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## SPECIAL ISSUE

Manuscript Studies: Past, Present and Future of an Evolving Discipline /  
Estudios de manuscritos: pasado, presente y futuro  
de una disciplina en evolución



## INTRODUCTION\*

Laura Esteban-Segura  
University of Málaga (Spain)

The twenty-first century, known as the digital age, has witnessed the unstoppable rise of information technologies as well as the advent of Digital Humanities, where traditional humanistic disciplines and the use of new technologies converge. Manuscript Studies as a discipline covers a broad spectrum of topics nowadays, ranging from the analytical handling of codices and the examination of texts and images contained in them to the digitisation of collections—which illustrate the turn from material to digital.<sup>1</sup> Manuscript Studies is the broader term which encompasses Philology, Palaeography, Codicology, among others; many are the areas related, as well: History, Theology, Philosophy, Ecdotics, to name but a few. This leads us to think of this complex field as essentially interdisciplinary and embracing different cultures and traditions (among which that of Europe is only one).<sup>2</sup> The present special issue sets out to be a reflection on the work which is currently being done in the arena of Early English manuscript research, particularly in Middle and Early Modern English. The topics covered by the authors in this collection include editing, dialectology, punctuation, etc. from different research traditions, but all of them ingrained in manuscript contexts.

The issue opens with María José Carrillo-Linares's paper, entitled "Outcomes of Editorial Intervention in Texts from National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS ii.1: Past, Present and Future." The focus is on the manuscript Brogyntyn ii.1, which is approached from the point of view of textual editing. The volume is a miscellany from the fifteenth century whose contents range from "science to history or poetry" (18), written by multiple scribes. Carrillo-Linares postulates that "editorial decisions distort the original text" (19) and this is corroborated in her well-rounded analysis of scribe O's production, which contains English verse and prose. Editions of this scribe's pieces have been produced since the first half of the nineteenth century and the author has meticulously collated each of them with her own transcription of the original texts, thus providing deep and fascinating insight into editorial intervention, mostly concerning abbreviations and spelling regularisation, across time. In addition, she assesses the dialectal features of the scribe's language by resorting to *eLALME* (Benskin et al. 2013), which allows her to accurately localise the texts. She concludes that "[s]ome degree of editorial intervention is unavoidable in every edition" (37) and advocates the advantages of digital editions to the detriment of paper printed editions.

MS Brogyntyn ii.1 is also pivotal to Edurne Garrido-Anes's paper, "A Dialectal Study of the First Quire in National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS ii.1." On this occasion, Garrido-Anes takes up the topic of historical dialectal

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variation in Middle English texts, more specifically those housed in the first quire—a late addition—of the manuscript under consideration, which were written by five different scribes (A, C, E, F and G). In order to appraise the linguistic provenance of the texts, the author provides a meticulous and in-depth analysis of each of the scribes' language, employing for the purpose *LALME*'s (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986) methodology (also *eLALME*'s), which includes the creation of the Linguistic Profiles (LPs) of the texts and the application of the 'fit'-technique. This allows her to successfully eliminate "unlikely areas of linguistic provenance and [...] eventually narrow down the dialectal origin of the language analyzed" (49). Finally, she reaches the conclusion that the linguistic area "shared by the English texts in quire 1 turns out to be more central than Shropshire and slightly more southern than Derbyshire" (57), further establishing Warwickshire or nearby as the area common to all five scribes.

In "Contextualising Middle English Liturgical Commentaries," Jeremy Smith expertly considers Middle English texts on the liturgy, both in verse and prose, and their cultural mapping by looking at their codicological contexts, that is, by taking into account material and local features of the manuscripts in which the texts are housed. For the purpose, in a brilliant display of philological erudition, he examines a number of codices that "offer paratextual commentary on the Mass" (71), most of which are miscellanies. This type of work has received increasing interest lately since, as Smith contends, "[m]any scholars have noted that the correlation of individual text and individual codex is the exception rather than the rule in the production of books during the late medieval period across Europe" (74). The contents of manuscripts varied depending on their "codicological settings and cultural functions of each copy" (77), and the latter can be recreated by evaluating dialect, ownership marks and textual organisation, among other features. Smith further discusses and provides insightful data on several devotional miscellanies, including the Vernon and Beinecke manuscripts.

Irma Taavitsainen and Alpo Honkapohja's contribution, "The Five Wits in English Medical Literature, 1375-1600," skilfully investigates a relevant element of culture in the Middle Ages, the five wits or senses, in order to effectively demonstrate how they became a commonplace in vernacular medical writing and determine how texts were adapted depending on the targeted audience, for instance, male versus female. The approach is corpus-based, resorting to medical electronic corpora, but a more philological stance is also adopted. Thus, their qualitative discourse analysis is complemented with codicological and palaeographical data obtained from first-hand inspection of several manuscripts. The types of texts scrutinised encompass

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\* I am grateful to the University of Málaga for research support (project reference B3-2022\_04).

<sup>1</sup> Edwards (2013, 2018) has addressed the limitations of digital technology for the scholarly study of manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the major global traditions, see Keene (2020).



surgical ones, specialised treatises, compendia with miscellaneous materials, medieval encyclopaedia in rhyming couplets, health guides, remedies and *materia medica*, and practical verse. Taavitsainen and Honkapohja assert that at the end of the fifteenth century “the scope of vernacular medical literature was wide [...], probably reaching even illiterate or semi-literate audiences with oral delivery” (102). Their solid analysis adds a new dimension to our comprehension of the development of vernacular scientific writing.

Two specific medical texts are tackled in the following two articles. Laura Esteban-Segura and Carlos Soriano-Jiménez’s proposal, “Guy de Chauliac’s *On Bloodletting* in Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307 (ff. 165v-166v),” offers a semi-diplomatic edition and a study of a Middle English treatise on phlebotomy, which remained unedited so far, by Guy de Chauliac. He was one of the leading medical scholars of the Middle Ages and a physician to several popes, whose influence has endured to the present day. The witness of his treatise on bloodletting in MS Hunter 307 forms part of a medical compendium including copies of other important medieval works such as the Middle English Gilbertus Anglicus and the anonymous *Circa instans*. Esteban-Segura and Soriano-Jiménez discuss the transmission of treatises on the topic and identify another witness of the one under consideration, held in London, British Library, MS Sloane 3486 (f. 147v). More copies may be extant and further research is encouraged. A brief physical analysis follows: this shows that the production of the codex was careful, with no marginalia, which questions a practical use of it. The edition pursues a faithful rendering of the original with a view to keeping its flavour. A linguistic analysis based on *eLALME*’s model is also carried out in order to localise the text geographically, assigning it to the area of Huntingdonshire. The authors succeed in providing socio-cultural, codicological, palaeographical and linguistic evidence of a thus far neglected Middle English piece.

In “Domestic Medicine in an Early Eighteenth-Century Manuscript, GUL, Ferguson MS 43,” Isabel de la Cruz-Cabanillas brings to the fore an Early Modern English recipe collection attributed to a woman, Lady Stanhope. The proliferation of such household manuscripts points to the important role of women “in the transmission and dissemination of knowledge within families and their social networks” (133). De la Cruz-Cabanillas’s perspicuous and well-articulated analysis is threefold. Firstly, she describes the manuscript from a physical standpoint; secondly, she assesses the degree of orthographic standardisation of the text; and thirdly, she explores the content and textual organisation of the recipes. By examining aspects such as the ingredients appearing in the recipes, the author concludes that this particular collection “was compiled for a prosperous home” (144). Studies of this type are essential to grasp socio-cultural practices in early modern England as well as linguistic usages, as De la Cruz-Cabanillas knowledgeably manages to do in her contribution.

Alpo Honkapohja’s solo paper, “The Extent of Fire Damage to Middle English Prose in the Cotton Library,” takes into consideration the Cotton collection in order to analyse the damage caused by a fire that took place in 1731—before the collection was actually housed in the British Library—to manuscripts containing Middle English. The author gives an exhaustive account of the situation of the





collection before and after the fire and provides a thorough list of damaged manuscripts, which details the extent of the havoc wreaked by the fire, among other aspects, thus illuminating our understanding of these works. The manuscripts surveyed include monastic registers, religious treatises, historical chronicles, documents relating to diplomatic matters, etc., and, to a lesser extent, literary and scientific prose. These contents bear witness to the political interests of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, who, apart from an antiquarian, was also a politician as well as to his dexterity in acquiring manuscripts, as Honkapohja points out (161-162).

Javier Calle-Martín and Jacob Thaisen's article, "General Patterns of Punctuation in the *Paston Letters*," close the special issue with a well-documented analysis of punctuation marks and their uses in this collection of Late Middle English correspondence. The letters are an important primary source for (socio-) linguistic and historical research, since they comprise texts written by a number of members of the Paston family, who belonged to the Norfolk gentry, from different generations. The authors have selected 171 letters and provided an inventory of marks of punctuation found in them, which includes the paraph, the single virgule, the double virgule, the punctus and the punctus elevatus. They discuss the functions of each mark, which sometimes overlap, and refer as well to formulaic expressions that accompany punctuation marks. It is worth noting that punctuation in this work, according to Calle-Martín and Thaisen, "is closely related to the letters' *mise-en-page*" (174). They also argue that the functions of marks in the *Paston Letters* are "invariably rhetorical, especially designed to aid the correct reading aloud and to ensure the correct parsing of the text" (180). Their piece of research leaves the door open for much needed further work on historical punctuation, particularly regarding medieval correspondence.

The articles in this special issue reveal the many possibilities that the study of manuscripts offers across different subject areas and fully demonstrate the significance and impact of manuscripts on all realms of medieval and modern life, i.e., medical, political, private, etc. I hope that the issue will be helpful for readers to envision some of the lines of research carried out within the label of Manuscript Studies and that it contributes to advancing and enriching our knowledge of a discipline which will always look to the distant past, well aided (now more than ever) by contemporary tools, and with a blossoming future ahead. Last but not least, I would like to thank the scholars whose expertise is reflected in the following pages and the generous peer reviewers, all of whom have made this issue possible.



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## ARTICLES



# OUTCOMES OF EDITORIAL INTERVENTION IN TEXTS FROM NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES, BROGYNTYN MS II.1: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE\*

María José Carrillo-Linares  
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## ABSTRACT

In editing medieval manuscripts changes in tastes, needs, conventions and resources have resulted in edited texts so disparate that it is difficult to visualise the relative uniformity exhibited by a codex copyist. In this article I compare different editions of texts copied by one of the scribes of National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS ii.1, responsible for twenty-one entries in the manuscript. Each edition has been collated with the manuscript to establish the criteria adopted by each editor in their transcriptions. I focus on how editors address aspects such as expansion of abbreviations, normalisation and treatment of certain palaeographical peculiarities. The goal is to show how the work of the same scribe has been variously interpreted and how this variation disguises the essence of this copyist's written language.

**KEYWORDS:** Brogyntyn MS ii.1, Manuscript Studies, scribes, editorial procedures, abbreviations.

RESULTADOS DE LA INTERVENCIÓN EDITORIAL EN TEXTOS DEL MANUSCRITO DE LA  
BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE GALES, BROGYNTYN II.1: PASADO, PRESENTE Y FUTURO

## RESUMEN

En la edición de manuscritos medievales, los cambios en los gustos, las necesidades, las convenciones y los recursos han dado lugar a textos editados tan dispares que resulta difícil visualizar la relativa uniformidad exhibida por un copista. En este artículo se comparan diferentes ediciones de textos copiados por uno de los escribas responsable de veintiuna entradas en el manuscrito Biblioteca Nacional de Gales, Brogyntyn ii.1. Se coteja cada edición con el manuscrito para establecer los criterios adoptados por cada editor en sus transcripciones. La atención se centra en cómo los editores abordan aspectos como la expansión de las abreviaturas, la normalización y el tratamiento de ciertas peculiaridades paleográficas. El objetivo es mostrar cómo la obra de un mismo escriba ha sido interpretada de forma diversa y cómo esta variación disfraza la esencia de la lengua escrita de este copista.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Brogyntyn MS ii.1, estudios de manuscritos, copistas, procedimientos editoriales, abreviaturas.

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## 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Brogyntyn ii.1,<sup>1</sup> formerly known as Porkington 10, is a fifteenth-century miscellanea in a small quarto volume containing fifty-seven entries in prose and verse. In its 211 folios,<sup>2</sup> thirty-three entries are in verse (thirty-two in English and one in Latin), nineteen are prose texts (seventeen in English and two in Latin), three of them contain exclusively Latin tables, two have English verse and prose, and one contains a Latin table and English prose. The subject matter is manifold ranging from science to history or poetry. Scientific texts deal with prognostication and phlebotomy, astrology, eclipses, divisions of time and space, weather, agriculture and medical recipes; the wide range of literary texts cover Arthurian romances, lives of saints, religious prose, history, parodies, comic tales, love poems, allegorical and moral poems, debate poems as well as material from the *Northern Homily Cycle* and religious and secular carols.<sup>3</sup>

The volume was originally thought to have been copied by up to nineteen scribes (Kurvinen 1953, 35), although later work on the topic suggested that only sixteen copyists were involved (Huws 1996, 189). More recent research such as Salter (2017, 191) tentatively suggests that there are fewer scribes than sixteen, although I do not find her arguments convincing.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there seems to be agreement that there are four scribes who were most active in the production of this volume. The so-called scribe O copied twenty-two out of the fifty-seven entries, provided most of the rubrication in the book and wrote the quire signatures. His entries occupy eighty-five folios, meaning he copied roughly 36% of the total. The other three scribes who contributed considerably were scribe Q (forty-nine folios, 22%), scribe J (thirty folios, 17%) and scribe L (twenty-six folios, 13%). Each of the other

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\* I am grateful to Nancy Pope, who kindly provided me with a list containing the items and some of the editions for the texts in Brogyntyn ii.1 which helped me to initially give shape to this paper. I would like to make a special remembrance to the late Meg Laing who put my name forward to participate in a project led by Nancy Pope on the Brogyntyn ii.1 manuscript. I would also like to thank Keith Williamson and Eburne Garrido-Anes for their always useful comments and suggestions. Likewise, I wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers whose recommendations have helped me improve the clarity of this work.

<sup>1</sup> Digital images of this manuscript are freely available at: <https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/a-middle-english-miscellany>. The digital images in this paper have been reproduced by permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / The National Library of Wales.

<sup>2</sup> According to Kurvinen (1953, 35), the volume originally had 232 leaves. The losses suffered by the manuscript are: thirteen leaves at the beginning, one after f. 26 and seven or more at the end. Huws (1996, 192) proposes instead that after folio 211v “two more leaves should have completed it and not much more is likely to have been lost from the end of Brogyntyn ii.1.”

<sup>3</sup> Information about the manuscript as well as a list of contents can be found in the online catalogue at <https://archives.library.wales/index.php/english-miscellany>. Further details can be found in Kurvinen (1953) and Huws (1996).

<sup>4</sup> See Carrillo-Linares (2023).



thirteen scribes contributed minimally copying among all of them roughly 11% of the whole volume.<sup>5</sup>

In this study I focus on scribe O's production. Seventeen of his pieces are English verse, three are English prose, one English and Latin verse, and another is English prose and a short passage in verse. All his pieces in English have been edited (once or more than once) since the first half of the nineteenth century. Although scribe O exhibits relative consistency in his copying habits and in his language features, the edited texts break this uniformity inasmuch as his work has been interpreted in various ways, and this variation disguises the essence of the copyist's written language. When a reader or researcher faces the edited texts, it is very difficult to discern this relative uniformity. This variation is due to how editors address aspects such as expansion of abbreviations, normalisation of spelling and treatment of certain palaeographical peculiarities.<sup>6</sup> By collating each edition with the original manuscript, I establish the criteria used by each of the editors—not always stated in their editions—when transcribing, and by comparing different editions I demonstrate how with any editorial intervention we operate with assumptions, and thus, all editorial decisions distort the original text.

The first published edition of a text copied by O dates to 1845, while the most recent one was published in 2005. In the past 178 years, the twenty-two entries copied by this scribe have been edited in fourteen volumes.<sup>7</sup> Over this period, resources, conventions, tastes and needs have changed. Editorial policies have not always been explicitly stated or, if they have, the information supplied has not always been sufficiently comprehensive or even accurate. Each editor has followed different paths in interpreting the same scribal features and, thus, the colour of the language in each of the edited texts differs from the others, as some idiosyncratic features have vanished from the final edited output.

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<sup>5</sup> Connolly (forthcoming) reduces the total number of scribes to ten or eleven, as she considers that in quire 1 there are only two or three people at work instead of the eight proposed by Kurvinen (1953).

<sup>6</sup> Regarding word division and capitalisation, there are also certain aspects of interest but for space reasons I have not dealt with them. There is no sign of scribal punctuation in the manuscript and most of the editors have added their own modern punctuation. The only exceptions are the transcription made for the *Index of Middle English Prose* (Marx 1999) and the text edited in Pope (2005), which reproduce more accurately the scribal practice in this respect. Neither have I considered any sort of textual emendation in my analysis.

<sup>7</sup> Entries by O are: ff. 59<sup>v</sup>-61<sup>r</sup>, *When I Sleep I May not Wake*; ff. 61<sup>r</sup>-63<sup>r</sup>, *This World is but a Vanity* (an old man's lament); ff. 63<sup>v</sup>-79<sup>r</sup>, *The Father of Pity and Most of Misericord* (a translation of the *Visio Fulberti*); f. 79<sup>r</sup>, An admonition to prepare for death; ff. 79<sup>v</sup>-81<sup>r</sup>, *Erthe upon Erthe*; ff. 81<sup>r</sup>-83<sup>v</sup>, *The Mourning of the Hunted Hare*; ff. 83<sup>v</sup>-86<sup>r</sup>, *The Knyzt and His Wife*; ff. 86<sup>r</sup>-87<sup>r</sup>, *The Holly Mane Sente Martayne*; f. 87<sup>r</sup>-87<sup>v</sup>, *Narracyon of Sente Tantene*; ff. 87<sup>v</sup>-89<sup>r</sup>, *Ave regina celorum*; ff. 89<sup>v</sup>-90<sup>r</sup>, Medical recipes; ff. 129<sup>v</sup>-130<sup>r</sup>, Parody of letter-writing formulae and of medical practice; ff. 150<sup>r</sup>-152<sup>r</sup>, *Ewyre Say Wyll or Hold þe Still*; ff. 152<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>r</sup>, *Trvtallys* (nonsense poem in couplets); f. 154<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>v</sup>, Epistolary love poem; ff. 154<sup>v</sup>-155<sup>r</sup>, *Have My Hert* (love poem); ff. 155<sup>r</sup>-157<sup>r</sup>, *Do for Thyself* (a moral poem); ff. 157<sup>r</sup>-184<sup>r</sup>, *The Sege of Jerusalem*; ff. 184<sup>r</sup>-192<sup>r</sup>, *The Boke of St Albans*; f. 200<sup>r</sup>-200<sup>v</sup>, Religious carol; ff. 201<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>r</sup>, Dialogue between the Virgin Mary and Christ; f. 202<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>v</sup>, *The Boar's Head Carol*.





## 2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data have been collected from manuscript and printed sources: National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS ii.1 and the published editions for the texts copied by scribe O in this manuscript. The entire manuscript has been transcribed to disk from the digital images held at the National Library of Wales website. In my transcriptions I have not expanded abbreviations and I have assigned a code to every different non-literal symbol occurring in the manuscript. I have preserved all the manuscript spellings, superscript or inserted letters, lineation, capitalisation and word division.<sup>8</sup> I created Linguistic Profiles (LPs) using an extended version of the Questionnaire in the electronic version of *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (*eLALME*) (Benskin et al. 2013) to include abbreviation marks, spelling of common words with no dialectal interest and some further items that seemed relevant for the copying practice of the scribe. The forms and features displayed in the LPs have been used to localise all the texts by scribe O, but these also enable comparison of the spelling in his different texts copied from exemplars from various places, since this might have affected the final output in each of his texts.

The editions have been consulted both in paper and in electronic format when available. My transcriptions for each text have been compared manually with the edition(s) available for each text and scribal features subject to interpretation, or which are the result of editorial errors of interpretation, have been listed and arranged alphabetically for each of the editions in order to facilitate the description and counting of the examples.<sup>9</sup>

## 3. SCRIBAL LANGUAGE

Scribe O shows a high level of consistency in many features. One feature common to all his texts is the use of <ow> (475x), <ov> (372x) or <ou> (172x) for what probably represented /u:/: ‘abowt,’ ‘abovt,’ ‘about.’ The other scribes in this same manuscript do not have this range of variation for this feature and only one of them uses the spelling <ov> sporadically.<sup>10</sup> For medial /v/ his spellings vary from

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<sup>8</sup> An example of the transcription method is the following. The numbers between curly brackets are the code for the abbreviation marks. Characters in-between ‘^’ are marked for insertion in the manuscript:

Lor{0} how scha{1} j me co{5}playne  
Vnto myn{5} own{5} lady der{3}  
ffor to te{1} her{3} of my payn{5}  
That j fe{1} þis tyme of þ<sup>e</sup> he<sup>i</sup> ^re  
My lovfe yf þ<sup>e</sup> 3e wy{1} hit her{3} [...]

<sup>9</sup> For the counting of the relevant examples, I have used Anthony (2014).

<sup>10</sup> Among the other scribes in the manuscript, only scribe J uses <ov> very rarely (8x).




















Code	MS symbol	MS image	Folio number
{0}	d		f. 60 <sup>r</sup>
{1}	h		f. 59 <sup>r</sup>
{2}	‘		f. 63 <sup>v</sup>
{3}	ɔ		f. 59 <sup>r</sup>
{4}	ω		f. 64 <sup>r</sup>
{5}	-		f. 59 <sup>r</sup>
			f. 60 <sup>r</sup>
			f. 65 <sup>v</sup>
			f. 61 <sup>r</sup>
{5b}	ð		f. 61 <sup>r</sup>
{6}	p		f. 78 <sup>v</sup>
{7}	p		f. 71 <sup>r</sup>
{8}	α		f. 155 <sup>v</sup>
{9}	9		f. 62 <sup>r</sup>
{10}	f		f. 163 <sup>r</sup>
{11}	f		f. 170 <sup>r</sup>
{12}	dñi		f. 200 <sup>r</sup>

Table 1. Abbreviation marks.

<v> (248x) to <u> (238x) and also <w> (99x): ‘heyuyne,’ ‘heyvyn{5},’<sup>11</sup> ‘heywyne.’ For initial /v/ he deploys a <w> (26x) and a <v> (27x): ‘wyrgyne,’ ‘vyssyon{5}.’ His spelling for /ʃ/ is always <sch>. He almost exclusively uses <3> (248x) for /x/ as the digraph <gh> occurs only 5x. Likewise, for /j/ he uses <3> (187x) and <y> (98x). Regarding the use of <þ> or <th> for /θ/ and /ð/, the former is used 2,141x against 827x for the latter. Although this distribution seems to favour <þ>, most of its occurrences fall word-initially in articles, demonstratives and pronouns, as well as in abbreviated syllables, while <th> is generally used at the beginning of a line in verse texts, and medially in content words.<sup>12</sup>

He uses uncommon forms for FROM such as ‘frow(e)’ or ‘frov(e),’ together with more common ones such as ‘from(e),’ ‘from’ or ‘fro.’ These uncommon forms

<sup>11</sup> As stated in note 8 above, the numbers inside {} represent a code for the abbreviations in the manuscript. I have assigned a number for each mark occurring in the scribal output, and as I do not expand abbreviations, I refer to this number throughout the paper. The symbols and their corresponding images are shown in Table 1.

<sup>12</sup> This is also the case for other scribes such as J in the same manuscript; see Carrillo-Linares (2023).



are shared with scribe J in the same manuscript. In the suffix *-NESS* the vowel is <y> (24x): ‘gladnyse’ or <i> (8x): ‘goonis’ and only occasionally <e> (2x): ‘swetenes,’ and *-ABLE* is mainly spelled with <u> (10x): ‘dyssaywabu{1},’ but spellings with <e> (5x): ‘notable’ also occur. His form for the first-person personal pronoun is ‘j.’

Regarding abbreviations and other palaeographic peculiarities, following Petti’s (1977, 22) classification, three common methods of abbreviation, i.e., suspension, contraction and superscript letters are to be found in the scribe’s output. Some contracted forms representing a whole word occur only occasionally:<sup>13</sup> [f] = {11} is found twice; a *Nomina Sacra* abbreviated form appears only once, [dñi] = {12}. A hook [ʃ] = {2} has been recorded 393x and is often used in combination with <p>, <u> or <w>, sometimes with <t> or <d> as well. Also widely used (133x) is a backwards loop after a <t>, <g> and occasionally <c> [᠞] = {4}. A very similar mark occurs 975x after an *r* [᠚] = {3}. Two types of ornamented <p> forms are to be found: (a) with a concave curve and forming a loop on the left side, [P] = {7}, which occurs 19x; and (b) with a horizontal mark halfway down the descender of the <p>, [p] = {6}, used 6x only. Likewise, a round curl over the line, a small 9-shaped mark [9] = {9}, is used 194x throughout all O’s entries. A loop going up and turning backwards with a long descender [ʃ] = {10} is used only twice. A crossed double <l> [H] = {1} is also the norm, and it is found 520x.

A bar or horizontal stroke over one or more letters is a common mark of suspension in medieval writing. The symbol assigned to the mark [̄] in the scribe’s output is {5}. It mainly falls over a vowel, an <n> or an <m>. The texts also show occasionally a stroke over letters <ʒ> and <th>. The ink colour and duct of these marks may vary. Sometimes the ink in the stroke is fainter or the colour of the ink is paler. This pale colour is similar to that used in a diagonal stroke over <i>, probably added to distinguish it clearly from other letters with which it could be confused, although the horizontal stroke can also be darker. The difference of colour in the strokes might indicate a later revision (by this same scribe or by another hand). An alternative to a neat horizontal stroke is a back curving loop starting from the foot of the minim of a word-final letter and finishing above the letter. Another mark can be seen when the letter <d> is in final position [d] = {0}. It consists of a vertical stroke extending down from the descender of the <d>. It has been recorded nearly 2,000x.<sup>14</sup>

AND is spelled in full as ‘An{0}’ / ‘an{0}’ 818x and portrayed 303x with a Tironian sign = [7]. Superscript letters are common in forms like ‘p<sup>e</sup>,’ ‘p<sup>u</sup>,’ ‘p<sup>i</sup>.’ Abbreviation also relies on superior letters in the rendering of WITH and THAT. WITH is usually abbreviated to ‘W<sup>it</sup>’ / ‘W<sup>tt</sup>’ / ‘w<sup>it</sup>’ / ‘w<sup>tt</sup>’ (95x) or ‘W<sup>p</sup>’ / ‘w<sup>t</sup>’ / ‘w<sup>p</sup>’ (135x) and it is spelled out only four times as: ‘Witt’ (2x) and ‘Wyth’ (2x). In turn, THAT

<sup>13</sup> See Table 1 for all the symbols and exemplifying manuscript images.

<sup>14</sup> It cannot be determined whether this mark is otiose or has any orthographic signification: it could easily be just a decorative flourish. However, some editors have interpreted it as an abbreviation mark, and thus, I have included it in the discussion.

is spelled ‘That’ / ‘that’ (62x) or ‘pat’ (20x), but in most instances the abbreviated form ‘pʳ’ (288x) is found. A super-linear <a> [a] = {8} occurs 3x.

Regarding the scribe’s dialectal features, I produced various LPs of his usage from the data collected from all his texts. Some of his entries do not provide sufficient relevant dialectal information, as not many diagnostic features occur. Separate analyses have been carried out: (a) his two longer texts<sup>15</sup> have been analysed independently to provide evidence for their possible localisations, and (b) all the relevant information from all the texts has been combined in order to try to localise the scribal language overall. Since the object of this paper is not to give a full account of the dialect of this scribe, I summarise the results obtained from the linguistic analysis and the fittings of the assemblages of his forms and features by comparing them with *eLALME* data.<sup>16</sup>

For the text in ff. 63<sup>v</sup>-79<sup>r</sup>, the fitting of the features in Table 2 in the Appendix indicates an area in the West Midlands that covers most of Warwickshire and north and southeast Worcestershire and north Gloucestershire. The text in ff. 157<sup>v</sup>-184<sup>r</sup>, on the other hand, can be located in an area that includes south Warwickshire, west Leicestershire and the southern half of Derbyshire. Fitting a combination of features (those in bold in Table 2) of these two texts with some others from the scribe’s shorter texts produces a much smaller area at the boundaries between Worcestershire and Warwickshire, an area that covers from the towns of Redditch in Worcestershire to Warwick and extending to the south as far as Alcester in Warwickshire and Inkberrow in Worcestershire. Whether the scribe was originally from this area or trained there is not possible to know, but the language of the texts that he copied seems to belong to that part of the West Midlands.

#### 4. EDITIONS OF THE TEXTS BY SCRIBE O IN MS BROGYNTYN II.<sup>17</sup>

##### 4.1. MID NINETEENTH CENTURY

The twenty-two entries copied by scribe O have been edited in fourteen volumes. Some pieces have been edited more than once, and some of the edited volumes contain several of the scribe’s contributions. The first edition of one of these texts was published in 1845 by Wright and Halliwell in a collection of various pieces in Middle English. The object of the publication was “to collect together such pieces from ancient inedited manuscripts illustrative of the literature and languages of our forefathers during the Middle Ages” (1845, volume I, iii). With the aim of

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<sup>15</sup> These are a translation of the *Visio Fulberti*, ff. 63<sup>v</sup>-79<sup>r</sup> and *The Sege of Jerusalem*, ff. 157<sup>v</sup>-184<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> A detailed description and analysis of the dialects of the whole codex is carried out in Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes (forthcoming).

<sup>17</sup> A summary of the main features analysed in this section is presented in Table 3 in the Appendix.



presenting the reader with the medieval material they “avoided any lengthened notes or comments on the documents.” In the preface of volume II of this collection of texts, the editors state that these volumes “will be found of use to future philologists, and to all who take an interest in the history of our language and literature” (1845, volume II, iii). Their editorial policy is not stated.

The comparison of the edition with the original manuscript in ff. 152r-154r shows that the manuscript <þ> is systematically changed to <th>, but other characters such as <3> are kept: ‘3er{3}’ = ‘3ere.’ The first-person personal pronoun ‘j’ is represented by ‘I’ and the Tironian sign ‘7’ by ‘and.’ <v> with vocalic value is rendered <u>: ‘covthe’ = ‘couthē.’ Medial <v> with consonantal value is changed to <u>: ‘fove’ = ‘fouē.’ Double <ff> is simplified to a single letter and capitalised: ‘ffyfty’ = ‘Fyfty.’ Superscript characters are rendered in the main font size and expanded if abbreviated: ‘þ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘the,’ ‘þ<sup>i</sup>’ = ‘thei, they,’ ‘þ<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘that,’ ‘w<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘with.’ A form for the third-person plural pronoun, which in the manuscript appears as ‘thay,’ has been changed to ‘they.’ Abbreviations are silently expanded and interpreted in this way:

{0} = <de> most of the time (34x), although there are exceptions: ‘An{0}’ = ‘And’ / ‘ba{0}’ = ‘bad’ / ‘go{0}’ = ‘God.’

{1} = <lle> in final position: ‘A{1}’ = ‘Alle,’ but it is considered otiose in medial position: ‘a{1}e’ = ‘alle.’

{2} = <er>: ‘þ{2}’ = ‘ther’ and <ur>: ‘to{2}nyng stonys’ = ‘tourneyng-stonys.’

{3} = <e>: ‘aftur{3}’ = ‘afture.’

{4} = <er>: ‘bett{4}’ = ‘better.’

{9} = <us> both for genitive marker: ‘Gnytt{9}’ = ‘Gnyttus,’ and plural marker: ‘mett{9}’ = ‘mettus,’ and also for the suffix <-ous>: ‘mervell{9}’ = ‘mervellus.’

The horizontal stroke is interpreted as: (a) omitted <e>: ‘horn{5}’ = ‘horne’; (b) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘mon{5}y’ = ‘monny’; (c) single omitted <n>: ‘so{5}day’ = ‘sonday’; (d) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘sem{5}eow’ = ‘semmeow’; (e) single omitted <m>: ‘ca{5}’ = ‘cam’; (f) omitted <me>: ‘ca{5}’ = ‘come’; (g) otiose: ‘men{5}ovs’ = ‘menous.’ The back curving loop is understood as <e>: ‘on{5}’ = ‘one.’

The poems found in ff. 59<sup>v</sup>-61<sup>r</sup>, ff. 61<sup>r</sup>-63<sup>r</sup>,<sup>18</sup> ff. 63<sup>v</sup>-79<sup>r</sup>, ff. 79<sup>v</sup>-81<sup>v</sup>, ff. 81<sup>v</sup>-83<sup>v</sup><sup>19</sup> and ff. 150<sup>r</sup>-152<sup>r</sup> were edited by Halliwell in 1855.<sup>20</sup> Again, the short preface to this edition does not mention the editorial policy. The editor states that “the ten articles now printed comprise the chief of the inedited pieces of any real value, and constitute, with those elsewhere published, a complete a copy of the manuscript as will generally be desired” (Halliwell 1855, vii), but the audience for whom the volume is intended is not clear. Comparison of his edited texts with the manuscript shows that <þ> is systematically changed into <th> and <3> is kept throughout, while ‘7’ is rendered ‘and,’ and the first-person personal pronoun ‘j’ is ‘I,’ as in the

<sup>18</sup> The poem in these folios was edited again in Brown (1939).

<sup>19</sup> This poem was re-edited in Robbins (1952).

<sup>20</sup> Some texts copied by other scribes in Brogyntyn ii.1 are also included in this collection.

edition discussed above. Double <ff> is capitalised: ‘ffrow’ = ‘Frow.’ Initial <v> with /u/ value is turned into <u>, although it is sometimes kept in medial position:<sup>21</sup> ‘yovr{3}’ = ‘youre.’ Medial <u> with consonantal value is turned into <v>: ‘Whoso eu{2}’ = ‘Whosoever.’ The pronoun ‘þow’ is changed into ‘thou’ and ‘wtt’ is ‘with.’ Superscript characters are levelled out and expanded if abbreviated as: ‘þ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘the,’ ‘þ<sup>t</sup>’ = ‘that,’ ‘þ<sup>i</sup>’ = ‘they,’ ‘þ<sup>u</sup>’ = ‘thou,’ ‘w<sup>tt</sup>’ = ‘with.’ The editor expands abbreviations without notice, and his interpretation of some of the marks does not coincide entirely with the interpretation in his and Wright’s 1845 edition:

{0} = meaningless.

{1} = <lle> in final position: ‘Gabre{1}’ = ‘Gabrelle,’ although not always.

Not expanded in medial position: ‘sty{1}e’ = ‘style.’

{2} = <er>: ‘ou{2}’ = ‘ouer.’

{3} = <e> when it occurs finally in a word:<sup>22</sup> ‘eyr{3}’ = ‘evyre,’ but sometimes meaningless in medial position: ‘dyuer{3}is’ = ‘dyveris.’

{4} = <er>: ‘eu{4}y’ = ‘every.’

{6} = <per>: ‘{6}secusione’ = ‘persecusione.’

{7} = <pro>: ‘{7}cesse’ = ‘proesse.’

{8} = <ra>: ‘g{8}ce’ = ‘grace.’

{9} = <us>: ‘helpp{9}’ = ‘helppus.’

{10} = <es>: ‘ergamente{10}’ = ‘ergamenttes.’

The horizontal stroke is understood as: (a) omitted <e>: ‘man{5}’ = ‘mane’; (b) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘began{5}e’ = ‘beganne’; (c) single omitted <n>: ‘wha{5}’ = ‘whan’; (d) omitted <ne>: ‘when{5}’ = ‘whenne’; (e) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘com{5}ynly’ = ‘commynly’; (f) single omitted <m>: ‘co{5}playne’ = ‘complayne’; (g) otiose: ‘am{5}en{0}’ = ‘amend,’ ‘mon{5}y’ = ‘mony.’

In a volume devoted to early popular poetry, Hazlitt (1864-1866) edited the poem found in ff. 83v-86v, a Marian miracle from the *Northern Homily Cycle*. The principal object of the editor was “to render accessible sound texts of as many pieces of old popular poetry as could be brought within the compass of a few volumes” (1864-1866, xv) and he declares that he “paid much greater attention to accuracy than preceding editors of similar collections” (1864-1866, xvi). His editing criteria are not explicitly stated, though. My collation of this edition with the manuscript shows that once more <þ> is replaced by <th> but <ʒ> is retained. ‘7’ is rendered ‘and,’ and medial and initial <v> with vocalic value are changed into <u>: ‘adovne’ = ‘adoune.’ Consonantal <u> is changed to <v>: ‘eu{1}’ = ‘ever’ and the first-person personal pronoun ‘j’ occurs as ‘I.’ Double <ff> is simplified to a single letter and capitalised: ‘ffor’ = ‘For.’ Superscript characters are levelled out and expanded as: ‘w<sup>p</sup>’ = ‘with,’ ‘þ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘the,’ ‘þ<sup>i</sup>’ = ‘thi,’ ‘þ<sup>t</sup>’ = ‘that,’ ‘þ<sup>u</sup>’ = ‘thou.’ The abbreviations are silently expanded and the palaeographical marks have been interpreted as follows:

<sup>21</sup> In one of the texts medial <v> with vocalic vowel is changed to <o>: ‘yovthe’ = ‘yooth.’

<sup>22</sup> There is one exception in one of the texts: ‘yowr{3}’ = ‘yowr.’



{0} = not generally expanded, but in one example: ‘en{0}’ = ‘ende.’  
{1} = <lle> in final position: ‘a{1}’ = ‘alle,’ but medially it is considered otiose:  
‘ca{1}e’ = ‘calle.’

{2} = <er>: ‘pou{2}te’ = ‘poverté’ but as <ere> in ‘p{2}’ = ‘There.’

{3} = interpreted as <e>: ‘autter{3}’ = ‘auttere.’<sup>23</sup>

{4} = <er>: ‘autt{4}’ = ‘autter.’

{9} = <us>: ‘wodd{9}’ = ‘woddus.’

The horizontal stroke is likewise interpreted in different ways in different contexts as: (a) omitted <e>: ‘on{5}’ = ‘one’; (b) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘gon{5}e’ = ‘gonne’; (c) single omitted <n>: ‘ma{5}’ = ‘man’; (d) omitted <ne>: ‘Then{5}’ = ‘Thenne’; (e) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘com{5}e’ = ‘comme’; (f) single omitted <m>: ‘co{5}e’ = ‘come’; (g) otiose: ‘in{5}’ = ‘in.’

#### 4.2. EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Chambers and Sidgwick (1907) edited the poem found in ff. 59<sup>v</sup>-61<sup>r</sup> in a collection of amorous, divine, moral and trivial poems, some composed in the fourteenth century and others in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. According to the authors, the spellings of “those of the fifteenth century are slightly normalised” (1907, ix) in this way: “*v* is substituted for consonantal *u*, *th* for *p*, *y* or *gh* for *z*, *I* for *y*<sup>24</sup> (pronoun), and *is* for *ys*” and also that “an *i*, *e*, or *th*, as the case may be, for *y* or vice versa; *sh* or *sch* for *x*; *-eth* for *-et* or *-it*. Final long vowels have been doubled [...]. Final *l* and *s* have also been doubled [...]. A final *e* has been added to a long vowel followed by a consonant” (1907, 326).

Of particular importance are some alterations which, far from modernising the text, make it seem more archaic, and in turn drive the reader even further away from the original. Examples of this are the changing of some verbal endings such as: ‘morn{5}’ = ‘morneth,’ ‘byn{5}dys’ = ‘bindeth.’ As the editors make substantial changes in spelling conventions and also alter some morphological features, it is difficult to systematise their intended editorial policy in the same way as in the editions discussed above. Double <ff> is portrayed as a single <F> ‘ffor’ = ‘For’ and some of the expanded abbreviations found in this edition include:

{1} = No consistency inasmuch as the words are partly modernised. Sometimes it is expanded to <le> with one <l> omitted: ‘lytty{1}’ = ‘little,’ other times one <l> is omitted without any other expansion: ‘mychey{1}’ = ‘mikel,’ and most of the times it is ignored: ‘scha{1}’ = ‘shall.’

{2} = <er>: ‘eu{2}’ = ‘ever.’

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<sup>23</sup> There is one occasion on which this abbreviation is interpreted as <er>: ‘afer{3}{0}’ = ‘aferred.’

<sup>24</sup> In the poem in Brogyntyn ii.1 there are no instances of ‘y.’ The first-person personal pronoun is always spelled ‘j.’



{3} = <e> only when it conforms to modern practice spelling, otherwise it is ignored.

The multiple horizontal strokes found in the manuscript are ignored in cases where they do not conform to modern practice, e.g., ‘began{5}e’ = ‘began.’ They are expanded if a more modern version of the word has a vowel as in ‘myn{5}’ = ‘mine.’

The Brogyntyn MS version of the popular poem *Earth upon Earth*, ff. 79<sup>v</sup>-81<sup>v</sup>, was edited together with twenty other versions of the poem by Murray (1911). Regarding her editorial policy, she affirms that:

Punctuation, inverted commas, and regular use of initial capitals in the text are the editor's. [...] capitals have been added in the case of all proper names [...] and a hyphen has been inserted where the MS. separates a prefix or particle from the rest of the word. The MS. writings ff. þ, ʒ, v for u and vice versa, have been retained in the text, and H, th, expanded to lle, the, but it was not thought advisable to expand m-, n-, to me, ne, nor other letters such as d, r, g, when written with a final flourish. (1911, xli)

In this edition most of the characters in the original manuscript have been preserved, with few alterations: <j> is rendered <l>, both in the first-person personal pronoun or in other contexts: ‘jn’ = ‘In.’ All superscript letters are levelled out to normal size: ‘sayþ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘sayþe’ and expanded if abbreviated as: ‘þ<sup>u</sup>’ = ‘þou,’ ‘þ<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘þat,’ ‘þ<sup>o</sup>’ = ‘þo,’ ‘þ<sup>i</sup>’ = ‘þi,’ ‘þ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘þe,’ ‘Wtt’ = ‘Witth,’ ‘w<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘with.’ Initial <ff> is kept but the first <f> is capitalised: ‘ffor’ = ‘Ffor.’ Abbreviations are expanded and italicised, and interpreted as:

{0} = <de>: ‘amen{0}’ = ‘amende,’ with one exception: ‘go{0}’ = ‘God.’<sup>25</sup>

{1} = <lle> in final position: ‘a{1}’ = ‘alle.’

{2} = <er>: ‘þ{2}for’ = ‘þerfor.’

{3} = <e>: ‘far{3}’ = ‘fare.’

{9} = <is>: ‘alm{9}’ = ‘almis.’

The horizontal stroke is interpreted in various ways, as in other editions, depending on the context in which it occurs, as: (a) omitted <e>: ‘mou{5}’ = ‘moue’; (b) omitted <u>: ‘won{5}dyrely’ = ‘woundyrelly’; (c) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘a{5}ny’ = ‘anny’; (d) single omitted <n>: ‘caryo{5}’ = ‘caryon’; (e) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘co{5}mys’ = ‘commys’; (f) single omitted <m>: ‘hy{5}e’ = ‘hyme’; (g) otiose: ‘on{5}’ = ‘on.’

In 1913 Sandison published a study on the lyric tradition of the “Chanson d’aventure” and included some editions of lyrics that had not been previously published. One of them is found in ff. 155<sup>v</sup>-157<sup>r</sup> of the Brogyntyn MS.<sup>26</sup> For the editions provided in this volume the author states that:

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<sup>25</sup> As this interpretation occurs only once and three other instances of the same word are retrieved as ‘Gode,’ this is likely to be unintentional.

<sup>26</sup> F. 198<sup>r</sup> of the Brogyntyn MS contains another poem copied by a different scribe and also edited in this volume.





Punctuation, uniform capitalisation of line initial, and strophe division in certain texts, are the editor's. Capitalisation of letters within the line has been consistently disregarded. In some texts [...] flourishes and other signs, chiefly over final *n*, have been disregarded when they appear to be without consistent abbreviatory significance. (1913, 100)

Most of the manuscript characters are kept in the edited text, so <þ> and <ʒ> are kept throughout, the renderings of <u>, <v> are faithful to the original and <ff> is also kept. The personal pronoun 'j' is rendered 'I.' Superscript characters are normalised as: 'W<sup>r</sup>' = 'W[t]t,' 'þ<sup>e</sup>' = 'þe,' 'þ<sup>i</sup>' = 'þi,' 'þ<sup>r</sup>' = 'þat,' 'þ<sup>u</sup>' = 'þou.' Abbreviations are expanded and italicised. The interpretation of the manuscript marks is as follows:

{0} and {1} = not considered abbreviation marks.

{2} = <er>: 'w{2}' = 'wer' or <ur>: 'whep{2}' = 'wheþur.'

{3} = <e>: 'ʒowr{3}' = 'ʒowre.'

{4} = <ur>: 'aft{4}' = 'aftur' and <er>: 'ʒeust{4}day' = 'ʒeusterday.'

{9} = <ys>: 'clerc{9}' = 'clercys.'

{8} = <ra>: 'p{8}er{3}' = 'praere.'

The horizontal strokes are treated in various ways, as: (a) omitted <e>: 'on{5}' = 'one'; (b) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: 'pe{5}ny' = 'penny'; (c) single omitted <n>: 'by{5}' = 'byn'; (d) single omitted <m>: 'who{5}' = 'whom'; (e) omitted <u>: 'lesson{5}' = 'lessoun'; (f) reproduced with a macron in the edition: 'agayn{5}' = 'agayñ.'

#### 4.3. SECOND QUARTER OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The poems in f. 200<sup>r</sup>-200<sup>v27</sup> and f. 202<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>v28</sup> were first edited in Greene (1935), in a collection of carols composed before 1550.<sup>29</sup> The editor contends that:

Emendation of the texts of the carols is as sparing as possible. The original spelling has been retained throughout, except that *þ* and *ʒ* have been transliterated into their modern equivalents and *i* and *j* are printed according to modern practice. Punctuation, capitalisation, and division of words follow modern usage and have been supplied by the present editor. Manuscript abbreviations are expanded in italics, and words and letters supplied by the editor are enclosed in square brackets. Erasures, scribal corrections, and minor palaeographical peculiarities are not recorded. (1935, 1)

<sup>27</sup> Edited again in Brown (1939).

<sup>28</sup> The poem in this folio was later edited in Robbins (1952).

<sup>29</sup> Two more poems in the manuscript, held in f. 198<sup>r</sup>-198<sup>v</sup> and ff. 198<sup>v</sup>-199<sup>v</sup> and copied by another scribe, were also printed in this same volume.



As stated in the editor's policy <3> and <þ> are turned into <gh> and <th>, respectively: 'no3t' = 'noght', 'þow3t' = 'thowght' and 'j' is rendered 'I,' while <ff> is simplified to a single letter and capitalised: 'ffor' = 'For.' The practice regarding the superscript letters is to render them 'þ<sup>e</sup>' = 'the,' 'þ<sup>r</sup>' = 'that' and 'þ<sup>u</sup>' = 'thou' and the Tironian sign '7' is transcribed as 'and.' Additionally, there is alteration in the spelling of some words such as: 'grettust' = 'grettist.' The manuscript abbreviations are interpreted as:

{0} and {1} = meaningless.

{2} = <er>: 'eu{2}' = 'euer.'

{3} = <e>: 'fadyr{3}' = 'Fadyre.'

{9} = <us>: 'wertt{9}' = 'werttus.'

The horizontal strokes are interpreted as: (a) omitted <e>: 'son{5}' = 'Sone'; (b) omitted single <n>: 'co{5}sayfe' = 'consayfe'; (c) omitted single <m>: 'hy{5} selfe' = 'hymselfe'; (d) otiose: 'reson{5}' = 'reson.'

The poem in f. 200<sup>r</sup>-200<sup>v</sup> was edited again in Brown (1939) together with three other poems in the manuscript copied by scribe O, in ff. 61<sup>r</sup>-63<sup>r</sup>, ff. 87<sup>v</sup>-89<sup>v</sup> and ff. 201<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>r</sup>. Regarding editorial policy Brown remarks that:

The manuscripts have been followed in orthography and capitalisation; and the Middle English characters *þ* and *ȝ* have been retained. On the other hand, the punctuation of the texts is editorial, and hyphens have been introduced, chiefly in compounds and after prefixes, which in the manuscripts are often separated. Also, the ordinary manuscript contractions have been expanded without the use of italics. (1939, xxxii)

He also retains the spelling <ff> throughout and the Tironian sign '7' is portrayed as '&.' Apart from that, this editor normalises the form for the first-person personal pronoun 'j' as 'I.' Likewise, superscript letters are normalised: 'hyþ<sup>e</sup>' = 'hyþe,' 'þ<sup>e</sup>' = 'þe,'<sup>30</sup> 'þ<sup>r</sup>' = 'þat,' 'þ<sup>o</sup>' = 'þoo,' 'þ<sup>u</sup>' = 'þu,'<sup>31</sup> 'w<sup>tt</sup>' / 'wt<sup>t</sup>' = 'witt' and 'w<sup>u</sup>' = 'with.' Scribal usages of <v> and <u> are kept. Abbreviations are expanded in this way:

{0} = meaningless.

{1} = meaningless in most cases.<sup>32</sup>

{2} = <er>: 'mast{2}' = 'master.'

{3} = <e>: 'nodyr{3}' = 'nodyre.'

{4} = <er>: 'matt{4}' = 'matter.'

{9} = <us>: 'wytt{9}' = 'wyttus.'

The scribal horizontal strokes are interpreted as: (a) omitted <e>: 'born{5}' = 'borne'; (b) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: 'mon{5}y' = 'monny'; (c) single omitted <n>: 'croppy{5}' = 'croppyn'; (d) omitted <ne>: 'vppo{5}' = 'vppone'; (e) single omitted <m>: 'hy{5}selfe' = 'hym-selfe'; (f) omitted <m> resulting in

<sup>30</sup> On two occasions in the poem in ff. 61<sup>r</sup>-63<sup>r</sup>, 'þ<sup>e</sup>' = 'the' (f. 61<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>31</sup> In the poem in ff. 201<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>r</sup>, there is one case of 'þ<sup>u</sup>' = 'þou' by this same editor.

