading was grounded, a new picture emerges. The texts I study in this thesis have enabled me to look from the late thirteenth century popularisation of Latin modes of reading (both monastic Latin *lectio* in the Book of Hours and scholastic Latin *lectio* translated into vernacular pastoral literature), to Latin influences in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Above all, my thesis focuses on the period from *c*. 1380 to 1500, on the century of Middle English manuscript production that saw the construction of an ‘English’ literary canon which has constantly been re-defined and reinterpreted in subsequent literature and criticism. I have attempted to trace an alternative history of Middle English manuscript cultures, focussing on those texts and manuscripts that are marginalised in contrast to the central canonical figures of Chaucer, Gower and Langland and the intensely-studied metropolitan scribes who produced their works. The products of this elite London culture are repositioned on the margins of my thesis, and I hope that my studies of other Middle English manuscripts will open up new models of interpretation for them, too.

Although scholarship has moved away from a hierarchical and rigid model of linguistic relationships, the interactions between the languages of medieval England are most frequently characterised not in terms of mutually-reinforcing stability, but in terms of dynamism, innovation, of the sparks that fly when different registers of communication are knocked together. This is perhaps not surprising, since the scholarship on vernacularity that evolved into an interest in multilingualism has progressed concurrently with another great scholarly trend, that of interest in the subversive Englishes of Wycliffism. Yet, for the medieval book users I study, the visible interaction of Latin and vernacular was normal, not exceptional. It was a constant reminder than all readers, no matter how educated in Latin grammar or theology they might become, were expected to learn to read by sounding out the syllables of the Latin prayers before they learned to understand the shapes and patterns they saw. It is only by interpreting the visual dynamics of religious manuscripts made in England that we can truly understand the linguistic relationships readers navigated every time they opened their books.

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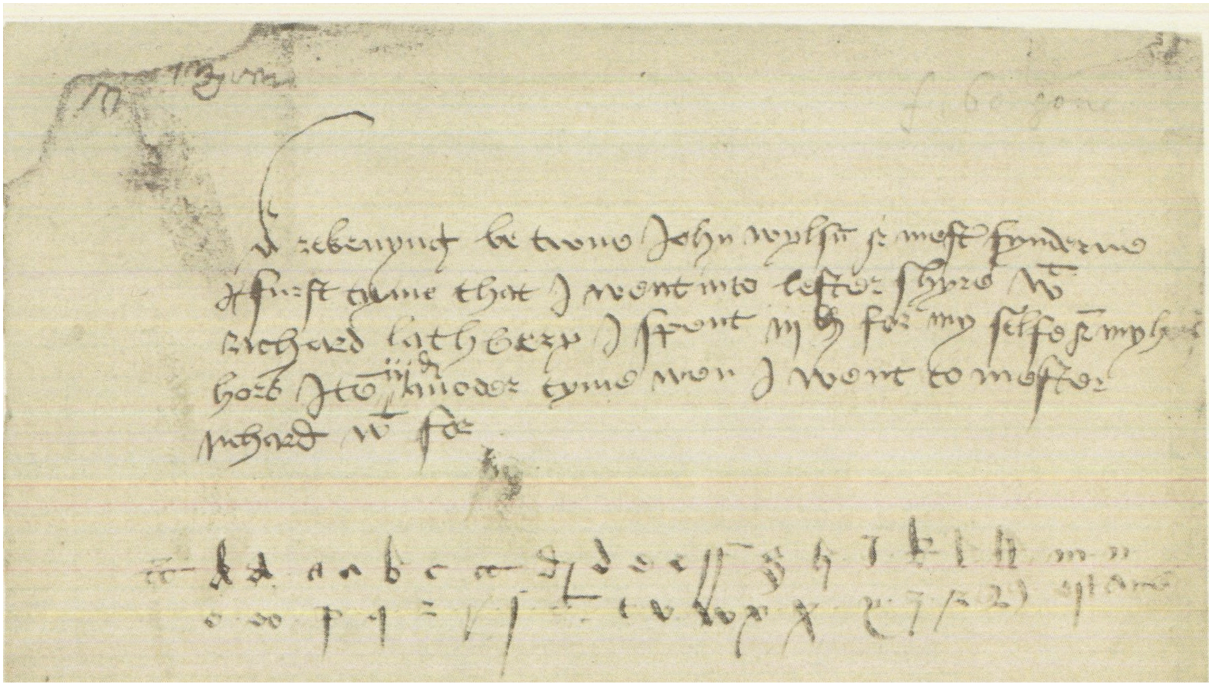

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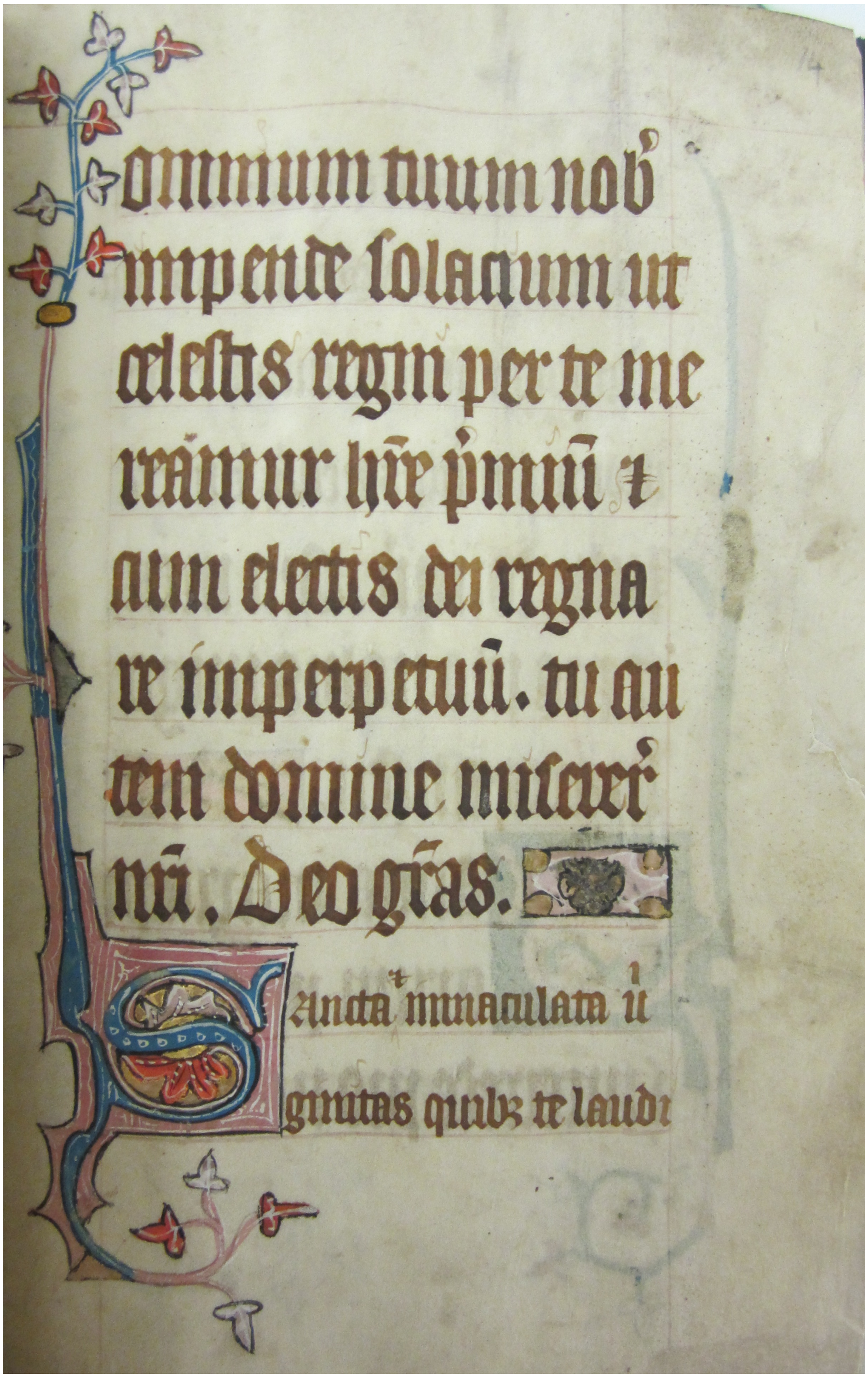

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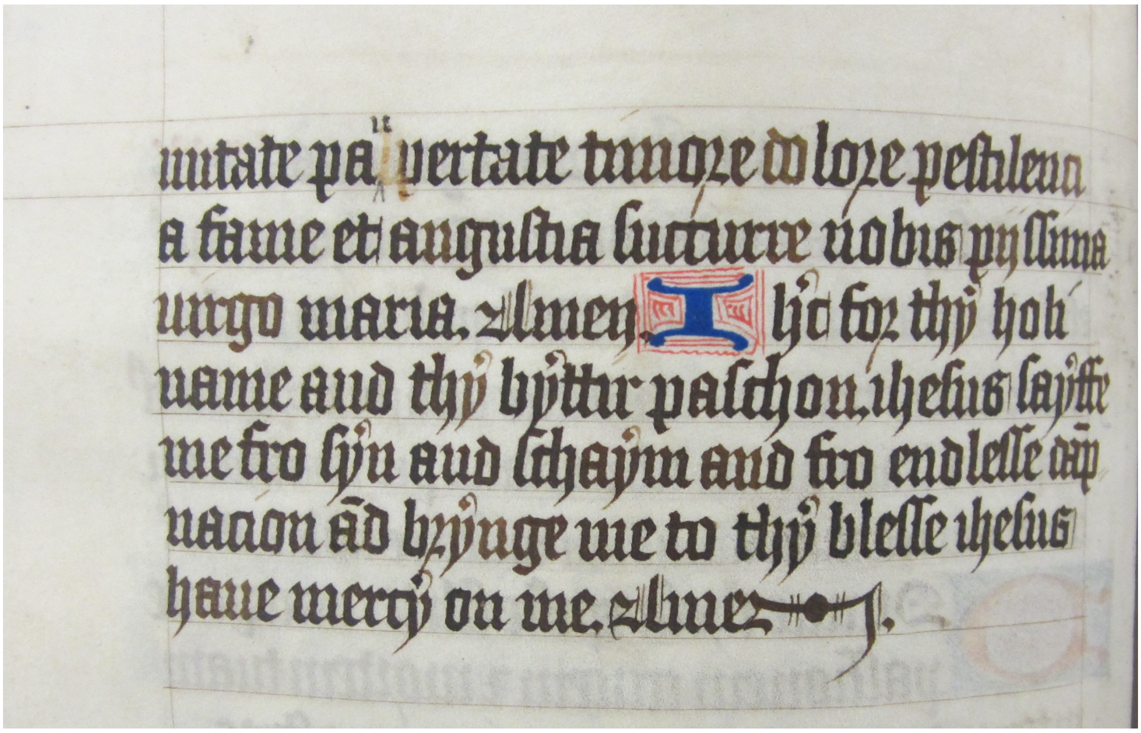

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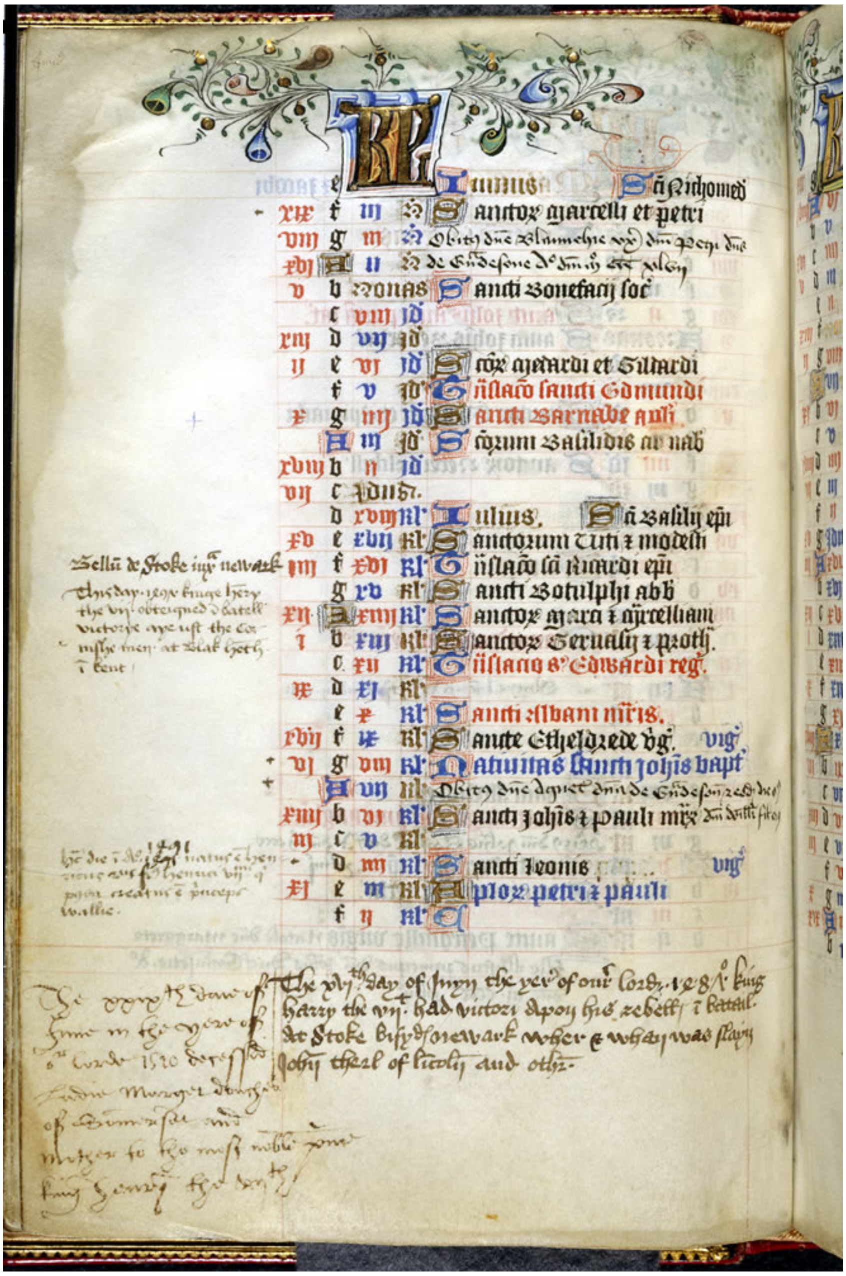

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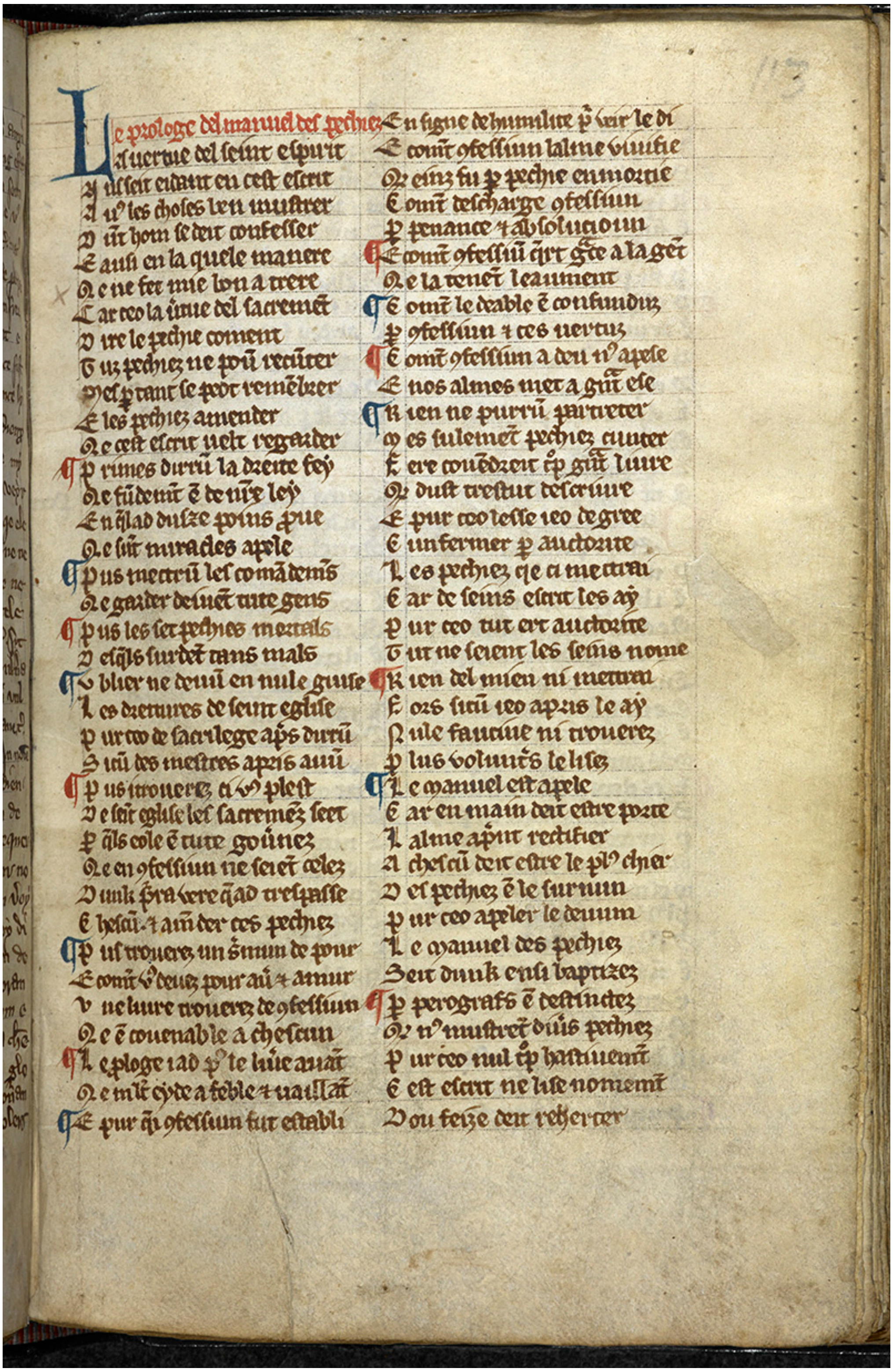