<sup>32</sup> Only in one instance it is expanded as <e>: 'a{1}' = 'alle' (f. 62<sup>v</sup>).



words with double <m>: ‘com{5}yth’ = ‘commyth’; (g) omitted <u>: ‘mo{5}rnyng’ = ‘mournyng’; (h) otiose: ‘Thyn{5}’ = ‘Thyn.’

#### 4.4. MID TWENTIETH CENTURY

Robbins (1952) published an anthology of popular lyrics dealing with the realities of the daily life of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In his collection he edited five poems from the Brogyntyn MS, four of them copied by scribe O (ff. 81<sup>v</sup>-83<sup>v</sup>, f. 154<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>v</sup>, ff. 154<sup>v</sup>-155<sup>v</sup><sup>33</sup> and f. 202<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>v</sup>).<sup>34</sup> Regarding his editorial policy he stated that:

The manuscripts have been followed in orthography and capitalisation; and the Middle English characters þ, ð, and ȝ have been retained. The common manuscript contractions have been expanded without the use of italics. The punctuation of the text is editorial, and hyphens have been introduced where components of words are separated in the manuscripts, and where modern usage demands. (1952, unnumbered page immediately facing p. 1)

Vocalic <v> is portrayed as <v>: ‘sovl[?]<sup>35</sup>’ = ‘sovle’ and consonantal <u> is also faithful to the original: ‘eu{1}y’ = ‘euery.’ The spelling <ff> is also retained and the Tironian sign ‘7’ is ‘&’, but the editor does not mention that he normalises the use of <j> to <i> in all contexts as well as superscript characters such as: ‘þ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘þe,’ ‘þ<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘þat,’ ‘þ<sup>u</sup>’ = ‘þou,’ ‘þ<sup>i</sup>’ = ‘þi,’ ‘þ<sup>s</sup>’ = ‘þis,’ ‘w<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘with,’ ‘w<sup>tt</sup>’ = ‘with.’ In the poems in ff. 81<sup>v</sup>-83<sup>v</sup> and f. 202<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>v</sup>, ‘wtt’ = ‘wit,’ but in f. 154<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>v</sup>, ‘wtt’ = ‘witt.’<sup>36</sup> Regarding abbreviations, his interpretation is as follows:

{0} and {1} = meaningless.

{2} = <er>: ‘eu{2}y’ = ‘euery.’

{3} = generally <e>:<sup>37</sup> ‘haar{3}’ = ‘haare.’

{4} = <er>: ‘hont{4}is’ = ‘honeris.’

{9} = <es>: ‘cokk{9}’ = ‘cokkes’ in ff. 81<sup>v</sup>-83<sup>v</sup>, but in f. 202<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>v</sup> = <is>: ‘wodcok{9}’ = ‘wodcokis.’

Horizontal strokes are interpreted as: (a) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘we{5}nissun’ = ‘wennissun’; (b) single omitted <n>: ‘furma{5}te’ = ‘furmante’; (c) single omitted <m>: ‘ho{5}bul’s’ = ‘hombul’s’; (d) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘com{5}yth’ = ‘commyth’; (e) omitted <u>: ‘mo{5}rnyng’ = ‘mournyng’; (f) otiose: ‘gan{5}’ = ‘gan.’

<sup>33</sup> The poems in f. 154<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>v</sup> and ff. 154<sup>v</sup>-155<sup>v</sup> were edited again in Kurvinen (1953).

<sup>34</sup> A poem copied by another scribe and found in ff. 130<sup>v</sup>-132<sup>r</sup> was also printed in this edition.

<sup>35</sup> The modern binding of the manuscript hinders the correct reading of the end of this word in the online version.

<sup>36</sup> There is also a single case of modernising a spelling by altering the original vowel and thus changing <o> to <e> in: ‘Thor{5}for’ = ‘Therefore.’

<sup>37</sup> In f. 202<sup>v</sup>, {3} is not expanded as in other texts in this same edition: ‘odyr{3}’ = ‘odyr.’



In an article devoted entirely to the description of the Brogyntyn MS, Kurvinen (1953) provided transcriptions of several entries in the manuscript that had not been published before. Among them are six copied by scribe O.<sup>38</sup> Kurvinen declares that:

Since most contractions present no problem of interpretation, they have been expanded without notice. Italic print has, however, been used when expanding the contractions for the syllables *-es*, *-us*, *-er*, *-ur*, etc., in unstressed positions. Italic print has also been used in expanding a horizontal stroke as a final *-e*. Strokes through *b* and *ll* as well as final curls to *m*, *n* and *r* have been disregarded as they appear to be mere ornaments. [...] The letters *i*, *j*, *u* and *v* are used as in Modern English. Capitals and punctuation are editorial. (1953, 38)

Vocalic <v> is rendered <u>: 'lovfe' = 'loufe' and consonantal <u> as <v>: 'þ{2}-ou{2}' = 'þereover.' For superscript characters her usual practice is: 'w<sup>r</sup>' = 'with,' 'þ<sup>e</sup>' = 'þe,' 'þ<sup>i</sup>' = 'þi,' 'þ<sup>s</sup>' = 'þis,' 'þ<sup>r</sup>' = 'þat' and for <ff> she capitalises: 'ffor' = 'For.' She also renders 'wt<sup>t</sup>' = 'witt.' The Tironian sign '7' is rendered 'and.' Regarding abbreviations and other marks, her interpretation is:

- {0} and {1} = not considered abbreviation marks.
- {2} = <er>: 'allysaund{2}' = 'allysaunder' or <re>: 'eg{2}mony' = 'egremony.'
- {3} = meaningless in all the cases.
- {4} = <er>: 'butt{4}' = 'butter.'
- {6} = <par>: '{6}cel' = 'parcele.'
- {9} = <us>: 'flowr{9}' = 'flowrus.'

The horizontal strokes are interpreted as: (a) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: 'llyn{5}yn' = 'llynyn'; (b) omitted single <n>: 'euy{5}' = 'euyn'; (c) omitted single <m>: 'ty{5}' = 'tym'; (d) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: 'wom{5}an' = 'womman'; (e) otiose: 'an{5}' = 'an.'

The two editions of the poems in f. 154<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>v</sup> and ff. 154<sup>v</sup>-155<sup>v</sup> differ only slightly in the transcription conventions. Apart from noticing or not the expansions of the abbreviations, they differ in the treatment of {3}: in the 1953 edition it is considered otiose, but Robbins (1952) expands it as <e>. For the vocalic <v> both editors make different choices. In the 1953 edition it is changed to <u> while in the 1952 edition manuscript <v> is retained. Likewise, for consonantal <u> the 1953 editor changes it to <v> while the 1952 edition retains the original manuscript form. Beyond these alterations, both outputs are very similar.

<sup>38</sup> These are the fragments (prose and verse) found in ff. 86<sup>v</sup>-87<sup>r</sup>, f. 87<sup>r</sup>-87<sup>v</sup>, f. 89<sup>v</sup>, f. 90<sup>v</sup>, f. 154<sup>r</sup>-154<sup>v</sup>, ff. 154<sup>v</sup>-155<sup>v</sup>, ff. 187<sup>v</sup>-188<sup>r</sup>. The last of these fragments and those found in ff. 89<sup>v</sup>-90<sup>v</sup> were also transcribed in Marx (1999).



The version of *The Siege of Jerusalem* found in ff. 157<sup>v</sup>-184<sup>r</sup> was edited by Kurvinen in 1969. In the introduction to her edition, she offers a very detailed description of her editorial principles and her criteria for adopting those principles. As a whole, she aims to stick closely to the original manuscript, keeping the manuscript usage of *þ*, *ʒ*, *v*, *u*, *j*, although she states that a “distinction is made between the letters *z* and *ʒ* even if they are indistinguishable in the MS. The scribe’s initial *ff*, which occurs half a dozen times, is printed as *f*. Paragraph division, capitals, and punctuation are editorial.” She adds that “with the exception of the stroke for a nasal and the signs for *er*, *es* and *us*, they offer no difficulty of interpretation” (1969, 66). Manuscript abbreviations are silently expanded and superscript characters are normalised, so that ‘þ<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘þe,’ ‘þ<sup>i</sup>’ = ‘þi / þei,’ ‘þ<sup>o</sup>’ = ‘þo,’ ‘þ<sup>u</sup>’ = ‘þou,’ ‘þ<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘þat,’ w<sup>tr</sup> = ‘wytt’ and an ending of the third-person singular present indicative, such as ‘follow<sup>r</sup>’ = ‘followyth.’

In her editorial policy she mentions the treatment of “the abbreviation for *er*” (1969, 68) as a single feature, although this covers two different marks, the ones that I have named {2} and {4}. She affirms that she has expanded following the scribe’s usual spelling as far as possible, and sometimes she expands it as <-er> and others as <-ur> or <-yr>. Examples for the two different marks are: ‘eu{2}’ = ‘euyr,’ ‘ou{2}turn{5}’ = ‘ouerturn,’ ‘to-geyd{2}’ = ‘toge ydur,’ ‘aft{4}’ = ‘aftur,’ ‘gou{4}nowrs’ = ‘gouernowrs,’ ‘nob{4}’ = ‘noþyr.’ Also, although she does not mention it, she also expands {2} as <-re>: ‘p{2}che’ = ‘preche,’ ‘p{2}sense’ = ‘presense.’

One of the two scribal instances of {10} = <is> occurs in f. 163<sup>r</sup>: ‘langag{10}’ = ‘langagis.’ In turn, the eighty-four occurrences of {9} have been interpreted “in four different ways, in each case in conformity with the scribe’s usual spelling of the same or similar words” (1969, 68). The cases in which {9} has been used in the manuscript include plural endings, genitive case and endings in Latin proper nouns, and they have been expanded as <-ys>, <-is> or <-us>: ‘angell{9}’ = ‘angellys,’ ‘Jam{9}’ = ‘Jamys,’ ‘kyng{9}’ = ‘kyngis,’ ‘bok{9}’ = ‘bokus,’ ‘Tyt{9}’ = ‘Tytus.’ The marks {0}, {1} and {3} are always ornamental. Other abbreviated forms are: ‘wt’ = ‘wyth,’ ‘wtt’ = ‘wytt’ and ‘7’ = ‘and.’

She interprets the horizontal strokes as an omitted nasal, never as a vowel. In cases like ‘co{5}fon{5}dyt’ (where there is a second stroke over the minims), she interprets the first one as an omitted nasal and the previous character as <u> and transcribes it: ‘confoundyt.’ In cases where the scribe wrote the nasal and a stroke, she interprets it in two ways:

- a) It has been interpreted as indicating an omitted medial nasal when it is placed above the vowel preceding the written nasal, if this is followed by a vowel and if the scribe’s usual spelling is not definitely against a double nasal [...]
- b) the stroke or curl has been disregarded when the written nasal is final; it has also been disregarded medially in the following cases in which the scribe’s usual spelling is against a double nasal [...]. (1969, 66-67)



Following my own systematisation she interprets the stroke in this way, as: (a) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘lyn{5}yn’ = ‘lynnyn’; (b) single omitted <n>: ‘slay{5}’ = ‘slayn’; (c) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘com{5}e’ = ‘comme’; (d) as a single omitted <m>: ‘hy{5}selfe’ = ‘hymselfe’; (e) otiose: ‘down{5}’ = ‘down,’ ‘hom{5}e’ = ‘home.’

Handlist XIV of *The Index of Middle English Prose* for the National Library of Wales collections was compiled by Marx (1999). In the entry devoted to Brogyntyn MS ii.1, apart from transcribing the *incipit* and *explicit* of entries contained in the manuscript, Marx transcribed some of the short texts in full, or almost in full. Among these extracts are the entries found in f. 89<sup>v</sup>, f. 90<sup>v</sup> and ff. 187<sup>v</sup>-188<sup>v</sup>. The *Index* is mainly designed as a tool for finding copies of a text across several manuscript witnesses, so the texts transcribed there are not editions. However, the transcriptions found in the volume, which follow the general guidelines for the series, are close to the manuscript spellings and there is no editorial punctuation added. The spelling <ff> is retained as in the manuscript: ‘ffor’ = ‘ffor,’ and vocalic and medial consonantal <v> are kept as <v> and <u>, respectively: ‘vndur{3}’ = ‘vndur,’ ‘povder{3}’ = ‘povder,’ ‘euy{5}’ = ‘euy.’ Initial consonantal <v> is also retained: ‘ven{5}ery’ = ‘vennery.’ The spellings with <þ> and <3> are kept throughout, while <j> is portrayed as <i>. The Tironian sign ‘7’ is ‘&.’ Superscript letters are normalised and expanded: ‘blow<sup>t</sup>’ = ‘blowith,’ ‘draw<sup>tt</sup>’ = ‘drawitt,’ ‘w<sup>tt</sup>’ = ‘witt,’ ‘p<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘pe,’ ‘p<sup>v</sup>’ = ‘pat.’ The abbreviated form ‘wt’ is portrayed as ‘witt.’ Abbreviations have been silently expanded in this way:

{0}, {1} and {3} = ornamental.

{2} = <er>: ‘gou{2}nny{0}’ = ‘gouernyd’ and <re>: ‘eg{2}mony’ = ‘egremony.’

{4} = <er>: ‘A nauan{4}’ = ‘an auaner.’

{9} = <us>: ‘basterd{9}’ = ‘basterdus.’

Horizontal strokes are interpreted in five ways, as: (a) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘bytto{5}ner{3}’ = ‘byttonner’; (b) omitted single <n>: ‘j’e{5}tylle’ = ‘ientylle’; (c) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘com{5}ente’ = ‘comme’; (d) omitted <u> ‘alon{5}dys’ = ‘aloundys’; (e) otiose: ‘favkon{5}’ = ‘favkon.’

#### 4.6. TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The most recent edition of a text in this manuscript is to be found in an article by Pope (2005, 37) who offers “a diplomatic edition” of the poem found in ff. 129<sup>v</sup>-130<sup>r</sup>, a parody of letter-writing conventions and of medical practice. In her text no editorial punctuation is added,<sup>39</sup> <3> and <þ> are retained throughout the text and <v> with vocalic value is kept both initially and medially: ‘vn{5}nethe’ = ‘vnnethe,’ ‘yovr{3}’ = ‘yovre.’ There is only one case of medial consonantal <v> and

<sup>39</sup> Pope (2005) offers a Present-Day English translation of the passage, fully punctuated following modern standards, that guides the readers through her interpretation of the text.



it is also retained as <v>: ‘servau{5}te’ = ‘servau<sup>te</sup>te.’ Superscript letters are normalised and italicised, so that ‘p<sup>e</sup>’ = ‘*p<sup>e</sup>*’ and ‘p<sup>at</sup>’ = ‘*p<sup>at</sup>*.’ The pronoun ‘j’ is portrayed as ‘I’ and the abbreviated form ‘wtt’ is ‘*wit<sup>h</sup>*.’ Abbreviations are expanded and italicised and are interpreted in this way:

{0} and {1} = not considered abbreviation marks.

{2} = <er>: ‘neu{2}’ = ‘*neuer*.’

{3} = <e>: ‘allmar{3}’ = ‘*allmare*.’

{4} = <er>: ‘plast{4}’ = ‘*plaster*.’

{11} = ‘*syr*.’

Horizontal strokes are interpreted in five ways, as: (a) omitted <n> resulting in words with double <n>: ‘j-wryttyn{5}’ = ‘*Iwryttynn*’ (b) single omitted <n>: ‘johu{5}’ = ‘*johun*’; (c) omitted <m> resulting in words with double <m>: ‘pem{5}’ = ‘*pemm*’; (d) omitted <u>: ‘wesysyon{5}’ = ‘*wesysyoun*’; (e) otiose: ‘blyn{5}{0}’ = ‘*blynd*’; (f) omitted <er>: ‘on{5}’ = ‘*ouer*.’

## 5. REMARKS ON THE PAST

Throughout the almost 180 years in which texts from this manuscript have been edited, an evolution can be observed both in the aim of the editions and in the editors’ procedures and choices. As inferred from the contents of the collections and also from the general comments made by the editors, the earliest editions of fragments from this manuscript tend to be collections or anthologies whose main purpose was to make available to contemporary readers medieval material that had remained hidden for centuries. The editor’s role was that of an antiquarian who searched for, selected, arranged and reproduced texts in order to pass on their contents to a readership that ranged from students to those interested in poetry, literature or medieval culture in general. In these years, faithfulness to the text was at odds with possible unintelligibility, and editors sought ways to ensure that the text presented as few obstacles as possible to the reader. The focus of interest was on the content rather than the form, which was secondary for both editor and reader. However, attention was paid to palaeographic details that would eventually be overlooked and that seem to have been much more relevant than in later years. In none of these editions is there any reference to editorial policy, as it was understood that the kind of reader that they had in mind did not need this information.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century editors started to provide the reader with information about their editorial policy, a practice maintained to the present day. Faithfulness to the original text was not always the primary objective, as the normalisation of the language to achieve a better understanding was still common. Yet, there were editions which were close to the original text in which expansions of abbreviations were italicised for the sake of a reader potentially interested in the form of the original as well as in the content. The interpretation of abbreviation marks, at times, also differed from that of their predecessors.

In the second quarter of the twentieth century some of the palaeographical marks, such as {0}, were seen as meaningless. The concept of faithfulness to the



original text was still far from what we understand today, and although editors claimed to have kept to the spelling of the source, editorial changes significantly altered the form of the original. In the editions analysed for this period two editors took different approaches to some horizontal strokes: in the same words, in the same poem, one expanded them as <e> and the other considered them otiose. There were also different approaches in the resolution of {1}.

The editions undertaken in the mid twentieth century kept closer to the original manuscript, although the editors thought it unnecessary to account for the expansion of abbreviations. In their view, symbol and meaning were univocal. Variant interpretations were not possible and so there was no need to italicise the expansions, although these are ultimately their own interpretation of the original. There seems to be an agreement that the marks {0} and {1} should be considered otiose thereafter.

In the editions made in the latter part of the twentieth century editorial principles gained greater weight and very detailed descriptions of both the editorial choices and the reasons behind those choices are given. The editor made it clear to the reader what had been done, how it had been done and why it had been done. It was important not only to provide a readable text faithful to the original but also the tools to enable the reader to make judgements about the text, or to make it possible to use a text for various purposes. For the expansion of the abbreviations the scribe's most usual spelling was followed as a rule. The only edition of a text by scribe O in the twenty-first century is essentially a diplomatic edition and follows the idea of expanding abbreviations according to the scribe's most frequent spelling forms.

All these editions, with their strengths and weaknesses, were made with specific purposes in mind, and for specific potential readerships in each era. From our twenty-first century perspective we cannot judge a work for its usefulness at the time, though we might question its later use for purposes other than those for which it was first intended.

## 6. REMARKS ON THE PRESENT

None of the Brogyntyn ii. 1 texts has been edited in the last decade. Barton (forthcoming) is editing *The Life of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, which was copied by a scribe other than O, and whose language I have localised broadly somewhere in the borders of west Warwickshire and east Worcestershire area, not far from the place of localisation of the texts by scribe O. Nowadays, paper editions which must conform to the publisher's requirements rather than the editor's priorities are still being produced. In many cases, publishers consider textual aesthetics more important than the detailed representation of the original. This leads to reflections such as that by Parkinson and Emiliano (2002, 348), who questioned the appropriateness of some of the existing editions which "are not suited for the linguistic, philological, and diplomatic study of the documents."

However, the digital era has brought new formats which allow for much more flexibility and variation in any edition. Robinson (2016, 187) states that "we





do not transcribe manuscripts in the digital era as we might have done a century ago, and we do not look at manuscripts the same way.” Digital editions allow for many different possibilities for the editor and the reader. Sahle (2016, 27) declares that “a main characteristic of a digital edition is its representation of a potentially large number of documents in a potentially limitless number of different views, such as facsimile, diplomatic transcription and reading versions.”

The main source of disagreement among the editions analysed in this paper lies mainly in the interpretation and expansion of abbreviations. There is not one single abbreviation mark that has achieved consensus among the editors reviewed for this article since the nineteenth century. There are some for which most editors assign the same value, but in all cases, there is always someone with a different interpretation. In addition, ideas on how to expand abbreviations have changed over time. In recent years concern about how to deal with abbreviations has called the attention of researchers and medieval manuscript editors. De la Cruz-Cabanillas and Diego-Rodríguez (2018, 166) consider that “it is essential to be consistent in the expansion of abbreviations and follow the same criteria on all occasions, allowing the reader to learn about the editorial procedure the editors have adopted.” Although they acknowledge that there is not always a single interpretation for the abbreviations, they still believe that “the most frequent expanded form should be taken into consideration in case there is doubt [...]” (2018, 180). This approach is shared by other scholars such as Esteban-Segura who, when editing Glasgow, University Library, Hunter MS 509, decided that in cases “when two options were possible, the most frequent form was selected” (2011, 100).

Computer technology now allows digital editions to provide different views of a text. Robinson (2016, 193) claims that “a digital transcript might offer alternative ways of seeing the text, toggling abbreviations on or off.” Abbreviations need to have a special status and need to be treated in a very specific way. Honkapohja and Suomela (2022) propose a system for tagging the abbreviations and its expansions by making use of the TEI P5 Guidelines tags for encoding them. Honkapohja (2021, 19-20) argues that “one of the most important uses of abbreviations in palaeography is for dating and localising scribal hands” since “scribes from a certain area may have acquired their abbreviation practices from some local writing centre” and the use of some abbreviations might be geographically conditioned. This means that even if expanding the abbreviations may be desirable for intelligibility of a text, providing the reader with the original abbreviation or a code for it has further advantages. For this purpose, the abbreviations must be treated independently from expanded forms and more studies concerning the actual abbreviation marks should be carried out.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> The mark that I have portrayed as {9}, in short, monosyllabic words such as þ{9} = ‘thus,’ h{9} = ‘house,’ sp{9} = ‘spouse,’ was found to have a clear geographical distribution in the West Midlands, at the border of Lancashire and Cheshire and in south Shropshire in the Early Middle English material transcribed for *LAEME = A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (Honkapohja 2019, 15). Unlike for the *LAEME* (Laing and Lass 2013) corpus, the use of abbreviations as a way of localising texts for the Late Middle English material is more complicated since there was no



## 7. REMARKS ON THE FUTURE

It has long been acknowledged that “virtually all editorial interventions in early texts represent potential losses of information, or addition of false information” (Lass 2004, 26). Even the most honourable approaches, such as diplomatic editions expanding abbreviations according to the scribe’s usual spelling pose problems. On many occasions the norm is the abbreviated form, and the fully spelled form is the oddity. From a few cases of a word with a particular spelling (or sometimes only one), it cannot be inferred that all the abbreviated forms of that word stand for the same spelling.<sup>41</sup> The result of this editorial intervention is a written language, partially made up by the editor, which departs from the scribe’s written language and which, as this analysis has shown, causes each edited text to exhibit its own characteristics, making it impossible to see the relative uniformity that the copyist originally produced.

Some degree of editorial intervention is unavoidable in every edition, but old formats have given way to new possibilities. The future is not in paper printed editions since they are very limited and cannot offer the plurality and versatility of digital editions. The future is in digital editions together with digitalised images of the manuscripts that can be linked to an edited text. These editions might include study and research on the contents of the edited material, and textual notes and references to other manuscripts or sources with the same or similar content. Special software can allow inclusion of as many variant readings as we want, thus making it possible to offer editorial interpretations, together with whatever is found in the source. However, the most important requirement for these editions is to provide material that is as close as possible to the original in all respects so that the resulting outputs make clear the difference between what is in the manuscript text and what is interpretation. Digital editions would benefit linguists, philologists, historians, palaeographers and even those lay readers interested in medieval culture with the same interests as the ones for whom some of the first editions were produced. All the editions consulted here, and many others undertaken in the past, despite their limitations, brought their texts out of oblivion, and without all these editions we would not be talking about the future of editing today.

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systematic collection of data for that purpose in *eLALME* (Benskin et al. 2013). Some of the *eLALME* abbreviated forms might have come from editions and, as I have shown in this paper, editors might interpret the same symbols in many ways.

<sup>41</sup> As seen above, in scribe O’s production WITH is usually abbreviated to ‘w<sup>it</sup>’ (95x) or ‘w<sup>t</sup>’ (135x) and it is fully spelled only four times as: ‘witt’ (2x), ‘wyth’ (2x). The majority form does not occur often enough to infer that it would be the scribe’s preferred form. Sometimes there may be no expanded form in the portion of text being edited to establish a comparison, or there might be one that might not be the majority form either if we were to consider the entire output of a scribe in a single manuscript (or in more manuscripts in cases of scribes who copied multiple works in multiple manuscripts).



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## APPENDIX

TABLE 2. SOME DIALECTAL DIAGNOSTIC ITEMS.

ITEM	ff. 63 <sup>v</sup> -79 <sup>r</sup>	ff. 157 <sup>v</sup> -184 <sup>r</sup>	FORMS IN ALL THE SCRIBE'S TEXTS
AGAIN	aʒeyne (2x), agayn{5}e (1x), aʒene (1x), aʒeyn{5} (1x), aʒeyn{5}e (1x)	aʒeyne (8x), a-ʒeyne (2x)	<b>aʒeyne (10x), a-ʒeyne (2x)</b> , a-gayne (2x), a-gayne (2x), <b>aʒene (1x), aʒeyn{5} (1x), aʒeyn{5}e (1x)</b> , agayn{5} (1x), agayn{5}e (1x)
AGAINST	Aʒeyns (2x), aʒeynst (2x), aʒens (1x)	aʒenst (2x), a-ʒennyst (1x)	<b>aʒeynst (3x), Aʒeyns (2x), aʒenst (2x), aʒens (1x), a-ʒennyst (1x), Aʒeynst (1x)</b>
ANY	anny (4x), any (2x), an{5}y (2x), an{5}ye (1x), enny (1x), eny (1x)	anny (1x)	anny (7x), an{5}y (5x), any (2x), an{5}ye (1x), enny (1x), eny (1x)
BEFORE	befor (2x), Befor (1x), be-for{3} (1x), byfor (1x), byfore (1x), to-forne (1x)	befor (3x), before (3x), byfor (2x), befor{3} (1x)	befor (5x), byfor (5x), befor{3} (3x), before (3x), be-for{3} (1x), byfore (1x), Befor (1x), Befor{3} (1x), to-forne (1x)
CHURCH		churche (2x), churchus (pl) (1x)	<b>churche (4x), churchus (pl) (1x)</b>
COULD	cov{0} (3x)		cov{0} (3x), cothe (1x), covthe (1x)
DAUGHTER	dowʒtt{4} (1x)	doʒtt{4} (4x)	doʒtt{4} (4x), dowʒtt{4} (1x)
EACH		eche (2x), yche (2x)	<b>yche (6x), eche (3x)</b> , eych (1x), eyche (1x), Eycheon{5} (1x)
FIRST	Fyrst (1x)	furst (6x), ffurst (1x), forst (1x)	<b>furst (15x), ffurst (1x)</b> , forst (1x), Fyrst (1x)
GIVE	ʒeve (2x), ʒeyf (2x), ʒeyfe (1x)	ʒeyfe (4x), geyfe (2x), geyf (1x)	ʒeyfe (8x), ʒeyf (4x), <b>geyf (3x), geyfe (3x)</b> , ʒeve (2x), yeve (1x)
HUNDRED		hundyrtys (1x)	hundyrtys (1x)
IF	yf (1x), ʒeyf (1x), ʒife (1x)	yf (13x), yfe (2x), ʒeyfe (2x), if (1x)	yf (26x), ʒeyfe (4x), yfe (3x), yff (1x), ʒefe (1x), ʒeyf (1x), ʒife (1x), if (1x), Yffe (1x)
IT	hit (15x), Hit (7x), it (3x)	hit (39x), it (1x)	<b>hit (98x), Hit (11x)</b> , it (7x), <b>Hyt (4x)</b> , yt (4x), <b>hite (2x)</b>
LIVE	leue (2x), lyue (1x), leve (1x)	leve (2x), leue (1x), lyve (1x)	leue (3x), leve (3x), lyue (2x), lefe (1x), leyfe (1x), lyve (1x), lyvfe (1x)
MANY	mon{5}y (3x), Many (2x), man{5}y (2x), mony (2x), mon{5}ye (1x)	mon{5}y (3x), many (2x), mony (1x)	<b>mon{5}y (11x), mony (5x)</b> , Many (3x), man{5}y (3x), many (2x), <b>mon{5}ye (1x), mon{5}e (1x)</b>



MUCH		myche (2x)	myche (7x), <b>mecu{1} (1x)</b> , <b>mekull (1x)</b> , <b>meku{1} (1x)</b> , <b>meky{1} (1x)</b> , mychey{1} (1x), mych (1x), <b>mykyl (1x)</b>
SHE		sche (2x), schew (2x), schewe (1x), schw (2x), schoe (1x), schow (1x), schwe (1x)	sche (14x), schw (6x), schow (5x), schew (4x), schoe (4x), schwe (4x), schewe (1x), scho (1x), schowe (1x)
SHOULD	schul{0} (6x), schw{0} (3x), schol{0} (1x), scholdyst (1x), schul (1x), schulddyst (1x), schvl{0} (1x)	schul{0} (11x), schw{0} (5x), schvl{0} (3x)	schul{0} (22x), schw{0} (10x), schvl{0} (4x), schol{0} (2x), schul (1x)
SUCH	syche (2x), Suche (1x), suche (1x)	suche (1x)	syche (8x), Suche (2x), suche (2x)
THEM	hem (1x), þe{5} (1x)	þeme (26x), þe{5} (13x), þem (12x), heme (6x), theme (4x), the{5} (4x), þem{5} (2x), hem (1x), Them (1x), them (1x), Theme (1x)	þeme (26x), þe{5} (17x), heme (16x), þem (12x), theme (6x), the{5} (4x), þem{5} (3x), hem (2x), Them (1x), them (1x), Theme (1x), þe{5}e (1x)
THEIR	her{3} (16x), her (1x), herre (1x)	þ{2} (27x), her{3} (17x), þeyr{3} (1x)	<b>her{3} (41x)</b> , þ{2} (28x), <b>her (1x)</b> , <b>herre (1x)</b> , þeyr{3} (1x)

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF EDITORIAL CHOICES.

MS feature	1845	1855	1864-1866	1907	1911	1913	1935	1939	1952	1953	1969	1999	2005
{0}	de	d	d de	d	de	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
{1}	lle	lle	lle ll	ll le	lle	ll	ll	ll	ll	ll	ll	ll	ll
{2}	er	er	er	er	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>er</i>	er	er	er re	yr er ur re	er re	<i>er</i>
{3}	e	e –	e	e –	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>e</i>	e	–	–	–	<i>e</i>
{4}	er	er	er			ur er		er	er	er	ur er yr	er	<i>er</i>
{5}	e & {5}	e n m me –	e n ne –	– nn	<i>e</i> <i>u</i>	<i>e</i> <i>n</i> <i>m</i> <i>n̄</i> –	<i>e</i> <i>n</i> <i>m</i> –	e n ne m u –	n m u –	n m –	n m –	n m u –	n m u –
{6}		per								par			
{7}		pro											



{8}	ra				ra									
{9}	us	us	us		is	ys	us	us	es	us	ys	us		
									is		is	us		
{10}	es										is			
{11}													<i>syr</i>	
{12}													<i>Domini domini</i>	
<þ>	th	th	th	th	þ	þ	th	þ	þ	þ	þ	þ	þ	
<3>	3	3	3	y gh	3	3	gh	3	3	3	3	3	3	
<j>	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	i	I	i	I	
7	and	and	and	and				<i>and</i>	&	&	and	and	&	
voc. v	u	u	u	u	v	v			v	v	u	v	v	v
cons. v/u	u	v	v	v	u				u	v	u	u	v	
wtt w <sup>t</sup> w <sup>tr</sup>	with	with	with		<i>witþ</i>	w[t]t				with	with	wytt	witt	<i>witþ</i>
									with	witt	wyth			
þ <sup>c</sup>	the	the	the	the	þe	þe	the	þe	þe	þe	þe	þe	þe	
þ <sup>n</sup>		thou	thou		þou	þou	thou	þu	þou		þou			
þ <sup>t</sup>	that	that	that	that	þat	þat	that	þat	þat	þat	þat	þat	þat	
þ <sup>i</sup>	they thei	they	thi		þi	þi			þi	þi	þi			
þ <sup>o</sup>					þo						þo			
þ <sup>s</sup>									þis	þis				
ff	F	F	F	F	Ff	ff	F	ff	ff	F	f	ff		







# A DIALECTAL STUDY OF THE FIRST QUIRE IN NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES, BROGYNTYN MS II.1\*

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## ABSTRACT

Brogynryn MS ii.1 (olim Porkington 10) is a mid-fifteenth-century collection of prose and verse copied by multiple scribes. As the signatures suggest, quire 1 did not belong to the originally intended book but was initially unrelated to the other twenty-five extant quires and a singleton. These two distinct parts of the codex became physically and textually connected when Scribe I used the end of this booklet (fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>) to start copying a text that continued at the beginning of quire 2 (fol. 11<sup>r</sup>). The volume's Middle English texts and place(s) of production were tentatively associated with the West-Midland counties of Cheshire or Shropshire (Ackerman 1947; Kurvinen 1951, 1969; Huws 1996). While a dialectal study of the core of the manuscript is currently underway by Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes (forthcoming), the present paper aims to offer a detailed analysis of the English texts in the first quire—except for Scribe I's later addition—and to delimit their linguistic provenance. The methodology followed is that devised in *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)* (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986).

KEYWORDS: Brogynryn MS ii.1, Porkington 10, quire 1, dialectal provenance, *LALME*.

ESTUDIO DIALECTAL DEL PRIMER CUADERNILLO DEL MANUSCRITO  
DE LA BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL DE GALES, BROGYNTYN II.1

## RESUMEN

El manuscrito Brogynryn ii.1 (anteriormente Porkington 10) alberga una colección de prosa y verso de mediados del siglo xv copiada por múltiples escribas. Como sugieren las firmas, el primer cuadernillo no pertenecía al libro original, pues no estaba inicialmente relacionado con los otros veinticinco cuadernillos y una hoja adicional suelta que se han conservado. Estas dos partes distintas del códice se conectaron física y textualmente cuando el Escriba I utilizó el final del primer cuaderno (fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>) para empezar a copiar un texto que continuaría al principio del segundo (fol. 11<sup>r</sup>). Los textos en inglés medio que forman parte del volumen y el lugar (o lugares) de producción del mismo se asociaron tentativamente a los condados de Cheshire o Shropshire, en el oeste del país (Ackerman 1947; Kurvinen 1951, 1969; Huws 1996). Como complemento al estudio dialectal del núcleo del manuscrito que están llevando a cabo Carrillo-Linares y Garrido-Anes (próxima publicación), el presente trabajo pretende ofrecer un análisis detallado de los textos ingleses del primer cuadernillo (exceptuando el añadido posteriormente por el Escriba I) para tratar de delimitar su procedencia lingüística. La metodología seguida es la diseñada en *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)* (McIntosh, Samuels y Benskin 1986).

PALABRAS CLAVE: Brogynryn MS ii.1, Porkington 10, cuadernillo 1, procedencia dialectal, *LALME*.

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## 1. BROGYNTYN MS II.1 AND ITS FIRST QUIRE

National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS ii.1 (olim Porkington 10) is a mid-fifteenth-century manuscript on parchment and paper.<sup>1</sup> Its Latin and Middle English texts are the work of multiple scribes and cover various subjects ranging from science and practical activities to lyric and love poems, romance and religion. This miscellany is believed to have been informally produced within the household of a gentry landowner.<sup>2</sup> The codex, written in a variety of bastard secretary and fere-textura hands, consists of twenty-six quires followed by a single surviving leaf from gathering 27.<sup>3</sup> Its signatures reveal that the first three booklets of the original compilation were replaced, for some unknown reason, by the present quire 1:

That our book was intended from the start to include quire 1 does indeed seem to be ruled out. But that quire 1 had an independent existence other than, briefly, as a loose quire appears unlikely [...]. The work of scribes A–H occurs only in quire 1 [...], and it seems improbable that they would have been aware in what a literary neighbourhood their texts were destined to find themselves. (Huws 1996, 191-193)

The first gathering of Brogyntyn MS. ii.1, of parchment, was bound together with the rest in one volume shortly after Scribe I used the blank space at the end-fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>—to start copying a treatise about the weather, which continued in what is now quire 2 (fol. 11<sup>r</sup>). A likely date around 1470 for the whole volume seems unobjectionable, judging from the reference to the Fall of Constantinople, a 1463 Calendar and watermarks from the late 1460s (Huws 1996, 202).

Despite some debate (Kurvinen 1953; Huws 1996; Salter 2012), eight scribes appear to have been involved in the copying of quires 2-27: I (fols. 8<sup>v</sup>-11<sup>v</sup>); J (fols. 12<sup>r</sup>-22<sup>v</sup>; 130<sup>r</sup>-138<sup>v</sup>; 192<sup>r</sup>-194<sup>v</sup>; 203<sup>r</sup>-211<sup>v</sup>); K (fols. 23<sup>r</sup>-26<sup>r</sup>); L (fols. 27<sup>r</sup>-59<sup>v</sup>); O (fols. 59<sup>v</sup>-90<sup>v</sup>;<sup>4</sup> 129<sup>r</sup>-130<sup>r</sup>; 150<sup>r</sup>-192<sup>r</sup>; 200<sup>r</sup>-202<sup>v</sup>); Q (fols. 91<sup>r</sup>-129<sup>r</sup>; 139<sup>r</sup>-150<sup>r</sup>); R (fols. 195<sup>r</sup>-198<sup>r</sup>); and S (fols. 198<sup>r</sup>-199<sup>v</sup>). Scribes J, O and L contributed to the core of the codex with the most significant number of pages. J and O were also the volume

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\* This paper complements Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes's (forthcoming) dialectal analysis of the Middle English texts in the main part of Brogyntyn MS ii.1. Both studies emerge from Nancy P. Pope's kind invitation to participate in a research project that approaches the codex from multiple angles. I am also grateful to Keith Williamson for generously helping with the production of the map in Figure 1 and to him and María José Carrillo-Linares for their readings of earlier drafts. I also fondly remember our dear friend, the late Margaret Laing, for suggesting that we be part of this project.

<sup>1</sup> See the digitized manuscript on: <https://www.library.wales/discover-learn/digital-exhibitions/manuscripts/the-middle-ages/a-middle-english-miscellany>.

<sup>2</sup> See Johnston (2014, 3), Clarke (2016, lxx; 88-102) and Griffin (2019, 79).

<sup>3</sup> For more details on the manuscript, see Marx (1999, 25) and the online catalogue: <https://archives.library.wales/index.php/english-miscellany>.

<sup>4</sup> Recipes 3-6 were copied by Scribe I (Huws 1996, 190).



rubricators, decorators and compilers. Together with I, they filled the blank pages at the end of quires (Huws 1996, 198).

Apart from Scribe I's later addition to quire 1, another eight scribes (A-H) participated in the production of the didactic prose texts that currently constitute the first part of the book. Scribe A copied several English texts—*Secundum Anticos Grecorum*—on auspicious and ominous days: for falling ill (item 1, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>-1<sup>v</sup>); being born, getting married, travelling and starting some mission (item 2, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>); dying awfully or becoming incorruptible (item 3, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>); and weather prognostications, based on Saint Paul's Day, in Latin and English translation (items 4-5, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>). This scribe was also responsible for some notes on the planets (item 6, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>); a Latin prose text on the divisions of the world (item 7, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>); and a chronology of the world in English (item 8, fols. 2<sup>v</sup>-3<sup>v</sup>) (Kurvinen 1953; Huws 1996).

The rest of the scribes in the quire were less prolific than A. Thus, Scribe B copied a Latin table presenting the divisions of time (item 9, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>). Another Latin table showing the planetary hours and explanatory notes in English was provided by Scribe C (item 10, fol. 5<sup>v</sup>). Scribe D then wrote the Latin text on the planets' influence at birth (item 11, fol. 6<sup>r</sup>), followed by Scribe E's English explanation of a 1463 calendar (item 12, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>). Next, Scribes F and G shared the copying of some rules for venesection in English (item 13, fol. 7<sup>r</sup>). Finally, Scribe H contributed a Latin table about sun and moon eclipses for 1462-1481 (item 14, fols. 7<sup>v</sup>-8<sup>r</sup>).<sup>5</sup>

## 2. THE WEST-MIDLAND DIALECT HYPOTHESIS AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE FIRST QUIRE

### 2.1. GOAL

The dialectal and geographical provenance of Brogyntyn MS ii.1 was tentatively associated with the North-West Midland counties of Cheshire or Shropshire (Ackerman 1947; Kurvinen 1951). Huws (1996) agreed that the scribes may have well shared a locality in either of these places, as both had strong social and commercial connections with Wales. Supportingly, the medieval scribe or book owner's name 'Hattun' (fol. 52<sup>v</sup>) appears to have been "more frequent in Cheshire and Shropshire than in any other part of England" (1996, 205). The codex was seemingly in Welsh hands by the early sixteenth century; in the seventeenth century, it was probably owned by the Owen family of Clennau (Caernarfonshire), from where it eventually reached Brogyntyn estate in Shropshire (Pope 2005, 38). Huws (1996, 205) acknowledged that the West-Midland language of the texts was only recognizable "under a heavy varnish of standardization." To more accurately delimit

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the contents of quire 1, see Silva (forthcoming); for a reconsideration of the number of hands involved in it, see Connolly (forthcoming). She believes that the linguistic localisation of the Middle English texts in the quire here presented is entirely compatible with her findings.



their dialectal provenance, he thus claimed for a more comprehensive and better-grounded study based on *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)*.<sup>6</sup>

To test the West-Midland hypothesis connecting the language of the manuscript with Cheshire or Shropshire, Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes (forthcoming) are presently studying the dialects of the eight scribes—I, J, K, L, O, Q, R, S—that participated in the volume's main part. The current paper undertakes complementary work in this respect and aims to widen the picture of the language variants present in the codex. This goal is achieved by providing and analyzing the Linguistic Profiles (LPs) of the five scribes—A, C, E, F, G—responsible for the Middle English texts in the initially alien—now first—quire.

## 2.2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology and conventions adopted are drawn from *LALME*. Initially, the texts were faithfully transcribed from the digitized manuscript. No emendations or expansions of abbreviations were attempted; instead, the symbol {@} was used, followed by a different number for the different abbreviation or possible otiose marks.<sup>7</sup> Then, one *LALME* questionnaire of ITEMS was filled in for every scribe and text.<sup>8</sup> For each item found, the primary or most frequent form was entered in the first place; any secondary variant—occurring from 1/3 to 2/3 of the times of the dominant one—was additionally given in single brackets; finally, enclosed in double brackets, rare forms—those attested less than 1/3 of the times of the dominant one—may follow (vol. 3, xiv).<sup>9</sup> Once the questionnaires are completed and the scribal LPs obtained,<sup>10</sup> the so-called 'fit'-technique is applied to each LP (vol. 1, 10-12). First, the distributions of the variants need to be retrieved from *LALME* by combining the information provided by the dot maps (vol. 1), the county dictionary (vol. 4) and *eLALME* user-defined maps.<sup>11</sup> Such distributions are then plotted and superimposed on a working map for each scribe. The fitting process—manually performed while benefiting from the *eLALME* tools—should begin with well-attested forms of the

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<sup>6</sup> See McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin (1986). See also the electronic version (*eLALME*) by Benskin et al. (2013).

<sup>7</sup> Carrillo-Linares (2023) and Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes (forthcoming) use the same transcribing system for the rest of the scribes in the volume. In this paper, however, for the sake of simplicity, the symbol {@} alone—with no number—stands for any abbreviation or idle mark. In all cases, the lexeme, together with all the potentially encapsulated realizations of each abbreviation or otiose mark will be considered for the analysis.

<sup>8</sup> The search tool *AntConc* (Anthony 2022) was a useful external aid that facilitated the retrieval of data from the transcribed texts.

<sup>9</sup> These relative frequencies are accompanied by the actual number of occurrences in each scribal text. The absolute numbers appear between square brackets [ ].

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix, Tables 1 and 2.

<sup>11</sup> The user-defined map tool is extremely useful to check the distributions of specific forms in a more user-friendly format than the one offered by the county dictionary.

items collected in *LALME* for the entire country of England; once the broad area of localization is known, the ‘fit’-technique can continue with other items collected only for the north or only for the south (Alcorn 2017). This method allows for the gradual elimination of unlikely areas of linguistic provenance and should eventually narrow down the dialectal origin of the language analyzed. However, due to the possible mobility of scribes and exemplars, the language of Middle English texts could also display linguistic features that did not necessarily belong to the place where they were produced or owned. Both the external and the textual history of a manuscript could condition the linguistic appearance of the copy.

Linguistic choices in Middle English texts could be determined by multiple factors such as scribal education, work connections, travelling or migration, personal preferences, text types, the intended audience and textual transmission. Stenroos and Thengs (2020, 85) highlight the benefits of studying documents localizable on reliable non-linguistic evidence and argue for a fluid approach to texts by integrating the geographical, linguistic and social spaces, that is, by considering “networks of contact rather than physical distance.” Their corpus of *Middle English Local Documents (MELD)* (Stenroos, Thengs and Bergstrøm 2017-) is an excellent reference tool complementary to *LALME*, although texts from the West Midlands have not yet been incorporated.

As McIntosh (1973, 61) described, whereas some scribes endeavored to provide a *literatim* copy of the exemplar, others chose to translate into their dialects, and most produced a mixture of their own, alien and tolerated forms in varying degrees. When several lengthy texts copied by the same scribe are available for comparison, the probability of identifying and localizing that scribe’s own repertoire of forms is high. A single text copied by one scribe can also be informative when long enough to allow the researcher to distinguish between different dialectal layers. By contrast, short texts may occasionally display very few occurrences of some dialectally revealing forms, thereby complicating the task of discriminating those that belonged to the scribe’s repertoire from those carried over from the exemplar. Given the brevity of some texts and, consequently, the fewer chances for items to occur and reoccur, the primary, secondary and rare labels might be misrepresenting the scribe’s actual practice. Thus, whether short texts do or do not supply a sufficient number of relevant features compatible with a not too broad dialectal area may sometimes become a matter of chance and luck. As Stenroos and Thengs (2020, 84) observed:

The *LALME* compilers expected that every text might be localised within the dialect continuum assuming that it contained an internally consistent combination of forms. A combination that could not be fitted in such a way would then represent something else than a local English dialect: a dialect mixture (*Mischsprache*), ‘standardised’ usage, or a genuine dialect from another continuum, such as Hiberno-English (*LALME* I, 12).

In the absence of more solid non-linguistic evidence that would ideally add to the contextual picture of the place of production and provenance of the scribes of Brogyntyn MS ii.1’s first quire, the current approach needs to be restricted to



localizing the texts based on the *LALME* notion of “*linguistic* [...] rather than *real* or *geographical* space” (Williamson 2004, 119-120). The fitting processes that follow aim to provide—in Stenroos and Thengs’s (2020, 84) words—“relative localizations [...] not meant to reflect precise geographical positions; rather, they reflect the linguistic similarities between texts.”

### 3. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Scribe A provides larger chunks of text and more variety of items and forms than the rest of the copyists in the quire. Although the heading preceding each of the four texts on prognosis—*Secundum Anticos Grecorum*—suggests that items 1-5 may have all been copied from the same exemplar, the questionnaires were initially filled out individually in case they showed incompatible features that could point to different sources. Similarly, the analyses of items 6 (on the planets) and 8 (the chronology) were first performed separately. However, a side-by-side comparison of the six pieces reveals that they all have a compatible language. Thus, the questionnaires for the different texts copied by A were eventually merged into a single LP.

Some of the spelling, morphological and lexical forms found in A’s, C’s, E’s, F’s and G’s texts were of widespread use and, therefore, of no diagnostic value. Such is the case, for example, of IT forms with <i> and no <h>; initial <ʒ> in YET; <wh> for WH; NOT as ‘not’; ANY, MANY and MAN with <a>; ‘is’ and ‘ys’ for IS; <sch> and <a> forms for SHALL; ‘was’ for WAS; ‘fro’ for FROM; AFTER with initial <a>; FIRST, with <i, y>; ‘good(e)’ for GOOD; and <-ly> for -LY. The forms ‘but’ for BUT, ‘or’ for OR, and the plural endings <-es, -is, -ys> were also broadly used. Consequently, only relevant forms displaying non-ubiquitous distributions in *LALME*’s dot maps are selected from each scribal LP to apply the ‘fit’-technique.<sup>12</sup> Scribe C’s notes on the planetary hours, Scribe E’s explanation of the calendar and Scribes F and G’s venesection are all relatively short texts. Notwithstanding this fact, all the scribes provide several diagnostic forms that allow for their approximate localization.

#### 3.1. SCRIBE A

For broadly delimiting the dialectal provenance of A’s language, the fitting process begins with several *LALME* items that are well attested for all the areas.<sup>13</sup> The assemblage of A’s primary forms for four of them—‘pes’ for THESE; ‘ʒif, ʒyf’ for IF; ‘whan(ʃ@)’ spellings for WHEN; and all ‘pouʒ’ type variants for THOUGH—leads to the dismissal of northern England, alongside the northerly Midland regions

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<sup>12</sup> These forms are highlighted with an asterisk in Tables 1 and 2.

<sup>13</sup> See Table 1 for Scribe A’s LP.



of Lancashire, Cheshire, North Shropshire, North Staffordshire and North and Central Derbyshire, in the west; in the east, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, the northernmost part of Leicestershire and Lincolnshire—except for its border with Soke of Peterborough—are also discarded.

The northern half of Northamptonshire, the adjacent part of Leicestershire, Bedfordshire and South Huntingdonshire are also improbable areas of origin due to their lack of ‘*ʒif*, *ʒyf*’ forms for *IF*. In turn, the entire Shropshire, West Norfolk and South-East Suffolk stand out for the lack of recorded occurrences of ‘*pes*.’ However, they should not be ruled out yet, given that the closely related ‘*pesē*’ is not particularly uncommon in those three regions. Likewise, the form ‘*pouʒ*’ is recorded in only three East Anglian LPs,<sup>14</sup> while the similar variant ‘*pouʒ*’ is slightly more common and appears in five LPs, mainly in Suffolk.<sup>15</sup> Spellings with <ou> and <ow> for *THOUGH* are unattested in Central Norfolk.

The combination of verbal forms ending in thorn for the third-person singular and <-n{@}> for the plural is not helpful in further delimiting the probable origin of the language displayed by Scribe A. Although typically associated with the Midlands, Brogyntyn MS ii.1 is a fairly late manuscript, and the ‘-n’ plural forms could have reached more southern areas by the mid-fifteenth century. That was also the case with endingless infinitives (Lass 1992, 145; Nielsen 2005, 73; Wełna 2012, 423).

In southern England, the concurrence of ‘*pes(e)*’, ‘*ʒif*, *ʒyf*’, ‘*whan*({@})’ and ‘*pouʒ*’ forms excludes Cornwall (which additionally lacks ‘*ʒit*’ for *YET*), Devonshire (except for its easternmost extreme), South Somerset, Wiltshire and the nearby areas of East Gloucestershire, North-West Oxfordshire and the northernmost extreme of Berkshire. Cornwall is additionally crossed out by the lack of ‘*ʒit*’, ‘*pes(e)*’, ‘*whan*({@})’, ‘*pouʒ*’ and ‘*ben*({@})’, whereas West and Central Devonshire are discarded by the lack of ‘*ʒif*, *ʒyf*’ and ‘*ʒit*’, with only LP ((5051)) showing the similar ‘*ʒyt*’.<sup>16</sup>

Both ‘*pes*’ and ‘*p*<sup>is</sup>’ appear only once in A’s writing, and only four *LALME* LPs display the superscript form.<sup>17</sup> Whether scribal or inherited, ‘*bis(e)*’ spellings are not attested for Dorset or Hampshire, and they are incompatible with most of Suffolk, except for its northeast.<sup>18</sup> The non-northern character of Scribe A’s texts is also confirmed when adding the combined distribution of ‘*aʒen*-type’ variants—for *AGAINST* and *AGAIN*—to the assemblage of forms mentioned above. This step provides

<sup>14</sup> LPs 776, 4057, West Norfolk; 8420, North-East Suffolk.

<sup>15</sup> LPs 4646, South-East Norfolk; 8310, 8491, West Suffolk; (8350), South-East Suffolk; 8450, Central Suffolk.

<sup>16</sup> Following *LALME*’s practice for the LPs, no brackets and single or double parentheses surrounding LP references are also used here to indicate the frequency of the form(s) discussed. An unbracketed LP indicates dominant usage of the form(s); single brackets enclosing an LP represent a scribal usage of 1/3 to 2/3 of the times of the dominant form; double brackets are given when the form discussed was used less than 1/3 of the times.

<sup>17</sup> LPs ((16)), Central-West Lincolnshire; 4564, North-East Norfolk; 5313, Central-West Wiltshire; (8420), North-East Suffolk.

<sup>18</sup> LPs (4768, 8420).





further evidence for the elimination of Lancashire, Cheshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland; it also supports the exclusion of the remaining parts of Derbyshire, the county of Shropshire and the bordering areas in West Staffordshire; ‘aʒen’ forms do not seem to concur in Cornwall, West Devonshire, Dorset and Monmouth.

The coexistence of the forms above delimits the likely provenance of Scribe A’s language to the Midlands and excludes its most northern parts. The overlapping distribution of the forms for WHO of the ‘who-so’ type—collected only for the “Southern Appendix” (vol. 4)—supports the exclusion of most southerly areas of the country from west to east, including Monmouth, in the South-West Midlands, and London, in the South-East Midlands. This first phase of the fitting process leaves three areas uncrossed: the largest one comprises the southern half of Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, North-West Gloucestershire and Worcestershire; the second one includes North-East, Central and South Oxford, and Central Berkshire; and the third area is Ely and the southeastern extreme of Norfolk.<sup>19</sup>

Focusing on the non-dominant forms in A’s language, ‘h-forms’ for IT are heavily found in the south and west of England. The distribution of ‘hit’ rules out the East-Midland areas of Soke of Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, West Norfolk, West Suffolk and the northeasternmost tip of Buckinghamshire. ‘Hit’ is rarely attested in Ely and Bedfordshire, and both ‘hit’ and ‘hyt’ are non-dominant forms in Norfolk.<sup>20</sup> In Hertfordshire, ‘h-forms’ are exclusively found on its borders with Essex and Central Buckinghamshire,<sup>21</sup> and they are recorded as subsidiary forms in only one Cambridgeshire LP localized to the north of the county.<sup>22</sup>

The co-occurrence of the non-dominant variants ‘hit’ and ‘hyt’ for HIT, ‘eny’ for ANY, ‘yf’ for IF, ‘beþ’ for ARE and ‘mane’ forms for MAN allow for narrowing down their area of likely origin to the West-Midland counties of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the adjacent South Northamptonshire area.<sup>23</sup> However, several isolated spots in East Suffolk and West-Central Wiltshire are still uncrossed.

The assemblage of primary and non-dominant variants occurs in Worcestershire, Warwickshire and South Northamptonshire. Furthermore, Scribe A uses ‘vas’ once as a rare form. Unfortunately, the item WAS appears in only one of the texts copied by A, which prevents any comparison with further occurrences, which would have allowed assessing whether the form was one of the scribe’s own variants or carried over from the exemplar. In either case, ‘vas’ must have been a fairly local form, as it is attested in only five *LALME* LPs, two of them localized to already discarded counties<sup>24</sup> and three from West-Midland areas not far from where

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<sup>19</sup> LPs 557, (73).

<sup>20</sup> LPs ((652), North-East Ely; ((8200)), South-West Bedfordshire; ((642)), (4629), South Norfolk; ((4041)), South-West Norfolk; (4564), ((4066, 4656, 4663)), East Norfolk.

<sup>21</sup> LPs (6530), 6620.

<sup>22</sup> LP 672 (hit), ((hyt)).

<sup>23</sup> ‘Mane’ is found in LPs from the still-uncrossed Worcestershire, ((7841)); Warwickshire, (4689); Northamptonshire bordering Warwickshire, 4273; South-East Northamptonshire, ((739)).

<sup>24</sup> LPs 366, East Riding Yorkshire; ((4621)), Central Norfolk.



A's language appears to be.<sup>25</sup> In addition, other words with <v> for <w> are recorded for North Gloucestershire, South Staffordshire and West Worcestershire.<sup>26</sup> Finally, scribe A sometimes writes <w> for <u>. Again, although scarcely attested in *LALME* and collected only for the south, this feature is compatible with the West Midlands, as evinced in LPs 4063—from the Warwickshire border with Northamptonshire—and 5658—broadly localized to Gloucestershire, South Herefordshire or South Warwickshire.

Scribe A and numerous LPs from Worcestershire, Warwickshire and adjacent areas in South Northamptonshire display remarkably similar combinations of forms, thereby endorsing the localization of A's assemblage to the linguistic space delimited by LPs 7640, 7660 and 7841; LPs 4063, 4675, 4679, 4686, 4689, 8000, 8010, 8040, 8070; and LPs 705, 739, 4273, 4710. They are all comprised within the Worcestershire area between Stanford-on-Teme (in the northwest), Redditch (in the northeast) and Pershore (in the south); the region that stretches from West to South Warwickshire, from around Hampton-in-Arden—near Birmingham—to Warwick and the Stratford-upon-Avon district, including the borders with North-East Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire; and South Northamptonshire, from the Daventry area (in the west) to Horton (in the east).

### 3.2. SCRIBE C

Scribe C's evidence is significantly smaller, as the notes to the planetary hours occupy only seven lines.<sup>27</sup> The concurrence of 'bep(e), beth(e)' forms for ARE allows for the dismissal of the entire north of England alongside an extensive part of the Midlands that includes, on the one hand, Cheshire, Derbyshire, South Staffordshire and South Shropshire, in the center and northwest of the region; and on the other, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, in the northeast. This combination of ARE variants additionally rules out most of the Central and South-East Midlands, except for the southeasternmost part of Norfolk, East Suffolk, Hertfordshire and Essex. 'Bep' and 'beth' appear in only two LPs from Ely, where they are rare forms.<sup>28</sup> Minority variants in few manuscripts of well-attested areas were probably relicts carried over from their exemplars, in which case, such areas become unlikely places of linguistic provenance.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the South and South-West regions of Dorset, South Somerset, Cornwall, East Gloucestershire and Monmouth are dismissed by the absence of at least one of C's variants for ARE.

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<sup>25</sup> LPs ((7080)), Central Gloucestershire; ((4239)), South Shropshire; ((529)), Central-West Staffordshire.

<sup>26</sup> LP ((7080)), North Gloucestershire; 4239, South Staffordshire; ((7331)), West Worcestershire.

<sup>27</sup> See Table 2 for Scribe C's LP.

<sup>28</sup> LPs 557, ((bep)); 558, ((beth)).

<sup>29</sup> For the notion of relict, see Benskin and Laing (1981, 58).



The overlapping distributions of several other items—THESE as ‘pes’; IT as ‘hit’; and -IGHT as <-yʒt>—support the elimination of several of the already discarded northern, North-East Midland and South-East Midland counties, including most of Hertfordshire. In the west, Shropshire seems unlikely due to the absence of ‘pes.’

Once the ‘fit’-technique excludes the most northerly regions, the variant ‘to’ for the conjunction UNTIL—collected only in *LALME*’s ‘Southern Appendix’ (vol. 4)—may be added to the assemblage of forms above. The plotting of ‘to’ allows for virtually discarding the whole south of England as an eligible origin; only central Wiltshire remains uncrossed. The macro-fitting leads to an extensive West-Midland area covering West Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and the more central Warwickshire. Scribe C’s specific spellings ‘bepe, bethe’ are primarily attested in West Warwickshire,<sup>30</sup> Central Wiltshire<sup>31</sup> and West Essex,<sup>32</sup> where they could have coexisted with ‘to’ for UNTIL<sup>33</sup> and the rest of the forms used by C.

The context provided by the preceding text in the quire suggests a linguistic location in the vicinity of A’s language. The combination of forms used by Scribe C is compatible with Warwickshire LPs 4675, 4683, 4684, 4685, 4689, 8010 and 8050, which includes Birmingham, Hampton and Henley in Arden, Wellesbourne and Goldicote—near Stratford-upon-Avon—in the west; Warwick, in the center; and Tysoe, in the southeasternmost tip.

### 3.3. SCRIBE E

Scribe E’s text on the 1463 calendar runs across thirty-five lines.<sup>34</sup> The overlapping distributions of ‘hit’ for IT, <-iʒt, -yʒt> for -IGHT; ‘aʒen’ for AGAIN, ‘the-wh(y/i)ch(e)’-type spellings for WHICH, and ‘beth(e), beþ(e)’ forms for ARE allow for narrowing down the potential provenance of Scribe E’s language to a limited set of counties. The initially uncrossed areas comprise Devonshire, Somerset, Central and South Wiltshire, Hampshire, Surrey and Kent, in the south; Leicestershire,<sup>35</sup> South Northampton, the eastern extreme of Norfolk and parts of East Suffolk, Essex, London and Middlesex, in the South-East Midlands; East Staffordshire, South-West Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Central Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, in the South-West Midlands.

The subsequent plotting of ‘call-,’ ‘callyd/id’ for CALL- / CALLED together with that of ‘vn-to / vnto’ spellings for the conjunction UNTIL adds evidence to the

<sup>30</sup> Warwickshire LPs 4689, 4683 and ((4675)) contain ‘bepe’; LP 4685 has ‘bethe.’

<sup>31</sup> Wiltshire LP (5430) contains ‘bepe’; LPs 5295, ((5314)) and ((5412)) have ‘bethe.’

<sup>32</sup> In Essex, the form ‘bepe’ appears in LPs (5602, 6210); LPs ((5601)), 5602 and 6300 contain ‘bethe.’

<sup>33</sup> Wiltshire LP 5460; Essex LPs 6100, (6260), 6330, 9450; Warwickshire LPs 4684, 8010, (8050).

<sup>34</sup> See Table 2 for Scribe E’s LP.

<sup>35</sup> The item ARE spelled with thorn is extremely rare in this county, only recorded in LP ((767)), Leicestershire.



elimination of most of the already discarded South-East Midland counties while additionally discarding London, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. This stage of the fitting process drastically narrows down the eligible areas of provenance to Surrey, Warwickshire and South Northamptonshire.

For a more precise fitting, although Scribe E's specific form 'beþe' is barely attested in *LALME*,<sup>36</sup> most of its recorded usages belong to West-Midland LPs. Moreover, ARE spellings with <th> or <þ> and final <e> could coexist with Scribe E's all other forms in the Warwickshire area demarcated by LPs 4675, 4683, 4684, 4689, 8040, 8070 and 9700, namely, the west and south of the county, virtually the same as Scribe C's localization and partially coincident with Scribe A's.

### 3.4. SCRIBE F

Scribe F's copying of the venesection text covers the first column on fol. 7<sup>r</sup>. Many forms used in such a brief passage are of no diagnostic value.<sup>37</sup> However, the coexistence of the forms 'nat' for NOT and 'callyd' ('callid') for CALLED can be delimited to an area that includes Derbyshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, South-East Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Essex, Surrey, Somerset and Wiltshire.

The third-person singular endings serve to confirm the elimination of the north of England, the North-West Midland counties of Shropshire and Derbyshire, and West Norfolk. However, since this item was not systematically—but only occasionally—collected for the south, it cannot be used to definitely exclude Suffolk or any of the uncrossed southerly counties. Notwithstanding this fact, the variants displayed by Scribe F—<<sup>t</sup>, -iþ<sup>e</sup>, -eþ<sup>e</sup>, -ithe>—even if one or more may have been carried over from the exemplar—could all co-occur in Leicestershire and the North-East Warwickshire adjacent area delimited by LPs 44, 299, 302, 432, 531, 699 and 767. The evidence elicited from this text prevents the dismissal of the remaining southern and southeastern counties of Wiltshire, Surrey, Essex and Suffolk. However, the linguistic association with Leicestershire or the adjacent Bedworth-Coventry-Nuneaton area in Warwickshire seems contextually more plausible.

### 3.5. SCRIBE G

Scribe G copied the venesection text's second column.<sup>38</sup> The assemblage of LITTLE as 'lytel(e,' AGAINST as 'a(-)3enste' and the '-us type' of plural (spelt <-vs>)

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<sup>36</sup> LPs ((767)), North-East Leicestershire; (6820), South Oxfordshire; (7040), South-West Gloucestershire; 5313, Central Wiltshire; ((6270)), South-West Essex.

<sup>37</sup> See Table 2 for Scribe F's LP.

<sup>38</sup> See Table 2 for Scribe G's LP.



allows the exclusion of the whole northern region together with Lancashire, Cheshire and North Shropshire. This combination of forms is possible—albeit unlikely—in Derbyshire.<sup>39</sup> The selected items allow for additionally discarding an extensive East-Midland area, whose uncrossed parts are narrowed down to Central Norfolk and South-East Suffolk. In the South, the West and the Central Midlands, this assemblage of forms is viable in Hampshire, North Sussex and Somerset; also in Staffordshire, South Shropshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouth; and in West Gloucestershire, North Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, West Leicestershire and South Northamptonshire. *WITHOUT* forms—spelt ‘w<sup>i</sup>(-)-out(e)’—do not occur in the uncrossed Monmouth and are recorded for only one Gloucestershire LP.<sup>40</sup>

Several items collected only for the north—*UPON* as ‘vppon{@}’ and *BETWEEN* spelt ‘be(-)twyxt’—contribute to further delimiting the likely dialectal provenance of G’s text by confirming the dismissal of Shropshire, Nottinghamshire and Norfolk. Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire are also ruled out, except for their border with Warwickshire. The verbal forms <-ithe, -ythe, -ethe> were not systematically collected for the south. Thus, although the uncrossed parts of Suffolk, Hampshire, Sussex, Monmouth, Worcestershire and Herefordshire cannot be technically discarded,<sup>41</sup> these three verbal endings are unattested for Shropshire but concur in the area where South Staffordshire, South Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire converge. The overlapping distribution of *EYE(S)* as ‘yʒe-, iʒe-’ points to the south of Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Therefore, North Warwickshire—near the border with Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire—seems likely to be the origin of Scribe G’s language. Such linguistic provenance would be congenial with the language in Scribe F’s first column of the venesection. Scribe G’s language could then be localized near LPs 699, 4285, 4675 and 9700.

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The long-needed study of scribal languages in the National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS ii.1 is currently in progress. Whereas Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes (forthcoming) will soon provide a linguistic analysis of the manuscript’s main texts, the present paper has focused on the language of the marginal booklet that eventually became the volume’s first quire. Although the late date and the brevity of its Middle English texts result in a seemingly limited number of diagnostic features, it has been possible to establish various degrees of dialectal delimitation.

*LALME*’s ‘fit’-technique applied to the different LPs derived from the transcribed texts of Scribes A, C, E, F and G has led to the unequivocal localization

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<sup>39</sup> LP ((257)) is the only witness for ‘aʒenst.’

<sup>40</sup> LP 7211, localized to the border with Herefordshire.

<sup>41</sup> Forms ending in <-ythe, -ithe> are attested in three Herefordshire LPs: (7351), 7352 and (7353).

of the language of the first quire to a non-northern dialectal area. The evidence suggests that this late addition to the original book was entirely written in overlapping dialectal varieties, more likely from the Midlands than the extreme south. The linguistic space shared by the English texts in quire 1 turns out to be more central than Shropshire and slightly more southern than Derbyshire.

Thus, Scribe A's assemblage of forms in the texts on prognosis, the planets and the chronology points to an area comprising Worcestershire, West and South Warwickshire, and South Northamptonshire. The fittings for Scribe C's copy of the planetary hours and Scribe E's notes on the 1463 calendar reveal the same West or South Warwickshire origin. Finally, Scribes F and G can be respectively situated in the area of Leicestershire or North-East Warwickshire and the north of Warwickshire or some neighboring area in the adjacent counties.<sup>42</sup>

Given that Warwickshire emerges as the largest uncrossed area shared by the five fitting processes performed, it may be suggested that Scribes A, C, E, F and G must have all worked under the linguistic influence of this county or nearby areas. Upcoming studies on the rest of the manuscript will hopefully improve, on the one hand, our present knowledge of the dialectal varieties of the remaining texts and scribes (Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes forthcoming); on the other, they will shed some light on the relationship between the linguistic findings and the volume's paleographic and extralinguistic context (Connolly forthcoming; Pope forthcoming).

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<sup>42</sup> See Appendix, Figure 1.

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# APPENDIX

TABLE 1. SCRIBE A.

LALME ITEM	LP-SCRIBE A	1. PROG-NOSIS	2. PROG-NOSIS	3. PROG-NOSIS	5. PROG-NOSIS	6. PLANETS	8. CHRONOLOGY
THESE*	bes, b <sup>is</sup> [1, 1]		bes [1]	b <sup>is</sup> [1]			
THOSE	bo, b <sup>o</sup> [2, 2]		b <sup>o</sup> [2]	bo [2]			
IT*	it ((yt, hit, hyt)) [23 ((2, 1, 1))]	it [19]	hyt [1]	hit [1]	it (yt) [4 (2)]		
MAN*	man, man{(@)} ((mane)) [2, 2, (1)]	man [1]		man [1]		man{(@)} [2]	mane [1]
ANY*	any (eny) [3 (1)]	eny [1]	any [2]	any [1]			
ARE*	ben{(@)} (bep) [3 (1)]		ben{(@)}, bep [1, 1]	ben{(@)} [2]			
IS	is (ys) [15 (7)]	is ((ys)) [4 ((1))]		ys [2]	is (ys) [2 (1)]	is ((ys)) [7 ((2))]	is (ys) [2 (1)]
WAS*	was ((vas)) [16 ((1))]						was ((vas)) [16 ((1))]
SHALL <i>sg</i>	schal (schall{(@)}) [11 (4)]	schal (schall{(@)}) [6 (2)]	schal (schall{(@)}) [3 (1)]	schal (schall{(@)}) [2 (1)]			
SHALL <i>2sg</i>	schalt [1]		schalt [1]				
SHALL <i>pl</i>	schall{(@)} [1]				schall{(@)} [1]		
TO <i>prep</i>	to [9]	to [2]		to [1]		to [3]	to [3]
TO 'til'	to [4]	to [2]		to [1]			-to [1]
TO + <i>inf</i>	to [5]	to [1]		to [1]			to [3]
FROM	fro [6]						fro [6]
AFTER	after [1]	after [1]					
THOUGH*	bou3 [10]	bou3 [10]					
IF*	3if, 3yf ((yf)) 6, 5 ((1))	3if [6]	3yf, yf [1, 1]		3yf [4]		



AS	as [1]		as [1]				
AGAINST*	aʒen [1]						aʒen [1]
AGAIN*	aʒen [1]		aʒen [1]				
yet	ʒit [1]	ʒit [1]					
WH-	wh- [8]	wh- [1]	wh- [2]	wh- [3]			wh- [2]
NOT	not [7]	not [1]	not [5]	not [1]			
OE, ON ā	o [19]	o [1]	o [2]	o [4]	o [1]	o [8]	o [3]
WORLD	world [1]						world [1]
<-IGHT>*	-yʒt, -yʒtt [1, 1]	-yʒt [1]		-yʒtt [1]			
WHEN*	whan{@} [1]						whan{@} [1]
<i>Sb pl</i>	-es ((-s, -ys)) [32 ((2, 1))]	-es ((-s)) [10, ((2))]	-es [6]	-es [5]	-es [1]	-es [3]	-es ((-ys)) [7 ((1))]
<i>Pres part</i>	-yng{@} (-yngē) [2 (1)]	-yngē [1]				-yng{@} [2]	
<i>Vbl sb</i>	-yng [1]						-yng [1]
<i>Pres 3sg</i>	-(e)þ [31]	-eþ [23]	-eþ [1]			þ [7]	
<i>Pres pl</i>	-n{@} [1]		-n{@} [1]				
<i>Weak pt sg</i>	-ed [5]						-ed [5]
<i>Weak ppl</i>	-ed ((-yd)) [3 (1)]	-ed [2]	-yd [1]				-ed [1]
<i>Str ppl</i>	-Ø, -en({@}) [5, 5]	Ø [5]		-en{@} [1]			-en [4]
ABOUT <i>adv</i>	a-boute [7]					a-boute [7]	
ALL	all{@} [1]				all{@} [1]		
ALSO	also [2]			also [1]			also [1]
AWAY	away [1]	away [1]					
BE <i>inf</i>	be [6]	be [5]		be [1]			





BEFORE <i>pr</i>	be-fore [1]			be-fore [1]		
BETWEEN <i>pr</i>	by-twene [1]				by-twene [1]	
BIRTH	berþe [1]					berþe [1]
BUT	but [1]	but [1]				
DAY	day [21]	day [12]		day [3]	day [1]	day [5]
DAYS	dayes ((days)) [19 ((1))]	dayes ((days)) [9 ((1))]	dayes [4]	dayes [4]		dayes [2]
DEATH	deþ (dethe) [3 (1)]	deþ [3]		dethe [1]		
DIE <i>vb</i>	dye(-) [9]	dye(-) [7]		dye [2]		
DIE <i>inf</i>	dye [2]	dye [2]		dye [2]		
DIED <i>sg</i>	dyed [1]					dyed [1]
EARTH	erþe [3]					erþe [3]
EVIL	yuel [2]			yuel [1]		yuel [1]
FAIR	fayre [1]				fayre [1]	
FIRST	fyrst ((fyrste, fyrst firste)) [3 (1, 1)]	fyrst [1]		fyrste, firste [1, 1]		fyrst [2]
FIFTH	fyfte [1]	fyfte [1]				
FOLLOW <i>vb</i>	folow- [1]	folow- [1]				
FOURTH	fourþe [1]	fourþe [1]				
GOTTEN	-goten{@} [1]			-goten{@} [1]		
GOES <i>3sg</i>	gop ((goeþ)) [7 ((1))]	goeþ [1]				gop [7]
GOOD	goode ((good)) 5 (11)			goode [2]	goode (good) [2 (1)]	goode [1]
GREAT	gret [4]					gret [4]
HAVE <i>inf</i>	haue [1]		haue [1]			

HAD <i>sg</i>	had [2]				had [2]
HEAD	-hedd- [1]				-hedd- [1]
HELL	helle [1]				helle [1]
HIM	hym [3]	hym [1]	hym [1]		hym [1]
HIS	hys ((his)) [10 ((3))]		his [1]	hys [1]	hys ((his)) [9 ((2))]
ENGLAND	Ynglonde (Ynglond) [5 ((2))]				Ynglonde (Ynglond) [5 ((2))]
LIFE	lyffe [1]	lyffe [1]			
LIVE <i>vb</i>	lyued [2]				lyued [2]
LONG	longe [4]	longe [2]	longe [2]		
LORD	lord [2]				lord [2]
MONTH	moneþ [8]	moneþ [8]			
NEVER	neu{@} [1]	neu{@} [1]			
OR	or [3]	or [1]		or [1]	or [1]
OTHER	oþer [1]			oþer [1]	
OUR	oure [2]				oure [2]
OUT	out [1]				out [1]
SAY <i>inf</i>	say [3]				say [3]
SAY <i>pl*</i>	seyn{@}		seyn{@} [1]		
SAID <i>ppl</i>	-saide [2]				-saide [2]
SIXTH	sixte [1]	sixte [1]			
SOME	som [1]		som [1]		
THOU	þou, þ <sup>u</sup> [1, 1]		þou, þ <sup>u</sup> [1, 1]		
THIRD	þirde [1]	þirde [1]			





TRUE	trew [1]	trew [1]				
TWO	two				two [1]	
WHAT	what			what [1]		---
WHO*	who-so [4]		who-so [2]	who-so [2]		
WITH	w <sup>i</sup> , with [1, 1]				w <sup>i</sup> , with [1, 1]	
WITHIN <i>pr</i>	w <sup>i</sup> -in [3]	w <sup>i</sup> -in [3]				
YEAR	ʒere [53]			ʒere [2]	ʒere [1]	ʒere [50]
YEARS	ʒere [4]				ʒere [4]	
-AND	-londe ((- lond)) [5 ((2))]					-londe ((-lond)) [5 ((2))]
-ANG	longe [4]	longe [2]	longe [2]			
-FUL	-full- [1]	-full- [1]				
-LY	-ly [5]	-ly [4]				-ly [1]
-NESS	-nes (-nesse) [3 (1)]	-nesse [1]		-nes [1]		-nes [2]
UN-	vn- [1]		vn- [1]			
'k' for 'c'	c ((k)) [1]			((k)) [1]		
'w' for 'u'	u ((w)) [86 ((14))]	u ((w)) [28 ((2))]			u ((w)) [3, 3]	u ((w)) [17 ((1))] u ((w)) [38 ((8))]

TABLE 2. SCRIBES C, E, F AND G.				
LALME ITEM	LP-SCRIBE C 10. PLANETARY HOURS	LP-SCRIBE E 12. CALENDAR	LP-SCRIBE F 13A. VENESECTION	LP-SCRIBE G 13B. VENESECTION
THESE	þes [1]			
IT*	hit [1]	hit, it [1, 1]	it [1]	
WHICH		the whyche [3]		
MANY*		many [2]		

MAN			man{@} [1]	man{@} [3]
ARE*	bɛɸe, bethe [ɪ, ɪ]	bethe, bɛɸ <sup>c</sup> [ɪ, ɪ]		
IS	ys [2]	ys [ɪ5]	ys [5]	ys [4]
SHALL <i>pl</i>		schal [1]	schal [ɪ]	
TO <i>prep</i>		to, tyɪ [1, 1]		
TO + <i>inf</i>	to [ɪ]	to [6]		
FROM	fro [ɪ]	fro [4]		
AFTER		aft{@} [1]		
THEN		then [1]		
IF		yɸ [1]		
AS			as [1]	
AGAINST*				a- enste [2]
AGAIN <i>adv</i> *		aʒen [1]		
LENGTH		lengheɸ <sup>c</sup> [1]		
WH-	wh- [2]	wh- [6]		
NOT*			nat [1]	
OE, ON <i>ā</i>	o [3]	o [4]		
WHERE	where [1]	wher{@} [ɪ]		
<-IGHT>*	-yʒt [2]	-yʒt ((-ɪʒt)) [4, ((1))]		-yght [ɪ]
<i>Sb pl</i> *	-es (-is) [2, ɪ]	-es ((-ys, -is,)) [8 ((2, 1))]		-es, -is, -ys, -us [1, 1, 1, 1]
<i>Pres part</i>	-yng [1]	-yng{@} (-yng) [2 (1)]		-yng{@} [1]
<i>Vbl sub</i>		-yng, -yng{@} [2, 2]		-yng (-yng{@}, -yng) [2, (1, 1)]
<i>Pres 3sg</i> *	-eɸ, -ythe [1, 1]	-ythe (-ethe) [2 (1)]	- <sup>c</sup> (-ithe, iɸ <sup>c</sup> , -eth, -eɸ <sup>c</sup> ) [2 (1, 1, 1, 1)]	-ythe (-ethe) ((-ithe)) [4 (2) ((1))]





<i>Weak ppl</i>		-yd (-id) ((-ed)) [6 (2) ((1))]	-yd [1]	
<i>Str ppl</i>	-en [1]	-yn{@} (-yn) [2, 1]	-Ø [10]	-Ø [8]
AFTERWARDS		aft{@}ward [1]		
ALSO	also [1]			
BE <i>inf</i>		be [3]		
BEFORE <i>adv-time</i>		a-fore- [1]		
BETWEEN <i>pr*</i>				be-twyxt, betwyxt [1, 1]
BUT	but [2]			
CALLED <i>ppl*</i>		callyd [2]	callyd [1]	
DAY	day [3]	day [7]		
DAYS		dayes [1]		
DOWN	doun [1]	doun{@} [2]		
EYE				y3e [1]
FIRST <i>adv</i>	fyrst [1]	first, fyrst [1, 1]		
FIRST <i>weak adj</i>		fyrst [1]		
FOURTH		fourthe [1]		
GO <i>inf, subj</i>	go [1]	go [1]		
GOOD			good, goode [1, 1]	good (goode) [3 (1)]
GREAT				grete [2]
HAVE		haue [1]		
HAS 3sg	hathe [1]			
HEAD	hede [1]		-hede [1]	hede (heede) [3 (1)]
HEIGHT		hy3p <sup>r</sup> [1]		

HIS		hys [2]
HOW		how [2]
KNOW <i>inf</i>	know [1]	
KNOWN		knowyn{@} (knowyn) [2 (r)]
KNOWLEDGE <i>sb</i>		knowledge [1]
LITTLE		lytel [1]
LORD	lorde [1]	lorde [1]
MADE <i>ppl</i>		made [1]
MAY		may [1]
MOON		mone [1]
NEW		new [1]
ONE <i>pron</i>	one [1]	
OTHER	oþer [1]	odyr [1]
THE OTHER		the oþ{@} [1]
SAY <i>inf</i>		say [5]
SAID <i>ppl</i>		sayde [1]
SEVENTH		seuenhthe [1]
SIXTH		sext [1]
SUN	son [1]	son{@} ((son, sonne)) [5 ((r, r))]
THIRD		thyrde [1]
TWELVE	twelfe [1]	
UNTIL <i>conj</i> *	to [1]	vn-to [1]
UPON*		vpon, vpon{@} [1, 1]





WHAT	what [1]	what [2]		
WHOLE		hole [1]		
WITHOUT <i>pr</i> *				w <sup>l</sup> -out [1]
YOU		ʒe [2]		
YEAR		ʒere [1]		
-LY		-ly [2]		
'k' for 'c'		c, k [5, 4]	c, k [9, 9]	k (c) [8, 3]
Doubling cons. excluding 'nn'			t ((tt)) [8, 1]	

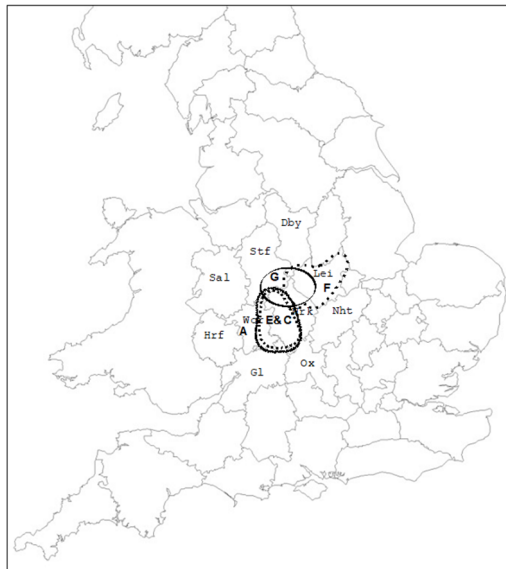


Figure 1. Approximate localization of the LPs for Scribes A, C, E, F and G.

# CONTEXTUALISING MIDDLE ENGLISH LITURGICAL COMMENTARIES

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## ABSTRACT

Important discussions of Middle English miscellanies, with special reference to works of religious instruction, include, for instance, work by Margaret Connolly (2003, 2011) and Ralph Hanna (e.g., 1996, 2007, 2010). But much detailed work remains to be done, from various disciplinary perspectives, to respond to the challenge set inter alia by Thorlac Turville-Petre forty years ago, viz., to set such works “much more securely and illuminatingly within [their] local context” (1983, 141). In this paper, part of an ongoing programme of research into the ‘cultural mapping’ of Middle English writings on the liturgy (see e.g., Jasper and Smith 2019, 2023; Smith 2021), a range of verse and prose texts are placed in their codicological contexts. It will be demonstrated how the forms of these texts correlate closely with the socio-cultural functions of the manuscripts in which they survive.

KEYWORDS: Middle English, liturgy, manuscript, codicology, orality and literacy.

## CONTEXTUALIZACIÓN DE COMENTARIOS LITÚRGICOS EN INGLÉS MEDIO

## RESUMEN

Discusiones importantes sobre misceláneas en inglés medio, con especial referencia a obras de instrucción religiosa, incluyen, por ejemplo, los trabajos de Margaret Connolly (2003, 2011) y Ralph Hanna (a saber, 1996, 2007, 2010). No obstante, queda aún mucho trabajo en profundidad por llevar a cabo, desde varias perspectivas de disciplinas, para dar respuesta al desafío planteado por, entre otros, Thorlac Turville-Petre hace cuarenta años, concretamente para establecer tales obras “mucho más firme y esclarecedoramente dentro de [su] contexto local” (1983, 141). En este artículo, parte de una investigación en curso sobre ‘*cultural mapping*’ de escritos sobre la liturgia en inglés medio (véase Jasper y Smith 2019, 2023; Smith 2021), una variedad de textos en verso y prosa se sitúan en sus contextos codicológicos. Se demostrará cómo las formas de estos textos se relacionan estrechamente con las funciones socioculturales de los manuscritos en los que sobreviven.

PALABRAS CLAVE: inglés medio, liturgia, manuscrito, codicología, oralidad y alfabetización.

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## 1. CONTEXTS

Research on the geographical and codicological distribution of Middle English vernacular texts<sup>1</sup> has demonstrated that by far the most widely circulated texts in late medieval England were broadly religious in content, often to be found within manuscript miscellanies. Examples range from well-known works from the Middle English literary ‘canon,’ such as William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*, a large number of religious lyrics and Richard Rolle’s writings, to texts that are less attractive to present-day readers: the *Speculum vitae*, *The Northern Homily Cycle*, *The Prick of Conscience*, *The South English Legendary* (saints’ lives) and the very substantial corpus of materials (sermons, tracts, bible translations) associated with Lollardy.

The prevalence of such material reflects the cultural setting of the period, which saw an efflorescence of vernacular religious writing that complemented the traditionally (if not of course exclusively) Latinate literary culture of the earlier medieval period. It represented a response to “the enhanced prestige of English, the interests of an increasingly literate laity in more advanced matters of theology than the rudiments of Christian behaviour, and dissatisfaction with the Church, expressed by orthodox and heterodox alike” (Spencer 1993, 14). Such a development aligned with what has been called the “imaginative intensity” (Duffy 2005, 593) of late medieval Catholic devotion.

At the heart of this “imaginative intensity” was one liturgical event in late medieval worship: the mass. As Claire Cross and Paul Barnwell have stated, “[t]he Mass exercised a defining influence upon the life of the late middle ages, affecting clergy and laity alike” (2005, 13). The doctrine of transubstantiation—adopted by the fourth Lateran Council of 1215—meant that the bread and wine, transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ, were treated within increasing reverence: “The potency of the Host was such that it was popularly believed that no-one would fall ill or die on the day that he saw it; this encouraged people to try and attend a Mass every day” (Cross and Barnwell 2005, 14). One of Margery Kempe’s experiences captures something of how the sacrament was perceived (cited from Meech 1940, 47):

On a day as þis creatur was heryng hir Messe, a 3ong man and a good prest heldyng up þe Sacrament in his handys ouyr hys hed, þe Sacrament schok & flekeryd to & fro as a dowe flekeryth wyth hir wengys. &, whan he held up þe chelys wyth þe precyows Sacrament, þe chalys mevyd to & fro as it xuld a fallyn owt of hys handys.

And the doctrine of purgatory, adopted at the second council of Lyon in 1274, encouraged the belief that intercessory Masses had the power to release individual souls from posthumous purgation of sins; funding for ‘soul Masses,’

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<sup>1</sup> Notably *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)*, for which see <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/elalme/elalme.html>), or the *Manuscripts of the West Midlands Project*, for which see <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/mwm/>, both last consulted 25 July 2022. An important collection of essays is Connolly and Mooney (2008).

often celebrated by dedicated chantry priests, therefore became a pressing concern. Although practices certainly varied depending on locality, there is evidence from numerous sources that worship, notably the Mass, was ongoing on a near-continual basis in parish churches:

During the day time, churches were almost continuously used by the parish priest, by the stipendiary ministers who served its chantries, and by the laity; most had several Masses daily, and incidental services on many days. In addition, the nave of the church could be the setting for much social activity, including funeral wakes and anniversary feasts and ‘church ales’ to raise money for the church. In these very different ways, parish religion with its very particular festivals and other observances both conferred a unique sense of identity upon each parish and at the same time helped to integrate it into the wider community of the locality and of Christian Europe (Cross and Barwell 2005, 16).

Such a situation fed a considerable demand for devotional aids, expressed in the vernacular, and these aids are the focus of the current article, part of a long-term research project on the history of English religious expression.

## 2. MIDDLE ENGLISH WORKS ON THE MASS IN THEIR CODICO-LOGICAL CONTEXTS

It is within the contexts just described—a growing demand for works of devotion and liturgical exposition, involving both laity and clergy, and relating to a special reverence for the Mass—that the Middle English “service and service-related works,” identified by Robert Raymo (1986, 2349-2369) in his authoritative catalogue, can be located. Raymo lists no fewer than fourteen separate surviving works designed to offer paratextual commentary on the Mass:

- (1) *The Lay Folks’ Mass Book (LFMB)*: a poem surviving in nine copies, frequently radically modified for distinct purposes. *The Lay Folks’ Mass Book* offered, for a congregation/readership whose discourse was in the vernacular, a comprehensive paratext for the Mass, flagging both words and actions. The standard ‘modern’ edition of the poem remains that carried out by the Anglican priest Thomas Frederick Simmons in 1879, who is responsible for the title. Simmons’s edition provides versions of the text from four manuscripts with readings from two others; the latter two were subsequently edited in full a few years later (see Gerould 1904; Bülbring 1905). Other copies have been identified since, and the current complete list, according both to the *New Index of Middle English Verse* (= NIMEV, i.e., Boffey and Edwards 2005) and the online *Digital Index of Middle English Verse*





- (= *DIMEV*),<sup>2</sup> is as follows. In all cases the poem is simply one item in miscellaneous compilations. The first six sigla given below are those assigned by Simmons: A = Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates' 19.3.11; B = London, British Library, MS Royal 17.B.xvii; C = Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 155; D = Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg 5.31; E = Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 84/166 (Part II); F = Cambridge, Newnham College, MS 900.4 (olim Yates Thompson); G = Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.4.9; H = Liverpool, University Library, MS F.4.9; I = London, British Library, MS Additional 36523.
- (2) *Ara Dei*: a long prose compilation from various sources, including many Latin passages, surviving in one manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional C.87. Ian Doyle (1958, 227) considered this book to have an Essex provenance, with links to the Vere family and Barking Abbey; according to Raymo, "it was clearly addressed to an educated, probably lay audience" (1986, 2350).
- (3) *The Manner and Mede of the Mass*: a cluster of stanzas alleged to be "a free paraphrase" of *The Lay Folks' Mass Book* (Raymo 1986, 2351; see also Simmons 1879, 128-147). The work survives in the well-known Vernon Manuscript, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS English poet. A.1. Raymo also identifies two other "similar treatises," viz., Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional A.268 and London, British Library, MS Royal 17.C.xvii; to these examples may be added a third witness for the same text: New Haven, Yale University, MS Beinecke Library 317 (olim Phillipps 1052), which also contains text (9) below.<sup>3</sup> Raymo also notes a further near-related "compendius tretyse" in Shrewsbury School MS 3.
- (4) *De meritis misse*, by the Shropshire friar-poet John Audelay (fl. 1417-1426) is an abbreviation of (3): *LALME* places the language of one of the manuscripts—Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 302—in Staffordshire and the other—London, British Library, MS Harley 3954—in Norfolk. The Douce manuscript contains only Audelay's poetry, whereas the Harleian copy of *De meritis misse* sits alongside a variety of other religious verse, including a copy of Langland's *Piers Plowman* and a copy of *Mandeville's Travels*.
- (5) *Merita misse*, once (it seems no longer) ascribed to John Lydgate, consists of "203 lines in short couplets with some lacunae" (Raymo 1986, 2353). It survives in one manuscript: London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A.xxvi, a composite compilation from the middle of the fifteenth century

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=5537>, last consulted 25 July 2022; see also <https://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=2205>, last consulted 25 July 2022.

<sup>3</sup> According to *DIMEV*; see <https://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=5128#wit-5128-3>, last consulted 25 July 2022. For the Beinecke manuscript, see <https://pre1600ms.beinecke.library.yale.edu/docs/pre1600.ms317.htm>; see also the digital facsimile at <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2013989>. Both items were last consulted 25 July 2022.

that has bound with it an Italian treatise on shipbuilding and a collection of French songs.

- (6) *How to Sing Mass*: “Ten lines of irregular length in couplets” (Raymo 1986, 2353), in London, British Library, MS Harley 3810, another composite fifteenth-century manuscript of religious texts (thus the contents may be fortuitous); *LALME* places the language of the manuscript in Warwickshire.
- (7) *The Sacrifice of the Mass* is a poem of thirteen rhyme-royal stanzas, in Oxford, Balliol College, MS 354. The Balliol manuscript is the commonplace book of the London-based merchant Richard Hill (fl. 1508-1536), which contains carols, selections from Lydgate and Gower, “practical treatises (on breaking horses and grafting trees), recipes (for brewing, making ink, killing rats, and so on), puzzles and card tricks, and two books on courtesy (one of which doubles as an English-French conversation manual)” (Shrank 2004, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, *ODNB*).
- (8) *Parts of the Mass* consists of two eight-line stanzas, found in Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg 4.32: another remarkable religious miscellany, whose contents range from the names of the Instruments of the Passion, in French, arranged in the manner of a chessboard as an *imago pietatis* (allowing for spiritual reflexion), to versified forms of the Creed, Ave and Pater.
- (9) *Virtues of the Mass* (*Virtutes missarum*) is a work mentioned by Simmons, who provided extracts in his edition of *LFMB*: “A collection of pieces in verse and prose enumerating [...] the extraordinary temporal benefits to be gained from attendance at Mass. They are of no literary merit and tastelessly exploit the simple piety of the laity” (Raymo 1986, 2354). Several versions are known, including one that survives in New Haven, Yale University, MS Beinecke Library 317 (see [3] above) and in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poet 32. Raymo’s summary of the Rawlinson/Beinecke version, of some thirty-one quatrains and two concluding stanzas each of six lines, offers a flavour of these texts: “Hearing Mass brings 30 rewards: that day you shall not go hungry; you shall be forgiven your idle words; you shall not suffer sudden death; you shall not age [...] you shall have 40 days of pardon if you kneel and give a kiss at the Verbum Caro [...] Therefore, Lollards and heretics, put aside your errors and follow the love of Holy Church [...]” (1986, 2354-2355).
- (10) *Bidding Prayers*: Raymo records numerous examples, both in manuscript and early prints, including in Caxton’s *Quattuor sermones* (1483) (Raymo 1986, 2355, 2558-2559). The language of one prose example, in York, Minster Chapter Library, MS XVI M 4 (the ‘York Manual’), is located by *LALME* to the city of York (Simmons 1879, 61-80).
- (11) *Levation Prayers* are “salutations and praises of Christ in the Eucharist combined with pleas for forgiveness of sins and against sudden death and supplications for salvation” (Raymo 1986, 2355). They are, again according to Raymo (1986, 2559-25561), very frequently recorded in Middle English writings, either independently or within other texts; they are often classified by modern scholars, rather anachronistically, as ‘lyrics.’ Versions survive, for instance,



in the Vernon Manuscript; they are also included within texts such as the *Ara Dei* (= [2] above) and Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests* (a work also found in London, British Library, MS Royal 17.C.xvii; see [3] above).

- (12) *Meditatyonys for Goostely Exercise in the Time of the Masse* offers an allegorical interpretation of the Mass. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Wood empt. 17 begins as follows: "The preste going to Masse signifythe & representyd þe Sauyours off þe world our moost swett Redemer Cryst Iesu." The Wood manuscript is a small sixteenth-century book, attributing the *Meditatyonys* to 'B. Langforde,' a priest who may be the scribe rather than the author (see Aston 1984, 123; see also Rinkevich 2018). Such allegorical interpretations, as Matthew Rinkevich has argued (2018, 42, 46), "convert the liturgical experience into a literary one. They suggest that divine worship is an act of reading and provide the glosses necessary for comprehension. [...] Langforde offers readers this litany of allegoresis, and through it, he invites them to begin reading the Mass allegorically. The church service becomes a polysemous text, and it compels churchgoers to become its readers and interpreters."
- (13) *A Good Contemplacion for a Preste or He Go to Masse* survives in two manuscript miscellanies: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.894 and London, British Library, MS Royal 17.C.xviii. The language of the Rawlinson manuscript has been localised to Middlesex in *LALME*. The work, a translation of a work ascribed to St Bonaventure, is directed to the celebrant: "Before a priest says Mass, let him be aware of the fact that he will receive God and man" (Raymo 1986, 2352).
- (14) *Praeparatio Eucharistiae*: a short prose treatise instructing the communicant on the proper way to prepare for partaking of Eucharist. The language of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1286—the sole witness for the text—is localised by *LALME* to Northamptonshire.

The above list gives a fair impression of the range of codicological contexts in which such works survive. In only three cases—(2), (12) and (14)—are the texts concerned the sole items in the manuscript. The remainder may most simply be described as miscellanies, and indeed even (2) is arguably a quasi-miscellany, being a compilation of passages from various works.

Now, miscellanies have attracted a great deal of attention in recent critical research. Many scholars have noted that the correlation of individual text and individual codex is the exception rather than the rule in the production of books during the late medieval period across Europe. Some of this company may have been the outcome of what Ralph Hanna has called "exemplar poverty" (Hanna 1996),<sup>4</sup> or

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<sup>4</sup> Hanna's paper is included in an important collection edited by Stephen Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (1996). See also more recent and similarly important collections edited by Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (2015), and by Sabrina Corbellini, Giovanna Murano and Giacomo Signore (2018).





through the various interests of a particular reader. This latter seems to be the case with the commonplace book of Richard Hill that contains text (7) above. Hill (d. circa 1536) was a London merchant with close connexions to the great continental cloth-markets of Antwerp and Bruges, and his book, compiled over many years, reflected the broad interests of a much-travelled man. Hill evidently enjoyed practical information: thus, the manuscript contains recipes for brewing, making ink, killing rats and so on, and treatises on horse-breaking and grafting trees. However, his book also demonstrated an engagement with court-culture (thus the poems flagged above, sections on puzzles and card tricks, and works on courtesy including one that also functioned as an English-French conversation manual), and with history and current affairs. In addition, the manuscript contains a group of religious works including in addition to *The Sacrifice of the Mass* a set of graces, a paraphrase of the ten commandments and a formula of questions to be asked of a confessor.

Such a mixture may seem random, but it is intriguing to note how Hill's texts, in miniature, reflect the broad interests of another London merchant with international connexions: England's first printer/publisher, William Caxton (d. 1492), whose output<sup>5</sup> is indicative of the tastes of his clientele. On the one hand—and probably better-known to present-day students—are vernacular works of the kind that aspirational courtiers such as John Paston II would have enjoyed: Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*, *Canterbury Tales*, *House of Fame* (and Lydgate's homage to the same, *The Temple of Glass*), *Parliament of Fowls* and *Troilus and Criseyde*; Gower's *Confessio amantis*; translations from French courtly writings, such as *Blanchardin and Eglantine*, *Charles the Great*, *The Four Sons of Aymon*, *History of Troy*, the *Eneydos* and *The Knight of the Tower*; and famously Malory's Arthurian cycle, reframed as *Le morte Darthur*. To this group might be added works of manners and heraldry, such as the *Book of Courtesy*—a manuscript version of which Hill also included in his commonplace book<sup>6</sup>—the *Book of Good Manners*, *Feats of Arms*, *The Booke of the Ordre of Chivalry* and legendary histories such as the *Chronicles of England* (a version of the *Prose Brut*, widely-circulated in manuscript-format), John Trevisa's translation of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* and indeed *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, which formed part of John Paston's library.

But by far the bulk of Caxton's publications was religious in content: two different versions of the *Ars moriendi* (*The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Soule*, 1491, and *The Art and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*, 1490), *The Court of Sapience* (1480), three editions of *The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres* (1477, 1479 and 1489), the *Fifteen Oes* (prayers in English and Latin, 1491), the English translation of the *Horologium Sapientiae* (1491) and the Latin, Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* (1484) and his translation of Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of the Soul* (1483), John Mirk's sermon-cycle *The Festial* and the associated *Quattuor sermones* (1483, 1491), and Nicholas Love's *The Myrroure of the Blessyd Lyf of Ihesu Cryste* (a gospel harmony, 1486, 1490).