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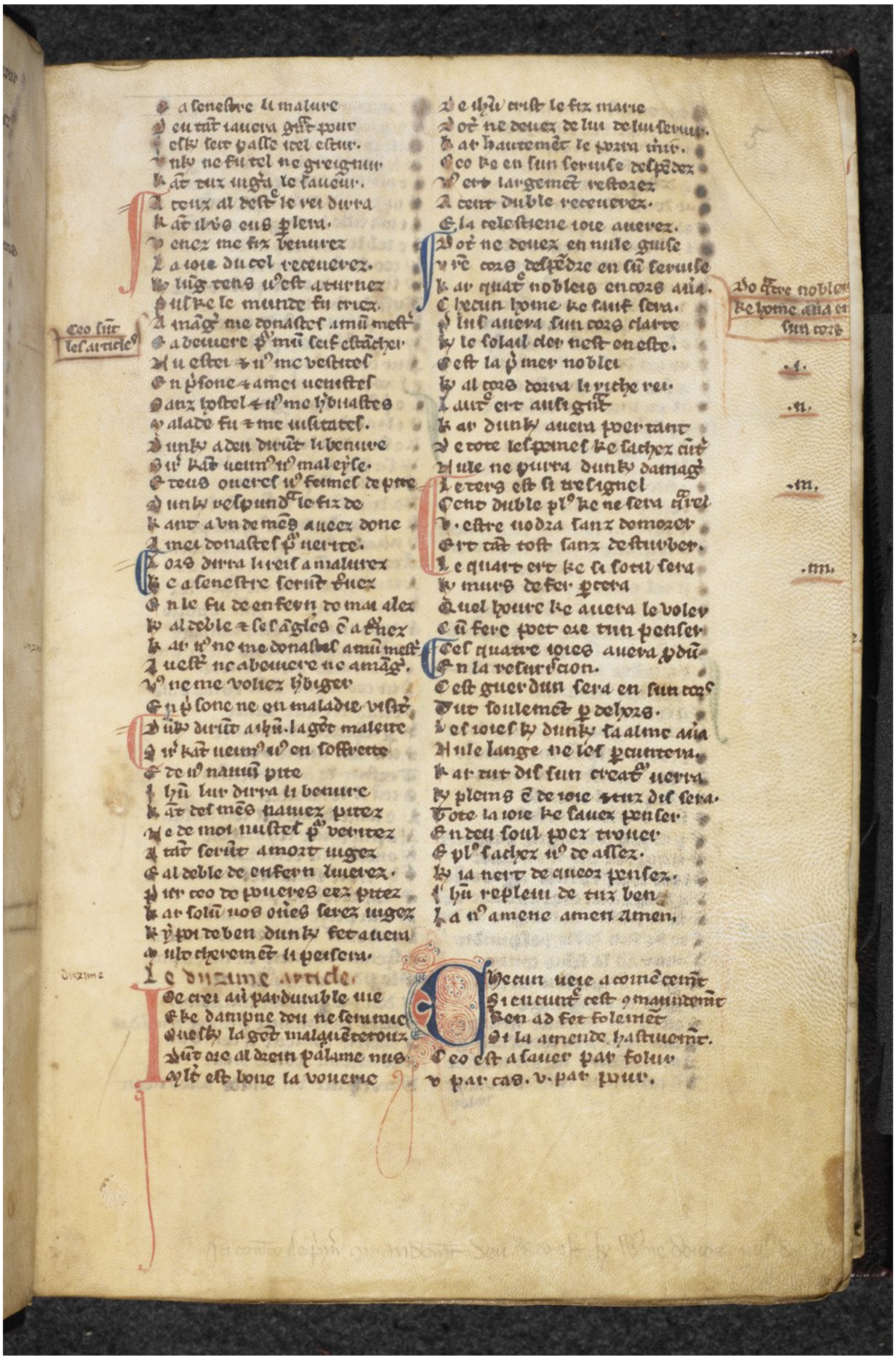

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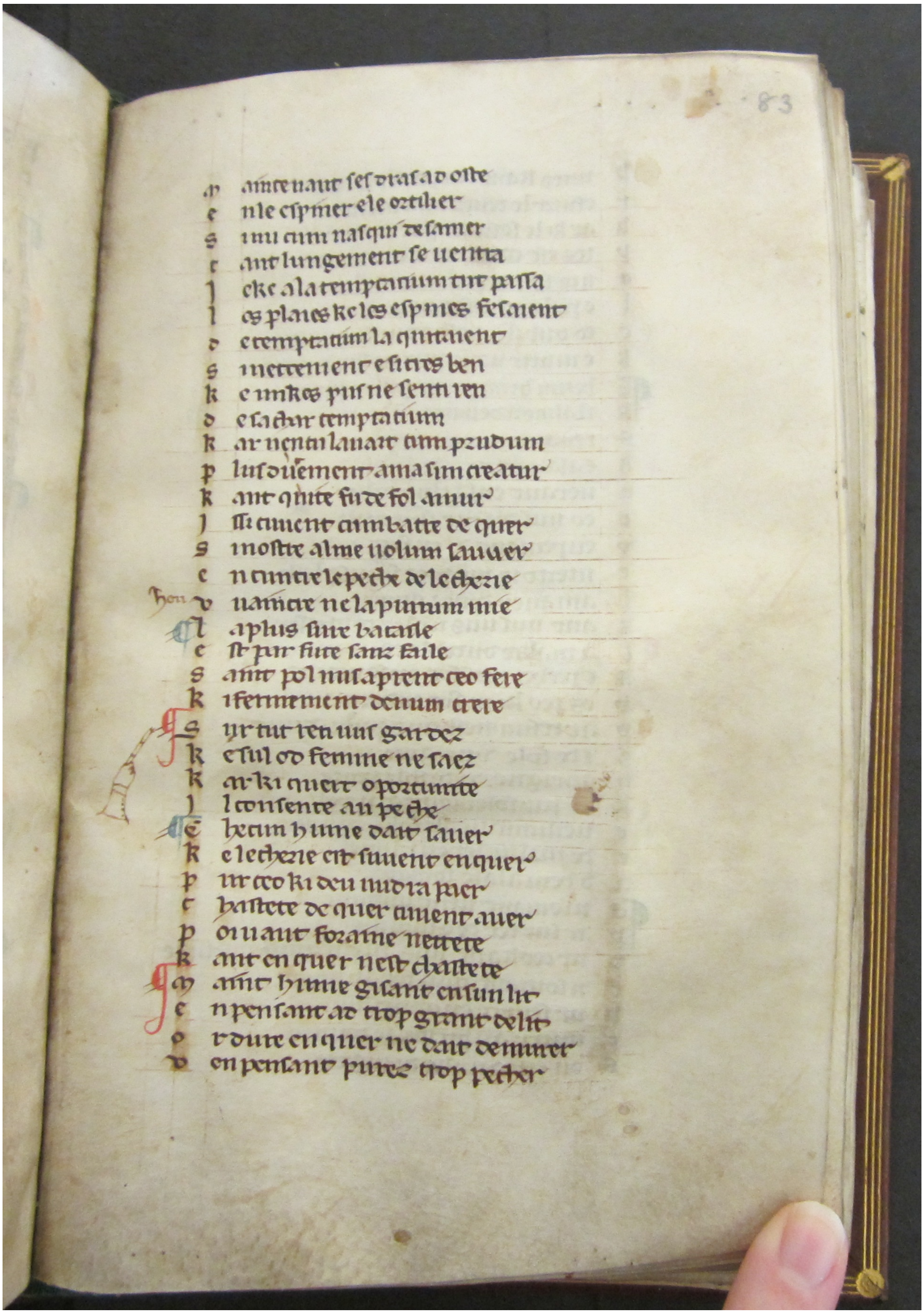