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<sup>5</sup> These items are handily listed in the bibliography to Blake (1969, 224-239).

<sup>6</sup> See the edition by Frederick J. Furnivall (1868).





Two Caxtonian editions survive of the great series of saints' lives *The Golden Legend*, which, Caxton tells us, caused him so many difficulties that "I feryd me in the begynnyng of the translacyon to haue contynued it / by cause of the longe tyme of the translacion/ & also in thenpryntyng of þe same";<sup>7</sup> it was nevertheless, judging by the number of surviving copies and the evidence for contemporary ownership, to have been a remarkable commercial success.<sup>8</sup> Less substantial works included single-sheet *Deathbed Prayers* (1484), indulgences (between 1476 and 1489) and *Images of Pity* (1487, 1490). And while still working in Bruges, Caxton also printed religious works in French, viz., *Les quatre choses derrenieres* and *Septenuaire des pseaulmes de penitence* (both 1475-1476); shortly afterwards he also printed Earl Rivers's English translation of the former work, viz., *The Cordyal, of the Four Last Things* (1479). And—in an interesting prefiguration of Hill's copying of a work on the mass—was his production of works for and to accompany the liturgy.<sup>9</sup> In 1487, for instance, Caxton published a *Commemoracio lamentacionis siue compassionis Beate Marie*, a Latin service book for the assumption of Mary,<sup>10</sup> and this work is not alone. In the same year Caxton produced a *Directorium Sacerdotum*, developed by the liturgical expert Clement Maidstone (d. 1456): a set of expositions and clarifications of the Sarum Use, which was by far the most common liturgy used in the medieval English church.<sup>11</sup> A second edition of the *Directorium* appeared in 1489. Maidstone was a monk of the great Bridgettine abbey of Syon, with which Caxton seems to have had a link (Powell 2000), and it is possible that this connexion is relevant to the printer's production of these editions.<sup>12</sup> Other liturgically-related, Latin publications issued by Caxton included a Psalter (1480), service books for the *Festum transfigurationis* (1491) and *Festum visitationis* (1480), and four editions of Latin *Horae* (1477, 1480, 1489 and 1490).<sup>13</sup> Some of these works, such as the Latin *Directorium* and *Ordinale*, were apparently designed for the use of churchmen and priests; others, such as the small *Horae*, may have catered for the habit, referred to both in writing and occasionally in manuscript illustration, whereby the laity followed books during church services: behaviour that has even been related to the growth in the size of windows in fifteenth-century church architecture (Spencer 1993, 39). It is possible that 'B. Langforde's' *Meditatyonys for Goostely Exercise in the Time of the Masse*, text (12) above, fulfilled a similar function; the manuscript is a small pamphlet, easily portable.<sup>14</sup> It is interesting that this little booklet, like Hill's miscellany, was copied

<sup>7</sup> *The Golden Legend* (1483), folio ii r.

<sup>8</sup> See further Ring (2019).

<sup>9</sup> See Wordsworth and Littlehales (1904).

<sup>10</sup> Edited by E. Gordon Duff (1901).

<sup>11</sup> See Cooke and Wordsworth (1901-1902); see also Wordsworth (1894).

<sup>12</sup> For Syon see below.

<sup>13</sup> Edited in Duff (1908).

<sup>14</sup> The manuscript may be what is sometimes called a *portu(u)s* or *porteous*. According to *OED*, a *porteous* (cf. Anglo-Norman *porteose*) was, in the fifteenth century, a portable breviary comparable in some functions to the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*; it is perhaps significant that one of *OED*'s citations, from a will dated to 1426, is to "My Masseboke, my portus" (cf. Furnivall 1882).



at the beginning of the sixteenth century, after the arrival of printing in England; printing, after all, seems to have been an instance of technological supply responding to social demand rather than the other way round.<sup>15</sup>

It is therefore possible to situate even Hill's apparently random miscellany within a wider cultural map, as a miniature library curated for a particular set of tastes, and the same goes for several of the other miscellanies containing works on the Mass that are more focused in content. Elsewhere (Smith 2021) I have discussed, for instance, the contents of the manuscripts containing *The Lay Folks' Mass Book* (text [1] above), demonstrating how the different versions of the text were tailored to the particular codicological settings and cultural functions of each copy: functions that can be reconstructed through attention to such matters as dialect and marks of ownership, and presentational matters including choice of script, in addition to issues of textual organisation.

To illustrate the further possibilities of such analyses, we might turn to text (3), *The Manner and Mede of the Mass*, considered by Raymo to be a "free paraphrase" of *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*. The Vernon Manuscript, which contains the most accessible version of the poem, was compiled towards the end of the fourteenth century in the English West Midlands. The commissioner of the manuscript had clearly decided to make a substantial investment of time and funding; Vernon is a vast book, originally of about 450 leaves, weighing 22 kilograms, and measuring approximately 54 x 39 centimetres. A hundred or so leaves are now missing, but there are still some 370 texts surviving in the compilation. It has been estimated that, some 211 calfskins would have been required to produce the book's parchment, with all the infrastructure of preparation that such a figure implies: what Ralph Hanna has aptly called "the agricultural underpinning of medieval literary production," necessarily "predicated on extreme social exploitation" (2005, 158). A sister volume of comparable scope, the Simeon Manuscript (now London, British Library, MS Additional 22283), also survives, albeit in an even more mutilated form.<sup>16</sup> Compendia such as the Vernon and Simeon Manuscripts can be seen as assertions or celebrations of spiritual presence, comparable to a great church building. As Ryan Perry has put it, "a magnificent [...] book [such as Vernon] might be comparable to a crucifix, relic, or a rosary; a book might become a potent and recognizable spiritual emblem" (Perry 2007, 158).

Despite recent research on the Vernon Manuscript, most notably by Derek Pearsall and Wendy Scase (e.g., Pearsall 1990; Scase 2013), there is still a degree of uncertainty about where, for whom and even why this vast collection was produced. The texts were copied by two scribes whose language has been localised to

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<sup>15</sup> It has often been pointed out that the Romans could have had printing; the use of stamps to impress clay was well-known to them, and it might appear that only a small imaginative leap would have been needed to develop such technology. The reason that imaginative leap did not happen seems to be because demand for text in Roman society could be met through the deployment of traditional scribal practice, often delivered by slaves.

<sup>16</sup> See further the important essays in Connolly and Radulescu (2015).



Worcestershire, and there are several large religious houses in that area which might—just—have been able to support the substantial community of practice required for such an ambitious enterprise. Although probably produced in such a place, where a substantial infrastructure of technology would have been available, the book may have been commissioned for a wealthy aristocratic patron. One possible commissioner suggested by Scase is Sir William Beauchamp, a member of the powerful family that also included the earls of Warwick; the Beauchamps were part of a circle of courtiers that also included Geoffrey Chaucer. Beauchamp had originally been intended for the church, and it has been suggested that he had sympathies with Lollardy, the reformist movement associated with John Wycliffe at the end of the fourteenth century (*ODNB*; see also Scase 2013, 269-293).

However, much of Vernon's contents are wholly orthodox, including some works that would have seemed rather old-fashioned by this date, such as a late version of the Early Middle English prose guide for female anchorites known as *Ancrene Riwe*. And there is an overarching theme to its contents that is explicitly indicated on the opening page of the volume, followed by a contents list (folio i r): "Here bygynnen þe tytles off þe book þat is cald in latyn tonge salus anime. and in englyhs tonge soulehele." *Soulehele* 'soul-health' can be said to be the concern of all the surviving texts, and indeed is explicitly cited early in *The Manner and Mede of the Mass*, which appears on folios 302v-303v of the book:

3ong and olde . More and lasse  
 Ful god hit is . to here A Masse  
 þat Cristendam . haþ tan  
 Hit was mad . for **soule hele**  
 (Simmons 1879, 128, lines 5-8; my emboldening)

The Vernon Manuscript may be an egregious example of a miscellany-collection, but its difference from others is one of scale rather than kind, a point easily illustrated from other books containing versions of *The Manner and Mede of the Mass*. Thus London, British Library, MS Royal 17.C.xvii,<sup>17</sup> located by *LALME* to Lincolnshire, contains not only *The Manner and Mede of the Mass* but also a clutch of other religious works including *The Life of St Mary Magdalene*, *The Testament of Christ*, *The Legend of the Holy Blood at Hayles*, Book IV of *The Prick of Conscience* and John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*. *The Testament of Christ* and the widely-circulated long poem *The Prick of Conscience* also appear in the Vernon Manuscript. The mass-poem appears at the end of the book, and is clearly seen as its culmination.

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed account of the contents, see

[https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002107357&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002107357&recIdxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.seps=scope%3A%28BL%29&mode=Basic&vid=IAMS\\_VU2&srt=rank&tab=local&vl\(freeText0\)=Royal%2017%20C%20XVII&dum=true&dstmp=1658744296000](https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002107357&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002107357&recIdxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.seps=scope%3A%28BL%29&mode=Basic&vid=IAMS_VU2&srt=rank&tab=local&vl(freeText0)=Royal%2017%20C%20XVII&dum=true&dstmp=1658744296000), last consulted 25 July 2022.

Such miscellanies as Vernon and the Royal MS are commonplace in the surviving Middle English record, and numerous other examples could be cited. Well-known instances include John Northwood's collection in London, British Library, MS Additional 37787, associated with Bordesley Abbey in North Worcestershire, where Northwood entered as a novice in 1386; the Northwood miscellany contains some twenty English works of vernacular devotion, several in common with Vernon. Thorlac Turville-Petre (1990) has drawn attention to shared material in Vernon and in the 'Clopton manuscript,' which was split into three sections when sold by the recusant Giffard family in 1937 (now MSS Washington DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, V.b.236; Princeton, University Library, Taylor 11; and London, University Library, V.17; see further Perry 2007). And Wendy Scase has described many other analogues; for instance, Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg 1.1, a multilingual collection which dates from c. 1330, is an early instance of what Scase calls "the collective vernacular tradition" (2013, 256; see also Scase 2013, 254-255 for further examples).

Because of the work of numerous researchers over many years it is possible to reconstruct the kind of folk who engaged with these books. Some, as in the case of Northwood's miscellany, were clearly professed religious; another example, for instance, is Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 155, which contains the C-version of *LFMB*, and is inscribed on folio 2v as follows:

Liber beate Marie de Rieualle  
ex procuracione domini Willelmi  
Spenser. Abbatis eiusdem.

The ex libris inscription 'Liber ... Rieualle' is clear evidence that the manuscript was at the powerful Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx, in the North Riding of Yorkshire (Ker 1964, 149); William Spenser resigned as abbot in 1448. Many monasteries owned such books alongside the substantial holdings in Latin that made up the more prestigious elements of their libraries. Other volumes are likely to have emerged—they were certainly read—in parochial settings, possibly owned by local priests whose lives and careers up to and beyond the Reformation might be exemplified, from a very different part of the country, by those of the now well-known Exmoor priest Sir Christopher Trychay of Morebath.<sup>18</sup>

However, there is substantial evidence that devotional miscellanies had a wide circulation in lay circles. Volumes owned by laypersons include 'common profit' books designed for sharing vernacular works of devotion, as represented in the fifteenth century by the London merchant John Colop's collection of mystical and Lollard texts (now Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.6.31) (see Scase 1992), or the major collection of devotional works in English assembled, as a kind of lending

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<sup>18</sup> See Duffy (2001).



library, in London's Guildhall.<sup>19</sup> And John Paston II, in his well-known autograph 'list of books,' included the following entry (the right-hand side of the list, originally a small paper scroll, has been damaged by damp):

A reede boke þat Percyvall Robsart gaff m<...>  
off the Medis of þe Masse, þe Lamentacion <...>  
off Chylde Ypotis, A Preyer to þe Vernycle <...>  
callyd The Abbeye off þe Holy Gooste <...><sup>20</sup>

The precise manuscript referred to as *A reede boke* has not yet been identified, but the texts listed capture something of the imaginative world to be found in most of these devotional miscellanies. *Ypotis* is a dialogue between a 'wise child' and the Emperor Hadrian on various matters of morality and belief, while *The Abbey of the Holy Ghost* was a widely circulated allegorical prose tract addressed to the laity.<sup>21</sup> And *the Medis of þe Masse* seems likely to be *The Manner and Mede of the Mass*.

### 3. ON READERS AND LISTENERS

We know, then, a lot about the contents of these manuscripts, how they circulated and who owned them. However, an area where research is still developing is to do with what those who encountered such texts did with them, and the kind of reading to which such books were subject is illustrated by Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional A.268, which also contains *The Manner and Mede of the Masse*. This book is now a composite volume, once owned by the great antiquarian and editor Bishop Thomas Percy (1729-1811) but sold by his estate to the Bodleian in 1884; part C of the current manuscript contains the text in question. The language of the hand responsible for this part of the manuscript has been located to Lancashire by *LALME*. The poem is preceded by an English text known by the Latin title *Speculum huius vite*, an abridged and altered version of the Middle English *Prick of Conscience*; it is followed by "All myzty god þat all has wrozt," a sequence of invocations to the Creator. Both works are known in other manuscripts.<sup>22</sup> Part C of A.268 is clearly conceived of as a work for prayerful engagement involving careful attention to textual detail; the *Speculum huius vite* is accompanied by a complex set of marginal annotations identifying references in the text, including Arabic numbers to indicate textual enumerations, i.e., of the ten commandments (folios 120v-121r). Such careful

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<sup>19</sup> For details of an ongoing project on this material, see <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/whittingtonsgift/>, last accessed 25 July 2022.

<sup>20</sup> Davis (1971, 517), after London, British Library, MS 43491, folio 26r.

<sup>21</sup> See Boffey (2003).

<sup>22</sup> According to *DIMEV*, which cites the two texts as items 788 and 436 respectively; 788 appears also in Dublin, Trinity College, MS 155 and 436 in London, British Library, MSS Cotton Caligula A.ii and Egerton 2810. See <https://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=788#wit-788-1> and <https://www.dimev.net/record.php?recID=436>, both last consulted 25 July 2022.

marking implies considerable rumination on the part of the manuscript's user or users, presumably to be followed by learning and inwardly digesting.<sup>23</sup>

And similar attention to textual detail can be observed in another manuscript containing the poem, viz., New Haven, Yale University, MS Beinecke Library 317, a book dated to around 1500 and associated with the Bridgettines of Syon Abbey and the Charterhouse at Sheen, on the other side of the river Thames (see Miles 2021). As was flagged in the list above, the Beinecke manuscript contains two works on the mass, and indeed text (9) is the first substantial work in the book, occupying folios 1v-3v. This work—described in the library catalogue as “The thirty-four virtues of the mass,”<sup>24</sup> is accompanied by Roman numerals in the margin to identify each virtue, and is followed by a prose commentary (“Yette moreovire vnto the confirmacyoun of thise vertues aforeseid”). Similarly, *The Manner and Mede of the Mass*, which appears on folios 22r-27v, is immediately followed by a prose work “yn confirmacyioun of the medys and merytes of theym that deuoutly here their masse.” That the book was read with care is indicated by an anxious addition, by a later hand, on folio 5r:

This book to hym that lovyth god and the helth of his owen soule is bettyre than eny erthly tresoure. And so wolle he say that redyth or heryth hit. ffor with out the knowlych of the matere that is wryten in this booke/ no man may fle evyll and do wele. the which is don for love or drede. or payne or ioye. vt patebit.<sup>25</sup>

This additional statement in the Beinecke manuscript is interesting in several ways. One obvious thing to note is its reference to “the helth of [the reader’s] owen soule,” which echoes Vernon’s *soulehele*, and suggests that the book had a comparable devotional function; but we might also note the reference to the person “that redyth or heryth hit.” ‘Cultural mapping,’ after all, is not simply a matter of geography,

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<sup>23</sup> We might recall Cranmer’s famous phraseology in the *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)*, in his Collect for the second Sunday in Advent: “Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ” (1662 version, cited in Cummings 2011, 272). We might note—as a prefiguration of the discussion in the remainder of this paper—the reference not only to reading but also to hearing. As has often been said, the *BCP*, although in some ways a marked break from the past was in others a culmination of tendencies already to be noted in late medieval textual culture; see for instance Cummings (2011, xvi).

<sup>24</sup> Expanded therefore from what seems to be the original thirty. See the catalogue entry, cited on note 3 above.

<sup>25</sup> This passage was then struck out by a later scribe and the statement added: “Beware of fals englysshe.” It is a puzzling annotation. Laura Saetveit Miles has suggested—plausibly to my mind—that “[p]erhaps this was a faithful monastic reader protecting his pre-Reformation book in a post-Reformation climate by making a somewhat perfunctory gesture of bringing it in line with Protestant protocols” (2021, 14). Miles’s alternative suggestion that the note “expresses the reader’s scepticism of English as an appropriate language” for the life of St Jerome, here being copied, seems to me less convincing, given the substantial amount of English covering sensitive matters such as the liturgy that has not attracted reservation.



and the texts discussed above need to be seen in terms of the social setting in which their readers—and audiences—encountered them; and it is with such matters that we might conclude this paper.

It seems certain from the careful annotation—both of which must have been developed and/or designed primarily for visual encounter—that such books were read privately. However, the expression ‘private reading’ disguises many different ways of engaging with writing. The evidence of such passages as that appended to the Beinecke manuscript is that such books were deployed for devotional reading in pious households, which could include not only the kind of private reading that the marginal apparatus suggests but also listening, either by an individual or collectively by a group. It seems that there was at this time a great variety of encounters with texts, extending from solitary perusal in silence—which seems to have been a comparatively rare thing, largely undertaken by the professionally literate such as professed religious—to more sociable, perhaps familial or household events, prefiguring the ‘social reading’ characteristic of much later periods (see, e.g., Williams 2017). We are reminded that the late medieval period saw the emergence not only of ‘literate cults’ such as that of the Holy Name,<sup>26</sup> but also of what has been referred to as a ‘literate environment,’<sup>27</sup> in which books were prototypically a resource for communal, often household reading; some would commonly listen, while others would read aloud. It is setting that would have, incidentally, had its attractions for some pious Victorian households, gathered around a *paterfamilias*.

Numerous accounts of such settings survive. We know, for instance, that devotional reading at mealtimes was a family activity encouraged in the Beauchamp circle:

Let the book be brought to the table as readily as the bread. And lest the tongue speak vain or hurtful things, let there be reading, now by one, now by another, and by your children as soon as they can read [...]. Expound something in the vernacular which may edify your wife and others.<sup>28</sup>

Such behaviour was clearly possible in humbler households than Throckmorton’s or Beauchamp’s. Other examples include the career of Margery Kempe (c.1378–after 1438), who, according to the autobiography probably dictated to her son (see Sobecki 2015), listened to English works of devotion read to her by a priest. Yet others include the suspected heretic Joan Baker, who was quoted, in the early sixteenth century, as saying that “she cold here a better sermond at home in hur howse than any doctor or prist colde make at Powlis crosse or any other place”; Baker seems to be referring to a communal experience (cited in Hudson 1996,

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<sup>26</sup> See Aveling (2016).

<sup>27</sup> Fox (2000), *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted by Perry (2007, 156), who states that the document in which this passage occurs was probably written for John Throckmorton, head of council for Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (1382–1489).





132). Bishop Reginald Pecock (d. in or after 1459), who undertook a programme of vernacular composition to “counter the spread of heterodox ideas in Lollard books” (*ODNB*), saw the reading and rereading of such texts as permitting “the layman to memorize a fixed set of words which he could then repeat to others without distorting the information” (Spencer 1993, 41); Pecock himself refers—albeit as devotional practices less effective than the contemplation of images—to “the hearing of other men’s reading, or [...] hearing of his own reading,” thus “assum[ing] the *speaking* of books” (Aston 1984, 114, and references there cited; see also Swan 2010). In sum, we may have no tape-recordings from the Middle Ages, but indirectly we can re-create something of the sound-world in which their material remains originally existed.

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# THE FIVE WITS IN ENGLISH MEDICAL LITERATURE, 1375-1600

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## ABSTRACT

The five wits were an important component of culture in the Middle Ages, and passages dealing with the bodily wits occur frequently in early vernacular medical literature (1375-1600). Our aim is to relate these texts to their readers to detect how the commonplace was presented to various audiences. We shall apply two lines of research. First, we shall discuss the linguistic realizations with qualitative discourse analysis. The data come from two digital corpora, *Middle English Medical Texts* (Taavitsainen, Pahta and Mäkinen 2005) and *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (Taavitsainen et al. 2010), compiled from edited versions. The scope of these passages is wide, ranging from theoretical treatises of natural philosophy and surgery to compendia and practical adaptations in recipes and remedybooks. Second, we provide case studies on the underlying manuscript reality by philological methods and study the same or related passages in some Cambridge and British Library manuscripts. The analysis showcases the importance of going back to the versions that reached the medieval audiences for the dissemination of medical knowledge in the early periods.

**KEYWORDS:** medieval medicine, dissemination of knowledge, corpora, theory, practice, manuscripts, editions.

## LOS CINCO SENTIDOS EN LA LITERATURA MÉDICA INGLESA, 1375-1600

## RESUMEN

Los cinco sentidos fueron un importante componente de la cultura en la Edad Media, y los fragmentos centrados en los sentidos corporales aparecen con frecuencia en la literatura médica vernácula temprana (1375-1600). Nuestro objetivo es relacionar estos textos con sus lectores/as para detectar cómo se presentaba lo común a diversas audiencias. Aplicaremos dos líneas de investigación. En primer lugar, abordaremos las realizaciones lingüísticas a través de un análisis del discurso cualitativo. Los datos provienen de dos corpus digitales, *Middle English Medical Texts* (Taavitsainen, Pahta y Mäkinen 2005) y *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (Taavitsainen et al. 2010), compilados a partir de versiones editadas. El alcance de estos pasajes es amplio, abarcando desde tratados teóricos de filosofía natural y cirugía hasta compendios y adaptaciones prácticas en recetas y libros de remedios. En segundo lugar, proporcionaremos estudios de casos sobre la realidad subyacente del manuscrito mediante métodos filológicos y estudiaremos los mismos pasajes, o relacionados, en algunos manuscritos de la Biblioteca Británica y de Cambridge. El análisis pone de manifiesto la importancia de remontarse a las versiones que llegaban al público medieval para la difusión del saber médico en épocas tempranas.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** medicina medieval, difusión del conocimiento, corpus, teoría, práctica, manuscritos, ediciones.

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## 1. AIM AND APPROACH: AN INTRODUCTION

The five senses belonged to the shared common ground in Western medicine. The aim of this article is to show how a medieval scientific doctrine deriving from classical medicine and philosophy became a commonplace in vernacular medical literature and how it was adapted to the needs and capacities of different audiences. We apply the methods of qualitative discourse analysis and philological manuscript study, and discuss passages dealing with the five senses in late medieval medical writing and in the transition period to early modern up to 1600. It is well known that modern scientific discourse varies according to its target audience (Meyers 1992; Swales 1990; Hyland 2005; etc.), but the insight that texts vary in the same way in the earlier periods is more recent (see, e.g., Taavitsainen 2009 [for early modern] and Benati 2022 [for medieval surgical texts]).

Our approach is pragmatic: texts are viewed as communication between authors and their audiences, displaying dissemination of scientific knowledge in its various forms (see, e.g., Taavitsainen 2017). The leading question from the historical pragmatic angle can be formulated as follows: Are there differences in style, contents and applications in the text passages dealing with the five wits that were targeted, on the one hand, at learned readers and, on the other hand, at heterogeneous lay audiences? We can even speculate whether knowledge of the five senses reached the semiliterate or illiterate people via oral delivery. It would also be interesting to achieve an understanding of how common cultural sets, such as the present scientific doctrine, were understood and acted upon (Chartier 1995, 89; Taavitsainen 2005, 180). It is, however, difficult to find clues, but we examined physical features of manuscripts with possible indications of past practices for this end.

## 2. THE FIVE SENSES IN MEDICAL LITERATURE

One of the commonplaces constantly repeated in medieval and early modern medical writing deals with the five senses. The prevailing medical tradition begins with Aristotle's *De anima* and *De sensu*, and with Galen, and it was elaborated by Arab scientists (Sears 1993, 23-25; Woolgar 2006, 19). Lists of the five 'outer wits' are common (see Lewis 1964, 161-165), related to the constituents of the 'inner wits,' which had their locations in the brain (Heller-Roazen 2008, 37; Carrillo Linares 2006, 249). They acted as links between man's intellect and the external world (Woolgar 2006, 19). The physical or the outer wits feature prominently in medical literature, whereas the spiritual or inner wits, also referred to as the 'myndly virtues,' typically belong to devotional literature, with only sporadic mentions in medical texts.

(1) **And so both the v wittes þat is to sey heryng seyng smellyng tastyng and felyng.** And so be the iij myndly virtues that is to sey ymaginatyf discretyf and memoratyf. (*MEMT, Gouvernayle of healthe*, 11v, fifteenth century) (Emphasis in all examples ours).



‘And so are the five wits, that is to say hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling. And so are the three virtues of the mind, that is to say imagination, reason and memory.’ (Translations by Taavitsainen, unless otherwise indicated)

The five wits had a place in the medieval world view through correspondences that encompassed all aspects of life. According to the medieval outlook, man was the microcosm, the centrepiece of the universe, and the influences of the macrocosm were reflected in him (Burrow 1986, 12). The five wits were integrated into this holistic system with the four seasons, the four elements, the four temperaments, the seven arts, the seven deadly sins, the seven ages of man, and the list could be extended to nines and twelves. Other related commonplaces were the *homo signorum* (‘zodiac man’) doctrine. The prevailing thought style of the medieval period was scholasticism, according to which all knowledge was contained in ancient books and the aim of scholarship was to rediscover the uncorrupted wisdom once known by Adam (Thomas 1971, 511; see below). An absolute reliance on authorities is expressed with frequent references to ancient philosophers and scientists.

The transition to the early modern period began at the end of the fifteenth century: the first printing press was set up in England in 1476, new continents were discovered in 1492, and two important books came out in 1543 that were to revolutionise scientific thinking.<sup>1</sup> Scientific knowledge in Europe at the dawn of the new era was highly mediated through longstanding textual traditions, but news from the widening world proved traditional inventories of nature inadequate, and the new instruments of the seventeenth century gave greater accuracy to observation by stretching the limits of unassisted human senses (Shapin 1996, 19). The firm belief in authorities broke down gradually, and observation as the predilect mode of knowing started to gain ground. The discovery of the new continents was instrumental as new observations showed how erroneous the descriptions of the nature had been, or as Walter Bailey (1588, A5r) put it “hath made manifest to vs, how greatly the old authors [...] were deceiued.”

### 3. DATA AND METHOD

To find answers to our research questions, we used two electronic corpora with a broad range of texts: *Middle English Medical Texts (MEMT)* (Taavitsainen, Pahta and Mäkinen 2005) and *Early Modern English Medical Texts (EMEMT)* (Taavitsainen et al. 2010). The medical corpora are designed to contain representative samplings of medical writing. For this purpose, we relied on medical historians’ expertise and consulted surveys of the relevant literature (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1997; Taavitsainen, Pahta and Mäkinen 2006; Pahta and Taavitsainen 2010, 4-6).

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<sup>1</sup> Copernicus, *De revolutionibus orbium caelesticum*, and Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica*.



*MEMT* comprises about half a million words primarily of editions of medical treatises. The scope is wide, from texts of highest learning to practical health guides and remedybooks written for general and heterogeneous lay audiences. Texts are grouped into three categories: specialised treatises, surgical tracts and remedybooks. *EMEMT* begins where *MEMT* ends (1500), and its finishing point was set to 1700.<sup>2</sup> It contains about two million words in some 230 texts printed in the two centuries, also ranging from theoretical treatises rooted in academic traditions to popularised and utilitarian texts. *EMEMT* texts are grouped into six categories: general treatises and textbooks; treatises on specific topics; recipe collections and *materia medica*; regimens and health guides; surgical treatises; the *Philosophical Transactions* (1665-) forms a category of its own. The two corpora were used for locating passages relating to the five wits up to 1600 with the help of lexical searches.<sup>3</sup> The names of the senses were an obvious point of departure, but other lexical items, such as the sense organs, were checked as well. Spelling variation was taken into consideration as we consulted *MEMT* wordlists and *EMEMT* normalised text files,<sup>4</sup> not to miss unusual spellings or rare words. The method of the empirical study is qualitative discourse analysis complemented by philological assessment of some Cambridge and London manuscripts.

#### 4. THE FIVE WITS IN EARLY VERNACULAR MEDICAL LITERATURE

In our assessment, we shall proceed according to the medieval traditions of writing and continue to the early modern period in the chronological order. We begin with learned surgical treatises, then deal with specialised texts and compendia, proceed to health guides, remedies and recipes, and we shall also discuss verse texts at the end of the section.

##### 4.1. SURGICAL TEXTS

Surgical texts were at the most learned end of vernacular writing in the late medieval period. Most texts in this category contain discussions of surgery, but some, like Guy de Chauliac's texts, are sophisticated treatises with descriptions of the human anatomy. Chauliac wrote in Latin for academic audiences, but when his works were translated into Middle English and other vernaculars in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, they lost their academic status. A passage

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<sup>2</sup> For this decision, we considered changes in medical thought, institutional developments, as well as the final breakthrough of the vernacular. Continuation to these two corpora is provided by *Late Modern English Medical Texts* (see Taavitsainen and Hiltunen 2019).

<sup>3</sup> The first scientific journal, however, remains outside the present timeline.

<sup>4</sup> Otherwise we used the versions with original spellings.





from an anatomical treatise begins with a definition of the eyes and proceeds to a quotation from Galen, the most frequently cited ancient authority in medical literature (Taavitsainen and Pahta 1998; Pahta et al. 2016). Example 2 indicates a precise text source; such exact references are found in learned treatises only. Deontic modality is a typical feature, expressed in scholastic phrases like *It byhouep* and *forwhi* (see example 5 and Taavitsainen and Schneider 2019):

(2) The eyzen beep the instrumentis of sight, and þai beep sette wiþynne þe papþe þe whiche is a parte of þe coronal and of þe bones of þe temples. Whoos bygynnyng **Galien telleþ so in 10 De Vtilitate, capitulo finali: It byhouep** þe synowes opitikes to be persed þat þere were the waie of þe spirite and to procede fro two parties, and þat þay beep oned wiþynne þe brayne panne. (*MEMT*, Chauliac, *Cyrurgie*, 42-43) ‘The eyes are the instruments of sight and they are set in the pathway which is part of the skull and the bones of the temples. Galen tells about their origin in 10 *De utilitate*, final section: it is necessary for the optical sinews to be pierced so that there is a way for the spirit to proceed from two parts so that they be joined to one within the brain.’

It is not known who the audience of the Middle English versions were, but the manuscripts that survive are carefully executed large-size volumes that show no signs of wear. They are likely to have been valuable display objects not intended for use (see Taavitsainen 2004a).

Example 3 below deals with hearing. It contains an anatomical description with references to all three layers of medieval medical knowledge: ancient wisdom (Galen), Arab learning (Avicenna) and contemporary surgery (Lanfrank). Genre features of top scholastic research are present as the conflicting opinions of authorities are quoted according to the commentary tradition, overlapping with compilations in this period (Taavitsainen 2004b).

(3) The full grustly eeres beþ ordeyned to herynge, vpon þe stony bone. To þe whiche eeres by croked hooles of þe forseide bone comen pores or synowes of þe fifte payre of synowes of þe brayne, in þe whiche the heryng is. And vnder þe eeres ben glandulouse flesshes þe whiche beþ þe purgyng places of þe brayne. Nyh þe whiche þe veynes passen þe whiche, as **Lamfranque saip**, beren a partie of þe mater of sparne to þe gendryng stones, þe [f. 14vb] whiche if þay be kutte, þe gendryng is lost. **Of þe whiche Galien holdeþ þe contrarie, as Auicen reherseþ in þe book of blood laste.** (*MEMT*, Chauliac, *Cyrurgie*, 44) ‘The cartilaginous ears are ordained for hearing and set upon the hard bone. To these ears by their crooked holes of the above-mentioned bone come pores or sinews of the fifth pair of sinews of the brain where hearing is situated. And under the ears is granulous flesh, which is the purging places of the brain. The veins pass near it which, as Lanfrank says, carry part of the sperm to the testicles. If they are cut the ability to procreate is lost. Of this Galen holds a contrary opinion, as Avicenna rehearses in the book of bloodletting.’

Old received knowledge was repeated in surgical books of the early modern period. With its lists of the five senses, Thomas Vicary’s *A Profitable Treatise of the*





*Anatomie of Mans Body* (1577) is a typical witness of the transmission of scientific ideas in the sixteenth century. It is based on medieval sources. Its anatomical description of the brain as the seat of the senses repeats the doctrine as it was discussed in the earlier literature.

(4) [...] in euery parte God hath ordeyned and set singular and seuerall vertues, as thus: First, in the foremost Ventrikle God hath founded and set **the common Wittes, otherwise called the fyue Wittes, as Hearing, Seeing, Feeling, Smelling, and tasting.** And also there is in one part of this Ventrikle, the vertue that is called Fantasie, and he taketh al the formes or ordinaunces that be disposed of **the fyue wittes**, after the meaning of sensible thinges: (*EMEMT*, Vicary 1577, 30-31)

#### 4.2. SPECIALISED TREATISES

The category of specialised treatises is wide, encompassing both learned and more popular texts, as the texts were selected based on their topic. The authors of medical texts in this category were mostly learned doctors known by name, and the intended audience was professional practitioners.

Descriptions of various correspondences within the holistic system of the universe with man as its centrepiece are common in specialised treatises. Example 5 from *De humana natura* relates the five senses to the nine emotions and the four humours. The text is a theoretical treatise of natural philosophy of unknown origin, ascribed to various authors, including Galen, Hippocrates and Constantinus Africanus. The first section of the treatise contains passages on the organs of the five senses. The eyes are treated more fully, but in general the descriptions are somewhat vague as the translator had difficulties in finding vernacular expressions for Latin notions (see Carrillo Linares 2006, 249-252). The passage below contains several features typical of learned writing: the title is in Latin, *forsoth* ('truly') is a core phrase of scholastic style that occurs frequently in learned writing and contributes to the tone of absolute reliance on the doctrine. The apposition beginning with *that is to say* is frequent in explication and definitions:

(5) *de sensibus animalibus*

Bi beastes,<sup>5</sup> **that is to say**, sciences, a body vsed to lustis 9 thynges, to the brayne to hym enlarged, **that is to say**, dilectacioun, haate, joy, sorowe, hardynes, dreede, shame, wrath, woodnes, **fforwhi bi sight, smellyng, feelyng, heryng, tastyng**, lovith, or haatith, joyeth or sorowith, dar or dredith, shameth, wrathith or woodith. **Fforsoth**, whan any man, bi any of thiese 5, to the love of any other be areised, it smytith the hert. Of whiche smytyng, proceden spirites hoote and

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<sup>5</sup> A mistranslation for Latin *animalibus*; Tavormina's interpretation 'Pertaining to the soul' is given in the edition (2006, 776).

drye, wherof oon is thynner and weiker whiche drawith the brayne. (*MEMT, De humana natura*, 78-79)

‘Pertaining to the soul, that is to say, sciences, a body has 9 emotions that enlarge the brain, that is to say, delight, hatred, joy, sorrow, hardness, dread, shame, wrath, madness, whereby by sight, smelling, feeling, hearing, tasting, man loves or hates, rejoices or grieves, is ashamed, angry or mad. Truly, when a man by any of these 5, be raised to the love of another, it smites the heart. Of which spreading proceed hot and dry spirits, whereof one is thinner and weaker which draws to the brain.’

The text survives in a unique late fifteenth-century copy in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.14.52, ff. 40v-44r (see the description by Pahta 2006). The manuscript contains several texts that pertain to the highest level of medical knowledge in the Middle Ages. It broadens the scope of vernacularised texts as, e.g., the Hippocratic commentary text shows an early attempt to transfer scholastic science into Middle English (see Tavormina 2006 and Taavitsainen 2018, 101-103).

A specialised treatise on ophthalmology by Benvenutus Grassus deals with the various eye diseases, according to the prevailing humoral theory, attributing them to an imbalance “of one or another of the four humours” (Eldredge 1996, 6).<sup>6</sup> The text is a translation from Latin and the shortness of the tradition of writing science in the vernacular shows in the vacillation over pronouns.<sup>7</sup> The following passage deals with the eye colour and its significance:

(6) But þei þat haue humours situat or set nygh besyde the tonnycles haue **eyen varied of diuers colours**, and hangyn mych yn whitenesse and hir syght is not right goode neþer yn yowgth nor age. Ffor yn þo maner of eyon haue bendyng humors of teris more þan yn oþer; ffor when the uisible spirite descendyng down by the holow synews fynde aboute the tonycle fresche habundance and plente of corupte humors, þei ben the sunner disgregat and dyssolued from the humors. Also ys the sight the feblere yn them þan yn þo that haue þer eyon meueablye blake. (*MEMT, Benvenutus Grassus*, 51)

‘But they that have humours placed or set near the tunics have eyes of diverse colours and hang much in whiteness and their sight is not very good either in youth or in old age. Because such eyes have plenty of tears, more than others. For when the visible spirit descending down by the hollow sinews finds fresh abundance and plenty of corrupt humours in the tunic, they are the sooner shedding tears and dissolved from the humours. Also the sight is feebler in them than in those who have their eyes in a lighter shade of black.’

The basic idea became expressed with extended metaphors in figurative language in Latin: the five senses were “messengers” (Cicero), the organs “doors” (Lucretius) with eyes as “windows” (Lactantius), and the head as a “castle” or “citadel”

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<sup>6</sup> Eldredge’s edition is based on manuscripts from the Bodleian, British and Glasgow University Libraries.

<sup>7</sup> E.g., sometimes the author is referred to with the third person “he,” sometimes with the first person “I” as in the original text.



(Plato; see Vinge 1975, 29-39). The imagery was enriched by scriptural additions of man as “a house,” reaching its peak of applications in the sixteenth century (Vinge 1975, 63). The images enter vernacular English medical writing with a slight delay as witnessed by the extract in example 7 from 1599.<sup>8</sup>

(7) [I]t is most euident that the **soule is shut vp within the bodie**, as it were **in a darke dungeon**, and that it cannot discourse, neither yet comprehend any thing without the helpe of the sences, which are as **the obedient seruants and faithfull messengers** of the same: it was needfull to place the instruments of the sences very neere vnto **the seate of reason**, and round about **her royal pallace**. Now **the sences** which we call externall **are onely fīue; the sight, the hearing, the smelling, the taste and handling**, of which altogether dependeth our knowledge, and nothing (as saith the Philosopher) can **enter** into the vnderstanding part of our minde, except it **passe through one of these fīue doores**. (*EMEMT*, Laurentius, *Preservation of sight* 1599, 10)

The scale extends to more heterogeneous audiences in anonymous texts in the pseudo-Aristotelian tradition intended for a wide lay audience. The relation of body and soul, which first appears in the learned treatise *De humana natura*, finds its way into the most popular text of medical writing *Aristotle's Masterpiece*. It enjoyed best-seller status for long, reprinted in the same form even in the seventeenth century. It refers to Biblical wisdom of Salomon's proverbs in order to convince its readers of the truth of the statements:

(8) It has caused many Disputes amongst the Learned, especially Philosophers, in **what part of the Body the Soul chuseth to reside**: and some have given their opinion, that its resident is in the middle of the Heart, and from thence communicates it self to every part; which **Solomon, in the Fourth of his Proverbs**, seems to assert, when he says, *Keep thy Heart with all thy diligence, because Life proceedeth therefrom*: but many curious Physicians ... do give it as their Opinion, that **its chief Seat is in the Brain, from whence proceed the Senses, Faculties, and Actions, diffusing the operations of the Soul through all parts of the Body**, [...] if stopped they become **Apoplectick**; for there must necessarily be some ways through which the Spirits animal and vital may have intercourse, and convey native heat from the Soul. For although the Soul is said to reside in one place, it operates in every part, exercising every Member which are the Souls Instruments, by which she manifesteth her pow'r: (*EMEMT*, *Aristotle's Masterpiece* 1684, 40-41)

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<sup>8</sup> A full allegorical presentation is found in Phineas Fletcher's *The Purple Island* from 1633.



Medicine was both a theoretical and a practical discipline and both sides are combined in a text by Gilbertus Anglicus. His original compilation in Latin, called *Compendium medicinae*, dates from c. 1240 and the vernacular versions were produced a couple of centuries later. Gilbertus was a university-educated scholar who based his work on classical writings from Salerno and Montpellier. He was also one of the first to consult new Latin translations of Arab texts (Getz 1998, 3). The following passage deals with the etiology of palsy where the sense of feeling is either lost or impaired (cf. above). According to the medieval theory, corrupt humours were the cause.

(9) Apoplexie is a sekenes þat comþ of stopping of þe principal placis þat ben in a mannes brayn þrow sum corrupte humour. And **þis sikenes bynemet a mannes wit** and his felyng for þe tyme and al maner meving wipouteforþe, saaf only breþing. Ther ben þre kyndes of þis sikenes, a more, and a lasse, and a mene bitwene hem two. The more sleep a man þe first day, for it is incurable. The meen sleep a man withyn þre daies, or ellis turneþ into a palesie; þe lasse withyn vii daies, or turneþ into palasie. And **þis sikenes comþ of moche flewme or of moche corrup blode þat filliþ þe principal places of a mannes brayn**. And if it be in so grete plente þat it filliþ al þe brayn, þen **it makeþ a man to leese his wittis as his syzte, his hering, his tasting, his smelling**, and his meving also. Þis is þe more apoplexie. (*MEMT*, Gilbertus Anglicus, *Compendium medicinae*, 27-28)

‘Apoplexy is a sickness that comes from obstruction of the principal places in a man’s brain by some corrupt humour. And this sickness takes a man’s wit and his feeling for the time and all movements apart from breathing. There are three kinds of this sickness, more, less or the mean between the two. The most vigorous kind kills a man in the first day, because it is incurable. The middle kind kills a man in three days or otherwise it turns into palsy; the lesser kind within 7 days or it turns into palsy. And this sickness is caused by much phlegm or much corrupt blood that fills the principal places of a man’s brain. And if it is so plentiful that it fills all the brain, then it makes a man lose his senses such as his sight, his hearing, his taste, his smell, and also his movement. This is the severe apoplexy.’

This Gilbertus version in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS TCC O.9.37 proved worth further examination from the viewpoint of textual transmission, as it records a detailed description of the symptoms of apoplexy in women as opposed to men (f. 42v). The focus on women is evident from two rubrics, missing from the copy edited by Getz, which specify that these symptoms apply to women:

(10) In wommen that been ystoppit. [T]he fallynge is with myche ache from the navill donwarde and with myche hevynese in her leggis by for that þei falleth downe. And thei streynen her wombe with her armys and bowith her hede to her knees and gryntith with her tethe for the grete ache þat þei haun & whan þei fall downe summe betyn þe erthe with her hondis and here fete and summe ligen still as þou3 they were dede and al her body is full colde and summe risen vp sone



and summe ligen in her accesse a daye or tweyne. (Transcription and translation by Honkapohja)

‘In women who have been obstructed, the fit causes much ache from the navel downwards and much heaviness in their legs before they fall down. And the patients stretch their womb with their arms and bow their heads to their knees and grind with their teeth, because of the great pain that they are in. When they fall down, they sometimes beat the earth with their hands and feet. Some lie still as if they were dead. All their body is very cold. Some rise up soon and some lie in their illness for a day or two.’

The above passage has value as an early vernacular witness of textual adaptation for the benefit of women’s treatment as it could help a doctor recognise the situation (cf. Whitt [2022, 180-181] about medieval obstetric passages in English). Such additions enhance the practical value of the text. Advice for medication is also included in the form of a short and standardised recipe for pills with, e.g., imperative forms: “**Take** of aloes and of euforbe iliche myche and **medill** hem with þe iuis of leke and **make** pillules” [‘Take equal amounts of aloe and euphorbium and mix them with the juice of leek and make pills’]. It is followed by longer explanations of two medical concoctions (f. 43v), “blake sope” and “white sope” with their ingredients and uses (according to the *MED*, ‘sope’ can refer to soap, whitening ointment or powder). The advice is detailed and grounded on contemporary beliefs of appropriate times and the “like favours like” principle: “it shall be made after arid somer in the caniculer dayes by hete of the sonne with owten yre and these sopes been gode for brennyng eiper scalding” [‘it shall be made after a dry summer in the dog days by the heat of the sun without iron. These mixtures are good for injuries caused by fire or hot liquid’]. The uses of these ointments included medical applications, but they also had beautifying effects: “they ben gode also for scabbis and openeth the poris of the skyn and makeþ the skynne white and for many oþer thinges thei ben full profitable” [‘they are also good for skin diseases and open the pores of the skin and make the skin white and they are very beneficial for many other things’]. This addition would have been useful for domestic households.

The greater emphasis on medical treatments directed at women also shows in texts included elsewhere in the manuscript. The manuscript includes *The Sekenesse of Wymmen* later in the codex (ff. 126r-128v). This tract was the most widely circulated gynaecological text in late-medieval England. It consists of “fifteen of the twenty gynecological and obstetrical chapters from Gilbertus Anglicus’ *Compendium medicinae*” (Green 1992, 73). Overall, the manuscript is a general medical compendium, which incorporates material explicitly concerned with childbirth and other gynaecological matters. The likely audience was still male practitioners (cf. Green 1992, 58-63).

The codex itself, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS TCCO.9.37, is of medium to high grade, with gilded initials on ff. 31r and 36r. It measures 29.5 x 20.5 cm and contains thirty-four lines to a page. It is partly copied on paper and partly on parchment. Many medical manuscripts are plain and utilitarian in appearance, but the present one contains pen-flourished blue and red initials, which are simple



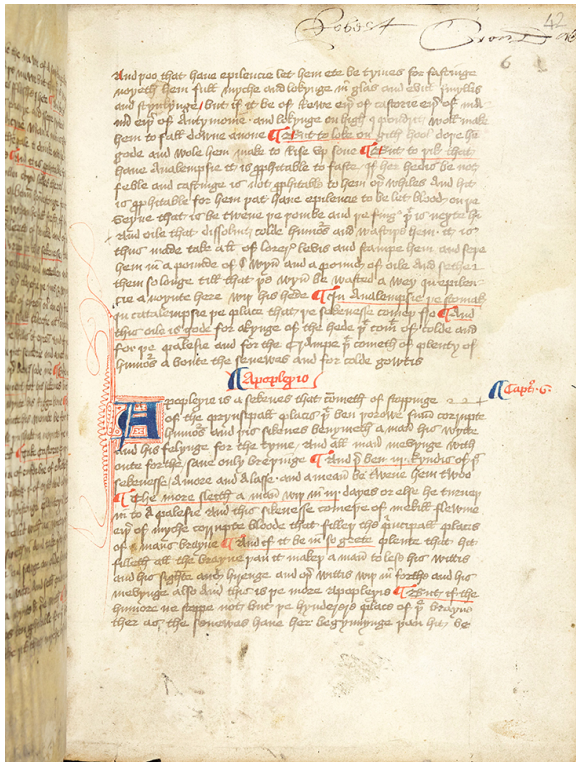


Figure 1. Gilbertus Anglicus, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS TCC O.9.37, f. 42r.  
 Reproduced with the kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

but functional and found across a large number of late medieval manuscripts (see Figure 1). The beginning of each chapter is indicated by marginal headings in Latin in red preceded by blue paraphs. Sections within each chapter are indicated by red paraphs and underlining. It is thus very much in the higher quality end of medical manuscripts, and interestingly enough shows a specific concern with recipes and medical advice directed for women both on the level of the codex and on the level of versions of texts included.

#### 4.4. MEDIEVAL ENCYCLOPAEDIA IN RHYMING COUPLETS: *SIDRAK AND BOKKUS*

The most popular end of the scale in this category can be found in a late medieval encyclopaedia in rhyming couplets. Its text form made the contents easy to memorise. Following a familiar text when read aloud provided entertainment to the audience who listened to its teaching (see Taavitsainen 2004c, 81-84). *Sidrak and Bokkus* is a pedagogical and philosophical dialogue between a heathen king (Sidrak) and a Christian philosopher (Bokkus) in an interactive form of questions





and answers, which also enhanced audience involvement. The work circulated widely in Europe, as several dozen manuscripts are extant in various languages (Burton 1998). The following extract deals with the learned subject matter of how the eye works, but it is rendered in much simpler terms than in the corresponding passages of theoretical texts (cf. Benvenutus text). The answer begins by quoting an “eternal truth”: “For ye may noþing 3eue outward / But it haue firste ytake inward” [‘For you cannot give anything out, unless it is first taken in’]. Such proverb-like sayings form typical features of popular texts.

(11) **‘Whan a man seeth a þing,** / Wheþer 3eueþ þe y3e out in seing  
Or it resceiueþ inward þerto / Þe shappe þat it seþ so?  
Noþing may come out owhere / But þere it 3ede in bifore,  
For ye may noþing 3eue outward / But it haue firste ytake inward.  
Perfore vndirstande aright / **Þre þinges goon to þe sight:**  
First **þe þing þat þou shalt see;** / Þe secounde þat it ycoloured be -  
For **alle of þinges is seen noþing** / But only þe colouryng;  
Þe þridde ben **beemes of þe sight** / Þat vpon þat þing shal alight  
Þat be seen shal. And after þis / The moisture þat in þe y3en is  
Draweþ to him þe shaping / And þe facioun of þat þing : (*MEMT, Sidrak and Bokkus*, 493)

‘When a man sees a thing, does the eye project outwards in seeing, or does it receive inward the shape that it sees? Nothing may come out anywhere without going in first, for you may give nothing outward if it is not taken in first. Therefore understand right away, three things belong to the sight: first the thing that you shall see, second that it is coloured, third that the beams of sight shall be cast upon the thing that will be seen. And after this the moisture that is in the eyes draws the shape and the fashion of that thing...’