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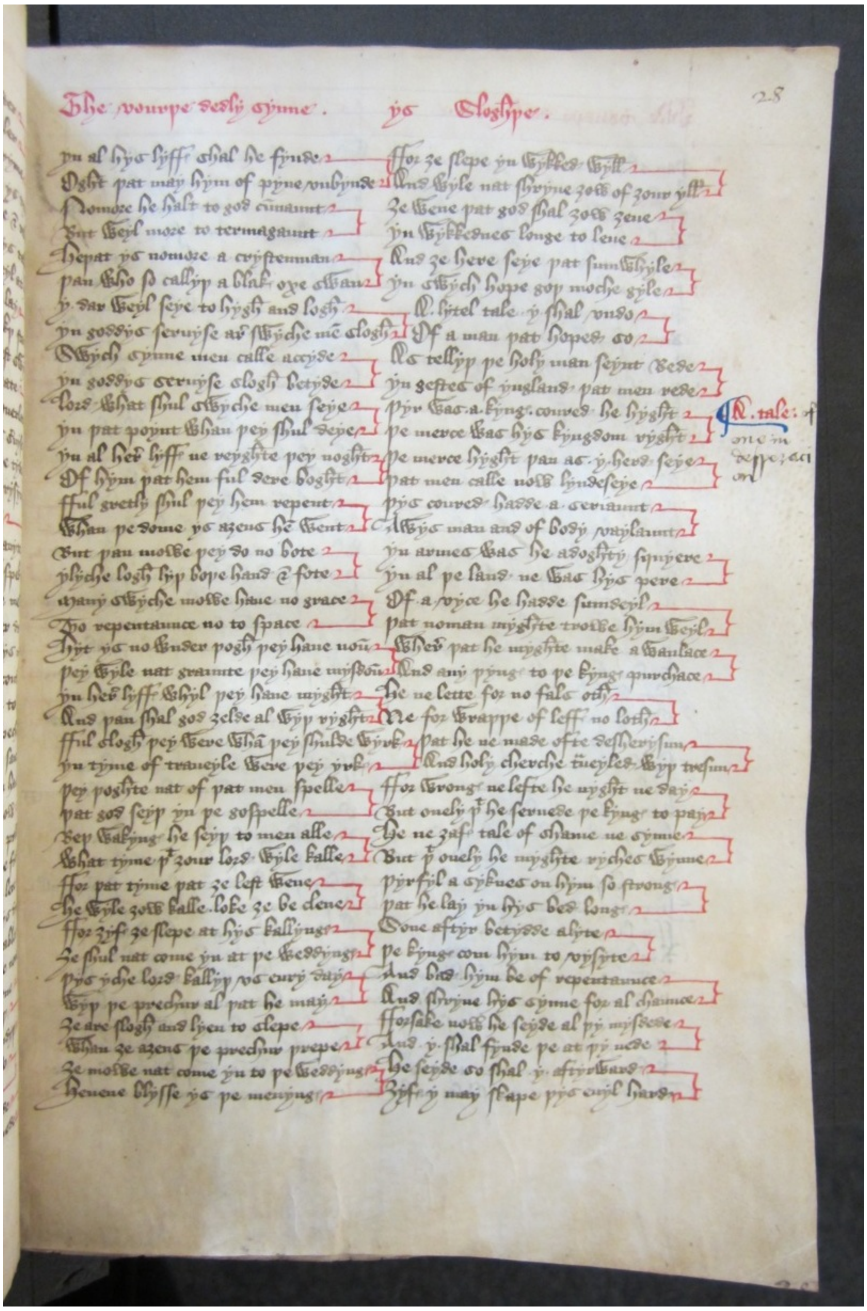

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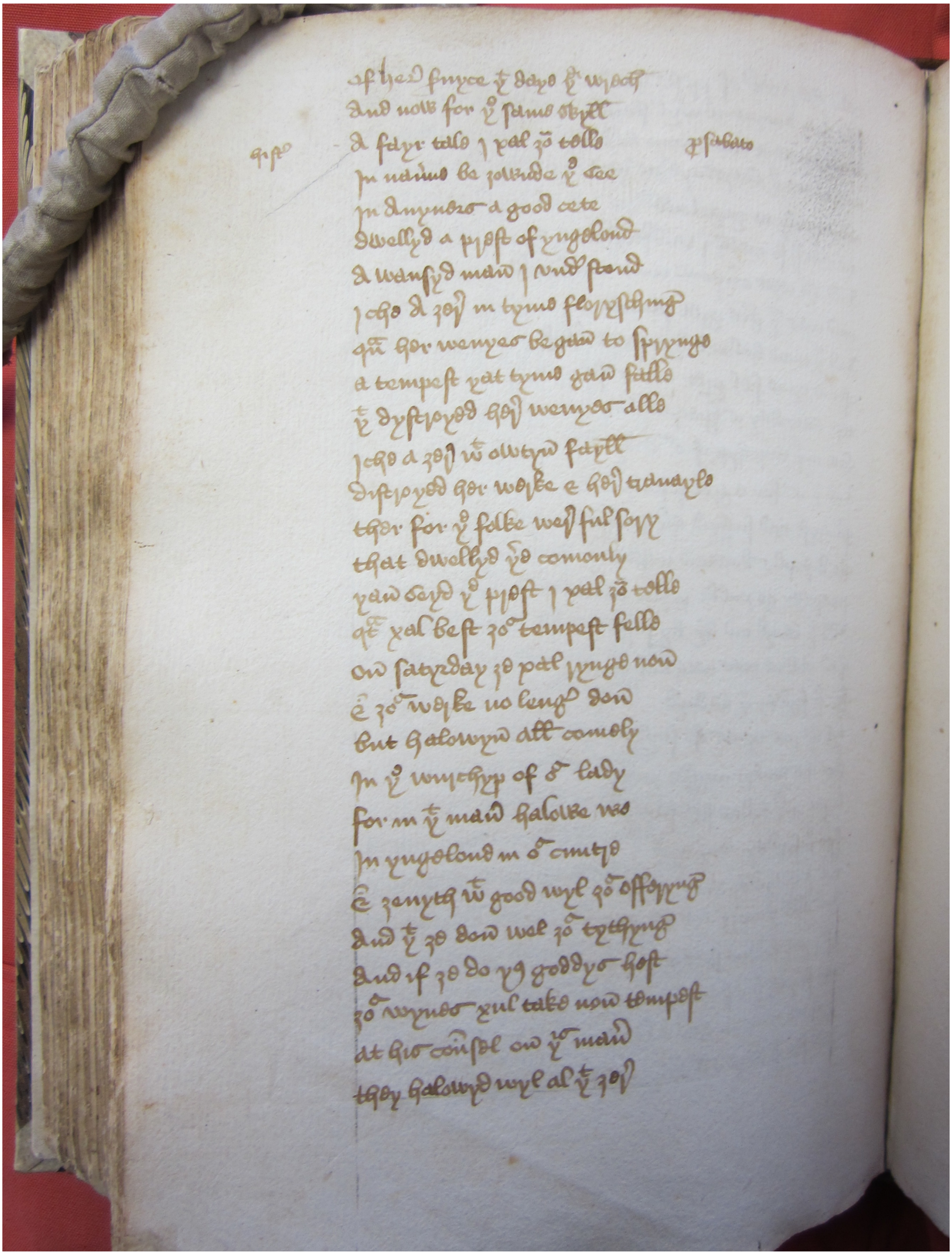

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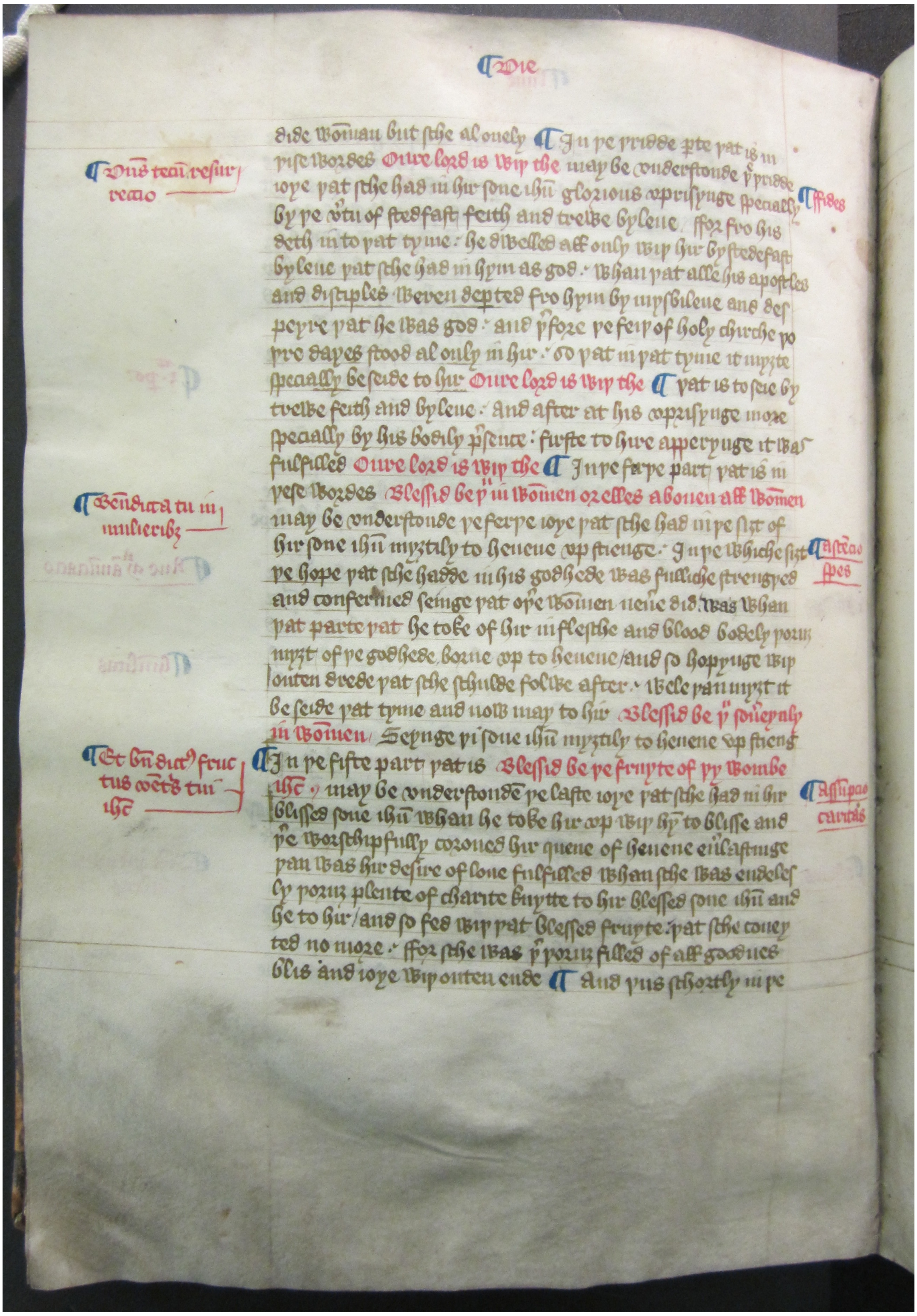

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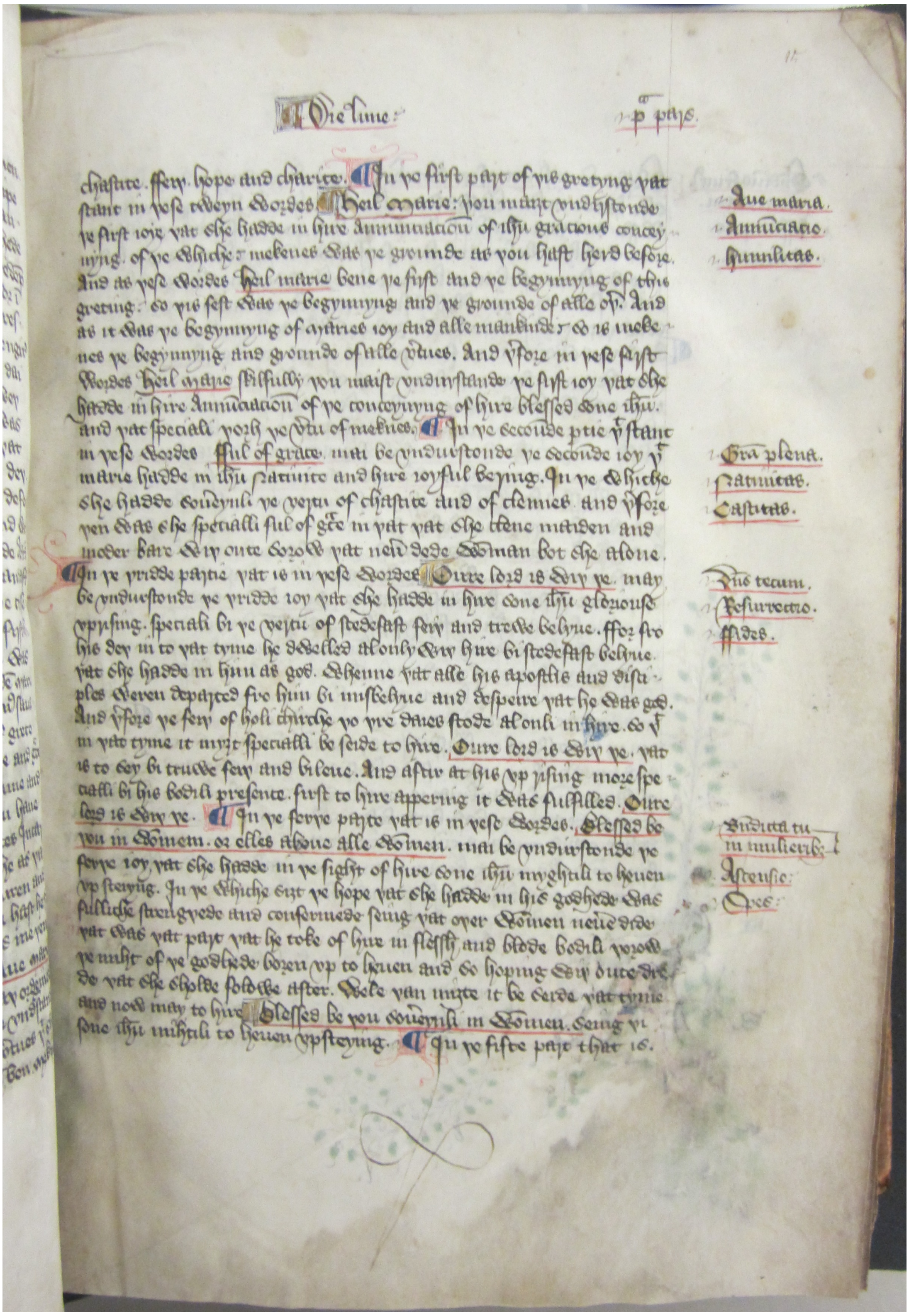