The manuscript transmission of *Sidrak* is interestingly varied. Manuscripts can also give us clues on what their readership considered important. Figures 2 and 3 contain the quoted extract in London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 793 (included in *MEMT*) and the closely related London, British Library, MS Harley 4294, which is perhaps twenty years later (Burton 1998, lvi) and copied in what appears to be a trained hand, but in uneven lines without ruling. Interestingly, both contain the same three things related to sight, which have been numbered 1 to 3 in the margins by Arabic numerals. In Lansdowne, the relevant words are also underlined in red. The three things that are underlined are ‘the thing’ that you see, secondly its colour and thirdly the ‘beams’ of sight. This shows that points of emphasis that called attention to different aspects of the five senses were copied as a standard form of annotation in Type 1 versions of *Sidrak*.

Harley also contains evidence of *Sidrak*’s later use. The questions were annotated by Harley’s librarian, Humphrey Wanley, who also wrote “19 November 1725” in the top margin of f. 1r. According to Burton (1998), the comments usually “indicate the subject of the question, or a topic in the answer” (lvii). In the margin of the present question-answer pair, he noted: “If the eye iudge of ought befor it be receiued inward” (Figure 3). The comment shows engagement with medieval popular



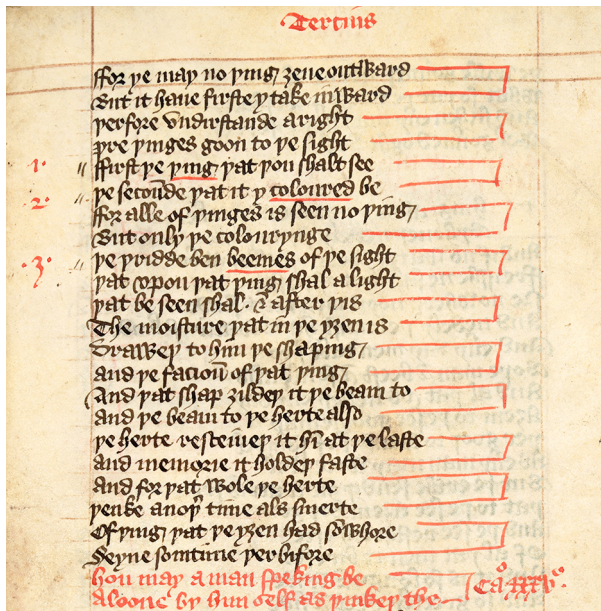


Figure 2. *Sidrak and Bokkus*; London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 793, f. 124r. Reproduced with the kind permission of the British Library.

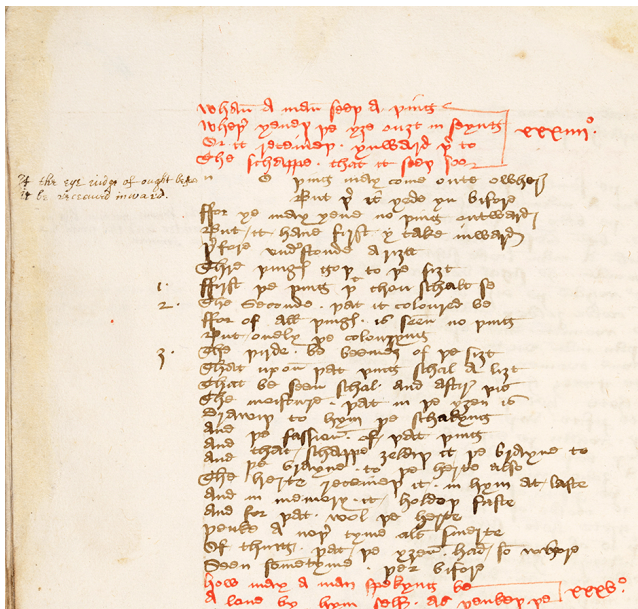


Figure 3. *Sidrak and Bokkus*; London, British Library, MS Harley 4294, f. 46v. Reproduced with the kind permission of the British Library





knowledge at a surprisingly late date. The annotation is made 200 years after Andreas Vesalius had published his major work on anatomy or fifty years after Isaac Newton had published his findings on the colour spectrum in the *Philosophical Transactions*. It is not certain from the comment(s), if the annotator was interested in *Sidrak* from an antiquarian point of view or as a genuine source of knowledge, although given Wanley's interest and expertise in palaeography and his work cataloguing the Harley collection, antiquarian interest seems more likely.

#### 4.5. HEALTH GUIDES

A fairly high number of vernacular health guides is extant from the fifteenth century. The *Gouernayle of health* (example 1 at the beginning) is extant in multiple manuscripts suggesting a wide circulation.

With at least nine different versions, the *secreta secretorum* tradition was even more popular. Allegedly it contains Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great, an attribution that enhances the value of the instruction. The passage below focuses on how to maintain health and strengthen the five senses:

(12) Than shalt thow froyte thy tethe and gomes with leues wele sauoured and hote and drye of nature, other with leues of grene trees of bitter nature or sovre. That helpeth and profiteth moch. [...] that openeth the closes of the brayn, and yeveth wexyng to the armes, maketh the nek fatte. It **clarefieth þe visage and the sight**, it strengtheth the 5 wittes, it shonneth and tarieth hoorenesse. After that, vse the best vngementis [...] Afterward sitte with nobles and estates, and speke with wise men, after the custume of kynges and of prynces. (*MEMT, Secrete of secretes*, 52)  
'Then you should anoint your teeth and gums with well savoured leaves, hot and dry of nature, or with leaves of green trees of bitter nature and sour of virtue. That helps and profits much ... that opens the obstructions of the brain and gives vigour to the arms, makes the neck fat. It clarifies the face and the sight, it strengthens the 5 wits, it prevents and postpones corruption. After that, use the best ointments ... Afterwards sit with nobles and men of high rank and speak with wise men, after the custom of kings and princes.'

The next excerpt is from an early printed health guide originally composed in the mid-sixteenth century. It contains lists of the spiritual wits as well as the bodily wits. The metaphor of the heart as 'the prince of organs,' is also of interest, as it shows that the metaphors were employed in more popular texts, too (cf. 4.4 above).

(13) *Ioh.* [...] I would bee glad to know the partes of mankinde, with a short description of his members.

*Hum.* Members be simple and also compound, [...] in the which **braine**, dwelleth the vertues of **imagination, fantasie, memorie, &c.** And these animall vertues, be placed as were heauenly aboue al the members, communicating their heauenly influences, down vnto the heart, as to **a prince, or chiefe ruler** within the body which giueth life to euery part therin. [...] Note also, that as there be noble sence giuen to the body, as **seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling.** (*EMEMT, Bullein, The Gouernement of Health*, London: Sims, 1595, 14-15)



#### 4.6. REMEDIES AND *MATERIA MEDICA*

Advice for preparing medicine for impaired senses is common in medieval remedy collections and household books. In most recipes the pattern is simple (see 4.3):

(14) **For bloody eyne:** chew mynt & lay lange to þi eghene Item: Chew betoyne, fastande, & it sall amend þi syght. (*MEMT*, Daniel, *Liber uricrisiarum*, 42)  
'For bloody eyes: chew mint and lay it on your eyes. Likewise: chew betony when fasting and it shall amend your sight.'

Relevant materials focus on practical applications of the underlying doctrine without further elaboration. The ailment is briefly mentioned as the title, perhaps for easy reference. The causes of the ailments are not mentioned as these texts were consulted for finding a cure, not to gain a deeper understanding of the problem.

#### 4.7. PRACTICAL VERSE

Rhyming couplets are favoured in practical verse for the benefit of the intended audience (see 4.4). The manuscript context of such short practical pieces seems haphazard. Recording them was likely to be guided by occasional empty spaces on folio pages rather than coherence of subject matter. The following herbal remedy gives simple advice for the preservation of sight and restoration of hearing, perhaps to be read aloud and learned by heart:

(15) It abreggyth heed werk, / And **þewyþ brythnesse to syth derke,**  
And ȝif it be falle to old or ȝing / **Newly to lesyn here heryng,**  
Jows of betonye in hys ere do leyn / And **it bryngyþ ye herynge ageyn;** (*MEMT*,  
*A tretys of diverse herbis*, 366)  
'It abolishes headache and gives brightness to dark sight.  
If it happens to old or young, to have lost their hearing recently,  
Put juice of bethony to his ear and it restores the hearing.'

Bloodletting was perhaps the most common method of both maintaining health and healing. It was applied mainly in order to restore the balance of disrupted humours that were regarded as causes of illnesses. A poem listing the veins to bleed also contains advice on how to preserve one's sight:

(16) Iilke a mane hath xxx and thre: / Lythe and I shall tell them the;  
Some er abowne, and some benethe; / Lithe, and thowe shall knawe, them ethe:  
**Behynde the heres, fyndes thowe twa; / If thowe lett blodle of tha,**  
**His syght shall neuer fale,** (*MEMT*, *What veins to bleed in*, 228)  
'Every man has 33 [veins to bleed], listen and I shall tell them to you.  
Some are above, some beneath, listen and you shall know them all.  
Behind the ears you find two. If you let blood from them, the patient's sight will never fall.'



## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In the late medieval and early modern period, universities in the British Isles were monolingual Latin. Thus, all vernacular medical texts belong to utilitarian writing, with the exception of some display copies of surgical manuscripts (see 4.1). Texts dealing with the five wits demonstrate the dissemination of a medical commonplace by relating the texts to their sociohistorical contexts and audiences. The earliest texts prove how difficult it was to render abstract notions in the vernacular that had not developed the means to convey such ideas yet (see the articles in Tavormina 2006). The situation improved fairly quickly, and the late fifteenth century already belongs to a different phase in the history of medical and scientific writing (Voigts 1996). At the end of the Middle English period the scope of vernacular medical literature was wide, from theoretical treatises to practical applications in rhyming couplets, probably reaching even illiterate or semi-literate audiences with oral delivery. The present survey is based on edited texts and shows that the passages about the five wits cover the whole repertoire. The wide scope can be taken as evidence of the desire to understand the workings of the human body. A look at the manuscript reality with focus on other sources besides the edited base texts adds to our knowledge of textual transmission and reveals new applications to specific target audiences. Notes in the margins and underlining of key words give evidence of the use of these texts, as they reveal what an early reader considered particularly important.

Styles of writing vary. The most learned texts exhibit commentary features associated with scholastic research at universities. Some texts combine theory with applications, but remedybooks focus on advice without probing deeper into the topic. In all, our survey shows that the theory of the five wits reached wide audiences, and we can assume that some knowledge of it belonged to the common cultural ground of the late medieval and early modern periods.

The Biblical idea that uncorrupted and perfect knowledge had existed in Paradise prevailed all through the period in focus in this article, but change was already on its way. Expeditions to the new continents cast doubt on old authorities' wisdom; observation told otherwise. New instruments in the early modern period enhanced sight and improved the faculty of observation, shaking the old premises even more, as a mid-seventeenth-century passage shows:

[...] our Primitive father *Adam* might be more quick & perspicacious in Apprehension, than those of our lapsed selves; yet certainly the Constitution of *Adam's* Organs was not divers from ours, nor different from those of his Fallen Self, so that he could never discern those distant, or minute objects by Natural Vision, as we do by the Artificial advantages of the Telescope and Microscope. (Power 1664, 5-6)

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GUY DE CHAULIAC'S *ON BLOODLETTING* IN GLASGOW,  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, MS HUNTER 307 (FF. 165V-166V)

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the edition and analysis of the text housed in Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307, ff. 165v-166v, which contains a version of the treatise *On Bloodletting* by Guy de Chauliac, an important author of medieval surgery, and which remains unedited, to the best of our knowledge. The objectives are the following: first, to investigate the transmission of the text; second, to explore the main codicological and palaeographical features of the treatise; third, to provide the first edition of the witness and discuss its main tenets; and finally, to examine the language of the text in order to locate it geographically. The assessment of all of the above will offer a complete picture of the treatise and will help to place it in its material and cultural context.

KEYWORDS: GUL MS Hunter 307, Guy de Chauliac, bloodletting, medical prose, Middle English, *eLALME*.

*ON BLOODLETTING* DE GUY DE CHAULIAC EN GLASGOW, BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA,  
MS HUNTER 307 (FF. 165V-166V)

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta la edición y el análisis del texto conservado en los folios 165v-166v del manuscrito de la Biblioteca de la Universidad de Glasgow, Hunter 307, que contienen una versión del tratado *On Bloodletting* de Guy de Chauliac, un importante autor de cirugía medieval, y que permanece inédito, hasta donde sabemos. Los objetivos son los siguientes: en primer lugar, investigar la transmisión del texto; en segundo lugar, explorar las principales características codicológicas y paleográficas del tratado; en tercer lugar, proporcionar la primera edición del texto y tratar los principios que la rigen; y finalmente, analizar el lenguaje del texto para localizarlo geográficamente. La valoración de todo lo anterior ofrecerá una imagen completa del tratado y ayudará a situarlo en su contexto material y cultural.

PALABRAS CLAVE: GUL MS Hunter 307, Guy de Chauliac, flebotomía, prosa médica, inglés medio, *eLALME*.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As Keiser fittingly remarked, the “full extent of the translation of learned medical treatises into the vernacular in later medieval England has only begun to be recognized” (1998, 3645). This idea still resonates twenty-five years later: while the last decades have witnessed a growing interest in vernacular scientific texts with the compilation of historical corpora, specific studies and digital editing projects,<sup>1</sup> there is still much work left to be done. The present paper tries to contribute to the knowledge of vernacular learned medical texts in English by making accessible a hitherto unedited one: a witness of the treatise *On Bloodletting* by Guy de Chauliac, a fourteenth-century French physician and author of the work *Chirurgia magna* (1363). This was one of the most influential medieval surgical texts and was translated from Latin into several vernacular European languages. The treatise under consideration is housed in folios 165v-166v of Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307. This manuscript constitutes a fine example of a Middle English medical compendium: it is a compact codex in one volume containing (i) an anonymous Middle English treatise on humours, elements, uroscopy, complexions, etc. (ff. 1r-13r); (ii) the Middle English Gilbertus Anglicus (ff. 13r-145v); (iii) an anonymous Middle English treatise on buboes (ff. 145v-146v); (iv) *The Sekenesse of Wymmen* (ff. 149v-165v); (v) Guy de Chauliac’s *On Bloodletting* (ff. 165v-166v); and (vi) a Middle English version of the *Circa instans* (ff. 167r-172v; see Esteban-Segura 2015). The whole manuscript has been labelled *System of Physic* (Young and Aitken 1908, 245-246; Cross 2004, 24-25). It dates from the early fifteenth century.

The objectives of this paper are as follows: first, to look into the transmission of the text; second, to assess the main codicological and palaeographical features of the treatise; third, to offer the first edition of the witness and discuss its main principles; and finally, to analyse the language of the text in order to locate it geographically. The physical analysis of the codex will be carried out by close, first-hand inspection of the manuscript as well as of its digitised images. The edition of the text will adjust to the semi-diplomatic tenets, which postulate faithfulness to the original witness. As for the linguistic analysis, it will be based on the methodology put forward by *An Electronic Version of A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (*eLALME*) (Benskin et al. 2013). The appraisal of all the aspects mentioned above will help to yield a complete picture of the treatise and to place it in its material and cultural context.

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<sup>1</sup> See Taavitsainen, Pahta and Mäkinen (2005), Esteban-Segura (2012a) and Miranda-García et al. (2012-2015), among others.



## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND TEXT TRANSMISSION

The practice of medicine in the Middle Ages in Europe was strongly influenced by the art of bloodletting, also known as phlebotomy. This therapy has been historically employed worldwide by physicians for treating fevers, infections, apoplexies, mental disorders and plagues for centuries (Parapia 2008, 490). The earliest evidence of this practice can be found in the Egyptian *Ebers papyrus*, one of the oldest medical texts written in the time of the Pharaohs during the early New Kingdom (Mokhtarian 2022, 92). Phlebotomy continued to be performed in the Greco-Roman and Islamic civilisations (York 2012, 143). As Voigts and McVaugh (1984, 4) contend, the main sources of medical information for bloodletting in the medieval period were the translations of the works produced by reputable physicians, such as Galen and Constantine the African.<sup>2</sup> These texts contained valuable instructions and comments regarding the convenience of venesection for different kinds of illnesses.

The development of the theory of phlebotomy was also strongly influenced by the *Epistula de phlebotomia*. This ninth-century anonymous medical treatise was reworked and adapted into verse form by the medical school in Salerno in the famous poem *Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum* in the twelfth century (Gil-Soltres 1988, 74). According to Voigts and McVaugh (1984, 3), this work played an important role in the diffusion of medical knowledge on bloodletting in the Middle Ages because it served as an essential guide for medical practitioners such as the Salernitan Archimattaeus (c. 1150), who later produced a phlebotomy treatise based on this text.

Bloodletting treatises, which were widely distributed at the time, not only reveal the different techniques employed, such as cupping or using a lancet, but also other crucial aspects that had to be taken into consideration when this practice was carried out. The age of the patient was just as important as the timing. The day of the month, the season and even the weather could affect the outcome of this type of surgery, as indicated by Despars, lecturer in medicine and rector of the University of Paris at the beginning of the fifteenth century (Wallis 2010, 324). Cowen (1975, 274) explains that religion also played a key role as, for instance, bloodletting was not recommended during Christian holy days. In her analysis of a Late Middle English medical manuscript, McCall (2023, 71) also describes the close relationship between astrology and phlebotomy:

Bloodletting and zodiac figures often travelled together; for easy consultation by a physician, they were sometimes included in portable folded booklets known as almanacs or calendars [...]. A fifteenth-century English example (Wellcome MS 40 [...]) shows a bloodletting figure surrounded by descriptions of when to take blood

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<sup>2</sup> Galen is considered to be one of the most prominent Roman-Greek physicians and medical scholars from antiquity. Constantine the African, a North African monk who translated Arabic medical literature into Latin in Italy in the eleventh century, was also another influential physician (Black 2019, 188).



from specific veins. The figure is pictured above a lunar table so the user could calculate astrological movements and thus the proper time to manage a patient's humours through phlebotomy.

Medical practitioners relied on these types of illustrations to locate the veins. One example of these images is a drawing of Vein Man found in a fifteenth-century Guildbook of the Barber Surgeons of York (British Library 2008).

Guy de Chauliac was a French surgeon from the first half of the fourteenth century (1298-1368). He was born in Chauliac, a village in the Géudavan, in the modern-day Department of Lozère (Thevenet 1993, 208). His medical expertise was mainly shaped by two distinguished figures. The first one was Raymond de Mollières, chancellor of the Medical Faculty of the prestigious University of Montpellier, where Guy became a Master of Medicine and Surgery (McVaugh 1997, xi). The second was Nicola Bertuccio, a surgeon at the University of Bologna. Most of Guy's education and anatomical knowledge was based on Bertuccio's theoretical teachings (Martín Ferreira and Conde Parrado 2003, 715). By the 1340s, he had acquired a high reputation in France and became the personal physician of three popes during the tumultuous Avignon Papacy (Clement VI, Innocent VI and Urban V) (Thevenet 1993, 210). In 1363, while Europe was experiencing the effects of the outbreak of the second plague pandemic, Guy produced the most significant text in the field of surgery at the time, the *Inventarium seu collectorium in parte cyrurgicali medicine*, more commonly known as the *Chirurgia magna* (McVaugh 1997, ix). In this work, it is evident that he was well aware of the significance of the aforementioned Salernitan medical school in his discussion of phlebotomy (Gil-Soltres 1988, 74). Guy de Chauliac was undoubtedly one of the most influential figures in the history of medicine. A more comprehensive biographical account of his life can be found in Nicaise's *La grande chirurgie de Guy de Chauliac* (1890).

With regard to the transmission of the medical text under scrutiny, another Middle English version of Guy de Chauliac's *On Bloodletting* can be found in London, British Library, MS Sloane 3486 (f. 147v). It was produced in the second or third quarter of the fifteenth century (British Library 2005). The treatise is not listed in Keiser (1998). Whether all the existing copies of it have been properly tracked remains uncertain and further investigation is mandatory in this regard.

The vernacularisation of medicine in Britain involved the translation into Middle English of many scientific texts in Latin on bloodletting that circulated at the time. Some examples of these medical manuscripts are: (i) London, Wellcome Library, MS 405 (ff. 67r-71v); (ii) London, Wellcome Library, MS 5650 (ff. 58v-61v); and (iii) Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 176/179. The text of the first manuscript listed includes a bloodletting treatise in Latin and English (Moorat 1962, 273). Regarding the second one, Alonso-Almeida (2020), who has provided its edition and study, states that it describes "the unfavourable days for bloodletting and when in the day bloodletting is recommended [...]; the bloodletting veins, location of veins and their therapeutic associated benefits [...]; and the virtues of bloodletting" (2020, 35). He postulates that the main source of his "edited text might be the pseudo-Bedan *De minutione sanguinis sive de phlebotomia*" (2020, 35). The



last manuscript mentioned, Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 176/179, is Henry of Blois's fifteenth-century translation of a Latin treatise on bloodletting. It is partially based on Constantine the African's *Megatechni* and *Viaticum* (Voigts and McVaugh 1984, 7).

### 3. CODICOLOGY AND PALAEOGRAPHY OF THE TREATISE

The physical features discussed in this section refer to those folios in which the treatise *On Bloodletting* is held. The writing surface is vellum and the material, black ink; blue and red ink are employed alternatively for paragraph marks and for two decorated initials. The dimensions of the binding are 200 mm x 140 mm, whereas the spine is 42 mm. The folios measure 190 mm x 130 mm. The dimensions of the written space are 147-150 mm x 90-95 mm. The text is presented in a single column and the handwriting is clear and careful. The treatise starts in line 14 of folio 165v, therefore in the middle of it approximately, since this folio is comprised of twenty-six lines. The number of lines in folios 166r and 166v is also twenty-six lines each. This indicates a careful process of copying. In the manuscript, folios are numbered in Arabic numerals at the top, on the right-hand side of each recto, and the treatise under consideration follows this practice. Thus, the only folio that appears numbered is 166r. Foliation seems to be a later addition. Each folio is within rules, both regarding frame and lines, in order to help the scribe keep a regular line of writing.

The script shows features from the Gothic *textura* book hand, which by the mid-fifteenth century was chiefly restricted to formal codices. There is distinction between <u> and <n> and no confusion between <þ> and <y>, as different graphs are employed (<y> has a tail). Both the layout and script show that it is a high-quality manuscript.

As in most medieval medical manuscripts, abbreviations are also made use of in the treatise in order to save time and space. Expansion marks indicate the omission of a nasal consonant and involve placing a horizontal line over the preceding vowel. They can appear in the middle (Figure 1) or end (Figure 2) of the word.<sup>3</sup> Superior letters, which appear over the line, signal the omission of one or more letters in a word (Figures 3, 4 and 5). A number of different brevigraphs or special signs are also employed to replace a common letter combination, such as *er* and *re* (Figures 6 and 7, respectively), *ur* (Figure 8), *ar* (Figure 9), *ri* (Figure 10) and *us* (Figure 11). Finally, a special symbol is used to stand for the conjunction *and* (Figure 12).

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<sup>3</sup> All the images provided in this paper are reproduced by kind permission of Glasgow University Library's Special Collections. We are grateful to Mr Robert MacLean, Assistant Librarian, for his generous assistance and for helping us with the measures of the manuscript and to decipher part of the marginal note in f. 166v.



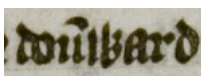


Figure 1. “dounward.”

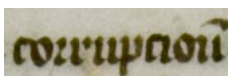


Figure 2. “corrupcion.”



Figure 3. “pat.”



Figure 4. “pou.”



Figure 5. “with.”

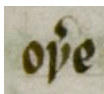


Figure 6. “opere.”

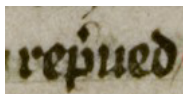


Figure 7. “repreued.”

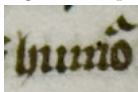


Figure 8. “humour.”

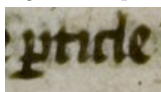


Figure 9. “particle.”

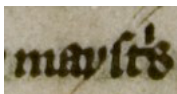


Figure 10. “maystris.”

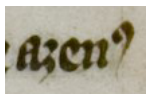


Figure 11. “azenus.”



Figure 12. “and.”

Marginal notes, quite common in medieval medical texts, are not found in the treatise, except for the name “Anthony” and the date “July 13,” in a seventeenth-century hand, in the left margin of folio 166v. This may be a mark of ownership. Running titles, underlining and other visual devices intended for reference are also wanting in the treatise.

Despite it being a short text, decoration appears in two of the three folios in the form of decorated initials, which are a two-line (f. 165v) initial letter—which opens the treatise—and a one-line one (f. 166r) in blue ink with decorations in red ink within the letters and along their left margin.

The inventory of punctuation marks encompasses the punctus (18×), always in raised position, the single virgule (40×), the double virgule (17×) and the paragraph mark (24×). The punctus is usually employed to delimit boundaries between clauses and sentences. On one occasion, two puncti are used to circumscribe a numeral. The single virgule normally appears in combination with the paragraph mark to mark off different paragraphs. When the single virgule stands on its own, its function is similar to the main one of the punctus (at clausal and sentence levels). The double virgule occurs at the of the line to signal that a word continues in the following one. The paragraph mark, as its name indicates, is employed to differentiate paragraphs. As mentioned above, paragraph marks are in blue and red ink and the scribe is systematic in alternating these two colours.

The scribe was very careful when copying the text since no errors have been spotted. The identity of the scribe/translator remains anonymous to date. MS Hunter 307 belonged to the personal collection of Dr William Hunter (1718-1783), who bequeathed it to the University of Glasgow. This institution has taken care of Dr Hunter’s legacy since 1807.



#### 4. EDITION

The tenets of the semi-diplomatic edition have been followed. The edition produced tries to be as faithful to the witness as possible. Thus, the layout of folios has been maintained in such a way that lines in the edition correspond to those in the original manuscript. However, the number of lines has been inserted and indicated to the right of the text to help the reader locate information. Digitised images of the folios comprising the treatise are offered before each transcribed folio and a simple textual apparatus, including information about decoration and marginalia, is provided at the end of each of these.

The usage of <u> (in medial position) and <v> (in initial position) has been preserved as it appears in the original and the same has been done for letters <i> and <j>. The corresponding symbols for *thorn* <þ> and *yogh* <ȝ> have been employed. Since the transcription is graphemic rather than graphetic, the distinction of graphs used for letters <s> and <r> depending on the position in which they are found within the word has not been kept.

The original capitalisation and punctuation have been retained. Likewise, word division has been left as it occurs in the text. Therefore, words which are combined but are in fact two different ones (e.g., “aman”; “aparty”; “agarsyng”) have not been disjoined. On the other hand, elements of the same word which appear separated with a blank space (e.g., “ouer moche”; “ouer party”; “a vised”) have not been united. Split words at the end of the line have been left as such.

Abbreviations have been expanded. It is interesting to note that the word “schuldris” appears in full on two occasions; on a third occasion, the final part of the word, except for the plural mark, has been abbreviated by means of a curved flourish ending in a diamond-shaped punctus, a symbol which the scribe has used for *er/re* elsewhere (see Figures 6 and 7 above). Although usage would recommend that the abbreviation should be expanded to *ri*, the word has been transcribed as “schuldr̄es” for the sake of transcription homogeneity, since the scribe has used a specific symbol for *ri* in other contexts (see Figure 10 above). Every effort has been made to minimise editorial intervention.





van zue hir oye medecyns as it is told her bifore and if sche  
haue no purgaciou after ye bearing of child zue hir medecyns  
yt were told i ye chapitre of withholding of blod. ¶ Su whome  
han corrupt mater as quyte passing a wey fro he in stide of  
blod. & sylbillich matir passy away w<sup>th</sup> ye blod yat yei schul  
den be purged off. And if it be old whomen or bareyn whomen  
it neddy not to zue he no medecyns. ¶ Yfor if yei ben zoge  
whomen let he sey karlokis or skyrellwhittis in whyn. & let  
hir lute ouer ye smoke yof yat it come to hir pry membre.  
or take pibol & mak poude yof & put it i to a bagge so bro  
od & so long yat it moise hile bove ye pry membris of ye wh  
man. & al wharm lei it on yilke membris and bynde it faste yt  
it falle not away.

**A**phisian behouey to knowe pre mane inspeccionis  
in blod letyng yat is to seie wher it be yicke or yine  
or meene whil ama bledy. ¶ Blod yt is yicke vneye goyng  
fro ye weyne but falling dropmeel it is euyl for it bitok  
ney ye moisture of ye body to be wastid. ¶ Blod yat is  
yine & watry you; it be leid on ye naile. it wole not en  
gale ne cruide van it is euyl for it bitokney y<sup>r</sup> albe hu  
mans ben to abundant in ye body or to moche moisture.  
¶ Blod yt is meene or mesurable yat is bittene yicke or  
yine yickable. ¶ Also in ye bledyng me schal byholde wher  
it be heot or cold. for heot blod bitokney hote humors to  
hane ye maistrye i ye body & cold. ¶ Whan it engely me  
schal byholde wher it be harsh or crassyng or ther kyng

Figure 13. Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307, f. 165v.

A phicisian behouþ to knowe þre manere inspecciouns  
 1  
 in blod letyng / þat is to seie wheþer it be þicke or þinne  
 or meene whil aman bledþ / ¶ Blod þat is þicke vneþe goyng  
 fro þe veyne but fallyng dropmeel it is euyl for it bitok//  
 neþ þe moisture of þe body to be waastid / ¶ Blod þat is  
 5  
 þynne *and* watry þou3 it be leid on þe naile · it wole not en//  
 gele ne crudde / þan it is euyl for it bitokneþ þat rawe hu//  
 mours ben to abundaunt in þe body or to moche moisture /  
 ¶ Blod þat is meene or mesurable þat is bitwene þicke or  
 þynne perisable / ¶ Also in þe bledyng me schal byholde wheþer  
 10  
 it be hoot or cold · for hoot blod bitokneþ hote humours to  
 haue þe maistrye in þe body *and* cold / ¶ Whan it engelþ me  
 schal biholde wheþer it be harsch or crassyng or cherkyng /

1 A] 2-line initial in blue ink with red gestures and black details





**F**for if it be so it bitokney moche corrupcion in ye body or dif  
 posyng to lepre **A**lso if it be fatty it bitokney ou moche fat  
 nesse **A**lso if ye sinel of ye blod be stynkyng it bitokney cor  
 rupcion of humo or rootnesse i ye body To knowe ye sinel  
 yof. Wete a cloy ym z lei to yi nose moche watrynesse i ye  
 blod bitokney moysture but litil watrynesse bitokney drie  
 nesse but yis watrynesse i ye blood if it be good it is lyk  
 ye vryn of hyn yf olky ye blood **A**z zolk aftir ye enge  
 lynyng me schal biholde if it be skūmyng for if it be so z it  
 be not along on ye halstynesse of fallyng it bitokney ye  
 blod to be vutefyed **A**lso ye ou pty of ye blod olky to  
 be reed z pleyu or euene and apy cleer for if it be not  
 euene and if it be not along on ye reeldyng of ye vessel  
 it bitokney grenaūre in ye body of par tyes **A**lso if ony  
 oye colour pā rody or reed apere i ye ou pty it bitokney cor  
 rupcion **A**zeleke blod bitokney abūdaūre of colre **P**ale  
 blod bitokney abūdaūre of flekyne if it be ycke and if it  
 be pyne it bitokney malencolie **B**lod yf myzey gree  
 nesse bitokney for breūnyng in ye body and if it nere to  
 blaknesse it bitokney more breūnyng or mortefyng blod  
 yf is skūmyng bitokney bellyg of humōs i ye body and  
 burbly blod bitokney thynidnesse **W**atry blod bitokney  
 coldnesse of ye lyuer **I**f ye blod aftir ye puttyng of blod  
 wat is brotū and esy to sundre it bitokney moche drie  
 nesse and if it be touz it bitokney quey z viscouse humōs  
**A** or gar syng z ventosyng it bifally of tre tymes

Figure 14. Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307, f. 166r.

¶ ffor if it be so it bitokneþ moche corrupcioun in þe body or dis//  
 posyng to lepre / ¶ Also if it be fatty it bitokneþ ouer moche fat//  
 nesse / ¶ Also if þe smel of þe blod be stynkyng · it bitokneþ cor//  
 rupcioun of humour or rootnesse in þe body / To knowe þe smel  
 þerof · wete a cloþ þerin *and* lei to þi nose / moche watrynesse in þe  
 blod bitokneþ moysture / but litil watrynesse bitokneþ drie//  
 nesse / but þis watrynesse in þe blood if it be good it is liyk  
 þe vryn of him þat owiþ þe blood / ¶ Now aftir þe enge//  
 lyng me schal biholde if it be skummyng · for if it be so *and* it  
 be not along on þe hastynesse of fallyng it bitokneþ þe  
 blod to be vndefyed / ¶ Also þe ouer party of þe blod owiþ to  
 be reed *and* pleyne or euene · and aparty cleer / for if it be not  
 euene · and if it be not along on þe teeldyng of þe vessel  
 it bitokneþ greuaunce in þe body of partyes / ¶ Also if ony  
 oþere colour þan rody or reed apere in þe ouer party it bitokneþ cor//  
 rupcioun / ¶ Zelewe blod bitokneþ abundaunce of colre / ¶ Pale  
 blod bitokneþ abundaunce of flewme if it be þicke and if it  
 be þynne it bitokneþ malencolie / ¶ Blod þat nyȝeþ gree//  
 nesse bitokneþ for brennyng in þe body / and if it neiȝe to  
 blaknesse · it bitokneþ more brennyng or mortefyng / blod  
 þat is skummyng bitokneþ wellyng of humours in þe body / and  
 burbly blod bitokneþ wyndnesse / ¶ Watry blod bitokneþ  
 coldnesse of þe lyuer / Jf þe blod aftir þe puttyng of blod  
 water is brotil and esy to sundre · it bitokneþ moche drie//  
 nesse / and if it be touȝ it bitokneþ quesye *and* viscouse humours /  
 For garsyng *and* ventosyng · it bifalliþ ofte tymes

26 For] 2-line initial in blue ink with red gestures



smale vernes to be touchid y<sup>r</sup> rēnen among ye fleisch hi  
dir ward & yndir ward ye whiche aperen not ne be not kn  
olke and yoo musten be touchid yowz gar sing or vento  
sing bi ye whiche ye body may haue moche heche. ¶ For ye  
passions of ye ren & ye heed. y<sup>r</sup> schalt make a gar sing or  
ventosing i to ye fleisch yndir ye chyn and ye maistr sey.  
y<sup>r</sup> schalt make y<sup>r</sup> gar sing for peyne of ye ren euene azen<sup>o</sup>  
ye ren i ye necke bihynde as y<sup>r</sup>. ¶ If ye rixte ye ake sette a  
ventosing ye azen<sup>o</sup> ye ye bihynde. & so ye lift ye fro ye roote  
of ye necke douward. to ward ye necke boon y<sup>r</sup> schalt make  
gar sing or ventosing for peynes of ye ren & of ye iolbis &  
of ye mouy & of ye teep and also for peynes of ye necke and  
for euyle i ye schuldir bladys yndir ye schuldris y<sup>r</sup> schalt  
make gar sing i y<sup>r</sup> plans or yre. ¶ Also bittere ye schuldir  
& ye elbowe for ye blod of brisur in ye schuldris & ye also for  
aking of ye ren & of ye heed. ¶ Also for aking of ye schulds  
& armes make a gar sing ypo ye arm on ye wristis and for  
peynes of ye brest y<sup>r</sup> schalt make ye azen<sup>o</sup> on ye bak. ¶ And  
for peynes of ye bak gar sing is good on ye buttokis by  
neye. ¶ And for raching bochus & scabbis bihynde ye knee w<sup>t</sup>  
out. ¶ & 20lb i yis hyue ye yrtide y schal make an ende & if  
ony ma biholde it & fynde ony yig y displey hi let hi not  
repue it but let hi take sicke alabō in hōd azen & let hi be  
wel avised y he be not repued. ¶ For yis i my maylrs ty  
me & my y haue wel pūed & curid & heehd many a patient  
y anckid be god of his grace sendyng to y is ye hyste &  
¶ The best leech!

Figure 15. Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307, f. 166v.



smale veynes to be touchid þat rennen among þe fleisch hi//  
 1  
 dirward *and* þidirward þe whiche aperen not ne *ben* not kn//  
 owe / and þoo musten be touchid þoru3 garsyng or vento//  
 syng · bi þe whiche þe body may haue moche heelp / ¶ ffor þe  
 passioums of þe izen *and* þe heed · þou schalt make agarsyng or  
 5  
 ventosyng *in* to þe fleisch vndir þe chyn / and þe maistir seiþ ·  
 þou schalt make þi garsyng for peyne of þe izen euene azenus  
 þe izen *in* þe necke bihynde as þus // ¶ Jf þe ri3te izen ake sette a  
 ventosyng þere azenus þe izen bihynde · *and* so þe lift izen / fro þe roote  
 10  
 of þe necke dounward · toward þe necke boon þou schalt make  
 garsyng or ventosyng for peynes of þe izen *and* of þe iowis *and*  
 of þe mouþ *and* of þe teef / and also for peynes of þe necke and  
 for euyle *in* þe schuldir bladis vndir þe schuldris þou schalt  
 make garsyng *in* · ij · placis or þre / ¶ Also bitwixe þe schuldir  
*and* þe elbowe for þe blod of brisure *in* þe schuldris *and* þere also for  
 15  
 aking of þe izen *and* of þe heed / ¶ Also for aking of þe schuldris  
*and* armes make a garsyng vpon þe arm on þe wristis / and for  
 peynes of þe brest þou schalt make þere azenus on þe bak ¶ and  
 for peynes of þe bak garsyng is good on þe buttokis by//  
 20  
 neþe / ¶ and for icching bocchis *and* scabbis bisyde þe knee *with*  
 out / ¶ Now *in* þis fyue þe particle J schal make an ende *and* if  
 ony man biholde it *and* fynde ony þing þat displesþ him · let him not  
 repreue it but let him take siche a labour *in* hond azen *and* let hym be  
 wel a vised þat he be not repreued / ¶ ffor þis *in* my maystris ty//  
 25  
 me *and* myn J haue wel preued *and* curid *and* heelid many a patient  
 þanckid be god of his grace sendyng to þat is þe hizeste *and*  
 ¶ þe best leech /

18 peynes] *in left-hand margin, vertically*: Anthony July 13



## 5. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Dialectal localisation of the language found in folios 165v-166v of Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 307 has been accomplished following the model provided by *An Electronic Version of A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, *eLALME* for short (Benskin et al. 2013), which is based on the well-known *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986), developed at the University of Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup> The method of analysis involves several stages. First, a survey questionnaire is completed. This questionnaire has a list that incorporates more than 400 items which are assigned to respective realisations recorded from the text studied. The set of items selected from *eLALME* for the present study is mainly composed of function words, such as determiners, prepositions, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs, although some content words have been included. In the next stage of the procedure, the results of this questionnaire are analysed. This step is essential for the creation of the Linguistic Profile (henceforth LP) of the text,<sup>5</sup> which is supplied in Appendix 1.<sup>6</sup> In the final part of this process, the “fit”-technique (Benskin et al. 2013) is employed. This involves finding the specific variants of the items plotted in the dot and user-defined maps (see examples in Figures 16 and 17, respectively) and comparing the devised LP of the text of the manuscript that concerns us with other LPs from other texts in *eLALME*.<sup>7</sup> The county dictionary has been consulted whenever no variants of items figure on the maps.

The distribution of the occurrences of the majority of the forms examined broadly places the text in the Midlands and the South. For instance, ‘þoruʒ’ for THROUGH, ‘wole’ for WILL and ‘ben’ for ARE typically occur in these regions. The dot maps also show that the forms ‘whan’ for the time conjunction WHEN, ‘þe whiche’ for WHICH and ‘moch’ for MUCH are registered in texts from the same areas. The next forms to be discussed, the first- and third-person singular present indicative

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<sup>4</sup> *eLALME* covers the period from 1350 to 1450 (Benskin et al. 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Following the editorial policy of *eLALME* (Benskin et al. 2013), uppercase and lowercase letters have not been distinguished in the LP of our text.

<sup>6</sup> A previous phase of lemmatisation and POS-tagging of the text has been particularly useful for quickly consulting grammatical information of the forms examined and for retrieving swiftly and efficiently all the realisations of the items analysed. Data about the category, subcategory, type, tense, number, person, case, gender, folio and line of each token have been collected in an Excel spreadsheet. In the semi-diplomatic edition of the text, although the abbreviations are expanded, the original word division and punctuation are preserved with as little emendation as possible. This is important because any conclusions regarding the local origin of the text under scrutiny have to be made on the basis of an accurate reproduction of the source text. For this purpose, all the original forms have been imported without modification to the concordance programme *AntConc* (Anthony 2023) to find their raw frequency in the text. In order to preserve the original letters, such as the thorn, the character encoding of the .txt file has been changed to “Unicode (UTF-8)” in this software tool.

<sup>7</sup> Dot maps reproduce the distribution of different forms or variants of an item on a map which covers mainland Britain between Land’s End and the Firth of Forth. User-defined maps offer a more precise location of all the forms registered in *eLALME*, together with extra information of their respective LPs.



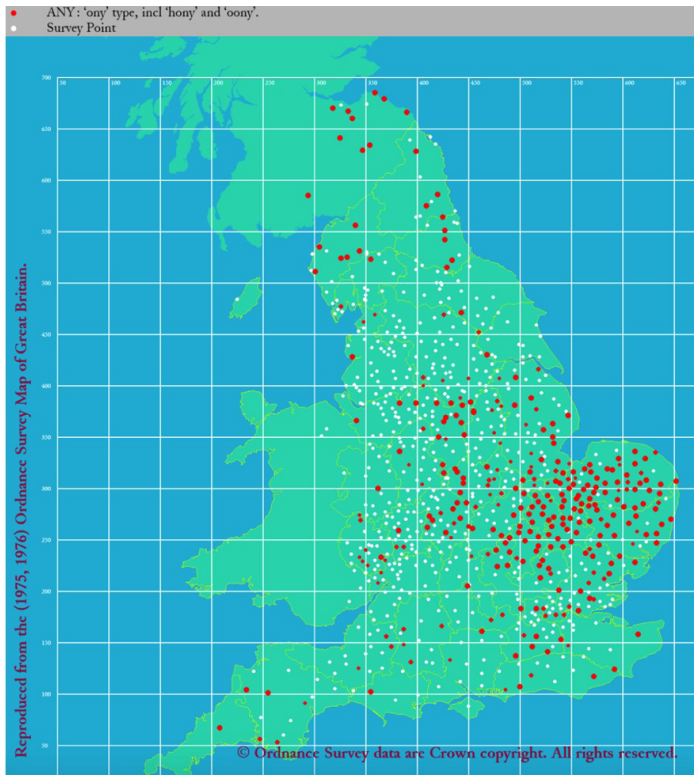


Figure 16. Dot map which shows the distribution of 'ony' type for ANY (*eLALME*).

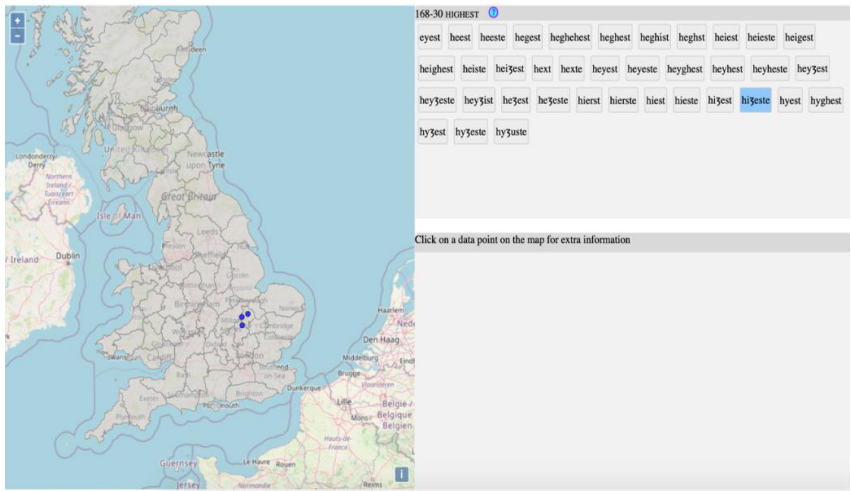


Figure 17. User-defined map which shows the distribution of 'hizeste' for HIGHEST (*eLALME*).



form 'schal' and the second-person singular 'schalt' for the verb SHALL, also present a similar distributional pattern, even though the latter appears more precisely in Huntingdonshire (Hu), Cambridgeshire (Cam), Bedfordshire (Bed), Hertfordshire (Hts), Northamptonshire (Nht), Warwickshire (Wrk) and in other counties in the Midlands, as confirmed by Vega Déniz (2004, 67). The presence of 'ony' for the item ANY in the East and North Midlands is corroborated by Alonso-Almeida, Domínguez-Morales and Quintana-Toledo (2022, 26).

A closer inspection reveals that the text under scrutiny shows some distinct Midland characteristics. This is particularly conspicuous in the distribution of the form with initial 'þ-' for THE and the two variants 'azen' and 'azenus' for AGAIN. The latter realisation has a very restricted location partly due to the scarce number of instances found: Nht, Wrk and Staffordshire (Stf). The dialectal localisation of 'þre' for THREE is similar. Its occurrences are largely concentrated in the counties mentioned above and others such as Cam, Hu, Bed, Wrk, Rutland (Rut) and Leicestershire (Lei). Concerning the personal pronoun HIM, there are three variants, namely, 'him,' 'him' and 'hym.' All three belong to the Midlands, although a substantial proportion of occurrences can be found in some northern regions as well. The item OTHER renders one single variant, 'oþere,' which has been attested in greater frequency in Nht, Cam, Hu, Bed, Rut, Lei and in a few other counties. As for the item BETWEEN, it yields two forms, 'bitwene' and 'bitwixe,' as an adverb and as a preposition, respectively, being the former restricted to the Midlands and the latter concretely to the area bordering the East Midlands and the East of England. More specifically, the localisation of 'bitwixe' has been found in Cam, Hu, Bed and the neighbouring counties. As regards the form 'aftir' for AFTER, there is a significant concentration of instances of this realisation in the counties aforesaid, even though it has also been located in Wrk, Lincolnshire (Lin) and Norfolk (Nfk), among others. There are three occurrences of 'hizeste' for the superlative item HIGHEST, two of them appearing in Hu and the other one in Bed.

It should be mentioned that the analysis of the realisations of other items, such as IT, FROM, IS, AFTER, NOT, WHILE, WHETHER, WITHOUT, HAVE, MANY and LITTLE, does not offer conclusive results since their distribution is widespread in the whole area studied. The data supplied by *eLALME* regarding some forms of KNOW and ALSO are not statistically significant, since only a few instances are registered across the country.

All this evidence shows that the limits of the geographical local origin of the text can be more narrowly circumscribed to the counties of Bed, Hu and Cam. As mentioned earlier, the final stage of the 'fit'-technique entails the comparison of the LP of MS Hunter 307 (LP H307) with those LPs from the aforementioned counties contained in *eLALME*. Taking into account the similarities that they share with the source text in terms of date of creation and linguistic features, LPs 749, 745 and 6180 have been selected. They are available in Appendices II, III and IV, respectively. The items which do not coincide with those of LP H307 have not been included in the appendices. The LP which happens to show a greater degree of linguistic correspondence with LP H307 is LP 745 from Huntingdonshire.



## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This article has offered the study and edition of a hitherto unedited fifteenth-century English text on phlebotomy, more specifically the Middle English version of Guy de Chauliac's *On Bloodletting*, which remained unexplored so far. The discussion of the sources of this work and the circulation of similar scientific texts about phlebotomy in the medieval period sheds light on the diffusion of specialised medical knowledge in England, but there is still much work to be done to assess the dissemination of this particular treatise.

The examination of physical features of the treatise points to a careful and well-planned piece of work, which has survived in very good condition. The type of script, the use of colour for paragraph marks and initial letters as well as the lack of marginalia and scribal errors seem to indicate that the function of the volume was not practical.

On the other hand, the analysis of the language of the text has allowed establishing a likely area of provenance. Following the principles of *eLALME* (Benskin et al. 2013), the dialectal localisation of folios 165v-166v of MS Hunter 307 has been identified. The results of the analysis suggest that the text was written in the Midland variety, probably in the county of Huntingdonshire. It is worth noting that some studies have confirmed that the local origin of other treatises housed in MS Hunter 307 is similar. In her linguistic analysis of one of the texts comprised within the medical compendium *System of Physic*, namely, a version of the Middle English Gilbertus Anglicus (ff. 13r-145v), Esteban-Segura (2012b) assigned it to the area of Huntingdonshire in East Anglia. In addition, Vega Déniz (2004, 70) indicated that the linguistic features of another text of this codex, the obstetrical and gynaecological treatise *The Sekenese of Wymmen* (ff. 149v-165v), appear to be from the same county. Thus, MS Hunter 307 seems to have been composed in East Anglia, where medical texts were in large circulation during the Middle Ages (see Jones 2000), and more specifically in Huntingdonshire. Further research on the rest of the texts contained in the manuscript will be carried out to confirm this hypothesis as well as to try to elucidate the identity of the scribe/compiler.

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## APPENDIX I: LP H307

No. <sup>8</sup>	ITEM	FORMS
1	THE:	þe (74x)
6	IT:	it (36x)
11	WHICH:	þe whiche (2x)
13	MANY:	many (1x)
14	MAN:	man (1x), man (1x)
15	ANY:	ony (3x)
16	MUCH:	moche (6x)
17	ARE:	ben (1x), beʒ (1x)
19	IS:	is (12x)
22	SHALL <i>sg</i> :	schal (4x)
22-30	SHALL <i>2sg</i> :	schalt (5x)
24	WILL <i>sg</i> :	wole (1x)
28	FROM:	fro (2x)
29	AFTER:	aftir (2x)
31	THAN:	þan (1x), þan (1x)
32	THOUGH:	þouȝ (1x)
33	IF:	if (14x), jf (2x)
34	AS:	as (1x)
37	AGAIN:	aȝen (1x), aȝenus (3x)
41	WHILE:	whil (1x)
46	NOT:	not (8x)
52	THERE:	þere (1x)
55	THROUGH:	þoruȝ (1x)
56	WHEN:	whan (1x)
76	ALSO:	also (9x)
84	BE <i>inf</i> :	be (24x)
89	BETWEEN <i>pr</i> :	bitwixe (1x)
89-10	BETWEEN <i>adv</i> :	bitwene (1x)
100	BUT:	but (4x)
126	EVIL:	euyll (2x), euyle (1x)
155	GOOD:	good (2x)
160	HAVE <i>pres</i> :	haue (1x)
160-20	HAVE <i>inf</i> :	haue (2x)

<sup>8</sup> The list of numbers in this and following LPs refers to the item number of the *eLALME* questionnaire.