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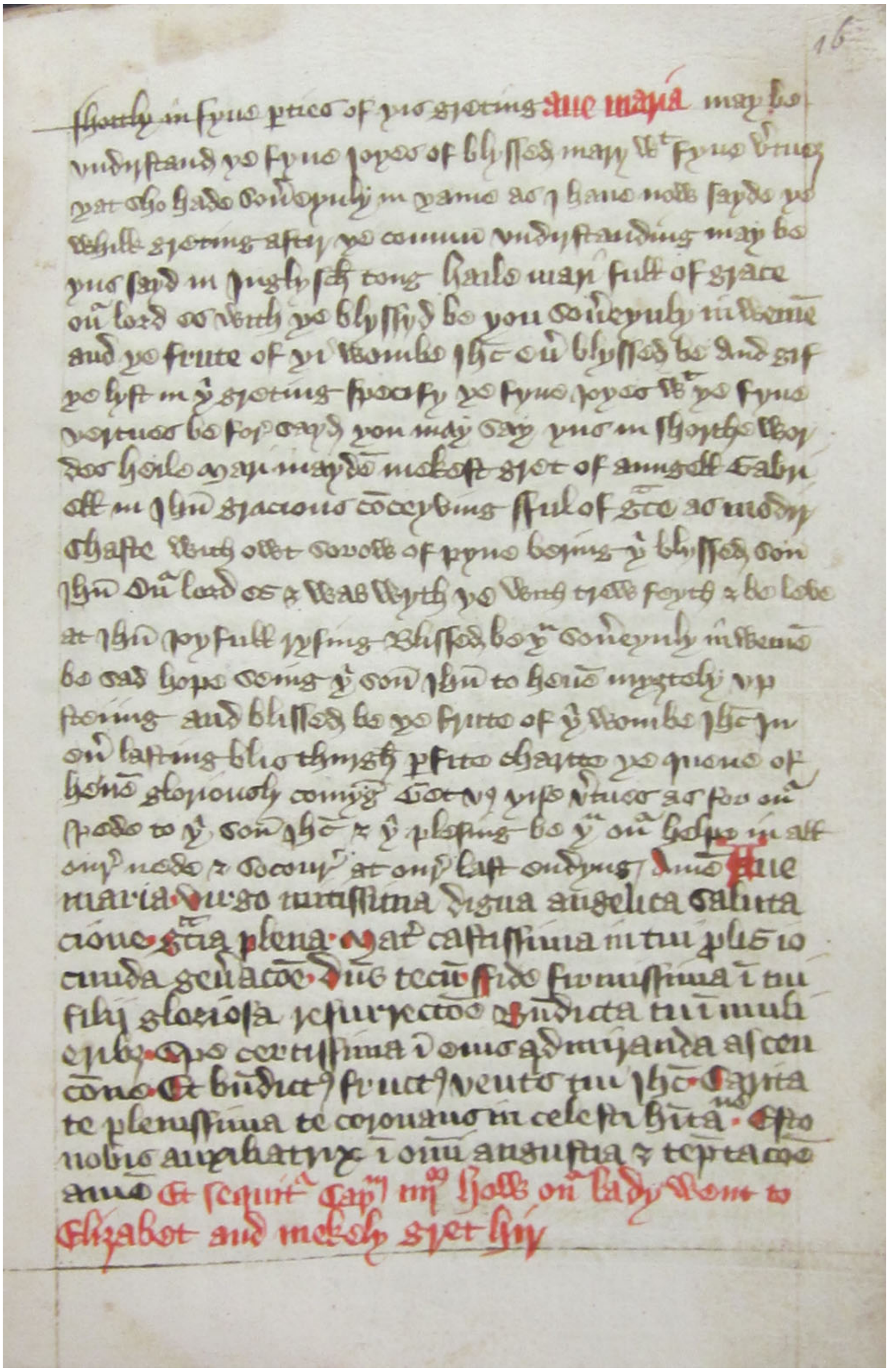

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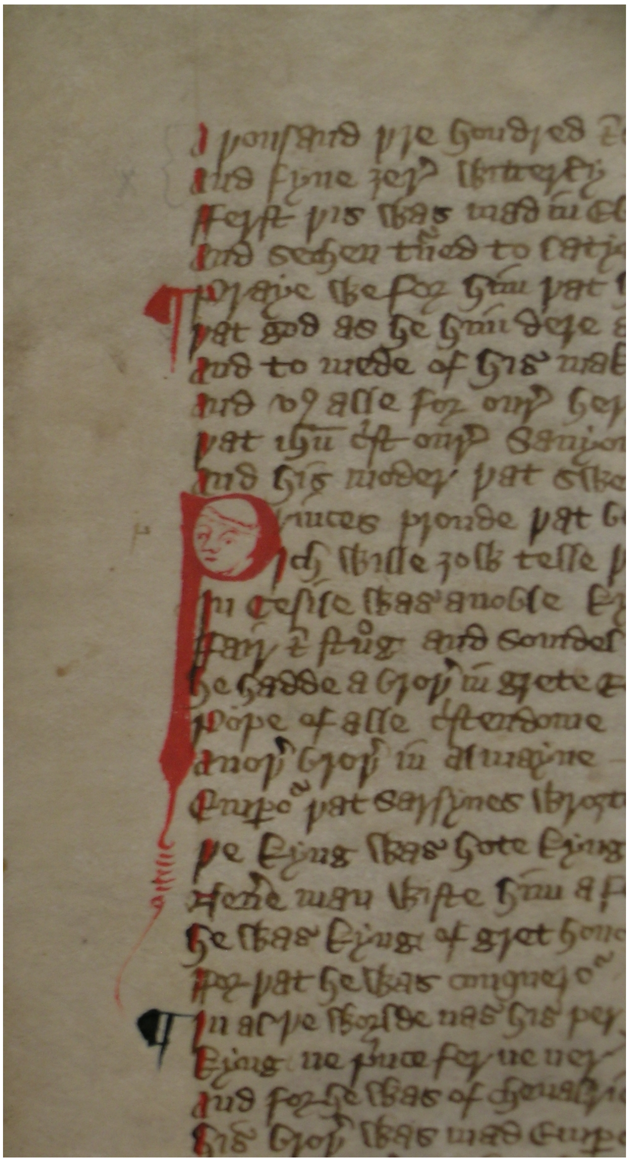

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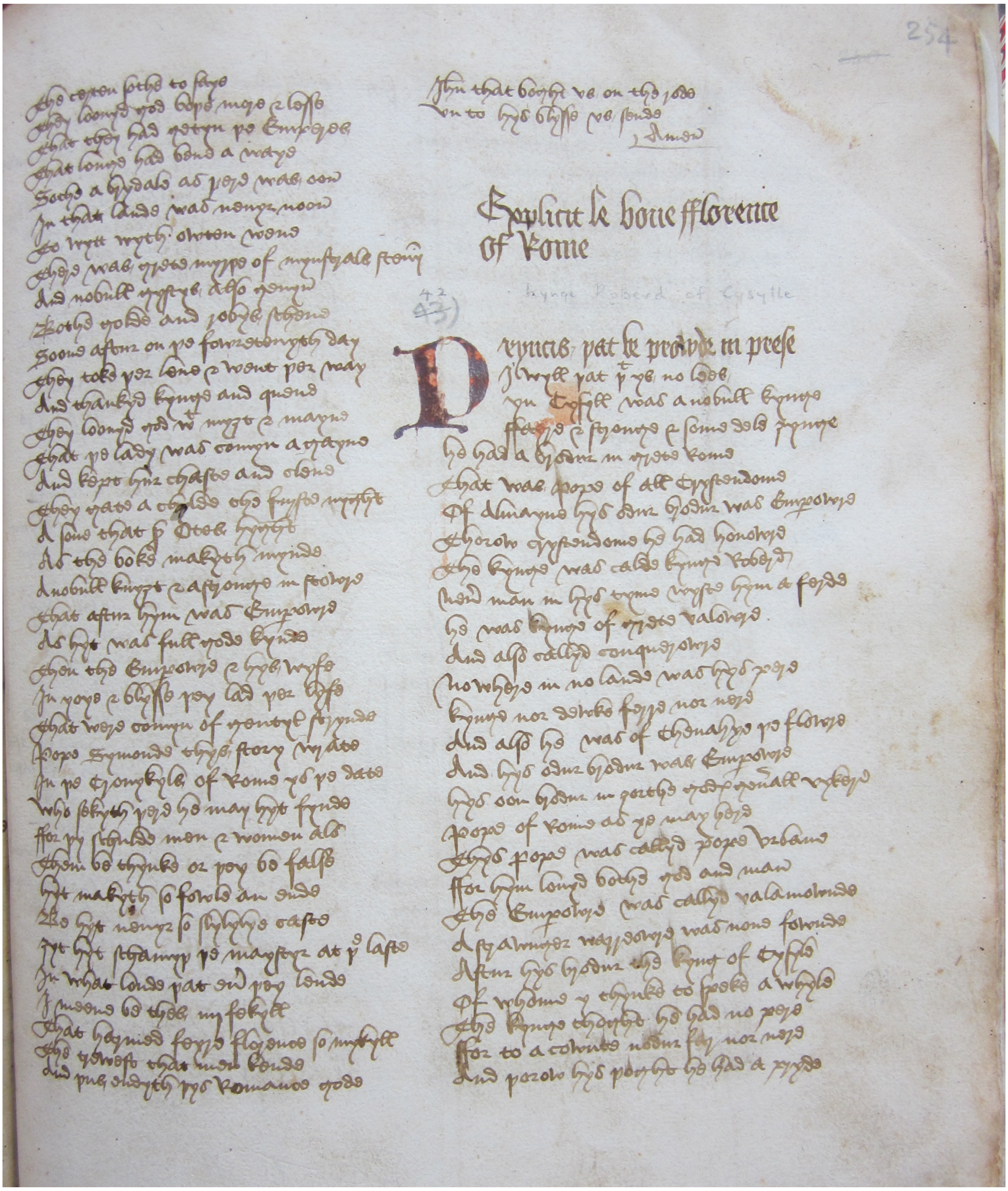

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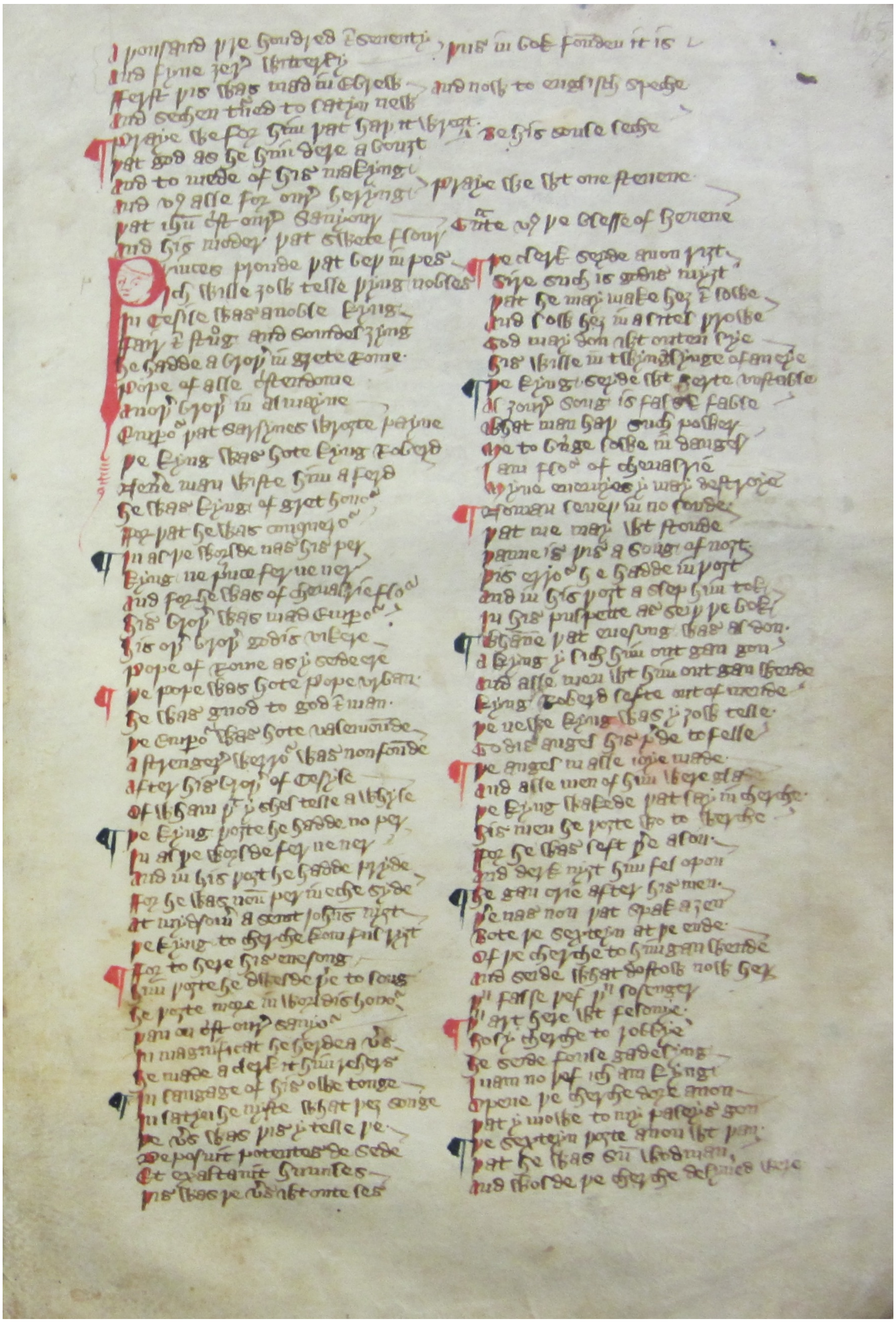

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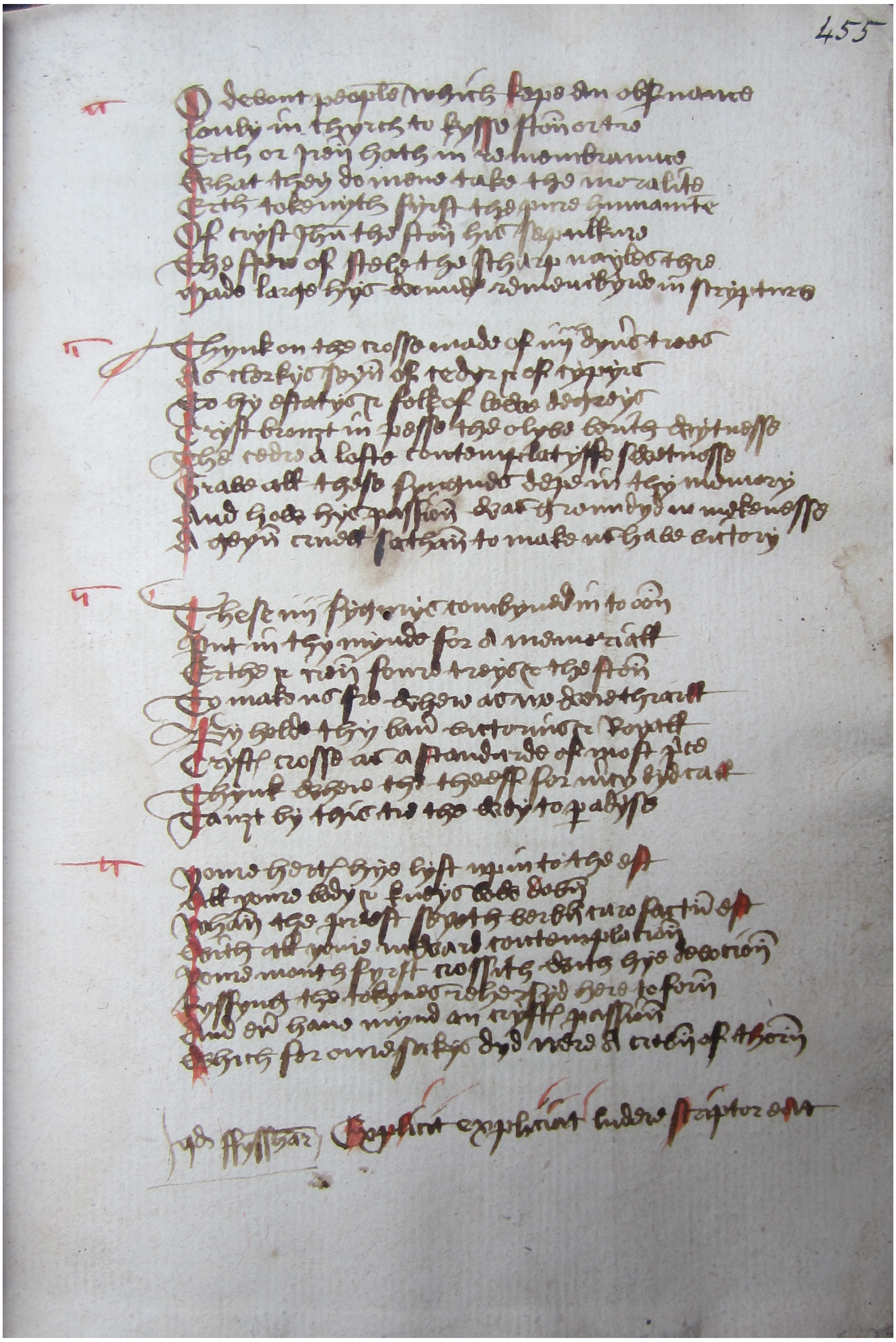