171	HIM:	him (3×), him (1×), hym (1×)
168-30	HIGHEST:	hiʒeste (1×)
181-10	KNOW <i>inf</i> :	knowe (3×)
191	LITTLE:	litol (1×)
198-10	MAKE <i>inf</i> :	make (7×)
199-10	MAY 1/3sg:	may (1×)
218	NOW:	now (2×)
221	OR:	or (17×)
222	OTHER:	oþere (1×)
259-10	TAKE <i>inf</i> :	take (1×)
267	THREE:	þre (2×)
285	WHETHER:	wheþer (3×)
295-20	WITHOUT <i>adv</i> :	without (1×)
299	YOU:	þou (5×)
337-20	THAT* 'tha':	þat (3×), þat (10×)
338	THIS* 'thus':	þus (1×)
339	THUS* 'this,' 'thes':	þis (3×)

## APPENDIX II: LP 749 (BEDFORDSHIRE, *ELALME*)

No.	ITEM	FORMS <sup>9</sup>
1	THE:	þe ((þ <sup>c</sup> , the))
6	IT:	it
11	WHICH:	which, whiche ((þe-which, þe-whiche))
13	MANY:	manie ((manye, many))
14	MAN:	man (man)
15	ANY:	ony ((oni))
16	MUCH:	myche
17	ARE:	ben (ben) ((be))
19	IS:	is
22	SHALL <i>sg</i> :	shal
22-20	SHALL <i>2sg</i> :	shalt

<sup>9</sup> According to Benskin et al. (2013), in *eLALME*'s bracketing system those variants which are "not enclosed by parentheses stand in dominant frequency. Single parentheses enclose forms that occur about one third to two thirds as frequently as the dominant form. Double parentheses enclose forms that occur less than about one third as commonly as the dominant form."





24	WILL <i>sg</i> :	wole
28	FROM:	fro
29	AFTER:	aftr (( <i>after</i> ))
31	THAN:	þan (( <i>þan</i> ))
32	THOUGH:	þouʒ
33	IF:	if
34	AS:	as (( <i>a</i> <sup>s</sup> ))
41	WHILE:	while (( <i>þe</i> -while))
46	NOT:	not
52	THERE:	þere (þere) ((þer, þer, þ <sup>r</sup> e))
55	THROUGH:	þoruʒ, þorouʒ
56	WHEN:	whanne, whanne (( <i>wh</i> <sup>a</sup> nne))
89	BETWEEN <i>pr</i> :	bitwix
100	BUT:	but
155	GOOD:	good (gode)
160	HAVE <i>pres</i> :	haue
160-20	HAVE <i>inf</i> :	haue
171	HIM:	him (( <i>hym</i> , hym, him))
181	KNOW <i>pres</i> :	knowe, know-
191	LITTLE:	litil (( <i>litle</i> , little))
199-10	MAY <i>1/3sg</i> :	mai (( <i>may</i> ))
199-20	MAY <i>pl</i> :	moun (( <i>mai</i> ))
218	NOW:	now
221	OR:	eip̄er (( <i>eip̄ir</i> , or, eip̄er))
222	OTHER:	oþere (oþer) (( <i>oþer</i> , oþir, oþere))
267	THREE:	þre
299	YOU:	ʒou (( <i>ʒou</i> <sup>u</sup> , ʒow))

APPENDIX III: LP 745 (HUNTINGDONSHIRE, *ELALME*)

No.	ITEM	FORMS
1	THE:	þe ((þ <sup>e</sup> , the))
6	IT:	it
11	WHICH:	whiche (which) ((þe-whiche, þe-which))
13	MANY:	manye (( <i>many</i> ))

14	MAN:	man (maʌ)
15	ANY:	ony ((onye))
16	MUCH:	myche (miche)
17	ARE:	ben (beʌ) ((be))
19	IS:	is
22	SHALL <i>sg</i> :	shal ((sha))
22-20	SHALL <i>2sg</i> :	shalt
24	WILL <i>sg</i> :	wole
28	FROM:	fro ((fʌo))
29	AFTER:	aftir ((after))
31	THAN:	þan ((þanne))
32	THOUGH:	þouʒ
33	IF:	if
34	AS:	as
41	WHILE:	while, whil
46	NOT:	not
52	THERE:	þere (þere) ((þeere))
53	WHERE:	where ((wher))
55	THROUGH:	þoruʒ
56	WHEN:	whanne (whan, whaʌne)
89	BETWEEN <i>pr</i> :	bitwixe (bitwix)
100	BUT:	but
155	GOOD:	good (goode) ((gode))
160	HAVE <i>pres</i> :	haue
160-20	HAVE <i>inf</i> :	haue ((han))
171	HIM:	him ((him, hym))
181	KNOW <i>pres</i> :	knowe, know-
191	LITTLE:	litol ((litel, litle))
199-10	MAY <i>1/3sg</i> :	may
218	NOW:	now
221	OR:	eip̄er ((or, eip̄ir))
222	OTHER:	oþere (oþer)
267	THREE:	þre
285	WHETHER:	wher (wheþer) ((wher))
295	WITHOUT <i>pr</i> :	wiþoute (wiþouten, wiþouten) ((wiþ-outen, wiþ-outen, wiþowte))
299	YOU:	ʒou



APPENDIX IV: LP 6180 (CAMBRIDGESHIRE, *ELALME*)

No.	ITEM	FORMS
6	IT:	it
11	WHICH:	þe-wich, þe-wiche, þe-which, þe-whiche
13	MANY:	many
14	MAN:	man, man
15	ANY:	ony, any
16	MUCH:	moche
17	ARE:	ben
19	IS:	is
22	SHALL <i>sg</i> :	schal (xal)
24	WILL <i>sg</i> :	wole, wol ((wil))
24-30	WILL <i>pl</i> :	wole (wolen, wolyn)
28	FROM:	from (fro)
29	AFTER:	aftyr (aftir)
31	THAN:	þan
32	THOUGH:	þou3, þou (al3if)
33	IF:	3yf, 3if (if)
37	AGAIN:	a3en
41	WHILE:	þe-while, while-þat, while
46	NOT:	not (nout, nou3t)
52	THERE:	þere
55	THROUGH:	þorou3, þoru3 (þour3)
100	BUT:	but
123	EITHER ... OR:	oþer+
126	EVIL:	euele, euyl
155	GOOD:	goode, gode, good
160-20	HAVE <i>inf</i> :	haue
191	LITTLE:	litol, lityl
221	OR:	or (oþer)
285	WHETHER:	wheþer
295	WITHOUT <i>pr</i> :	wiþ-outyn



# DOMESTIC MEDICINE IN AN EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT, GUL, FERGUSON MS 43\*

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## ABSTRACT

This article delves into Early Modern English<sup>1</sup> manuscript domestic medicine with special attention to a recipe compilation, Glasgow, University Library, Ferguson MS 43. Household recipe books were an important repository of practical medical knowledge for families. Recipe collections were often brought by women to their new households upon marriage, and were subsequently passed down through generations, highlighting the significant role that women played in the production and dissemination of household practical knowledge. Ferguson MS 43, attributed to Lady Stanhope, showcases the female recipe collections' ability to provide valuable information regarding eighteenth-century domestic medical practice and, more specifically, women's contribution to it. The manuscript physical characteristics and its contents are analysed to place the text in its proper social, cultural and linguistic context as a representative instance of the recipe genre.

**KEYWORDS:** GUL, Ferguson MS 43, medical recipes, women scientific writing, household medicine.

LA MEDICINA DOMÉSTICA EN UN MANUSCRITO DE PRINCIPIOS DEL SIGLO XVIII, GLASGOW, BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA, FERGUSON MS 43

## RESUMEN

Este artículo indaga en la medicina manuscrita doméstica en inglés moderno temprano con especial atención a una recopilación de recetas, Glasgow, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ferguson MS 43. Los libros domésticos de recetas constituían un importante repositorio de conocimiento médico práctico para las familias. Las mujeres llevaban consigo las colecciones de recetas a su nueva residencia al contraer matrimonio y, de esta forma, se pasaban de generación en generación, lo que pone de manifiesto el papel relevante que las mujeres desempeñaban en la producción y transmisión de este tipo de conocimiento práctico. El manuscrito Ferguson 43, atribuido a Lady Stanhope, resalta la habilidad de las colecciones de recetas para proporcionar información valiosa sobre la práctica de la medicina doméstica y, más concretamente, sobre la contribución femenina. Se analizan las características físicas del manuscrito, pero también el contenido, para ubicar el texto, como elemento representativo del género de las recetas, en el contexto social, cultural y lingüístico adecuado.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** GUL, Ferguson MS 43, recetas médicas, escritos científicos de mujeres, medicina doméstica.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both men and women produced recipe compilations at home, since domestic medicine even in wealthy households “consisted of self-treatment, family members creating remedies and administering care, and purchased medical guide and products” (Allen 2017, 334). Modern housewives and household managers moved across a wide range of activities, one of which was taking care of the people in their estates and households. Thus, “home remained the central place of medical care throughout the eighteenth century” (Hiltunen and Taavitsainen 2019, 13).

Handwritten recipe books were an important repository of practical knowledge for families. They included culinary recipes, medical remedies and household tips that recorded the work of women at home. Subsequently, sharing recipes was a great interest in the period for several reasons: recipe books worked as manuals to be consulted in case of need, but it was also a way of socializing. In fact, many recipes were passed round in manuscript form through social networks. The recipes were often collected by women from family members, neighbours and friends. Leong and Pennell comment on the process of circulation of recipes claiming that:

Instructions to make medicaments for all sorts of ailments and illnesses were exchanged during social visits, circulated in letters, and were recorded into bound notebooks. Sometimes they were even merely bundled together as batches of paper. The onward circulation of individually inscribed recipes and prescriptions, indeed of entire manuscripts, provided other compilers with an important source for their own collections. (Leong and Pennell 2007, 138)

The recipes obtained through social contact could be copied down as such or the compilers could alter dosages, substitute ingredients and change production methods to reflect their own preferences (Leong 2018, 163). In this way, a recipe collection is regarded as an “active, dynamic compilation that would create new texts” and that “could be erased, expunged and altered” to suit the compiler’s needs and interests (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2016, 82).

On occasions, complete copies of recipe books were made as gifts from a family member, like in London, Wellcome Library, MS 7113, which reads “K. Fanshawe. Give mee by my Mother March 23th 1678” (after the cover, before folio 1). In this sense, Leong states that “the leather or vellum bound books of recipes were seen as heirlooms – material objects to be bequeathed to the next generation within the narrow confines of a lineage family” (2013, 95). They could also be presents by servants, “where patronage and service were implied” (Leong and Pennell 2007, 142), as in London, British Library, Sloane MS 3842, which shows the following

\* This research is part of the Spanish Government project entitled “Interpersonal devices in specialized household and public instructional texts written by women in Modern English” (Ref. PID2021-125928NB-I00).

<sup>1</sup> Following Lass (1999), the dates for the Early Modern English in this article are 1476 to 1776.



inscription: “This book humbly begs Madam Elizabeth Butler her acceptance from her faythfull servant: Poore Colly. march the last 1679” (f. 1r).

Recipe collections like the one in Ferguson MS 43, attributed to Lady Stanhope, were often brought by women to their new households upon marriage, and were subsequently passed down through generations, highlighting the significant role that women played in the production and transmission of household knowledge. In fact, the pages in blank in this manuscript could be designed for the new owner to accrue the initial recipe compilation with more material. Leong contemplates that the documents produced by women in charge of an important estate “add a much-needed female voice to histories of household and estate management, shedding light on the managerial role taken on by elite women and emphasizing the range of knowledge, skills, and expertise the household collective needed to carry out these tasks” (2018, 49).

Indeed, manuscript recipe collections authored by women are a reflection of their contribution to the field, their concerns and the world surrounding them. In this sense, they are paramount in the transmission and dissemination of knowledge within families and their social networks. They are also witnesses of the role of women in documenting, making and administering medicines in the home. Thus, Ferguson MS 43 showcases the female recipe collections’ ability to provide valuable information regarding eighteenth-century domestic medical practice and, more specifically, women’s contribution to it.

Like in many other cases in the Ferguson Collection, the volume is not included in big reference works and the only information available is that provided by the online catalogue of Glasgow University Library, where no further indication of authorship is given.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Lady Stanhope could be the compiler or the owner of the manuscript. This absence of information is in line with other household recipe books of the period, since, as noted by Leong,

[they] tend to lack contextual information in multiple senses. Many offer only recipe after recipe, with few additional instructions or clear articulations of historical actors’ intentions, ideas, and goals. Second, most manuscript recipe books now housed in libraries or archives have survived with little or no accompanying biographical information. Consequently we have scant knowledge about the creators, readers, and users of these texts, and it is difficult to locate the historical actors and spaces that shaped their creation. (Leong 2018, 14)

The volume under consideration, Ferguson MS 43, will be analysed from different perspectives. Firstly, the physical description with the codicological and

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<sup>2</sup> Thanks to the information provided by the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, several candidates to be this Lady Stanhope have been identified. For instance, Elizabeth Savile (d. 1708, wife of Philip Stanhope, third Earl of Chesterfield), Katherine (d. 1718, wife of Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield), Anne (d. 1719, wife of William Stanhope, first Earl of Harrington) and Lucy (d. 1723, wife of James Stanhope, first Earl of Stanhope). For a more detailed account of who this Lady Stanhope might have been, see De la Cruz-Cabanillas (2023, 29-33).



palaeographical features is presented to be followed by the spelling description to assess the degree of standardisation of the text. Secondly, the contents and the recipe structure will be examined to place the text in its proper social, cultural and linguistic context.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The present study has been carried out after having produced a semi-diplomatic edition of the text, which has been transcribed using the digitised images provided by Glasgow University Library together with an in-situ examination of the original manuscript (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2023). The tenets of semi-diplomatic editions have been followed, showing minimum editorial intervention to provide a reproduction of the original witness as accurate as possible. Subsequently, the following set of practices has been adopted: (a) foliation and lineation have been kept as in the source; (b) spelling, capitalisation and word division remain as in the original text; and (c) punctuation and paragraphing have been faithfully rendered.

Additionally, the software *AntConc* (Anthony 2020) has been used for the automatic retrieval of the instances, although manual disambiguation was required for the classification of several occurrences. Multiple searches have been carried out depending on the features to be analysed. The results were filtered manually, since the programme does not discriminate between alternative spellings for the same lexical unit. For instance, the word *fire*, can appear with <i>, <y> and also with double <f>. Disambiguation of meaning is also needed in cases like *tyme*, which appears ten times in the text, but on only two occasions the ingredient *thyme* is meant; the other occurrences correspond to the modern spelling *time*. Likewise, the category of the word needs to be revised by the researcher, since the programme does not establish the difference between word categories, inasmuch as the word *ground* can be used as a verb and as a noun in the text. The present analysis is based on a total of thirty-one recipes that amount up to 3,945 words.

## 3. STUDY OF FERGUSON MS 43

### 3.1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: CODICOLOGICAL AND PALAEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The manuscript under study is held in Glasgow University Library. It is a bound volume of thirty folios, fifteen of which are blank. The manuscript measures 19.5 by 15 cm and is written on paper with no watermarks. The paper has been lined in red to delimit the physical boundaries of the text, since all the margins have been clearly marked. As the lines are handwritten, the text box space within the lines differs slightly from page to page. The text is written in one single column and the number of lines per folio varies, being the average twenty lines, except for



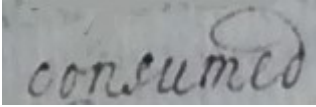


Figure 1. *consumed* (f. 3r).<sup>3</sup>

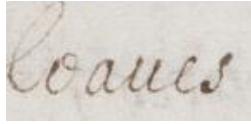


Figure 2. *leaves* (f. 15v).

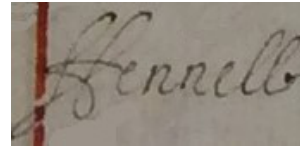


Figure 3. *ffennell* (f. 1v).

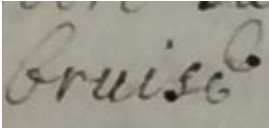


Figure 4. *bruise* (f. 3r).

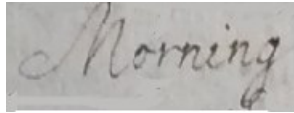


Figure 5. *Morning* (f. 12r).

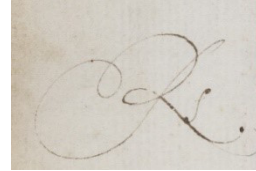


Figure 7. *R* for *Recipe* (f. 2v).

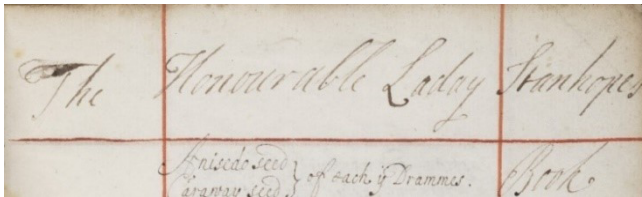


Figure 6. *The Honourable Lady Stanhopes | Book* (f. 2r).

folio 1r, which functions like a cover. The catalogue of Glasgow University Library indicates that the volume is early eighteenth century.

Regarding the script, it is written in a mixed cursive hand, combining italic and secretarial letter forms. The italic script with several particular features prevails, though some reminiscence of secretarial traits can be identified. Thus, the handwriting retains the letter <d> represented with a left-curved stem from secretarial hand, as in Figure 1 and the double-compartment <e>, which alternates with the cursive <e>. Both forms of <e> can be seen in the word *leaves*, in Figure 2.

Other characteristic features of Ferguson MS 43 are the letter <f>, distinguished from long <s> because of its medial horizontal stroke (Figure 3) and the letters <b> and <g> with a double lobe (Figures 4 and 5, respectively).

Marginal notes in Ferguson MS 43 are scarce. They are witnessed in a few instances in the manuscript. For example, there is an inscription at the top of the second folio that continues in the right margin indicating the owner of the volume written in a different hand (Figure 6).

The reader will also find the traditional abbreviation for the word *Recipe* on the left margin on folios 1v and 2v (Figure 7).

<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to the staff in the Special Collections Room at Glasgow University Library for their help during my visits to the library and for allowing me to transcribe from manuscript Ferguson 43 and to take images and reproduce them here. The copyright belongs to Glasgow University Library.



Likewise, each folio presents a catchword at the bottom right. This device is employed by the scribe to avoid mistakes in the sequence of the quires of the manuscript, since no foliation is observed. Thus, the scribe of Ferguson MS 43 follows this practice consistently all along the volume.

### 3.2. SPELLING: DISTRIBUTION OF GRAPHEMES

In this subsection, the degree of orthographic standardisation of Ferguson MS 43 will be assessed taking into account different aspects of the language, such as the distribution of graphemes. One of the main indicators of the degree of standardisation of Early Modern English texts is the complementary distribution of graphemes. Their regularisation occurred mostly during the seventeenth century, although their use was not normalised simultaneously. This fact will be observed in the analysis of the alternation of the graphemes <u> and <v>; <i> and <y>; <i> and <j>; and <ou> and <ow>.

#### 3.2.1. <u> and <v>

The use of <u> and <v> seems to correspond mainly to the common practice in Early Modern English, whereby both letters were used to represent a vocal and a consonant sound. On the one hand, <v> appears at the beginning of words with *untill* being the most frequent word (13x), but also in *vpon* (10x), *very*, *vp* and *vse* (7x each) or *vnder* (1x). On the other hand, <u> occurs in the middle, as in *haue* (4x), *fiue* and *giue* (3x each), *proued* (2x) and *grauel* (1x). However, in several cases both spellings can be found, as in *ouer* (6x) / *ouer* (1x). In turn, medial <v> is also witnessed in other examples, where medial <u> is not attested even once: *cover* (6x), *canvas* (2x), and *approved*, *evaporated*, *evening*, *everie*, *every*, *inveterate*, *ivy*, *liver* and *liverworte* (1x each). Taking the above-mentioned data into consideration, the standardisation of both graphemes seems to be an ongoing process, which still shows Early Modern English practices but also more recent uses.

#### 3.2.2. <i> and <y>

Ferguson MS 43 alternates the use of <i> and <y> in word-medial position in a number of items: *firefyre* (2x each) alternating with *ffire* (10x), *pipkin* (7x) / *pipkyn* (1x), *plaister* (1x) / *playster* (4x), and in initial position in *ivorielyvoirie* (1x each). In the other instances, the data suggest a regular standardised use of <i> when it occurs at the beginning of a word: *it* (185x), *in* (63x), *into* (36x), *is* (24x), *inveterate* (1x), *ivy* (1x) and in medial position in cases like *pinte* (8x), *white* (16x), *will* (9x), etc. but not in *strayne*, which appears 15x as a verb with this spelling and none with <i>. In turn, some lexical units only occur with <y> in medial positions, such as *oyle* (14x), *ayre* (5x), *slyced* and *synammon* (4x each). In word-final position



the use of <y> aligns with Present-Day English practice in *by, bay, day, dry, finely, gently, lay, may, quantity, slowly, they*, etc. with the exception of *every* and *very* that occur as *everie* and *verie*, respectively, on one occasion each.

### 3.2.3. <i> and <j>

Consonant <j> is always yielded as <i> in initial position, in cases like *iuiçe(s)* (5x), which alternates with *juice* (1x), *iulep* (2x), *iaundes/iaundies* (1x each), *Iohns*, *iugges* and *Iune* (1x each). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the use of <j> representing the sound /dʒ/ was established soon after 1630 (s.v. *J*). No instances of <j> in word-initial position in Ferguson MS 43 are found. On the contrary, letter <j> is found in final position in Latin words, *Christij, cusentj* and *nolj*, as well as to indicate numbers, as in *ij, iij, vij, xij*.

### 3.2.4. <ou> and <ow>

The French grapheme <ou> was adopted in English in the fourteenth century to represent the long vowel /u:/ (Scragg 1974, 47). Over time, the grapheme <u> was acquiring many different sound values and could appear to represent the various sounds that are nowadays conveyed by the digraphs <ou> and <ow>. This alternation of the digraphs <ou> and <ow> is witnessed in Ferguson MS 43 in the numeral *four*, which appears as *fower* (4x) and *foure* (1x). In other instances, one digraph or the other is present. Thus, *powder* appears 13x as a noun and 2x as a verb, whereas no form with <ou> is documented. The uses in the sequence <ow> correspond to the present practice: *downwarde, flowere, knowledge, marrowe, owne, strowe, towe, yellow*. The only exception is *howers* that only occurs with <ow>. Likewise, the use of <ou> is in line with the present practice in items such as *about, enough, fountayne, goute, ounce, out, pound, pretious, through* and *wound*, whereas several non-standardised practices are still observed in words like *bloud*. This spelling could be an indicator of the fact that the Early Modern English shortening of /u:/ in words like *flood* and *blood* was not completed at the time when the manuscript was produced or, at least, not in the specific variety of the scribe.

## 3.3. CONTENTS

The organisation of the contents of the recipes in Ferguson MS 43 does not follow the usual medieval arrangement, i.e., *de capita ad pedem* (i.e., from head to foot). The recipes seem to adopt no specific order. There are thirty recipes for diverse medical ailments and one more to bake a venison, which includes no medical instructions. At this time, humoral theory was giving ground to more evidence-based medicine. Accordingly, no indication of the humoral theory can be found in the collection, nor any sickness caused by the imbalance of humours. On the





Physicke Ale	1	ffor y <sup>e</sup> yellowe Iaundies ffor y <sup>e</sup> Iaundies	2
A yellow plaster called fflos vngentorum Oyntment called Flos Vnguentorum	2	For y <sup>e</sup> Wormes A Playster for y <sup>e</sup> Wormes	2
for y <sup>e</sup> Purge	1	A pretious drinke to comfort y <sup>e</sup> Stomake	1
ffor y <sup>e</sup> Glyster	1	A Receipt to open y <sup>e</sup> Stomake & Spleene	1
A Water to stay y <sup>e</sup> fflux	1	Another Medicine as good for a bruise if it be taken in tyme	1
A most Sovereaine greene oyntment good for all bruises, smellings, Ague sores, and aches y <sup>e</sup> be not inveterate	1	The Receipt for making Wound oyle	1
A Plaister for an Ache	1	To make y <sup>e</sup> White Salue excellent for all Wounds & Aches	1
A Receipt for a Consumption ffor a Consumption A Medicine for a Consumption	3	A Receipt to make y <sup>e</sup> blacke plaster	1
A Medicine for y <sup>e</sup> third third Ague	1	ffor y <sup>e</sup> hard bellye w <sup>ch</sup> Children are Subiect to	1
ffor the Stone ffor y <sup>e</sup> Stone Collicke or Grauell	2	A purging and clensing iulep	1
For a Canker	1	A Receipt of y <sup>e</sup> Rose perfume	1
To make a perfume to smell vnto against y <sup>e</sup> plague	1	A pretious Oyntment for a Woman nere her trauel	1

contrary, there are remedies for diseases rampant in the period, such as consumption, a form of tuberculosis, and other diseases which are of concern to women because they are suffered by them or by their children. Thus, the reader will find recipes for child delivery, but also for “ffor y<sup>e</sup> hard bellye w<sup>ch</sup> Children are Subiect to” (f. 13r). There is no clue to discern whether the collection was gathered from oral material, printed sources or other manuscripts, but in the period, it was common to shape the material according to the compiler’s interests. In this case, the needs and interests are in line with those of an early modern woman. This selection of the material evidences that “handwritten recipe compilations are to be seen as dynamic artifacts that are personalized to suit the creator’s needs” (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2020, 43). The reader finds the remedy for the ailment that is meant to be treated in the title. In Table 1, the purposes of the medical recipes and the number of recipes for them can be consulted.

As can be seen, the most frequent remedy is for consumption; recipes for the jaundice, worms and the stone and to make *fflos vngentorum* can be found on two occasions each. Bruises, aches and wounds also appear in different recipes. However, in some of the texts, the purpose is not stated. Thus, the reader should know what the *physicke ale* was used for, since no indication is given. Likewise, no medical specification of the purpose of the *blacke plaster* is offered. The absence of medical rationale is in line with Stobart’s (2016) observation for seventeenth-century



medical recipes, since they “focused almost exclusively on the making of medicinal preparations rather than providing explanations of mechanisms of action and medical theory” (2016, 29). In the same vein, the preparation of baked venison provides no clue as to whether the dish can have a medical restorative function. In another case, a cock is to be boiled with some other ingredients and the reader is instructed to drink the broth to treat consumption (f. 5r-5v). Like the broth just mentioned, most remedies in Ferguson MS 43 are prepared as liquids to be drunk, as plasters to be applied to a particular part of the body, as ointments to be smeared and as perfumes twice: a rose perfume and one specific for the pestilent odour of the plague.

### 3.4. THE RECIPE STRUCTURE

The recipe compilation in Ferguson MS 43 follows the usual stages found in this genre: title, ingredients, preparation, application and efficacy phrase. The titles have been shown above in Table 1 with the overriding presence of the formula of *for + noun phrase*, where the head noun corresponds to the name of the disease. The construction *to + infinitive + direct object* is also frequently attested, as well as only a noun phrase indicating the name of the remedy to be prepared (e.g., *a purging and cleansing iulep*). The structure *for + verb in -ing* is only witnessed in the cooking recipe: *for baking a venison*.

In terms of the ingredients found in the collection, they are particularly revealing for various reasons. We do not know whether Lady Stanhope was the author or compiler of the volume or the recipient, but the fact that her last name is preceded by the address term *Lady* places her in an upper-class environment. Furthermore, noble and gentry families were especially keen on documenting several pieces of information, as Leong claims (2018, 126) that “recipe writing was firmly a part of wider practices of household archiving.” Thus, recipe books can be considered primary sources for writing history.

Lady Stanhope’s social and economic position will be reflected in the ingredients to be used in the collection, since recipes are a clear example of the mixture of well-known herbs with a long therapeutic tradition and more lavish ingredients. Among the former, in Ferguson MS 43, around eighty herbs and derivatives from plants, such as resins, oils, etc., which were already present in medieval times, are identified (Table 2).<sup>4</sup>

Other ingredients were introduced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, the reader finds *Venice turpentine*, first recorded in 1577 by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and plants, gums and resins from Asia and the Americas, for instance, *Beniamin*, *cacha*, *carana*, *tackame-backa*.

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<sup>4</sup> For a recent study of medical herbs in Middle English, see De la Cruz-Cabanillas and Diego-Rodríguez (2022).





TABLE 2. PLANTS, FRUITS AND RESINS ALREADY IN USE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND.

agrimonie/agrimony (2x)	mayden-haire (2x)
almonds (1x)	nutmeg(g)(s) (5x)
aloes (1x)	olibanum 1x)
anisedo sedes/anniseeds (2x)	oringe (1x)
ashen keys (1x)	parsely (2x)
barberries (1x)	penywhite (1x)
berries (1x)	pepper (2x)
betony (1x)	per-rosin (1x)
borage (1x)	plantayne (3)
brome (1x)	polipodium (1x)
bruscus (rootes) (1x)	raysons (1x)
buglosse (1x)	red nettle (1x)
camomile (1x)	rhubarb/rubarbe (2x)
camphire (4x)	ribworte (1x)
camapiteos (1x)	rose (5x)/damaskes roses (1)
capers (1x)	rosemarie (4x)
caraway (1x)	rosin (4x)
carduus benedictus (2)	saffron (1x)/English saffron (1x)
cetrache (1x)	sage (2x)
ciuett (1x)	sanders (1x)
cloue (1x)	saxifrage (1x)
comfrey (2)	sena/sene (2x)
coriander (1x)	setwell (1x)
currans (1x)	shepheards purse (1x)
dates (1x)	southernwood (1x)
elder (1x)	St Iohns-wort (1x)
f(f)ennel (4x)	stone crap (1x)
ffumitorie (1x)	succory (1x)
frankinsence (3x)/ffrankinsense (1)	synammon (4x)/synamon (1x)
ginger (2x)	tamariske (1x)
ground ivy (1x)	turmericke (1x)
grunsell (1x)	turpentyne (3x)/turpentine (2x)
hasellnut (2x)	tyme (2x)
hay (2x)	valerian (1x)
hypeberryes (1x)	violet (1x)
knotgrasse (1x)	wheate cornes (1x)



lauender cotton (1x)	woodbyne (1x)
liverworte (1x)	wormwood (2x)
mace (3x)	zedoarie (2x)
margerom (1x)	

*Benjamin* refers to a gum benzoin and is also the name applied to three trees, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

(a) *Styrax benzoin*, the tree from which benzoin is obtained; a native of Sumatra, Borneo, etc.; (b) the *Benzoin odoriferum* or *Lindera Benzoin*, a North American shrub, which has an aromatic stimulant tonic bark, and berries yielding an oil of similar properties; called also Benjamin-bush and in U.S. Benjamin; (c) sometimes applied to *Ficus Benjamina*. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

In turn, *cacha* is “a name given to several astringent substances, containing from 40 to 55 per cent of tannin, which are obtained from the bark, wood, or fruits of various Eastern trees and shrubs. They are used in medicine, and in tanning, calico printing, and dyeing” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *cutch*). Finally, *carana* and *tackame-hacka* are both resins from the Americas. The former is obtained from a West Indian tree (*Bursera acuminata*) and the latter was originally yielded by a Mexican tree, *Bursera (Elaphrium) tomentosa*, and later extended in the West Indies and South America to similar resins obtained from other species of *Bursera* (s.v. *tacamahac*, *tacamahaca*).

Obviously, these gums and resins were not available to any patient. This idea is in line with Allen’s claim, whereby “the fashionability of a disease was inherently tied to the medical advice and treatment a wealthy individual was able to access” (2017, 335). Thus, the fact that the recipes were elaborated to be produced in a well-off household is also evidenced in the use of other ingredients. The reader finds *ivory*, *gold* and other elements like *sperma ceti* and *musk*. *Sperma ceti* is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “a fatty substance, which in a purified state has the form of a soft white scaly mass, found in the head (and to some extent in other parts) of the sperm-whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) and some other whales and dolphins.” *Musk* is “a reddish brown substance with a strong, persistent odour secreted by a gland of the male musk deer, esp. *Moschus moschiferus*, and highly prized in perfumery. Also: any of various substances secreted by other mammals, esp. for scent marking” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Both were known in the Middle Ages and so was *mastic*, which is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as

[a]n aromatic gum or resin which exudes from the bark of the lentisk or mastic tree, *Pistacia lentiscus* [...], used chiefly in making varnishes and, formerly, in medicine (also *mastic gum*). Also with distinguishing word: any of various similar resins derived from other trees. Mastic is generally sold in the form of roundish, pea-



sized tears, transparent with a pale yellow or faint greenish tinge. It is produced almost exclusively on the Greek island of Chios in the Aegean Sea. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

Likewise, another product which is exclusively produced in one specific area of France is *Burgoine pitch*, first recorded in 1678 in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *Burgundy*), which explains that this resinous substance “is still chiefly obtained from the neighbourhood of Neufchâtel, which was once Burgundian territory. So French *poix de Bourgogne*.” Along with these expensive ingredients, we find wines like *malmsey*, *muscatel* and *sack*.

The ingredients appear as part of the preparation stage where the presence of the verb *take* is overwhelming. Other verbs frequently found in this section are *mingle*, *mix*, *pound*, *put*, *slice*, *wash*, etc. In the instructions provided to get the proper combination of ingredients, the appearance of technical implements is common. Apart from well-known containers, such as *bowls*, *cups*, *dishes*, *glasses*, *kettles*, *mortars*, *pots*, *pans* and *saucers*, other implements like *knife*, *spoon*, *strainer*, etc. are mentioned. Some of the objects are not so commonly found today, for they are considered obsolete or archaic by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For instance, *chaffer*: “A vessel for heating something: (a) A vessel for heating water, a saucepan; (b) a portable grate, a chafing-dish.” Likewise, *pipkin* is defined as “[a] small (usually earthenware) pot or pan. Also: a drinking vessel; a bottle.” Another container, especially for liquids is *pottle* “[a] pot, tankard, or similar container, (usually) *spec.* one having the capacity of a pottle.” Additionally, among the cutting instruments, *trencher* could be understood as such, but it has other meanings: (a) *plate* (Yeoman 2017) and (b) *slice of bread*. The latter proves more appropriate taking into account the context: “then crush out all y<sup>e</sup> Moysture betweene 2. Trenchers, strowe some powder of Aloes vpon y<sup>e</sup> Plaster, and renewe it Morning & Evening” (f. 12r).

This section is followed by the application stage, which is characterised by the presence of vocabulary related to body parts. In the text, several parts of the body are mentioned: the head, the brain, the ears, the navel, the sinews, the wrists, among others. The linguistic realisation of this stage is carried out by means of verbs in the imperative mood. In Ferguson MS 43 the verbs in this section are *apply*, *anoint*, *drink* or *put* depending on the remedy. The dosage and duration of treatment are usually indicated by means of time and metrical units. Thus, this section instructs the reader on how to use the remedy with the verb of the sentence in the imperative: “and giue it y<sup>e</sup> partie three Mornings together” (f. 8r) or with a more attenuated form: “may be taken two spoonfulls everie <sup>other</sup> day” (f. 13v). The instructions can be very precise in terms of the suitable time to administer the remedy: “drinke of it in y<sup>e</sup> Morninge fasting, and at foure of y<sup>e</sup> Clocke in y<sup>e</sup> afternoone” (f. 2r-2v). On some other occasions, even if the time is specified through a sequence of events, it seems difficult to apply, given the fact that the patient needs to predict when the fit will occur: “binde it to yo<sup>r</sup> Wrists halfe an hower before y<sup>e</sup> fitt cometh” (f. 6v).

The final stage of recipes is the efficacy phrase, a tag phrase to indicate that the remedy is effective. In the medieval period, it was common to find formulas and routine idioms often given in Latin (Taavitsainen 2001, 104). Thus, *sanabitur* and



*probatum est* were frequently attested in medieval remedybooks, but other set phrases could also be found in English, such as “he will be whole.” In Ferguson MS 43 two efficacy phrases are registered in: “This hath byn often proued and hath holpen a great many of my owne knowledgē” (f. 6v) and “hath bin proued, but yo<sup>u</sup> must not putt in y<sup>e</sup> Oyle vntill it be boyled. I dare warrant it to helpe any bruise” (f. 9v).

When discussing the structural pattern of the genre, Lehto and Taavitsainen (2019) claim that “in the eighteenth century the scheme is no longer followed to the same extent as before and the efficacy phrases, for example, did not survive” (2019, 284). Instead, free formulas can be found. All in all, they do not appear in Ferguson MS 43 on a regular basis. Only once the efficacy phrase is witnessed formulated with a verb in the future tense. Thus, in a recipe entitled “For y<sup>e</sup> Wormes,” the efficacy phrase states that “it will destroy all manner of Wormes” (f. 8r).

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present article aims to acknowledge recipe books as important historical witnesses of women’s writings. In this sense, the recognition of the unique contribution of recipe books authored or compiled by women is underscored, as well as the expansion of the understanding of the history of medicine through the consideration of the genre. Recipe books bear witness to a practice in which women’s official role is greatly restricted to early modern social norm, where housewives were responsible for the wealth of the members of the household. This specific role of women is examined in an early eighteenth-century recipe book, Ferguson MS 43, focusing on both palaeographic, and linguistic and structural features.

Lady Stanhope’s recipe book is representative of other household recipe books in early modern England. Consequently, linguistically speaking the text under study conforms to the practices expected in Early Modern English recipe collections, especially in the personalisation of the contents to reflect the individual interests of its owner. Selecting those materials, the author created a personalised recipe collection suited to their needs. In this way, the manuscript reveals itself as a dynamic artefact whose contents can be modified and accrued. In fact, the blank pages in the volume could be left for future additions.

Linguistically speaking, the examination of the manuscript demonstrates that the standardisation process is not fully completed in this text. The scribe’s spelling shows major tendencies from the two previous centuries but is far from being fixed. In fact, the use of the graphemes <u> and <v>, <i> and <y>, and <i> and <j> presents practices compatible with old traditions and certain level of standardisation as well.

As for the textual organisation, the recipes are structured in the usual stages: the title stage, showing the purpose of the remedy, is realised by means of different linguistic formulas. After this, the contents are examined thoroughly to demonstrate that the household practice in the eighteenth century is heavily rooted in the medieval tradition, due to the great number of herbs that were already used in the Middle Ages to prepare medicines. All in all, the contents of this section show



innovative elements, such as the introduction of new plants and their derivatives found in the New World, such as *carana* and *tackame-hacka*. Along with these new ingredients, the recipes contain other items not easily available to any patient, such as *gold*, *ivory* or foreign wines. The introduction of such elements evidences the fact that the recipe collection was compiled for a prosperous home.

The third stage is the preparation phase, which shows continuity from previous methods and so does the application stage. Unlike these two sections, the efficacy phrase has little presence in the recipe collection. This fact is in line with the findings in other scholars' studies (for instance, Lehto and Taavitsainen 2019, 284) that mention the absence or gradual disappearance of the formula as a specific trait of the period.

Ferguson MS 43 proves to be a valuable recipe collection to better understand both the eighteenth-century linguistic usages and domestic medical culture, particularly in terms of female engagement with the text. Nonetheless, there is still much work left to do, including more detailed research on its authorship and textual transmission to find the sources of the material or other witnesses containing similar recipes.

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# THE EXTENT OF FIRE DAMAGE TO MIDDLE ENGLISH PROSE IN THE COTTON LIBRARY\*

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## ABSTRACT

The library of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (1570/1-1631) has been described as the most important collection of manuscripts assembled by a single person in Britain. The collection was partly destroyed in a library fire in 1731. While the Cotton collection has been celebrated (and the damage it suffered lamented) for its Old English manuscripts, the extent of fire damage to Middle English prose within the collection has not been systematically explored. This article aims to address this gap by conducting a comprehensive comparison of surviving manuscripts which are now part of the Cotton collection in the British Library with surviving pre- and post-fire catalogues, book lists and reports of Cotton's manuscripts. The investigation was undertaken during the compilation of an *Index of Middle English Prose (IMEP)* volume dedicated to the Cotton collection.

KEYWORDS: Middle English, *Index of Middle English Prose*, Manuscript Studies, Cotton library, bibliography.

## EL ALCANCE DEL DAÑO POR FUEGO EN LA PROSA EN INGLÉS MEDIO DE LA BIBLIOTECA COTTON

## RESUMEN

La biblioteca de Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (1570/1-1631) ha sido descrita como la colección de manuscritos más importante reunida por una sola persona en Gran Bretaña. La colección fue parcialmente destruida en un incendio en 1731. Si bien la colección Cotton ha sido celebrada (y el daño que sufrió, lamentado) por sus manuscritos en inglés antiguo, el alcance del daño causado por el fuego en la prosa en inglés medio de la colección no se ha estudiado sistemáticamente. Este artículo tiene como objetivo abordar dicho vacío mediante una comparación exhaustiva de los manuscritos que sobrevivieron y que ahora forman parte de la colección Cotton en la Biblioteca Británica con los catálogos, listas de libros e informes, existentes antes y después del incendio, de los manuscritos de Cotton. La investigación se llevó a cabo durante la compilación de un volumen para el *Index of Middle English Prose (IMEP)* dedicado a la colección Cotton.

PALABRAS CLAVE: inglés medio, *Index of Middle English Prose*, estudios de manuscritos, biblioteca Cotton, bibliografía.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The library collected by Sir Robert Bruce Cotton (1570/1-1631), a politician, an antiquarian and one of the central figures of Renaissance England, along with his two descendants, was partly destroyed in a notorious library fire in 1731. The Cotton collection is particularly renowned for its Old English (OE) and early medieval Anglo-Latin manuscripts, which have been extensively studied in relation to fire losses (e.g., Kiernan 1981; Keynes 1996; Dunning, Hudson and Duffy 2018). However, the collection also includes a considerable number of texts written in what we now call Middle English (ME), encompassing especially documentary texts and historical chronicles. Unlike OE, there has been no systematic survey to assess the extent of ME prose lost in the library fire. This article aims to address this gap in scholarship and present a comprehensive investigation into the loss of ME prose within the Cotton collection.

I have undertaken this work as a part of the EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action *Index of Middle English Prose: Digital Cotton Catalogue Project*. The *Index of Middle English Prose (IMEP)* is the main reference tool for ME non-verse texts. Its objective is to comprehensively locate and identify all surviving English prose texts composed between c. 1200 and 1500 (see Rand 2014). The present survey is a byproduct of my archival work. It aims to answer two main questions:

- (1) Which ME prose works were completely lost due to fire damage or survive only as fragments?
- (2) Which ME prose works suffered damage resulting in the loss of certain portions, but remain partially readable?

The article will provide a useful source of information for people working with ME prose in the Cotton collection. Additionally, it will be of interest to anyone seeking knowledge about the collection itself and the repercussions of the library fire.

The paper is structured as follows. Subsection 2.1 presents the Cotton library. In subsections 2.2 and 2.3, the available pre-fire sources are discussed. The main post-fire sources used in this study are presented in subsection 2.4. Subsection 2.5 discusses the definition of ME and prose, which form the foundation of the present study. The focus of section 3 is on fire damage. Subsection 3.1 describes the overall extent of damage across different shelfmarks. Subsection 3.2 presents a list of ME prose works that were either lost completely or only survive as fragments. Subsection 3.3 lists ME prose works that experienced text loss but remain partially readable. Finally, section 4 concludes with insights into how much was lost and what it tells us about the Cotton collection.

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## 2. EVIDENCE FOR COTTON'S MANUSCRIPTS

### 2.1. OUR MAIN SOURCES FOR THE COTTON COLLECTION

The Cotton library was owned and looked after by the Cotton family for three generations before becoming one of three founding collections of the British Museum (together with the Sloane and Harley collections). After the death of Sir Robert Cotton, the collection passed on to his son, Sir Thomas Cotton (1594-1662), and then to his grandson Sir John Cotton (1621-1702), both of whom added more manuscripts to the collection. On his death in 1702, Sir John donated the collection to Great Britain. As Great Britain would not have a national library until fifty years later, the manuscripts were placed under the custody of a board of trustees and moved between temporary storage locations, including the ominously named Ashburnham House, which is where the fire took place in 1731. After the fire and quick restoration efforts in the following months, the surviving manuscripts and fragments were put into temporary storage for twenty more years in Westminster School until 1753, when the British Museum was founded.<sup>1</sup> All these stages left behind records which can give us an idea of what was in the collection both before the fire and in its immediate aftermath. Unfortunately, neither pre- nor post-fire sources give us the complete picture.

The sources used in this study, both pre- and post-fire, encompass the following materials. The pre-fire sources comprise handwritten catalogues by Robert and Thomas Cotton themselves or their librarians.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, there are miscellaneous records such as loan slips, memoranda and correspondence pertaining to the collection. Most importantly, a printed catalogue by Rev. Thomas Smith ([1696] 1984), an Oxford scholar employed as a librarian by John Cotton, is also included among the pre-fire sources.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the patchy pre-fire sources, I also consulted a number of post-fire sources. These sources include parliamentary reports on the fire damage, published in 1732, immediately following the fire, as well as reports from 1756 related to the foundation of the British Museum. Furthermore, a 1777 subject catalogue of the collection by Hooper<sup>4</sup> (1777) and a comprehensive catalogue by

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed account, see Prescott (1997, 391-400).

<sup>2</sup> Seven of these have been edited by Tite (2003): London, British Library, Harley MS 6018; Cambridgeshire, County Record Office, DR588/Z1; London, British Library, Harley MS 1879; London, British Library Additional MSS 35213 and 5161; London, British Library, Cotton Appendix MS XLV; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Smith MS 124.

<sup>3</sup> A digitised copy is available online at the British Library (BL) website: [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_uUAv2HzUGxgC](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_uUAv2HzUGxgC). A facsimile edition was published by Tite (Smith [1696] 1984) with the introductory essays translated from Latin into English.

<sup>4</sup> A digitised copy is available at the BL website: <https://archive.org/details/acataloguemanus00astlgoog>.



Joseph Planta from 1802<sup>5</sup> were consulted. I also had available to me the unfinished draft for the *IMEP* Cotton volume by Brian Donaghey, who was working on the collection before his unfortunate passing in 2015. Additionally, a work-in-progress catalogue by Julian Harrison, the Lead Curator of pre-1500 manuscripts, was graciously provided for consultation.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, modern scholarship on the manuscripts has been valuable, particularly the contributions of Tite (1980, 1992, 2003) and Prescott (1997).

## 2.2. HANDWRITTEN LISTS

During the lifetime of Sir Robert, and to a lesser degree that of his son and grandson, the Cotton library was a changing and evolving collection. Investigations into what was lost in the Cotton library fire are never straightforward as books were constantly added and removed, either on temporary loan or donated to someone.

Sir Robert was known as a forthcoming and well-connected collector, who was happy to show his library to scholars and lend out his books (Sharpe 1997, 9). His library was also located very centrally, especially after he purchased a house right next to the Parliament in Westminster (see Sharpe [1979] 2002, chapter 3; Tite 1992). Cotton was, however, not the most meticulous of librarians. He did not have a consistent system for keeping track of books that he added to his library or lent out to others, although he seems to have been aware of the need for such a resource towards the end of his life, since he promised in 1622 to send a catalogue of his books to Bishop Ussher when it was ready (cf. Sharpe 1997, 3). Unfortunately, no complete catalogue from Sir Robert's time has survived, leaving behind only a number of incomplete book lists.

The earliest and most substantial record of books from Sir Robert's lifetime is preserved in Harley 6018, ff. 147-191v (Tite 2003, 31-73). It is a collection of various shorter lists detailing the books that Cotton possessed, had lent out or was anticipating receiving. It contains a total of 413 entries, which represents less than half of the 958 volumes that were present in the library at the time of the 1731 fire (Tite 1980, 146-147; Sharpe 1997, 3).

According to Sharpe (1997, 3), Harley 6018 may have served as an unfinished draft for the catalogue that Cotton had been planning. However, it could be more accurately described as a collection of memoranda and ad hoc lists related to the library, lacking the intentional cataloguing principles aimed at achieving a full catalogue. The pages of Harley 6018 are on separate mounted leaves, and their original order has become impossible to ascertain (Tite 2003, 5). To complicate matters

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<sup>5</sup> A digitised copy is available at the BL website: <https://archive.org/details/ACatalogueOfTheManuscripts1802>.

<sup>6</sup> I am grateful to Dr Julian Harrison for his help during my time working at the BL in autumn 2021.



further, the manuscripts were not yet organised according to the famous emperor shelfmark system, which was only adopted in the final years of Sir Robert's life.

Among the other handwritten catalogues, there are several shorter ones, each with its own focus or specialisation. Cambridgeshire, County Record Office, DR588/Z1 (Tite 2003, 73-74), primarily lists historical materials related to Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, reflecting Cotton's own origins and research interests. BL Add. 5161, ff. 1r-9v (Tite 2003, 80), is a list of monastic cartularies and muniments in the Cotton library. The items are in alphabetical order, but also record the emperor shelfmarks next to the entries. Tite (2003, 80) dates the list to 1638-1639.

BL Harley 1879, f. 10v (Tite 2003, 74-76), contains a one-page list entitled "Books I want [...]," listing titles formerly in the collection of Lord Lumley (d. 1609), which had become available after his death. Additionally, f. 108v in the same MS contains a brief crossed-out list of five books that Sir Robert had lent out, along with a memorandum of six books that he had had bound in August 1612. BL Add. 35213, ff. 33r-77v (Tite 2003, 76-80), comprises a range of bibliographical records, including acquisitions for the Cotton library, but also contains "fragments or preparatory sections of catalogues, gathered together [...] in seemingly random fashion" (Tite 2003, 10).