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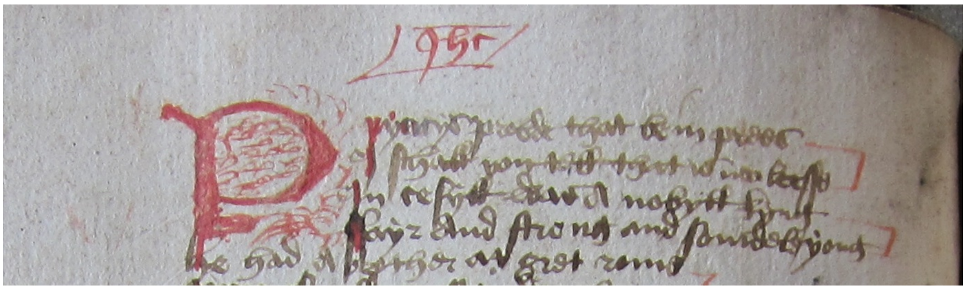

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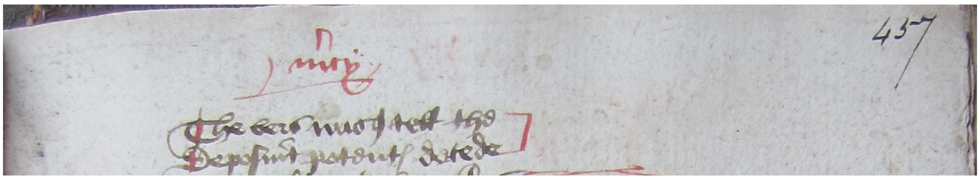

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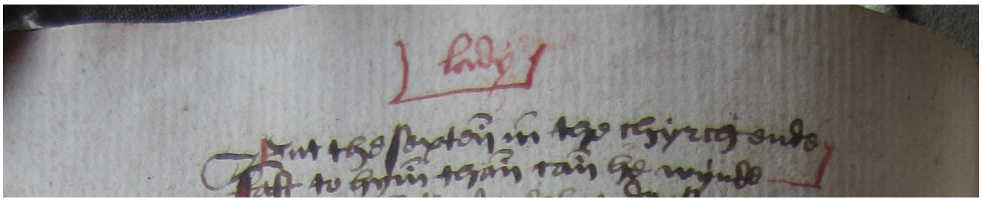

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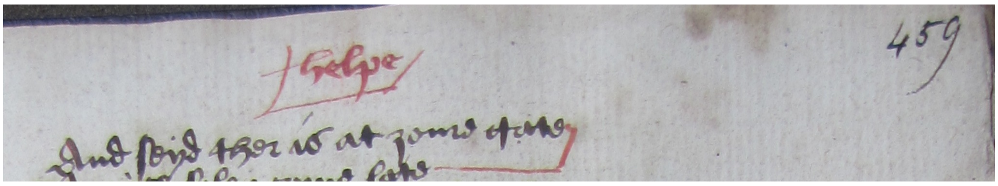

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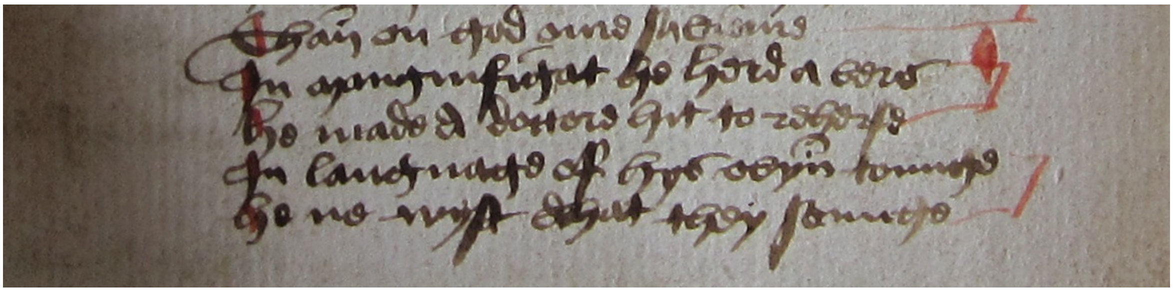

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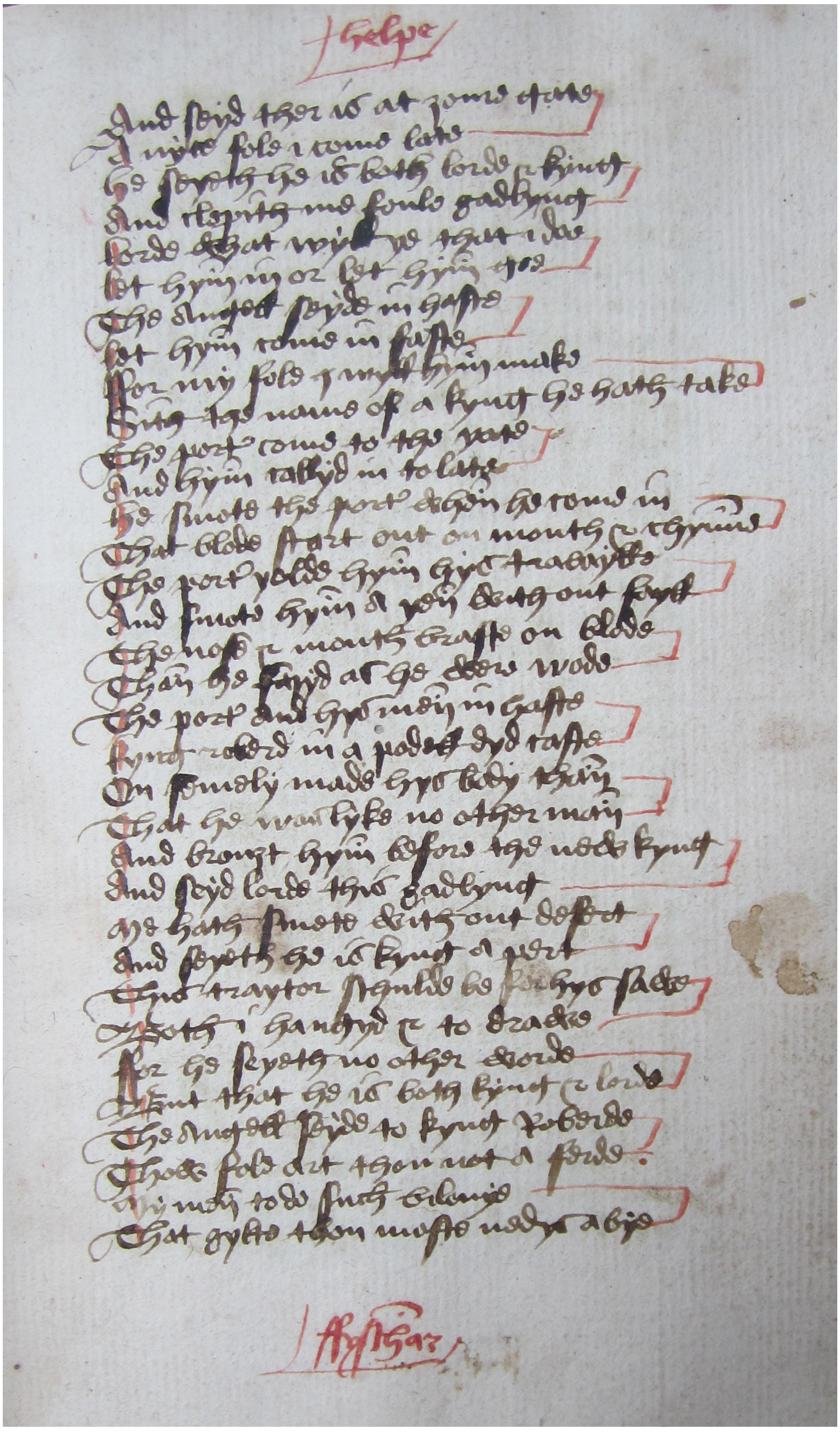

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