Finally, there are two lists documenting items borrowed out from the collection. BL Cotton Appendix XLV, ff. 1-7 (Tite 2003, 80-89), records loans from Thomas Cotton's library between 1638 and 1661. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Smith MS 124 (Tite 2003, 5, 89-90) lists volumes borrowed by Thomas Smith, the author of the first printed catalogue, between 1662 and 1673. Except for Harley 6018 and the very miscellaneous Add. 35213 (which also includes titles not in the Cotton library), these lists are relatively short, consisting of only a handful of leaves.

### 2.3. THE FIRST PRINTED CATALOGUE

The first and only pre-fire catalogue intended to cover the whole collection was published in 1696 by Rev. Thomas Smith, an Oxford scholar, working as a librarian for Sir Robert's grandson, Sir John Cotton. This printed book is organised according to the emperor shelfmarks, with the majority of them still corresponding to the current arrangement, even if the occasional manuscript has changed its place. Unfortunately, Smith's work is not without omissions. It lists approximately 6,200 items, which is considerably fewer than the number listed by Planta (1802).<sup>7</sup> What is more, some of the missing items are among the most well-known ones in the collection today.

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<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of the additional items are correspondence and other documentary texts, which Planta (1802) catalogues meticulously. The Cotton collection contains thousands of documentary items from the sixteenth century, to the extent that it has been described as the site of state papers from the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.



To illustrate this, we can take a closer look at Vitellius A XV (example 1) and Nero A X (example 2). Smith's description of the last three items in Vitellius A XV (Smith [1696] 1984, 83) reads as follows:

#### Example 1

4. Dialogus inter Saturnum & Solomonem, Saxonice.  
'Dialogue between Saturn and Solomon, in Saxon.'
5. Translatio epistolarum Alexandri ad Aristotelem, cum picturis de monstrosis animalibus Indiæ, Saxonice.  
'Translation of Alexander's letter to Aristotle, with pictures of the monstrous animals of India, in Saxon.'
6. Fragmentum de Juditha & Holopherne, Saxonice.  
'A fragment of Judith and Holophernes, in Saxon.'  
Præmittitur annotatio brevis de expugnatione Caleti per R. Edwardum.  
'Preceded by a brief annotation of the capture of Calais by King Edward.'

The description of Nero A X (Smith [1696] 1984, 49-50) reads:

#### Example 2

3. Poema in lingua veteri Anglicana, in quo sub insomnii figmento, ad religionem, pietatem, & vitam probam hortatur Auctor; interspersis quibusdam historicis, & picturis, majoris illustrationis gratia, subinde additis.  
'A verse composition in old English language, in which under the guise of a dream, the author exhorts towards religion, piety, and good life; interspersed from time to time with explanations [histories?] and pictures added for greater clarity.'

Smith's description of Vitellius A XV completely overlooks *Beowulf*, which is situated between his items 5, *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, and 6, *Judit*. Moreover, his description of Nero A X combines all of the ME poems in the manuscript together into a single item in the description, without any mention of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.<sup>8</sup> The likely reason for such omissions was that Smith did not hold particular interest in these works. It is also possible that, as a clergyman, he was more proficient in Latin and Greek than in OE. While the exclusion of *Beowulf* may be perplexing—as Smith does value OE and speaks highly of Cotton's role in saving manuscripts from destruction caused by Henry VIII's dissolution of monasteries (cf. Smith 1696 [1984], 47-51)—it is plausible that he held outright contempt for the works of the Gawain poet. Smith expresses his disdain for some contents of the collection in his introductory essay:

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<sup>8</sup> Tite (2003, 131) notes that Harley 6018 seems to refer to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* with the line *Gesta Arthurii regis et aliorum versu anglico* ['Deeds of King Arthur and others in English verse'].



There is entertainment too for the frivolous with time to spare, ready to waste a few hours reading the dreams of madmen whose wanton minds composed love stories or who babbled about unknown events due to occur in future ages, about the overthrow of empires, changes in royal families, wars, pestilence, floods and the end of the world. [...] There is such abundance of visions and prophecies of this sort in the library that I cannot tell if one is more inclined to burst out laughing or to grieve in pity or to blaze in anger, wondering how lies so dense could be thrust on the credulous populace or how the makers and sellers of trash could sink to such folly and shame. (Smith [1696] 1984, 58)

These omissions serve as a reminder to exercise caution when using Smith as a source. Still, despite its shortcomings, Smith's account remains, by far, the most complete description of the contents of the Cotton collection during the time of Cotton's grandson, which was also the time when new manuscripts ceased to be added to the library.

The problems related to working with the handwritten catalogues are even greater for the reasons discussed above. Harley 6018 is incomplete, bound in the wrong order, and employs a different shelfmark system. The other handwritten catalogues are very short and primarily focus on specific items of interest such as monastic cartularies or documentary texts related to areas near Cotton's Huntingdonshire estates. Lists of manuscripts borrowed out of the Cotton library typically refer only to the item in which the borrower was interested, even though it may have been bound together with other texts.

Scholarship in recent decades has highlighted how much the Cotton library was a working library and an ever-evolving collection. In particular, the research conducted by Tite (1980, 1992, 2003) has greatly contributed to our understanding of how the library's contents changed over time. Tite's extensive work involved the identification of many of the books described in the handwritten catalogues. However, this is inherently challenging for a study like the present one, which focuses on items likely to have been lost. The reason is that identification of a codex described with a different shelfmark relies on the existence of a surviving codex that matches the description. If that particular codex was destroyed in the fire, its identification through this method becomes problematic if not impossible.

Moreover, the evolving nature of the Cotton collection means that the absence of a particular title does not necessarily indicate its destruction in the fire. While Sir Robert actively sought to acquire new books for his library, he was not overly protective of the ones that he already possessed. This is evident in the fact that several books once part of the Cotton collection are now housed in other libraries (Tite 1992). The contents of the Cotton library in 1631, at the time of Sir Robert's death, differed from those in 1731 when the fire occurred. Consequently, if no item in the current Cotton collection matches items in handwritten lists, it does not necessarily mean that it perished in the fire. It is possible that it is now housed in a different collection, such as the present-day Harley or Royal collections.



Considering all these factors, Smith's catalogue remains the most reliable foundation for the current investigation. It provides a description of the collection close to the time when it ceased to function as a working library.

#### 2.4. POST-FIRE SOURCES

The earliest sources available after the fire are the reports conducted in 1731-1732 and 1756, which will be discussed in more detail in subsection 3.1. The first catalogue after the foundation of the British Library was a subject catalogue by Hooper (1777). This catalogue heavily relied on Smith's publication but has been found to be of limited usefulness when working with the collection. Hooper has a specific heading for *Libri historici saxonici* ['Historical Saxon books'] but not for ME. While he does have categories for different languages in subjects such as romances, it is unclear whether the term *anglice* ['in English'] refers to ME or Early Modern English (see subsection 2.5 below).

The most complete catalogue of Cotton manuscripts was started by Joseph Planta in 1792 and published in 1802. Planta was critical of what he perceived as deficiencies in Smith's catalogue and the overall lack of organisation in the collection, as the manuscripts were not arranged according to subject matter or author (Prescott 1997, 401). As a cataloguer, Planta was intrusive, adding a new set of folio numbers to existing manuscripts and "then proceeded to examine [...] bundles in cases" and arranged "several volumes and parts of volumes of State Papers" (Planta 1802, xiv). Planta was dismissive of manuscripts he was unable to restore, regarding them as "obscure tracts and fragments of little or no importance" (1802, xiv), even though later restorations revealed some of them as important and unique (cf. Prescott 1997, 401). However, he was fairly meticulous in his treatment of documentary texts such as letters and legal documents.

#### 2.5. MIDDLE ENGLISH PROSE: DEFINITION

The present survey focuses on texts written in *Middle English* and *prose*. For a systematic survey, we need to define these terms, which, fortunately, is fairly straightforward, thanks to the prior resources available on ME verse and OE. The definition of ME used in this study is the same as in *IMEP*, that is, "non-verse texts" copied between 1200 and 1500 (see Rand 2014, vi). The *IMEP* allows for the inclusion of texts that predate 1200 or were copied after 1500 if they are not covered by other standard reference works. The purpose of the *IMEP* is to complement Ker's (1957) *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* and the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse (DIMEV)*. Any works already catalogued in these resources are excluded.

Nonetheless, including copies of ME texts made after 1500 remains something of a grey area. In the case of the Cotton volume of the *IMEP*, the decision was made not to include post-1500 copies of ME items due to the extensive





number of transcriptions made by Cotton and other antiquarians. However, these transcriptions are invaluable for the survival of medieval works. It is in this way that the *Battle of Maldon*, the *Runic Poem* and Asser's *Life of King Alfred* have survived to us. Some manuscripts even survive as Early Modern facsimiles, such as those made of Otho A I (see Keynes 1996, figure 6). On the subject of ME, Otho A XVIII contained four poems by Geoffrey Chaucer,<sup>9</sup> which were completely lost to the fire, but survive as transcriptions by William Thomas in 1721, as well as in at least ten other MS witnesses. Whenever Early Modern transcriptions survive for ME prose items, I will note them in my subsequent list.

While defining ME prose may be straightforward, our understanding of OE and especially ME does not fully align with that used by Cotton or Smith.<sup>10</sup> The preferred term for OE was *Saxon* or *Anglo-Saxon* until the twentieth century. Although the core of the seventeenth-century *Saxon* canon fits well with our current understanding of OE canon (see Fletcher 2021, chapter 1), it would also include texts that we now classify as early ME such as the *Ormulum* (Dekker 2018). Moreover, the preferred term for our ME tends to be *old English*. Neither Smith nor Planta employ a consistent system for recording the language of each item. Sometimes they explicitly state the language, using the word *Saxonice* ['in Saxon'] for items copied in OE (example 1), while what we now call ME is referred to as *lingua veteri Anglicana* ['old English language'] (example 2) or *old English*, as evidenced by example 3.

Example 3: Smith's description of Vitellius D XV (Smith [1696] 1984, 94)

4. The life of Gilbert, Founder of the Order of Sempringham: translated by Frere John Capgrave, 1432. in old English.

This, however, is not the only way in which Smith and Planta can indicate the choice of language. Sometimes, they change the language with the entry, describing Latin texts in Latin and English texts in English. Nonetheless, English can also be described in Latin, as in examples 1 and 2. While both Smith and Planta often follow a consistent system for consecutive manuscripts, it is not maintained throughout their entire catalogues. The impression is that they may have followed one practice on a given day but did not adhere to a consistent style sheet for the whole catalogue. Nevertheless, when searching for ME prose texts that were lost to fire, the most reliable source of information is Smith's shift from Latin to English when describing entries or labelling an item as "old English."

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<sup>9</sup> Smith ([1696] 1984, 69), Otho A XVIII, 24. A Ballade made Geffrey Chaucer upon his death-bed, lying in his anguish, 25. Ballade ryall, made by Chaucer, 26. Chaucer's ballade to his purse, 27. Cantus Troili, 28. Pictura Galfridi Chauceri. *DIMEV* numbers 1326-16; 4990-8; 5249-7 and 6044-9.

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Dr Rachel Fletcher for her comments on the definitions of Old and Middle English in Cotton's time.





### 3. FIRE DAMAGE

#### 3.1. THE EXTENT OF THE FIRE DAMAGE

To determine the number of Cotton manuscripts that were lost in the fire, it is helpful to start with the official reports from the eighteenth century. The first and most detailed report was conducted by a parliament committee immediately after the fire in October 1731 and submitted in January 1732, three months later (Prescott 1997, 391). According to the report, “the Cotton library contained before the fire 958 manuscript volumes, of which 114 were ‘lost, burnt or intirely spoiled’ and another 98 so damaged as to be defective” (Prescott 1997, 391). While these numbers are very precise, they do not reflect the present state of the collection. The majority of the 114 codices reported as completely lost have since been successfully restored and are available for consultation, even if some of their contents may have been lost due to damage (1997, 391). What is more, there are manuscripts that were damaged in the fire, but are not listed in the report. To use the most famous fire victim as an example, the ‘*Beowulf* manuscript,’ Cotton Vitellius A XV, is not among the ninety-eight listed as defective.

Subsequent reports were carried out in 1756, when the collection was assessed by officials from the British Museum during its founding, using Smith’s catalogue as the basis of comparison (Prescott 1997, 397). These reports stated that the manuscripts in ten of the presses (Julius, Augustus, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Cleopatra, Faustina and the Appendix) had “suffered nothing by the fire” and were “found to agree with Mr Smith’s catalogue” (Prescott 1997, 397). They also reported the inability to locate some of the items described in the previous report and the possibility that some manuscripts reported as damaged could still be restored. On the other hand, they reported that the following five shelfmarks had suffered the most damage: Tiberius, Caligula, Galba, Otho and Vitellius. This list corresponds to the most heavily damaged ME manuscripts listed in subsections 3.2 and 3.3. However, it also has to be noted that the fire damage was not concentrated evenly within these shelfmarks.

Even among the badly burned shelfmarks, there are unaffected codices. For instance, Vitellius A XVI remains largely intact, with no visible fire damage affecting the legibility of its pages, despite being located right next to the Nowell Codex, Vitellius A XV, which contains *Beowulf*. In fact, the damage appears somewhat random. One possible reason for this is that the manuscripts were not in perfect order, as they had been moved twice in the decades between the death of Sir John Cotton in 1702 and the Ashburnham House fire in 1731.

Finally, it should be noted that medieval manuscripts often have missing leaves or may have suffered other types of damage. As this study focuses on the effects of fire damage, other types of damage are not included. In subsections 3.2 and 3.3, the manuscripts are listed in the traditional order, which follows a chronological arrangement for the twelve emperors, followed by the two imperial ladies, Cleopatra and Faustina, as well as the Appendix and Fragments. When identifying works surviving in multiple copies, I will make reference to standard reference works



such as the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse (DIMEV)*, the *Index of Printed Middle Prose (IPMEP)* and *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500 (Manual)*. I will refer to the *IPMEP* citing text number and to the *Manual* citing volume, page and text numbers. For texts which are included in the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (LALME)* (McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin 1986), I will give the linguistic profile (LP) numbers.

### 3.2. BADLY DAMAGED OR LOST MIDDLE ENGLISH PROSE TEXTS

After successful restorations, the current count of manuscripts considered completely lost in the library fire is actually as low as thirteen (cf. Prescott 1997, 391; Dunning, Hudson and Duffy 2018, 8).<sup>11</sup> Most manuscripts that were once considered lost have been restored, although many of them now only consist of a few charred leaves on separate paper mounts. If a text survives only in a few badly damaged fragments or was completely lost despite other sections of the manuscript surviving, it will also be included in this section.

*Caligula D IV.* The manuscript contains primary documents related to dealings between England and France from the reign of Henry IV. Unfortunately, it was badly damaged in the fire and hardly any of the items are legible. Planta (1802, 153) notes: “Fragments of divers papers relating to the affairs of the English dominions in France; chiefly in French and of the time of Henry IV. K. of England. This MS consisted originally of 150 leaves, of which only 70 are now left, and there so much burnt and defaced as hardly to be of any use.” The majority of the contents are not in English, but fragments of English letters survive on ff. 94-95, addressed to the Chancellor and Treasurer of England in 1405, and f. 111, dated to 17 January 1407. A bilingual letter fragment with the address terms in English and the main text in French is on f. 29. It was written on the 24<sup>th</sup> day, but the month and year are too damaged to read.

*Caligula D V* is a collection of primary sources on Henry V's campaigns in France. Like the previous MS, this one is also badly damaged. Fortunately, Robert Sanderson, Clerk of the Rolls (d. 1741), made a number of transcriptions of these primary documents before the fire. These include p. 141, “Extract from Cotton MS *Caligula D. v.*, viz. letter of R – Priour to [Robert Frye] that the meeting of the Kings (see art. 18 i) is postponed, that the ambassadors going to Paris were attacked by the Dauphin's men, etc.; Vernon, 11 May [1419]. Original now lost. f. 94” (*British*

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<sup>11</sup> According to the British Library website, sixteen manuscripts were lost in the fire (or a later one in the BL book bindery in 1865, on which see Prescott 1997): Galba A. I, Galba A. II, Galba A. III, Galba A. VIII, Otho A. XV, Otho A. XVI, Otho A. XVII, Otho B. I, Otho B. VIII, the former Otho B. XIV, Otho B. XV, Otho C. VI, Otho E. II, Otho E. V, Vitellius D. XIV and Vitellius F. XIV. [https://hviewer.bl.uk/IamsHViewer/Default.aspx?mdark=ark:/81055/vdc\\_100000000035.0x0000b4](https://hviewer.bl.uk/IamsHViewer/Default.aspx?mdark=ark:/81055/vdc_100000000035.0x0000b4).



*Library Catalogue of Additions*, 1911-1915, published by the Trustees of the British Museum, Oxford: Oxford University Press [1925] 1969).

*Otho B XIII*. The manuscript was badly damaged in the fire with large sections missing. It once contained a history of Crowland Abbey. Parts of the manuscript were edited and printed by W. Fulman in *Rerum Anglicarum scriptorum veterum*, vol. I (Oxford, 1684). The text is mainly in Latin, but pp. 522-524 contain a now-lost exchange between the Abbot of Crowland and Lord Dacre in ME (see *LALME I*, 106; Tite 2003, 152).

*Vitellius A I*. Like many manuscripts in the Vitellius shelf mark, this codex has been badly damaged in the library fire. Planta (1802, 378) describes it as *male habitus* ['in bad condition']. Ff. 1-27 contain John Somer's *Kalendarium* (*Manual* 10:3769 [62]). The work is badly damaged but survives in thirty-three complete and nine partial copies (see Mooney 1998, 48-49). It is followed (ff. 27r-30v) by a short *London Chronicle* (*IPMEP*, 365; *Manual*, 8:2845) from 1326 to 1462, with the names of mayors and sheriffs of London and short annalistic entries. These too received significant fire damage.

*Vitellius D XII*. Some fragments now remain of this manuscript. English ones include a single-leaf prose fragment of the *Siege of Rhodes* (f. 43), which contains the final page of a novel by Gulielmus Caorsin ([1482] 1970), translated into English by John Kay. Textually, the fragment is close but not identical, suggesting that it is the same version, but not copied from the printed edition. The fragments also include two verse ones, *The Expedition of Henry V into France* (*DIMEV*, 1591-1592) and *The Gossips' Meeting* (*DIMEV*, 3795), edited by Robbins (1963), which is separated from Titus A XXVI. However, the manuscript must have contained several more texts. Smith switches from Latin to English for items 7-12 in his catalogue and specifies that item 7 is in "Old English," which are both surefire signs of ME. Smith's description reads:

7. The rule of S. Augustin, in old English.
8. Three letters of a devout man to a Nun.
9. Directions and rules for the management of private devotion in the course of life, and in the use of the offices of religion.
10. The siege of Rhodes, written by John Kay, and dedicated to King Edward IV.
11. The siege of Harflet and battle of Agencourt by King Henry v. in old English verse.
12. The tale of the little boy and the friar in old English verse. (Smith [1696] 1984, 93)

*Vitellius D XV* is a badly damaged manuscript, which consists of burned fragments that were disordered in the binding process, ff. 29r-35v (for the correct order, see Munro 1910, xi). Smith lists three items in it, the first three of which are in Latin. The final one contains John Capgrave's *Life of Saint Gilbert* (*IPMEP*, 771), a saint's life which Capgrave translated from Latin for the nuns of Sempringham Prior (see Munro 1910, ix). Fortunately, it is not the only surviving copy of the work, as the full text survives in Add. MS 36704, which is Capgrave's holograph.



*Fragments XXII* contains twelve leaves, which are faded and burned around the edges. The contents are related to the English cloth trade.

*Fragments XXXII* consists of fragments stored in boxes, which are in such a fragile condition that they are normally not handed out to readers.<sup>12</sup>

*Fragments XXXII, Box 6* contains fragments of an unidentified ME work.

*Fragments XXXII, Box 8* contains fragments of Tiberius E VII, which included the Northern Homilies, a paraphrase of Richard Rolle's *Form of Living*, William Nassington's *Speculum vitae* and a ghost story called *The Gast of Gy*.

### 3.3. PARTIALLY DAMAGED ME PROSE TEXTS

In addition to manuscripts in which a significant amount of text was lost, there are ones in which the damage was much more minor, but still leading to the loss of some text. They are listed here.

*Tiberius A X*. The manuscript has been badly damaged by fire. It is now mounted on paper due to its nineteenth-century restauration. Planta (1802, 34) notes that the MS is too badly damaged to describe. Smith ([1696] 1984, 20-21) lists twenty-six documentary texts, most of which are in Latin, but item 17 is in English: "Proclamation of King Henry the sixth at Dunstaple in the 37. year of his reign, anno 1459. that no man should be adherent to any Lord, or go with him, except he be the said Lord's menial man in houshold." The ME text is fortunately mostly legible, despite having a few gaps due to fire damage.

*Tiberius B VI* is the remnants of a medieval codex, containing copies of various documentary texts relating to the deeds of Henry V in France in 1417-1420. The manuscript is marked as *desideratur* 'missing' by Planta (1802, 36), but its contents are described in detail by Smith ([1696] 1984, 23-24), who lists twenty-five items. Most of them are in Latin but item 11, ff. 17v-19v, is in English, containing declarations made by the royal ambassadors of Henry V, relating to various matters. The manuscript received significant fire damage resulting in the loss of text, especially around the side margins. The fire also turned the parchment partly transparent, which makes the text difficult to read as the text on both sides shows through.

*Tiberius B XII*. This manuscript is described by both Planta (1802, 37) and Smith ([1696] 1984, 24). Planta notes that the MS is *incendio nimium corruptus* ['excessively damaged by fire'] and copies his description straight from Smith. The manuscript is a fifteenth-century compilation of documents "made by Thomas Beckington, bishop of Bath and Wells, to fortify the English claim to the French crown" (Tite 2003, 108). It is a finely decorated volume with decorations supplied by the so-called Shaded Initials Master, and may have been presented as a gift to Henry VI by Beckington (Scott 2006, 105). Most of its contents are not in English,

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<sup>12</sup> I am fortunate to have had access to digitised images of these fragments, thanks to the generosity and help of Julian Harrison and Calum Cockburn.



but out of the ones that are, the English translation of the treaty of Troyes, between Henry V and Charles VI in 1420, ff. 107v-111r, is readable. However, ff. 214v-218v and ff. 232v-234r contain two English documents that are so badly damaged that they are barely legible.

*Tiberius C VII.* This manuscript received some fire damage, as noted by Planta (1802, 38): *incendio nimium corrugatus* [‘excessively shrivelled by fire’]. It contains *Henry Knighton’s Chronicle*, edited by J. R. Lumby, *Chronicon Henrici Knighton vel Cnithon, Monachi Leycestrensis*, RS 92 (London, 1889-1895). The chronicle is in Latin, but contains occasional speeches in English, including the speeches of the rebel leaders Jakke Mylner, Jakke Carter and Jakke Trewman, and the letter of John Ball in 1381, f. 174r-v, as well as confessions by the Lollards John Wycliffe, f. 179r-v, ff. 180v-181r, Nicholas Hereford, ff. 183v-184r, and John Aston, f. 184r-v. The damage to the English sections is minimal.

*Tiberius C IX.* This manuscript is burned around the margins, causing the loss of some lines particularly at the tops of leaves. The first item in the manuscript is the Latin *Historia vitae et regni Ricardi Secundi*, ff. 1r-44v. According to Dunphy (2010, 806), this is the second earliest surviving copy of the work and dates to 1413. While the main text is in Latin, it includes three speeches given by Lancastrians, which are copied in English. These are Henry IV’s claim to the throne (*IPMEP*, 369), f. 43rb; a speech by Henry IV on his accession (*IPMEP*, 607), f. 43vb; and an announcement of Richard II’s deposition (*IPMEP*, 606), ff. 44rb-vb. All of these items suffered minor damage, leading to the loss of a few words close to the margins.

*Tiberius D VII.* The manuscript, which is now bound in two parts, was burned somewhat badly, but has been restored and mounted on paper leaves, making cuts to pages, which is a sign of early restoration techniques by Forshall (cf. Prescott 1997, 406). It contains an important early witness of John of Trevisa’s translation of the *Polychronicon* (*IPMEP*, 605; *Manual*, 8:2866 [21]), dating to the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, copied in a dialect close to Berkeley, where Trevisa was vicar (*LALME*, LP 7051; cf. Waldron 2004, xi-lix; Liira 2020, 62-63). While some words have been lost to fire damage, the text itself survives as thirteen other ME copies and three printed editions. Chapter VI of the text was edited from the present MS by Waldron (2004).

*Tiberius E VIII.* This paper manuscript was badly burned, leading to the loss of a significant amount of text. The document seems to have been folded when it caught fire and now there is a big hole in the bottom and middle. The majority of its contents are Early Modern, but ff. 214v-215r contain articles of agreement between Henry VI and Richard Duke of York concerning the title to the crown; a significant portion of text is now missing.

*Galba B II* is a paper manuscript, which was damaged in the fire. Its pages are now burned around the edges with damage to the text at the left, right and top. The manuscript contains primary documents related to diplomatic matters between Henry VII and France, the Holy Roman Empire and Burgundy. The majority of the documents are dated after 1500, but two are from 1499. Ff. 48r-53v, containing a report from Henry VII’s commissioners, is dated to March-April 1499. Ff. 107r-109v



contain instructions from Henry VII about Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, dated to September 1499.

*Vitellius A X* is a composite manuscript, containing Wace's Anglo-Norman *Roman de Brut* and other mainly Latin and French historical texts. It received minor damage around the margins. The final part of the manuscript, ff. 163r-205v, consists of statutes of the Lichfield Cathedral. These are mainly in Latin but include three ME documentary texts. They are a ruling by Edward IV dating to 1470-1471, f. 167; a petition to confirm grants to Lichfield Cathedral, addressed to Henry VI, ff. 197v-198r; and a copy of a letter by Henry VII to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral, dated to 13 September 1485, f. 205r-v. All are nearly intact, with fire damage mainly causing the loss of the top line of the second ME text.

*Vitellius E X*. This is a paper manuscript, which has been burned around the edges, especially the top and centre. It contains three sermon drafts by Bishop John Russell (ff. 170r-176v, ff. 177r-179v, ff. 180v-183r, ff. 184r-185v) and the *Treatise of Hope*, a ME translation of Alain Chartier's *Le traité de l'esperance* (1428). All of these are readable, despite the loss of some text.

*Vitellius F IX*, ff. 1r-70v, contains a copy of the *London Chronicle* from 1189 to 1439 (*IPMEP*, 365; for a description of this copy see McLaren 2002, 100-103). The manuscript is burned around the top, left and right margins, leading to loss of text, but the majority remains readable.

*Vitellius F XII* contains another copy of the *London Chronicle* from Richard I (1189) to Henry VI (1439), as well as a narrative of the foundation of the Franciscan convent of Newgate in London. The manuscript is also known as the *Chronicle of the Greyfriars*, since it was found and likely copied in the monastery of Greyfriars (McLaren 2002, 117; this copy is not listed in *IPMEP*, 365). The manuscript received damage to the edges, leading to loss of some text.

*Vitellius F XVI* contains a register of the Hospital of St Augustine Papey in London. It is almost entirely in Latin, but f. 119 contains a memorandum dated to the sixth year of Edward IV concerning an agreement between the mayor and aldermen of London. Even though the manuscript has lost the upper halves of pages due to fire damage, the ME text is in the lower half of f. 119 and mostly intact.

*Appendix XXXIX*. The manuscript contains six partly damaged texts, two of which are copies of well-known ME works. Ff. 1r-22v contain an acephalous and atelous copy of *The Three Kings of Cologne* (*IPMEP*, 290; *Manual*, 2:630 [277]; see Horstmann 1886 and Schaer 2000 for editions). The text corresponds with pp. 3, l. 9 to 121, l. 33 in Horstmann. Ff. 23r-28v contain a fragment of the prose *Brut* (*IPMEP*, 374; *Manual*, 8:2818 [10]; see Matheson 1998), which corresponds to pp. 129, l. 8 to 140, l. 15 in Brie (1906/1908).

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The list of lost and damaged texts provides valuable insights into the strengths and focal points of the collection as a whole, at least with respect to the ME prose preserved in it. Cotton was a politician as well as an antiquarian, who used his





collection not only for the historically oriented scholarship that he presented at the Society of Antiquaries, but also as a source for finding historical precedents, which he used for making political arguments (see Sharpe 1997, 24-27). Cotton's aim, in the words of Smith ([1696] 1984, 30) was:

to gain a thorough understanding of the whole shape of government in England traced in all its aspects and tasks from its earliest origin through successive centuries and supported by evidence collected by his powerful intelligence [...]

Cotton's library was and is an excellent source for someone interested in English history, also in relation to the affairs of neighbouring countries like France, and the monastic history of England. As the library was not organised based on subject matter (see Sharpe [1979] 2002, chapter 2), although the fire disproportionately damaged certain shelfmarks, the resulting list of lost and damaged texts presents a cross-section of the materials that Cotton accumulated.

Damaged and lost ME prose texts include several volumes of state papers and other documentary texts in Tiberius B XII, Tiberius E VIII, Caligula D IV, Caligula D V, Fragments XXII, Tiberius A X, Tiberius B VI, Tiberius C VIII, Galba B II and Vitellius A X. Historical chronicles such as *Henry Knighton's Chronicle* in Tiberius C VII, the *Polychronicon* in Tiberius D VII and two copies of the *London Chronicle* in Vitellius F IX and Vitellius F XII were also impacted.

Another major group which is well-represented among damaged ME texts consists of monastic registers, cartularies and histories, which were among the lost or damaged texts in Otho B XIII and Vitellius F XVI. Similarly, saints' lives such as Capgrave's *Life of St Gilbert* (Vitellius D XV), as well as sermons and other religious treatises (Vitellius E X) were affected. The effects of the fire on this group reflects who collected manuscripts from dissolved monasteries, which seem to have circulated in the antiquarian market of Cotton's days and which he was skilful in acquiring.

Even though some of the most famous works in the Cotton collection are literary, these kinds of texts are in the minority. This is also reflected in the list of damaged ME prose works: *The Siege of Rhodes* in Vitellius D XII and *The Three Kings of Cologne* in Appendix XXXIX. Similarly, scientific treatises, represented by John Somer's *Kalendar* in Vitellius A I, were not central to Cotton's interests, unlike another founding collection of the BL, the one assembled by Sir Hans Sloane. The contents of the Cotton library are overwhelmingly historical, which is exactly where Cotton's main interests lay.

The emphasis on historical texts in Cotton's library has implications, especially when it comes to the survival of documentary texts. Some of the letters and other documents may have been unique, making their loss greater than that of well-known ME texts that survive in several copies. On the other hand, scribes produced several copies of important documents, especially state papers, which increased the chances of their survival. As Cotton had good access to the archives in Westminster, many of the documents in the Cotton library fell into this category. Still, there are likely to be items that do not survive in several copies such as Smith's now lost item 8 in Vitellius D XII, "Three letters of a devout man to a nun."



It is also worth noting that many contemporary users of the library, such as Cotton's fellow antiquarians, as well as both Smith and Planta, seem to have shared Cotton's historical interests. As a result, these items received more detailed descriptions. We know what Smith considered important from the six categories that he lists in his introductory essay (Smith [1696] 1984, 47-56):

1. Manuscripts written in the Anglo-Saxon tongue,
2. cartularies of monasteries,
3. lives and passions of saints and martyrs,
4. genealogical tables,
5. histories, annals, and chronicles and
6. original records of the kingdom.

He does acknowledge that these six categories do not cover everything, but as is clear from the quote in subsection 2.2, he does not think much of "entertainment [...] for the frivolous" such as "love stories" or "visions and prophecies" ([1696] 1984, 58), a bias which may have caused him to overlook items such as *Beowulf* or the work of the Gawain poet.

In the introduction to the original *Index of Middle English Verse*, Brown and Robbins (1943) make the following hopeful contention: "At most, we can be sure that no major work has perished, for any work of excellence would have been preserved in at least one or two MSS" (1943, xii). Nevertheless, Smith's exclusion of *Beowulf* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* from his catalogue tells us a different story. If these works had completely perished in the Cotton fire, we would have no knowledge of their existence and importance. Consequently, it is not impossible that something else could have perished too.

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# GENERAL PATTERNS OF PUNCTUATION IN THE *PASTON LETTERS*\*

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## ABSTRACT

The late Middle Ages saw a proliferation in the number of marks of punctuation as a result of the development of cursive hands and scripts. While the punctus had been the principal mark used in the Anglo-Saxon period, other marks like the paragraphus, the virgule, the perioslash and the hyphen were progressively incorporated into the repertoire of punctuation. The inventory of marks and their functions settled over time, but it was not until the seventeenth century when we find the early symptoms of normalization (Calle-Martín forthcoming). Even though some recent studies have focused on the analysis of the punctuation system deployed in different text types—literary, scientific and legal material in particular—, letters have, however, not been the focus of these studies. This paper therefore analyses what marks are present in the *Paston Letters* and what their functions are. Particular attention is paid to the punctus and the virgule as marks with overlapping uses in the period.

**KEYWORDS:** *Paston Letters*, grammatical punctuation, rhetorical punctuation, punctus, virgule.

## PATRONES GENERALES DE PUNTUACIÓN EN LAS *PASTON LETTERS*

## RESUMEN

La Baja Edad Media fue testigo de la proliferación de un número de signos de puntuación como resultado de la implantación de la escritura cursiva. Mientras que el punto había sido hasta entonces el principal recurso en el periodo anglosajón, signos como el párrafo, la virgula, el *perioslash* o el guion, entre otros, se incorporaron con posterioridad al repertorio. El inventario de símbolos y sus respectivas funciones se fueron especializando con el tiempo, y es en el siglo XVII cuando se detectan los primeros síntomas de normalización (Calle-Martín próxima publicación). Si bien los estudios recientes se han centrado en el análisis del sistema de puntuación empleado en diferentes tipos de texto—fundamentalmente literarios, científicos y legales—, las colecciones de cartas, sin embargo, han quedado en su mayoría al margen de los mismos. Este trabajo pretende, por tanto, dilucidar qué signos aparecen de manera recurrente en las denominadas *Paston Letters* y las funciones que estos desempeñan. Se estudian los usos del punto y la virgula por su solapamiento en el periodo.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Paston Letters*, puntuación gramatical, puntuación retórica, punto, virgula.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The art of pointing, or a good command of it, is deemed of paramount importance for the correct understanding of any written artifact, both in Early and Present-Day English. This view of punctuation can be traced back to the Middle Ages in Chaucer's *The Romaunt of the Rose*, when the B-translator explicitly mentions that "a rede[r] that poyntith ille / A good sentence may ofte spille" (lines 2161-2162). This is an intriguing digression by the B-translator "between Guillaume's promise that he is reporting the God of Love's speech word-for-word (lines 1055-1062) and his promise to narrate the dream in due course (lines 2063-2074)" (Knox 2022, 196). The references to *reading* and *pointing* in this digression can be interpreted, on the one hand, either from the perspective of the reader, where marks of punctuation rhetorically interpolate to guide their reading aloud with the necessary pauses; or from the perspective of the writer in his attempt to provide a coherent rendering of the source text by making the most of the marks of punctuation at his disposal (Parkes 1992, 70-76). Regardless of the interpretation, Chaucer's text unambiguously delves into the actual requirements of a text, both in terms of rhetorical and grammatical punctuation, to ensure its correct understanding and thus avoid, in Chaucer's own words, any likely deterioration of "a good sentence":

Now is good to here, in fay,  
If ony be that can it say,  
And poynte it as the resoun is  
Set; for other gate, ywys,  
It shal nought well in all thyng  
Be brought to good undirstondyng:  
For a rede[r] that poyntith ille  
A good sentence may ofte spille.  
The book is good at the eendyng,  
Maad of newe and lusty thyng;  
(Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 409,  
*The Romaunt of the Rose*, f. 42r, lines 2155-2164)<sup>1</sup>

In itself, Chaucer's interpolation perfectly summarizes the major concerns of medieval writers in their deployment of punctuation. The act of putting pen to paper—or ink to vellum—usually involved the making of a number of decisions which were directly associated with the appearance of the final product. The first

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<sup>1</sup> Transcription available at [https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/library/files/special/Rose/html\\_mt/042r\\_mt.htm](https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/library/files/special/Rose/html_mt/042r_mt.htm) (accessed 2 September 2023).



had to do with the repertoire of marks of punctuation, which actually depended on the typology of the text.<sup>2</sup> Poetry, on the one hand, was often rendered without recourse to marks of punctuation, an example being the manuscript version of *The Romaunt of the Rose* in Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 409.<sup>3</sup> The rendering of prose, on the other hand, was more problematic in view of the greater need to clarify syntactic relationships, which obviously made room for a higher number of marks of punctuation. Moreover, prose presented as a single block of text must have been harder for a reader to parse, especially when it was written in the *currens* grade of script. Punctuation served to guide the reader and to facilitate parsing. Unfortunately, however, the medieval scribe did not have the present-day repertoire available to him to cater for all the grammatical needs. He had to make the most of, to a certain extent, a constrained repertoire at a moment in time when there was not a standard of punctuation. This predicament is logically connected with the overlapping functions of marks in the period according to which one and the same mark could be deployed in a number of contexts, and the extent of the overlapping was eventually a matter of scribal decision. Every handwritten artifact is therefore unique, thus embodying its own set of conventions and limitations based on the scribal choices (Calle-Martín forthcoming).

Apart from the limitations of the repertoire, medieval writers were also compelled to take a stand between grammatical and rhetorical punctuation. Grammatical punctuation signals the structural relationship between the sentence constituents to yield syntactic sense, while rhetorical punctuation, in turn, aims to provide the text with the necessary rest points for a meaningful oral performance (Calle-Martín and Miranda-García 2005a, 95). Even though the scope of grammatical and rhetorical punctuation was basically determined by the nature of the text and the context in which it was to be read—either written to be read silently or aloud—or the reader's level of literacy, the issue is not so straightforward for the medieval scribe as it basically depended on how dependent or interdependent speech and writing were then conceived to be (Baron 2001, 16). As a matter of fact, both types of punctuation coexisted throughout the Middle Ages, often intermingled in a single text, and writers gave more prominence to the grammatical or the rhetorical in view of the nature of the text or the particularities of the mark in a given context. It would not be until the advent of printing and the growth of silent reading that grammatical punctuation progressively toppled the rhetorical, albeit it has never ousted it completely.

These reflections contribute to shaping the medieval scribe as an actual facilitator of meanings whose decisions, as far as punctuation is concerned, shaped the handwritten text as it has eventually come down to us, both as regards the

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<sup>2</sup> The chapters in Bonapfel et al. (forthcoming) make it abundantly clear that norms and conventions varied by text-type.

<sup>3</sup> Some other poetical works might also resort to the punctus for the expression of the necessary illocutionary pauses in the middle of a line, as in the late fifteenth-century English version of Palladius's *Practice of Husbandry* in Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 104.



inventory of marks and the functions attributed to them. The problem, however, is that these decisions are usually not transparent enough to the modern reader, who is at a loss in the attempt to make some sort of order out of the apparent chaos presented by the manuscript folios. This order, unfortunately, is not easily attainable for the overlapping functions of some marks, which are the source of alternative readings and, in some cases, equivocal renderings (Lucas 1971, 19; Mitchell 1980, 412; Calle-Martín and Miranda-García 2005b, 28; Smith 2020a; Nedelius 2022).

This lack of transparency basically explains why medieval punctuation has often been disregarded in the relevant literature, in the previous century in particular, in view of its idiosyncratic and whimsical character (Jenkinson 1926, 154; Denholm-Young 1954, 77; Zeeman 1956; Parkes 1978, 138-139; Rodríguez-Álvarez 1999a, 27-28; Calle-Martín 2004, 407-408; Calle-Martín and Miranda-García 2005b, 27-28). The existing studies of Late Middle English materials are, however, descriptions of the inventory of marks found in particular pieces together with their uses and functions, usually by a single hand, with a focus on literary texts, even though medical and legal materials have been actively adopted as primary sources for analysis in the course of this century. Letters, however, have not been the focus of this effort.

The present study analyses the deployment of punctuation in Late Middle English correspondence which, as was mentioned above, stands out as a hitherto unexplored text-type as regards punctuation. Correspondence is now part of what is elsewhere known as historical ‘ego’ documents—together with diaries, travel accounts, witness depositions, etc. In Stenroos, Bergström and Thengs’s (2020) classification, the category of *correspondence* can be classified into other functional subcategories including *complaint*, *petition* and *request* material, together with a catch-all category subsuming “official, business and private letters dealing with a variety of topics” (2020, 50). The *Paston Letters* are then a prototypical instance of ‘ego’ documents involving private correspondence between a sender and an addressee, thus becoming “instrumental sources in shedding light on language variation and change in the past” (Hernández-Campoy, Conde-Silvestre and García-Vidal 2019, 288). The letters collectively bear testimony to the writing habits of many authors, whose individual habits themselves vary according to the circumstances under which their letters were produced. Paragraphing, for instance, is a typical case at hand with some letters divided into paragraphs and others presented as a single block of text with no subdivisions. When it comes to punctuation, the more hastily written letters that go to other family members do not often contain any punctuation at all, while the others are limited to the use of the single virgule, the double virgule at more important divisions, the punctus and the sporadic deployment of the punctus elevatus (Davis 2004, xxxiv).<sup>4</sup> Our study, then, is concerned with punctuation marks proper, that

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<sup>4</sup> Williams (forthcoming) finds the same set of marks and notes too that the punctus elevatus is rare among them. We record a mere two examples of the punctus elevatus in our selection of letters, both occurring in the same letter (Davis #39), while Williams focuses on the use of this mark by one



is, it excludes other side-elements such as titles, capitals, layout or colored initials and focuses instead on some recurrent patterns that stand out as common norms across the Paston writers.<sup>5</sup> Particular attention is paid to the punctus and the virgule as the marks sharing overlapping uses in the period.<sup>6</sup>

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The *Paston Letters* is the label employed to name a collection of authored documents written by fifteen members from the different generations of this Norfolk family between the years 1425 and 1503 (Turner 1897, 425). The letters were either committed to paper or vellum by the members of the family themselves or by their hired amanuenses, particularly in the case of the female members of the family. From these materials, we have picked a subset comprising 171 letters where we had ready access to both an electronic transcription and a corresponding digital image. The last two decades or so have witnessed a proliferation of studies based on the *Paston Letters* in view of their historical and philological interest, not only because of the fresh information about fifteenth-century England that they yield but also because of their linguistic dimension as material composed immediately before the Modern period, when the English language was undergoing a number of changes at all levels (Hernández-Campoy, Conde-Silvestre and García-Vidal 2019, 291-292).

The present study relies on the digital images of the *Paston Letters* currently available online for free from the British Library and housed in its Additional MSS 43488, 43489, 43490 and 43491, together with an additional manuscript volume containing further material from the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

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of the legally-trained Paston amanuenses. This is James Gresham, who appears to use it in particular in interrogative or exclamatory contexts where it would be reasonable to expect rising intonation in speech. If this analysis is correct, Gresham's use of the mark exemplifies the beginnings of the process of specialization whereby the various marks eventually developed their present-day forms and functions.

<sup>5</sup> It is a fact that there is more than a single writer and habits may differ from one another, generalization becoming then a desideratum unless it has been proved that they all follow similar patterns of usage. However, a systematic identification of the type of copyists and their output is unfeasible in view of the number of writers and their whimsical attitudes as regards punctuation. Instead of elucidating individual preferences according to the type of writer, the present study has been conceived to discern the common practices of the Paston family to obtain the set of uses shared by all its members.

<sup>6</sup> See Weir (2018, 173-219) for a detailed analysis of the punctuation practice of the Paston family and their circle during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter four explores the pragmatic features of Early Modern English correspondence, punctuation in particular, addressing the uses and functions of punctuation marks in these documents; the level of gender variation between male and female correspondents; and the variation found in the expression of a set of communicative acts across the generations of writers.

<sup>7</sup> The five different volumes can be easily accessed from the British Library blog entitled "The Paston Letters Go Live" (<https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2015/04/the-paston-letters-go-live.html>); accessed 15 November 2021).





These digital images have been supplemented with the electronic edition of their text available online at the *Oxford Text Archive*.<sup>8</sup> The digital images have been our source for the compilation of the different marks of punctuation in the original handwritten documents, while the electronic editions were used for the retrieval of the running text especially in cases of an obscure and difficult reading of the original, be it in terms of the handwriting itself or other external issues such as any likely deterioration of the physical folios with the passing of time. Our methodology has been first to remove the editorial punctuation from the edition, and subsequently to add the punctuation marks found in the letters by reading against the high-resolution color images. This process avoids the problem characteristic of electronic editions in general, this one included, that they did not attempt to reproduce the actual punctuation found in the letters themselves.

Procedurally, the instances were retrieved manually and subsequently classified in terms of the mark of punctuation involved. The corpus instances were saved in an Excel file. The respective columns of this spreadsheet contained the context preceding the punctuation mark, the mark itself, the context following it, and a reference to the letter in which that instance occurs. This type of concordance file was particularly adequate for our purposes as it allowed us to sort the instances alphabetically according to the word appearing both before and after a mark. This alphabetical sorting led to similar instances appearing in succession in the file, e.g., in view of a following conjunction, which allowed us readily to identify recurring patterns in the deployment of punctuation marks.

### 3. ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. INVENTORY OF MARKS OF PUNCTUATION IN THE *PASTON LETTERS*

The functions of punctuation in the late medieval period—and beyond—have never been fully codified, and a solid taxonomy of punctuation marks is still a desideratum. This gap is surely explained as a result of the primary difficulty of access to the source materials themselves. Hopefully, this situation is being rectified as high-resolution color images of more and more medieval texts are becoming available online. Another likely reason has to do with the genre and/or text-type of the particular document. It is a fact that medieval literary texts have received greater attention from both scholars and keepers of manuscripts than other types of documents, even though in the past decades both medical and legal material have gained important ground as objects of analysis. Notwithstanding this, literary

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<sup>8</sup> The electronic edition is available at <https://ota.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repository/xmlui/handle/20.500.12024/1685> (accessed 17 August 2023). It reproduces the first of Davis's (2004) two-volume edition, which arranges the letters in chronological order. The manuscripts, however, follow a different ordering principle, which made it cumbersome for us to correlate the edited electronic text with the digital images.



texts are what repositories continue to prioritize when they choose what materials to make available online, and literary texts also provide the materials of choice for linguists to mine for linguistic data, including punctuation.

Even though it has been stated that medieval legal documents tend to contain very little punctuation,<sup>9</sup> recent work has demonstrated that this statement is not entirely valid, since a considerable proportion of them in fact contain punctuation marks proper—71% of the corpus looked at by Thaisen and Nedelius (forthcoming). It is our impression that the percentage is higher still in other document types. The amount of punctuation, however, varies across documents and, more importantly, writers use marks differently to the extent that one writer's punctus may turn into another writer's virgule, or the other way around in terms of their function. An additional problem is the representation of punctuation in electronic corpora, which may not be adequate, for example because editors' choice of a symbol to represent a mark may be constrained by the font that they use in their transcriptions. The *currens* grade of scripts in the Gothic Cursiva family, for instance, can be inherently ambiguous so that it can be difficult to determine whether a scribe intended a stroke to be a mark of punctuation or not. The Greeks and, later, the Romans placed a punctus at different heights to indicate periodus, kola and kōmmata: if this convention survived into the late Middle Ages, we might transcribe a full-stop to represent the punctus and then lose the height distinction in the process.

The *Paston Letters* do not contain very many different marks of punctuation. For our corpus of 171 documents, the inventory of marks is restricted to the following five marks: paraph, single virgule, double virgule, punctus and punctus elevatus. Setting aside the paraph which performs a macro-textual function, our counts are 463 instances of the punctus, 411 of the single virgule and 181 of the double virgule. The punctus elevatus occurs twice, with both instances found in the same text (Davis #39). As any experienced transcriber will be aware and as we hinted at in the previous paragraph, it can be difficult to determine whether a stroke is a part of a letter or a mark of punctuation. We have used our best judgment and have marked uncertain instances separately. For instance, a letter like <f> may terminate in a downstroke that is perpendicular on a cross-bar and the downstroke may be formally similar to a virgule and may be confused with it. Our principle has been to transcribe a virgule only when the stroke has unambiguously been separately executed from the cross-stroke with a pen-lift rather than a turn of the pen. The letter <e>, on the other hand, may terminate in a spur to the right that connects to

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<sup>9</sup> Jenkinson's (1926, 154) assessment is that sixteenth-century legal documents continue a medieval trend whereby punctuation is "not infrequently so slight as to be negligible," while Petri (1977, 25) remarks that while punctuation increased in both range and frequency during the course of the late Middle Ages in other text-types, "the trend was quite the reverse in legal documents. Punctuation is almost completely absent from them by the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the pattern of minimal punctuation has persisted in English legal use" (1977, 25). Rodríguez-Álvarez (1999a) concurs, calling absence of punctuation a hallmark of a writer trained in law; cf. Rodríguez-Álvarez (1999b).



the lower part of the lobe and such a spur may terminate in a dot, becoming then difficult for a transcriber to determine whether a dot has been separately executed or terminates a spur.<sup>10</sup> In the same vein, the editorial practice here has been to interpret a mark of punctuation only when the dot has been separately executed on purpose.

Punctuation in the *Paston Letters*, in our opinion, is closely related to the letters' *mise-en-page* (layout). It is not possible to elaborate on the history of the interplay between punctuation marks proper and layout for reasons of space, but this is an issue which still awaits the labor of an insightful scholar in the future.<sup>11</sup> Layout in the sense of indentation, blank lines, headings and other features used to indicate textual divisions may characterize such text-types as financial accounts, wills or contracts. However, these features do not characterize the *Paston Letters*. Those *Paston Letters* that are letters, which make up the majority of the collection, are typically laid out as a single block of text, except that the recipient's name and address appear separately on the back. None of the ones that we have looked at contains more than one ink color neither rubrication nor colored initials.<sup>12</sup> Instead, many of them corroborate that they were the result of hasty writing or drafting, being then instances of plain, workaday documents. This makes letter writing the exception rather than the rule. However, one feature does characterize the *Paston Letters*: the writers are particularly committed to the use of capitalization serving the same functions as a mark of punctuation; therefore, the combination of both a capital letter and a punctuation mark is a frequent device in the letters (Calle-Martín forthcoming; Calle-Martín and Romero-Barranco forthcoming).

### 3.2. THE FUNCTIONS OF MARKS OF PUNCTUATION IN THE *PASTON LETTERS*

As far as the functions of punctuation marks are concerned, a few trivial uses may be noted for the record, which are described in the remainder of this section. As shown, punctuation is mostly deployed for the expression of macro-textual and sentential relations, while at clause and phrase levels it is restricted to the expression of apposition and some formulaic expressions.

(a) The single virgule and the double virgule are both often used as visual cues to indicate an interlinear insertion, while the single virgule is chosen to separate words unintentionally written too close together. Setting aside these uses of punctuation, the majority of punctuation marks, in turn, are certainly deployed both non-trivially

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<sup>10</sup> The electronic edition, following Davis's practice, uses a semicolon to indicate the presence of such elaborate finishing strokes that have not been separately executed, thus <e;> and <t;>.

<sup>11</sup> Little (1984) suggests that punctuation marks have been used either rhetorically, syntactically or typographically since Old English times, thus separating off layout as an independent dimension. We believe that our examples show that the typographical and the rhetorical are not independent of each other.

<sup>12</sup> Even though the text is written in one ink color, there are sporadic corrections in a darker ink.



and non-randomly. Even though in the majority of cases these marks occur at clause boundaries, their function is not found to be strictly grammatical and writers do not seem much concerned with expressing the syntactic relationships of the utterance. A mark of punctuation, for instance, is systematically rendered to signal a major textual division such as the beginning of a new statement or sense unit or a change of topic in the utterance. Writers are not particularly committed to the use of a line break or indentation after the last letter of the last word of a section, and this explains the higher dependence on capitalization for the opening of a new section or a statement in the text. In these cases, the writers often have recourse to a formulaic lexical element to open the new section of text, the word *item* ('and, also, besides') in particular, either abbreviated or spelled out in full.<sup>13</sup> As a matter of fact, elements such as *item*, *also*, *then*, *moreover*, *furthermore* and *first* were recurrent devices to indicate the beginning of a sense unit in the fifteenth century, either preceded by a punctuation mark or not, a practice which was mostly popularized through its commonplace use in legal writing (Ikegami 1990, 209; Rodríguez-Álvarez 1999b, 12-13). Examples 1-2 below show how the single virgule and the double virgule are frequently used in these contexts. In these and subsequent examples, we have emboldened both the punctuation mark and the context in which it appears so as to enhance clarity:

- (1) [...] of othere maters also the whych I may not wryte to you of at thys tyme  
 // **Item** I haue spoke w[lyth John] Strange of the matere that ye wrote to me of  
 (Davis #184)
- (2) [...] they can in-to her power for to have hys good lorchepe / **Item** yf it please  
 you me thynkythe it ware ryght nessessary þat (Davis #178)

The word *item* also introduces a new topic without being preceded by any mark of punctuation and in these cases it is often capitalized so that, in effect, the capitalized form itself stands for an actual mark of punctuation helping the reader to identify the beginning of the new section or sense unit. Example 3 is an extract from a single letter illustrating this usage:

- (3) **Item** I pray yow send me woord as hastyly as ye can how the world goothe No  
 more but God lant yow lansman and rather then to stand in dowght remembyr  
 what peyn it is a man to loose lyberte The Flet is a fayir preson but ye had but  
 smale lyberte ther-in for ye must nedys aper when ye wer callyd **Item** I haue fownd  
 Jamys Greshamys oblygacyon **Item** he comyth to London ward thys day Wretn  
 þe xiiij day of Maye J P (Davis #340)

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<sup>13</sup> In addition to the existence of prototypical legal formulae, another strategy used in legal texts to indicate the beginning of sense units is the use of *item* or its English equivalent *also*. The presence of these strategies may well respond to the familiarity that some members of the Paston family had with legal language given that they exercised professions related to the law (Turner 1897, 429).



An alternative to the word *item* is the phrase *as for/and as for*, as in example 4. Both *item* and *as for/and as for* coexist in the same letters, frequently used in combination with capitalization.

(4) [...] trowe hathe be wyth yow / **Item** as for John Maryot I haue sent to hym for þe xl s but I haue non answer // **Item** I haue spok wyth Barker and he hathe no money nor non can get tyll haruest when he may dystreyn the cropp vp-on þe grownd He seyth ther is not owyng past v mark and on Saturday next comyng he shall send me a vewe of hys acompte whyche I shall send yow as sone as I haue it // **As for** Fastolffys v mark J Wyndham hathe be spokyn to by me half a doseyn tymys to send to hym for it and he seyth he hathe doon so // **Item** Syr John Styll hathe told Jwde when ye shall haue the chalys Ax Jwde of your crwetys also **Item** the prowde pevyshe and euyll dysposyd prest to vs all Syr Jamys . seyth þat ye comandyd hym to delyuer þe book of vij Sagys to my brodyr Water an he hathe it **Item** I send yow the serteunte her-wyth of as myche as can be enqwerd for myn oncyll (Davis #353)

(b) Formulaic expressions are recurrently used by the writers, especially in the opening of letters as a direct appeal to the addressee introduced by the intensifier *right* ('very, extremely') and subjected to some level of lexical variation. These formulaic expressions are in most cases rendered with the use of a capital at the beginning and a mark of punctuation flagging the sequence, the punctus, the single virgule and the double virgule predominating in these environments. Even though the capital letter is found to be a systematic practice of the *Paston* writers, the punctuation mark at the end is more a matter of choice, as shown in examples 5-8:

- (5) **Right** trusty and welbeloved I grete yow hartily well . **and will ye wyte** þat where hit is so þat (Davis #62)
- (6) **Right** worchepful hosbond I recommand me to yow / **Please yow to wete** þat (Davis #160)
- (7) **Ryght** worchepfull and my most good and kynd moder in as humbyll wyse as I can or may I recomand me to yow and beseche yow of your dayly blyssyng // Moder **please it yow to vndyrstand** that (Davis #378)
- (8) **Right** worchepfull hosbond I recommand me to you **Please you to wete** þat (Davis #159)

Stenroos, Bergstrøm and Thengs (2020) argue that clerks progressively developed English equivalents of Latin formulae over time, as in the following examples, where the corresponding Latin formulae are rendered in English, regardless of any orthographic, morphological, lexical and/or syntactic variation. The verb *lekit* ('like') in example 9 is here preferred instead of *pleasyt* ('please') in example 10, both of them capitalized regardless of the additional material coming before and after the verb. This same statement, however, can also be accompanied by a mark of punctuation, as shown in examples 11-12, where a single virgule and a double virgule are used, respectively, to introduce the verb *plesyt* as a sentential device to inform the reader about the beginning of a new sense unit and secure the correct understanding of the utterance. As shown, the statement *ryght wurchipfull*



introduces the greeting while formulae such as *lekit it 3ow to wethe* or *pleasyt yow to wett* would then mark the beginning of the body of the letter.

(9) **Ryththe** wurchipfull broder I recomand [me] to 3ow **Lekit it 3ow to wethe** (Davis #91).

(10) **Ryght** worchepfull modyr aftyr all dwtes of humble recomendacyon in as humble wyse as I can I beseche yow of your dayly blyssyng **Pleasyt yow to wett** that (Davis #380)

(11) **Ryght** wourchipful husbonde I recoumaunde me to yow dyssyryng hertely . to here of yowr welfare thankyng yow of yowr grett chere that ye made me and of the coste that ye dede on me Ye dede more cost thanne myn wylle was that ye choulde do but that it plesyd yow to do so God gyf me grase to do that may plese yow / **Plesyt yow to wett** that on Fryday after myn departyng fromme yow I was (Davis #192)

(12) Most reuerent and worchepfull fadyr i recomande me to yow lowly preying yow of yowyr blyssyng and hertly desyryng to her of yowyr welfare and prosperyte the whyche I prey God preserue and kepe to hys plesans and to yowyr hertys desyir // **Plesyt yow to haue knowlage** þat (Davis #318)

When it comes to the closing of these expressions, the formulaic element *written* is systematically capitalized and frequently flagged by a punctuation mark, as in examples 13-15. The punctus, single virgule and double virgule are all found serving this function. The participial form *written* is generally preceded by well wishes (e.g., *the blessed Trinity have you in his keeping, God keep you or God have you in his keeping*, as in examples 13-16 below).

(13) And the blyssyd Trinyte haue yow in hys kepyng and send yow good sped in all yowyr materys **Wretyn** in haste at Norwyche the Monday next be-for Seynt Edmu[n]de the Kynge (Davis #164)

(14) Item þat he come by Cambrigge and bryng with hym Maister Brakkeles licence from þe prouynciall of þe Grey Freres . I prey you recomaunde me to my modir . **Wretyn** at London the Thursday next to-fore Middelsumer . John Paston // (Davis #55)

(15) and lete hym w[[ete]] þat my cosyn his suster hath childe a doughter / **Wretyn** at Norwich the iiij day of September (Davis #39)

(16) God haue yow in hys kepyng **Wretyn** in hast on Seynt Martynys Evyn (Davis #318)

(c) Marks of punctuation, in turn, are frequent devices flagging a legal formula or key contents. This is in fact commonplace in the particular case of legal texts (Rodríguez-Álvarez 1999b, 12-14) such as leases, contracts or wills, especially in fair copies of them (Thaisen and Nedelius forthcoming). Example 17 is a deed concerned with the sale of plate and the first three punctūs that it contains are deployed in its opening lines in order to mark the price, the recipient and the Habendum clause introduced by the legal doublet *to haue and to hold*, respectively, thus suggesting the scribe's familiarity with legal conventions. In its closing lines the legal phrase *in witnesse*, which introduces a deed's Testatum clause, is both



capitalized and flagged by the use of a punctus. In between comes the clause describing conditions of the contract, with the “And if X happens” part and the “then Y will be the consequence” part both introduced by capitals.

(17) This indenture witnessith that Sir John Paston knyght being possessed of xx disshes and a sawser of siluer weying by Troy weight xxvij lb ix vncis and di in playn and open market in the Citee of London hathe bargayned sold and deliuered the day of the date of these indentures to Edmund Shaa citezein and goldsmyth of London the saide xx disshes and sawser . **for l li sterlinges** by the said Edmund to the forsaid Sir John Paston aforehand paid wherof the same Sir John Paston knowlachith him-self truly contented and satisfied by these presentes . **to haue and to hold** the forsaid xx disshes and sawser . **to the said Edmund his executours and assignees** as their propre godes foreuermore [...] **And** if defaulte be made in payment of the saide l li in parte or in all at the saide xiiijth day of Octobre . **Than** [...] foreuer . **In witnesse** wherof the parties aforssaid to these indentures entierchaungeably haue sette their sealles . **Youen** the third day of July . in the xth . yere of the . reigne of Kyng Edward the Fourth (Davis #250)

(d) In addition to the previous uses, which are especially conceived for macro-textual purposes, punctuation is also found to signal other kinds of sentential and clausal relations. In this vein, punctuation is then deployed to separate the elements in a list. Especially in cases where the statement lists a number of items, writers were then committed to signaling their boundaries to avoid any likely misinterpretation. Example 18 shows the sequence of five elements in a series which are separated by the punctus. This practice, however, is taken to be sporadic in our data and it may then reflect scribal idiosyncrasy.<sup>14</sup>

(18) ¶ Item that **Debenham . Lee . Tymperle . and his old cownseyl and attendans . as well as þe gode ladijs servawntys** be avoydyd and Tymperle of malys apelyd of treson (Davis #46)

(e) Punctuation is also used to separate elements that are in an apposition-like relation to each other, the second element often introduced by a phrase like *that is to say*, as shown in example 19. Even though this is a recurrent practice in other types of documents, it is rare in our corpus. It may be that it is subjected to some kind of scribal idiosyncrasy and possibly transferred from other text-types. This phenomenon is found to be a frequent device in other types of documents, as in scientific (Calle-Martín 2004, 415; Calle-Martín and Miranda-García 2005b, 41) and legal writing (Calle-Martín and Miranda-García 2008, 369; Thaisen and Nedelius forthcoming).

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<sup>14</sup> Thaisen and Nedelius (forthcoming) have found a sufficient number of examples in the *Middle English Local Documents* corpus (Stenroos, Thengs and Bergstrøm 2017-) tentatively to corroborate that the separation of elements is a recurring function across writers and text-types.





(19) þe seyð William / were induced to trete in þe same matier in þe fourme þat folwith // **þat is to seyne** þat þe seyð William schuld sue forth þe seyð pleynt and þe execucion þer-of at hese owne will / and þe seyð Walter schuld defende hymself in þe seyð pleynt at hese owne will / except þat he schuld no benefice take by noon proteccion ne wrytte of corpus cum causa ne of no lordes lettres vp-on þe seyð sute // (Davis #5)

#### 4. DISCUSSION

It is not possible for us to classify every instance of a punctuation mark in the corpus into functions a-e. The remaining instances amount to a substantial number, and it is not immediately transparent to us what their function, or functions, are. However, it does seem to us that some generalization is possible, if not in relation to what mark is used for what function but, more importantly, in relation to what the functions are, namely functions a-e.

The present survey also argues for punctuation marks and capitalization serving much the same functions, which in turn reminds us of the set of functions familiar from studies of the *mise-en-page* of manuscripts housing late medieval literary texts. A literary text, for instance, may use rubrication and a slightly different script for the Latin text in the same way as the *Paston Letters* furnish the Latin adverb *item* or its English equivalents *and* and *also* with a punctuation mark. In this same vein, a literary text may use a *littera notabilior* to indicate a major textual division in the same way that the *Paston Letters* deploy a punctuation mark. Manutius the Younger's *Orthographiae ratio* is considered the first treatise establishing and advocating a system of grammatical punctuation. It did not appear until 1561 while the majority of the *Paston Letters* date from the previous century. In the absence of a standard of punctuation at the time, writers were thought to belong to communities of practice which, through the repeated use of their punctuation habits, spread the understanding and socialization of particular conventions (Bergs 2005, 30-31). Even though it goes without saying that there was not a standard of punctuation in the medieval period, there were some common norms which every single writer consciously applied to the written text, which eventually became reflected in the implementation of a system of punctuation out of the poor resources of the medieval repertoire. Even though overlapping was—and still is to this day—just a side effect of the limited inventory of marks, writers were surely acquainted with these common norms requiring the use of punctuation marks in particular contexts.<sup>15</sup> The choice of a mark, however, was not haphazard since it is true that both a punctus and a virgule

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<sup>15</sup> Present-Day English punctuation presents the same kind of overlap insofar as full stops, for instance, are used at the end of both abbreviations and sentences while commas, in turn, are used to separate elements in a list and frequently after adverbials or between a subclause and a main clause.





could be used to introduce appositions but it was rather improbable that a paraph appeared before a prepositional phrase (Mark Faulkner, personal communication).

These functions are also in line with Parkes's (1992) observation about punctuation that "its primary function is to resolve structural uncertainties in a text" (1992, 1). Resolution of structural uncertainties may not have much to do with whether readers were reading aloud or silently (Smith 2020a, 205-218), but it would surely have aided the less experienced reader in the task of parsing the text. More proficient readers have less need for punctuation to help them parse a text to such an extent that the amount of punctuation is inversely proportional to the writer's and/or the reader's degree of literacy. From our modern perspective, novelists such as William Faulkner and James Joyce are well-known for their decision to make the least use of punctuation to such an extent that the former begins *Absalom, Absalom* with a 122-word sentence that contains only one comma. They both argue that there is no need to punctuate to write properly and punctuation is then pragmatically conceived by an author in the light of the readers' different levels of literacy, thus contributing to meaning conveyance (Jucker and Pahta 2011, 3; Calle-Martín and Romero-Barranco forthcoming). This issue is connected with our discussion of the *Paston Letters* in view of the fact that a fair copy was more likely to contain punctuation than a draft. The writer of a draft, whether an amanuensis or one of the male Pastons, was self-evidently literate and would furnish their letter with punctuation when the reader was someone other than themselves (see also footnote 6).

Another relevant issue is whether the Paston writers considered punctuation grammatical or rhetorical. We have described it as if a writer had consciously to choose between the two alternatives. But Manutius's treatise post-dates our letters, as we have mentioned, and it goes without saying that all these functions we have identified are invariably rhetorical, especially designed to aid the correct reading aloud and to ensure the correct parsing of the text. The marking of key content might additionally have enabled an experienced reader quickly to locate specific pieces of information on a folio. At best, we can accept as grammatical, punctuation deployed in co-ordinate structures such as to mark apposition-like relationships or to separate elements in lists. When punctuation signals hierarchical relationships between sense units, those units can be of any length and will often coincidentally share boundaries with grammatical units such as clauses and sentences. Such coincidences do not, in our view, show that the late medieval writer had the same theoretical conception of a sentence or clause as we do today, but rather that those boundaries are natural to the English language. We also note that while the beginning and end of a sense unit may coincide with a sentence boundary, any sentence boundary internally in the sense unit will not be so marked.

We are far from the first to discuss whether punctuation is grammatical or rhetorical, be it Present-Day English punctuation or late-medieval English punctuation. While this question remains open and both types are still in use today alongside one another in prose texts that follow the norm, there seems to be a consensus that grammatical punctuation has become more prominent over time at the expense of the rhetorical alternative. Perhaps the reason why it is hard to find a clear answer is that it is, to some extent, the dilemma itself that is false. Rhetorical



punctuation is sometimes equated with prosodic punctuation, as both adjectives evoke functions to do with pauses and intonation patterns when reading aloud, and many medieval Latin grammars do indeed instruct a reader to hold their breath for certain lengths of time upon encountering punctuation in a text. We have followed suit, but delivery was merely one aspect of the ancient art of rhetoric. The art also included discovering and developing arguments that could be used to persuade a listener, which suggests that discourse-organizing functions can also be subsumed under the label without them necessarily having much to do with how to read aloud. Those functions produce the coincident boundaries discussed in what has preceded and ultimately, logically, make the two systems of punctuation indistinguishable from each other.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The present study has shed some light on the recurrent patterns of punctuation in a body of so-called ‘ego’ documents, private correspondence in particular, which for some reason have been disregarded as the input for this kind of approach. Even though there is certainly a great deal of variation in the use of punctuation marks across the members of the Paston family and their amanuenses, the study has tentatively confirmed that, regardless of the mark at hand, the writers had already developed a set of common norms leading to the function of marks of punctuation in particular contexts. Importantly enough, there seems to be a consensus as to the need of a mark of punctuation for the expression of macro-textual needs to signal the major textual divisions along with the beginning of a sense unit or a change of topic in the utterance. This macro-textual concept of punctuation is also witnessed with both legal formulae and formulaic expressions, generally rendered with a mark of punctuation—and clearly enabling an experienced reader to scan a text in order to locate key pieces of information. There is not, however, such a consensus about the need for punctuation to mark off sentential and clausal relationships since punctuation is found erratically to introduce appositions and sequences of elements. This, in fact, is deemed more a matter of scribal idiosyncrasy perhaps having to do with the formality of the letter or assumptions about the background of the addressee.<sup>16</sup>

There are still unanswered questions as far as Middle English correspondence is concerned, not only about the *Paston Letters* but also about other collections of the period such as the *Cely Letters* and the *Stonor Letters*. As shown, the study of punctuation in medieval private correspondence is still a desideratum from different perspectives. As far as authorship is concerned, on the one hand, the material was rendered by different members of the family and therefore becomes the ideal input

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<sup>16</sup> In this same vein, Smith’s (2017) work on the trial of the Earl of Bothwell views punctuation according to the assumed literacy background of the audience, and not strictly in terms of sentential or clausal relationships (2017, 223-238).



for the analysis of the phenomenon from the perspective of intra-speaker variation. The collections, on the other hand, also house different types of letters, e.g., private or business, to a wide array of recipients, which can shed some light on the possible correlation between marks of punctuation and the nature of the letter. More importantly, however, further studies along these lines will cumulatively lead to a solid typology of marks and functions allowing to relate it to this particular text-type and its sociocultural function (Smith 2020a; 2020b, 150). In the meantime, we will patiently wait for these new insights to fill this gap and gather a more comprehensive understanding of punctuation in this text-type.

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## MISCELLANY





# REREADING DORIS LESSING'S SHORT STORY "WINE" THROUGH THE LENSES OF SPACE, HISTORY AND TRAUMATIC MEMORIES\*

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## ABSTRACT

Doris Lessing has been called a writer "ahead of her time" (Drabble 2008; Maslen 1994) due to the kind of issues she explored in her narrative. The topic of war and its everlasting effects stand as an invisible thread that runs through her entire *oeuvre* to present the reader with the devastation brought about by the world wars not only in the physicality of cities and towns but also in the bodies and minds of the survivors. The historical events that marked the twentieth century broke people's morale and the memories of the horrors witnessed flooded back poisoning their lives. The present article draws on the interconnection between space, history, and trauma in Doris Lessing's short story "Wine" (1957). By exploring the enduring relationship between these three variables she creates her Poetics of Space in which she not only crosses spatiotemporal boundaries but also public and private spheres.

KEYWORDS: Space, Trauma, History, Liminality, Short Story.

## RELECTURA DEL CUENTO "VINO" DE DORIS LESSING A TRAVÉS DE LA ÓPTICA DEL ESPACIO, LA HISTORIA Y LOS RECUERDOS TRAUMÁTICOS

## RESUMEN

Doris Lessing ha sido calificada como una escritora "adelantada a su tiempo" (Drabble 2008; Maslen 1994) debido al tipo de temas que explora en su narrativa. El tema de la guerra y sus efectos imprevistos es un hilo invisible que recorre toda su obra con el objetivo de presentar al lector la devastación provocada por las guerras mundiales no sólo en el aspecto físico de las ciudades y pueblos, sino también en los cuerpos y las mentes de los supervivientes. Los acontecimientos históricos que marcaron el siglo veinte quebraron la moral de las personas y los recuerdos de los horrores presenciados envenenaron sus vidas. El presente artículo se basa en la interconexión entre el espacio, la historia y el trauma en el cuento "Vino" (1957) de Doris Lessing. Al explorar la relación duradera entre estas tres variables, la autora crea su propia Poética del Espacio, en la que no sólo cruza los límites espacio-temporales, sino también las esferas pública y privada.

PALABRAS CLAVE: espacio, trauma, historia, liminalidad, cuento.

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Space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction [but] the evidence of its  
existence stares us in the face:  
our senses and thoughts apprehend nothing else.  
(H. Lefebvre 1991, *The Production of Space* 8)

See the past in relation to the future, and so prepare the way for masterpieces.  
(V. Woolf 2008, *Selected Essays* 31)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Doris Lessing has been called a “transgressor,” a “border crosser,” and a writer “ahead of her time” (Drabble 2008; Maslen 1994, Ridout and Watkins 2009) due to the topics she explored in her narrative. Even before Spatial Studies entered Academia as a new field of research, she already used places/spaces to support her stance regarding the issues dealt with in her writing. The different spaces chosen to set her European stories show not only the cohesion and consistency that can be observed in the societal fabric depicted in the tales, where particular codes have to be deciphered to reach the solid core of its society but also the dialogue in which she engaged between the public and private domains. Her objective, in her entire *oeuvre*, was to foreground the damage caused by the world wars either in the physicality of cities/towns and human bodies or in the spirit of the people who, even though they were lucky to survive, had to deal with conflicting emotions. I contend that Lessing aimed to show how ordinary human beings handle an immediate past, reflecting the warlike conflicts that moved the foundations of society leaving permanent and painful traces on the people who had to endure the wars. To reach her objective, she used the past in the present to show how historical trauma, insofar as the accumulative emotional and psychological pain endured by individuals during their lives which can be passed through generations (LaCapra 1999, 722-724), takes different forms in the survivors, bringing to the fore old wounds, as well as to emphasise the depiction of spaces to reinforce the plots turning them, sometimes, into characters which silently convey the message rounding up the stories. Taking into account various theoretical insights regarding Spatial Studies in Literature developed by very well-known scholars, I will summarise their findings concerning the dyad place/space to provide the background to the text. This article concentrates on Lessing’s use of space, history, and traumatic memories in the short story “Wine” (1957) to explore the long-lasting relationship between the aforementioned variables and survivors of the armed conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, theatricality will be used concerning the transformation physical spaces undergo in which dramatic performances can take place.

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\* A brief summary of this paper was read online at the VI Doctoral Seminar of the University of Malaga, on June 22, 2021.

<sup>1</sup> All the subsequent references to the story under analysis are from Doris Lessing’s book *Stories* cited in the bibliography and quoted parenthetically in the text.



## 2. DEFINITION OF SPACE

Space, as the atmosphere that emerges within the boundaries of a place (Heidegger 2001, 152), assumes different forms according to the location where the action takes place. On the one hand, summarising spatial scholars' claims, space turns into place as soon as the human being captures its true essence. It can be utopian –ideal– or heterotopian –real– covering all the stages of human practices and can be considered representational insofar as the mental and lived space of inhabitants and users (Foucault 1984). It can be represented and organised in maps and drawings or can express the daily routine of its people. It can also be read and decoded and is endowed with palimpsestic and/or panoptic characteristics according to the circumstances and, on occasion, turns the narration into a hegemonic discourse (Lefebvre 1991). On the other hand, as academics have amply demonstrated, fictional space is created by language in different modalities: mythical, pragmatic, and abstract and literature is a significant contributor to its making (Yi-Fu Tuan, Lefebvre, Sizemore). Likewise, since human beings are historical-social-spatial people, they construct their own spatialities in an attempt to manage their existence and, in so doing, leave traces for future generations (Heidegger, Foucault, Lefebvre, Tuan, Virilio, de Certeau, and Soja). Regarding literary space and after scrutinising the works of several academics who have dealt with the topic, I have devised a conceptualisation that endows it with some characteristics, apart from the ones already mentioned, that may or may not be all present in a literary text. Firstly, space can be felicitous or hostile, like the one of warfare and its aftermath in which its population goes through a state of psychological trauma (Bachelard, Virilio, LaCapra, Felman, Caruth); it can also be internal or external and there is always a 'caesura' that allows the passage from one space to the other (Bachelard, Foucault, Yi-Fu Tuan, de Certeau). By the same token, space is created by people's behaviour either from the higher levels (government, institutions) or from the lower ones (common people) to maintain their place in society, giving life to a space of competence against power and in which social practices are performed (de Certeau, Lefebvre, Soja). Secondly, it can be imagined, lived, and perceived through past experiences and teachings that connect past and present (Lefebvre, Sizemore) and involves a broader view of gender, class, and ethnic groups (i.e., the "Other") that foregrounds the diversity of everyday life (Lefebvre, Soja, Cirstea). Finally, the human body is a space in itself insofar as a "physical space of flesh and bone" that is lived and where power can be exerted (Soja 1996, 114).

Doris Lessing's stories display the aforementioned palimpsestic quality since she embeds in the layers of the texts not only the passing of time with its marks but also the pleasant or traumatic experiences her characters have gone through, hence a connection between past and present is established. This particular feature renders her narrative realistic and her stories can be placed within the frame of "Free Short Story," but with some variations due to the considerable emphasis Lessing lays in the depiction of the concrete characters and their places in the world. Nick Bentley in his essay "Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*: An Experiment in Critical Fiction" (2009) states that Realism was the style in which she wrote her entire 1950s fiction:



“Realism carries for Lessing, during this period, a political imperative as well as a preferred aesthetic preference [...] it involves a surface/depth model in terms of the expression of the subjective personal experience set against an underlying objective socio-economic framework” (46, 47). Concerning Lessing’s works of the ’50s and ’60s, Elizabeth Maslen (1994) highlights the topic of the city (13-24) as the spatial location in which she set her novels and short stories that is a recurring image in those works. All the situations she had to live during those decades provided her with a broader and truer perspective from which she could observe the world and transport her views into her writing. To achieve her goal, she takes heed of the physical places where the stories are set along with the time of the action, the characters’ traits as well as their everyday actions, and represents that crucial moment in which her protagonists undergo the epiphany that will transform their lives.

## 2.1. PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND LIMINAL SPACES

Henri Lefebvre –one of the pioneers in Spatial Studies– draws on the fact that those spaces, public or private, where social groups gather “contain messages, embody functions, forms, and structures quite unconnected with discourse” (1991, 131). He also supports the notion that the levels of discourse do not only involve verbal utterances but sounds and gestures that also carry meaning and perform different functions in the structuring of space. The public and private spaces depicted in the story under analysis possess their form of communication since “[e]very discourse says something about a space” bringing about a particular “relationship between language and space” (Lefebvre 1991, 132). The scholar makes a distinction between “dominated space,” which stands for public/outside space characterised by the technology that not only transforms but also mediates in its construction, and “appropriated space,” the one that is modified “in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group” (165). Likewise, the urban geographer Ali Madanipour (2003) contends that “[t]he way space is subdivided and the relationship between the public and private spheres [...] are a mirror of social relations” and indicates “how society organizes itself,” not only affecting the mental states of individuals but also regulating the way they behave and overlaying the spaces where human societies live with “a long-lasting structure” (1). Bearing in mind the previous attempts at defining public and private spaces, I came to the conclusion that Doris Lessing has made use of most of the distinguishing features characteristic of these realms to depict the atmosphere in the different places the protagonists of her stories find themselves in. These spaces, sometimes oppressive, hostile, or welcoming, but always highly charged with strong feelings, trigger sudden flashes of emotions that make the characters confront their inner trauma caused by the armed conflicts and that has come to the fore at the time of the narration.<sup>2</sup> As Alice Ridout and Susan

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<sup>2</sup> The First and Second World Wars.



Watkins (2009) explain, the moment a person crosses a spatial border, he/she “is also crossing a temporal border and seeing a glimpse of the past” (38). This fact entails “the crossing of psychological and social barriers” and, simultaneously, makes an alteration in “the construction of identity in the human subject” (41) that is revealed in the disturbing memories the protagonists of the story revive in the café.

Within the broad categorization of public/private spaces, the in-between or liminal spaces are included. Liminality, a term coined by the German-born, French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold Van Gennep in his book *The Rites of Passage (Les rites de passage)* (1909) but reformulated by Victor Turner in his article “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*” (1964) opened its application to other fields of study.<sup>3</sup> It has been widely used in Spatial Studies to describe places that do not conform to only one established classification but that are in between two categories as in the case of public and private spaces. Hotels, restaurants, bars, and cafés, among other transitory spaces, are examples of liminality in space. These are public because people from all walks of life visit them, but once they enter a room or sit at a table, the environment becomes private. Its limits blur as a result of the acts that guests undertake within it. Apart from eating or drinking, the most usual activities at restaurants, pubs, and cafés are private talks, business closings, book reading, and so on, but in hotels, more personal activities are engaged, such as undressing, having a bath, sleeping, and so on.

## 2.2. TRAUMATIC SPACE

Space is created by societies and according to the events that permeate it the community will be joyful or traumatised. Bearing this essential concept in mind, it is noticeable how Michel de Certeau’s theory of spatial practices developed in his seminal book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988) coincides with the tenets introduced by trauma academics since the traumatic places people live in are formed by “the presences of diverse absences” and “what can be seen designates what is no longer there” (108) but is yearned for. Places are haunted by the spirits of those who have gone, they are hidden in the ominous silence the community has retreated into, but also in the material things that form the social group and in the institutions that exert power. This leads me to believe, like Soja (1996), that feelings of emotion create an active space, and because of this, it elicits “spatial responses, individual and collective reactions to the ordered workings of power in perceived, conceived and lived spaces” (87), the triad formulated by Lefebvre (1991) by which space is produced.

The community is considered the social space *par excellence* where all types of human activities are undertaken so, “when the community is profoundly affected,

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<sup>3</sup> In 2015, Jochen Achilles and Ina Bergmann published *Liminality and the Short Story: Boundary Crossings in American, Canadian, and British Writing*, bringing together essays that focus on the liminality of and within the short story.



one can speak of a damaged body, [...] trauma can work its way into the fabric of community life” (LaCapra 1994, 188). Jeffrey Alexander (2004) defines societal cultural trauma as a collective response to horrific incidents that mark participants perpetually changing their identities “in fundamental and irrevocable ways” allowing them to “identify the existence and source of human suffering” and, thereby, letting them share their trauma memories (6). Traumatic memories do not disappear completely but are integrated into the new reality that is created but maintains the traces of the past. Michel Foucault (1988) also joins in this dialogue when he speaks of “encumbered space” (3) meaning the morally burdened environment where people have to lead their lives regardless of the circumstances, which may well describe the Parisian environment in which the story under analysis takes place.

### 3. STORY

#### 3.1. BACKGROUND

This very short story –only six pages– is set in Paris in the aftermath of the Second World War. It has been mostly analysed from the point of view of the differences between men and women regarding relationships, sexuality, and their positions in the world, while the present rereading is centred on spatial, historical, and traumatic perspectives. The protagonists are a nameless couple who seem to be visiting the French capital since they are staying at a hotel. They are “representatives of their time” in such a way that “they are anonymous” and can be named like “those in the old Morality Plays,” as Doris Lessing states regarding textual “voices in general” in the “Preface” to *The Golden Notebook* (2014, 7), meaning that what is going to be disclosed in the story may well coincide with the feelings of thousands of others who may have gone through similar experiences; hence the omission of the protagonists’ names, only the generic terms “man” and “woman” which echo “Everyman.” They also embody the disillusionment of the times since it seems that they are together only to avoid loneliness; no emotional feelings appear to be present between them given the fact that “they could look at each other without illusion, steady-eyed” (Lessing, *Stories*, 90). On the part of the woman, “the sadness deepened in her till she consciously resisted it” whereas on the man’s part “a flicker of cruelty” came and he made a derogatory comment about her face to which she sharply retorted “[y]ou need a whipping boy” (Lessing, *Stories* 90). The last expression is open to interpretation being the most plausible one that he has always been accustomed to laying the blame on others instead of acknowledging his own mistakes or wrongdoings. It can also be considered a proleptic tool used by the author to anticipate what will be revealed later in the story. After being awoken by the deafening sound of demonstrators who were shouting and singing slogans on the streets, the couple leaves the hotel and enters a café where they start reminiscing about their past. It is outstanding how in such a brief narrative Doris Lessing has managed to include different spatial and temporal levels in which history and trauma intertwine with the protagonists’ present and past realities. The first one, which corresponds with the writing time, is defined by the



city of Paris with its war aftermath and the café. This liminal space is central in the story given the fact that it triggers painful memories –around which the narrative is based – and what takes the reader to the second spatiotemporal level, the French countryside, and the Caribbean in the past.

### 3.2. GEOGRAPHICAL SPACE: PARIS

The geographical setting of the story is Paris. The time may well be some years after the end of the Second World War since there appear markers in the narrative that correspond with the period. According to W. Scott Haine (2000), demonstrations and strikes were a constant in France after the Second World War due to the hardships people were experiencing because of the severe restrictions imposed on food, the lack of workplaces, and the political unrest that aimed to overthrow the different governments that took power after the creation of the Fourth Republic that did not satisfy citizens' needs. Furthermore, there were also demonstrations against the wars in the French colonies of Indochina and Algeria from where soldiers had been recruited to fight a war they did not acknowledge as theirs (171-191). The painful recollections brought back by the city and, particularly, the café coincide with the interwar years which not only increased dramatically the severe trauma the population was going through but also witnessed the French government's complete and feeble inaction which resulted in a critical economic situation as well as in the emergence of political groups – socialists, communists, fascists– supported by the working class and the youths. Regarding the topic, Antonius Robben and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco (2000) explain that “[t]he interwar years brought about massive trauma” examples of it were the “massacre of over one million Armenians in Turkey [...] Russian and German pogroms, the Civil war in Spain, the state-organised famines in the Ukraine, or the tens of millions of political prisoners rotting in Stalin's Gulag” (16). France did not escape the mayhem brought on by the aftermath of the First World War. Haine (2000) devotes chapter nine to giving an account of the period and he also highlights the fact that, due to the political unrest, on 6 February 1934, demonstrations and riots sparked which ended with the killing of fifteen demonstrators and the *Place de la Concorde* blocked. Therefore, it can be said that politics and economy had poisoned the physical space which was already destroyed by the violence inflicted on it by the armed conflict.

Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) states that even though the organization of human space is uniquely dependent on sight, the other senses act as complements in its understanding. Sound, in particular, “enlarges one's spatial awareness to include areas behind the head that cannot be seen.” Moreover, it “dramatizes spatial experience” (16). The noises that roused the protagonists from their sleep, as well as the agitation produced by the demonstrators, trigger sad memories that lead them to utter phrases like “and it still goes on”, and “[n]othing changes, everything always the same” (Lessing, *Stories* 91) referring to past times which may correspond to the period between the First and Second World Wars in Paris where several political groups used the streets to put forward their ideas. Chris Millington (2012) asserts





that after the First World War, veterans, who not only were “perceived as the living incarnation of order, moral authority, and the nation” but also as heroes “of the working class opposed to capitalist warmongers” formed political groups, the most important of which were “the centre-left *Union fédérale* (UF) and the conservative *Union nationale des combattants* (UNC)” which used to demonstrate on the streets (3). Hence, the landscape seems to be the same for the protagonists who, apparently, have been out of the French capital for some years but, taking a closer look, they find evidence regarding the changes undergone by the city.

The city of Paris is a palimpsestic space that has been built layer after layer, keeping in it joys and sorrows, improvements and destruction, faithfulness and betrayal, life and death which can be “read and interpreted” (Sizemore 1989, 28) in the signs and symbols scattered throughout the city. Furthermore, the Parisian space can be considered a theatre stage where a performance takes place as Christine Sizemore and Rosario Arias, two of the scholars who have analysed the space of the city as a theatre, state in their book and article respectively. I agree with Rosario Arias (2005) in that the city space is “an area of experience that can be observed through the eyes” (6), in this case, of the survivors/witnesses, and that the narrator is a mere “observer” who makes use of the “theatrical metaphor of life as a stage” (7, 8) where reality is conformed by countless layers of experience. Following this train of thought, it could be said that the street demonstrators act as a Greek chorus in the protagonists’ existential tragedy, given the fact that they provide the ambience and the awareness the couple needs to face everything they have lived in the past years; a process that may also require the summoning of some ghosts from earlier times.

### 3.3. PROJECTED SPACES

Barbara Piatti (2009, 185) defines projected space in fictional narratives as the one that characters, even though they are not present, long for, or dream of, and I add feel nostalgic or melancholy. Since human beings revisit felicitous or unhappy places through memories, it can be said that Doris Lessing has made use of this mental process to take the reader to different spatiotemporal levels of understanding, interweaving historical facts with traumatic moments that have marked the characters’ lives and which have turned them into the persons they are at the time of the story.

The first projected space that appears in the narration is an unidentified country, the woman’s homeland, as she remembers it after fifteen years. Through several markers left purposely by the author, the reader can identify it as a Caribbean one given the fact that France had many Caribbean colonies at the time of the story such as Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint Martin, and French Guiana, among others. She sees herself “in blazing *tropical* moonlight, stretching her arms to a landscape that offered her nothing but silence” in complete opposition to the noises she is hearing in the present city of Paris (Lessing, *Stories*, italics added 91). In her memory, she pictures herself “running down a path where small stones glistened sharp underfoot, till at last she fell spent in a swath of glistening grass.” The idyllic landscape makes her envy “the girl ecstatic with moonlight, who run crazily



through the trees” (Lessing, *Stories* 91), and as a wave of nostalgia comes over her, reality slaps when she understands that this person does not exist anymore; her desires and dreams are gone forever and what remains, after fifteen years of estrangement, uprooting, violence, terror, and disappointment is a “tired compassion” (Lessing, *Stories*, italics added 91-92) for the human race.

The second projected space referred to is the French countryside where the male protagonist and his friends, as young students, used to work getting in fruit on a farm to earn some money. Haine (2000) comments that given the fact that the First World War had wreaked havoc among the industries in France, unemployment had soared dramatically to levels unheard of before. This situation pushed people to resort to the produce of family farms to have food to survive. Moreover, young students, among them the ones who had arrived in the country on a programme that started around 1923 and were short of money, used to be hired to pick vegetables or help with the harvest (143-169). The man evokes distant memories of the situation stating that “[n]one of us had any money, of course, and we used to stand on the pavements and beg lifts, and meet up again in some village.” Their work consisted of “gathering apples” but he remembers how the atmosphere was charged with excitement and rejoicing on their part whereas tension heightened between them and the employer, “the farmer shouting at us and swearing at us because we were making love more than working, and singing and drinking wine” (Lessing, *Stories*, italics added 91-93). With her mastery of the language, Doris Lessing has needed only one sentence to fuse two opposite spaces; on the one hand, the adult one with all the hardships they were suffering due to the recent war as well as the heavy responsibilities they had to bear; on the other, the youngsters’ space that, even though they seem to have been committed to the political reality of their time, they could not help but behave according to their age and getting out the most of their lives in those difficult circumstances. Two opposing spaces joined together by the adversities they had been faced with in the aftermath of the First World War symbolised by the wine they were drinking. This ancient beverage has generally been “associated with blood because of its colour” and the “idea of sacrifice” due to the “shedding of blood” (Chevallier & Ghreerbrant 1996, 113-116). Therefore, by mentioning the word ‘wine’ in the Spatio-temporal space of the French countryside in the interwar years, not only does Doris Lessing take the readers back in time to the First World War but also foreshadows the blood that was going to be spilt in the second. The scene in the barn, in which the male protagonist is pretending not to watch while a Jewish girl –Marie– gets naked in front of him (94), but he does, acts as a prolepsis of what might have happened to her had she stayed in her native Vienna when the Nazis took over her homeland, Austria<sup>4</sup>. Many years later, remembering the situation considering what happened in Europe during the years of terror, the male protagonist must have felt as if he had been one of the guardians at a concentration

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to bear in mind that the narration of the event in the barn is told from the man’s perspective, so it is understandable to think that it might be biased and that there are facts he is not revealing.



camp who stared at the Jewish women while they stripped naked and entered the gas chambers. Therefore, in the present space of the café, some years after the end of the second war and filled with disillusionment, he orders wine (Lessing, *Stories* 91) to the surprise of the woman but given the memories of past times that have flooded back, he must have done it to drink to the memory of all his beloved ones who died in both armed conflicts as well as an atonement for his own guilt.

Even though most of his memories in the story are related to his unkind and unfair behaviour towards a girl, his recollections open the scope for Lessing to introduce several historical indicators that round up the depiction of the temporal space. The first one involves the “youth movement[s]” (Lessing, *Stories* 93), among which two of the most important ones that emerged in France during the interwar years were the Young Communists (*Jeneusses communistes* [JC]) and the Young Christian Workers (*Jeneusse ouvrière chrétienne* [JOC])” (Millington 2012, 140) and the attitudes these youngsters adopted in which the key phrase “bourgeois morality” (Lessing, *Stories* 93) encodes a way of thinking and living among the French youth in the interwar years. Susan Whitney (2009) delves into the movements’ ideologies, their political and religious stances, and, more importantly, how the different genres –male and female– developed and worked cooperatively in a highly politicised context which proves Lessing’s awareness of the matter at the time of writing the story. The second indicator of the space in which people are living is the hidden reference to the second world war and Hitler’s movement. When the male protagonist mentions Marie, the girl he had ill-treated and the only character who has a name in the narration – a fact that is open to further onomastic analysis beyond the scope of this article–, he comments “[s]he was a doctor afterwards in Vienna. She managed to get out when the Nazis came in” (Lessing, *Stories* 94). This particular reference unveils the type of space these people lived in which was charged not only with ideology but also with hunger, terror, riots, confrontations, and murder due to the devastation brought about by the armed conflict. France was unable to recover during the interwar period which witnessed a succession of governments but none of them achieved what they had promised. The state of political turmoil was reflected not only in the people but also in the spaces inhabited and produced by them (Haine 2000, 143-169). Moreover, in a very subtle way, Doris Lessing has approached particular traumatic events for one of the characters –Marie– like the *Anschluss* or Annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany –which took place on 12 March 1938– that brought about the exodus of many Jewish nationals due to the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws. They were passed on September 15<sup>th</sup> 1935, for the “Protection of German Blood and German Honour” and banned marriages and extramarital intercourse between Germans and Jews. Furthermore, the Reich Citizenship Law stated that only Germans or people related by blood to a German would be eligible as citizens (Evans 2005, 544). Those who were not fortunate to leave the country had to endure their expulsion from the circles they were part of and their transportation to different concentration camps like Mauthausen –the principal one– located near the city of Linz. The Austrian Jewish were also sent to Dachau, Buchenwald, and Auschwitz, among others (Berenbaum 2018, n.p.). Instantaneously, the national space had been transformed into a hostile one that



forcibly expelled them from their homeland. Both protagonists are traumatised due to what they have had to endure in the last fifteen years. Trauma travels through space and time and the city of Paris as well as the café –where he is convinced to have been around in his youth– resurface disturbing memories they had tried to block for many years.

### 3.4. LIMINAL PACE: THE CAFÉ

As I mentioned earlier, Ridout & Watkins (2009) argue that crossing a spatial boundary means crossing a temporal border as well as being able to see “a glimpse of the past” (38). Not only is a person crossing “social barrier[s]” but also “psychological” ones (41) that make people relive painful or sad memories. Ali Madanipour (2003) contends that the barriers or boundaries that divide two spheres, public and private are “used to shape social relations and spatial arrangements” [...] rooted in particular social and historical contexts” (53) as well as “to separate the space owned and controlled by individuals from those beyond such control and under the control of the society as a whole” (56). Moreover, the awakening of disturbing and unhappy memories is sometimes associated with the appearance of ghosts from the past. Michel de Certeau (1988) states that “[t]here is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence” and that people have the choice of ‘invoking’ them or not summoning them at all (108). Inside the walls of the café, ghosts of the man’s past start to appear, compelling him to face his former actions.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) formulates the concept of ‘spatial economy’ and defines it as an implied concurrence of “non-violence which imposes reciprocity and communality of use” that values relations among individuals in certain places like cafes, restaurants, cinemas, shops, etc; in sum, most public places where established, and sometimes not-written, conventions must be observed to turn them into “trouble-free” spaces (56). Furthermore, regarding cafés, Doris Lessing has stated that they are excellent places to “observe real-life soap operas” where the customer acts as a spectator of “events that are not unfamiliar” (Lessing 1992, 97). She has used this liminal space in some of her stories like “The New Café” (1992) where the narrator witnesses the friendly interaction between two young girls with a local boy, and “Sparrows” (1992) in which a middle-aged couple discusses their daughter and eventually they come to an agreement after watching a baby sparrow, to mention just a few. In short, life itself is displayed before the observer’s eyes as if he/she were attending a theatrical performance.

As well as in the Parisian streets where demonstrators acting as a Greek chorus provide the environment for the action to take place, within the café walls another performance is being delivered. Christine Sizemore (1989) states that in liminal places like cafés, the observer can perceive “fragmentary views into others’ lives” (58). Only three actors are spotted on the café’s ‘stage,’ the waiter who has a minimal role that includes serving the customers against his will, and the couple. As the action starts to develop, breaking the ominous and deafening silence that reigned in the place, these people show their growing disillusionment with their



present reality as well as their “separateness” (Lessing, *Stories* 92). The man is described as having “a shape of violence that struggled on in the cycle of desire and rest, creation and achievement” whereas the woman is regarded as “a soft-staring never-closing eye, observing, always observing, with a tired compassion” (Lessing, *Stories* 92). In what could be considered a soliloquy on the part of the man in the play performed at the café, the invisible public becomes acquainted with a situation in the male protagonist’s past whose reminiscence has been brought about by the physical space and all the connotations it has for him. Suddenly, the character feels the urge to speak about it while the woman listens to him in awe after having been transported to her homeland as a vital resource to overcome her unutterable sadness. Without being prompted by any particular question or conversation he pronounces the phrase “I remember” (91) and the recollection starts to flow.<sup>5</sup> The situation is like a one-act play in which the plot is constructed around the man’s memory which unfolds their own drama. The space on the premises has turned traumatic since the couple’s innermost and distressing feelings have captured its ambience. The pain and suffering of the past decade, along with the trauma inherited from his familial circle, may have caused his inner compulsion to speak and, in so doing, release the pain he had been concealing for years.

In the story, the café is described, firstly, as a “glass-walled space that was thrust forward into the street” (Lessing, *Stories* 90). Therefore, from the beginning of the narration, and considering Lefebvre’s “relationship between language and space” (1991, 132), the reader can visualise the place as if forming part of the public realm of the pavement and street. However, it is retracted, separated from it by a barrier, not a brick barrier that prevents people from seeing or hearing what is taking place on the other side but a glass one that allows customers to feel inside and outside simultaneously as members of a mass or detached from it in a role of mere observers. Secondly, even though the nearby streets had been overcrowded with demonstrators whose noises “absorbed the din of Paris traffic” (Lessing, *Stories* 90), the café was empty. This concrete situation creates a particular atmosphere in which the protagonists - disillusioned and detached from each other - have to deal with the memories rekindled by the café and its surroundings. On the one hand, the male protagonist’s phrase “I remember” opens a spatiotemporal gap in which the present reality triggers past memories. He utters those words while looking intently and steadily at the faraway protesters “with a nostalgic face” (Lessing, *Stories* 91). He is transported to another time and space where, as a member of a youth movement, he had also demonstrated on the streets with his friends. Looking at it from his adult perspective, it was to no avail given the fact that even though France was among the victorious after the Second World War, the suffering had exceeded the benefits, and what was left in the youngsters who believed in what they were doing was a bittersweet melancholy. On the other hand, the woman, inferring the happiness the

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<sup>5</sup> This phrase is repeated three times in the story, with the connotations attached, once on page 91 and twice on page 92.



upcoming spring will bring, rejects the thought and sticks to “the static sadness” that “welled up in her, catching her throat” (Lessing, *Stories* 91) preventing her from uttering any word, only visual memories of her homeland populated her head.

The café where the male character met with his friends-comrades and the streets he used to wander have changed over the years. His recollections vary completely from what he has before his eyes and he blames the places for the wave of nostalgia and melancholy that has come over him,

It must have been this street. Perhaps this café—only they change so. When I went back yesterday to see the place where I came every summer, it was a *pâtisserie*, and the woman had forgotten me. There was a whole crowd of us—we used to go around together [...] There were recognised places for contacts: people coming from Vienna or Prague, or wherever it was, knew the places—it couldn't be this café unless they've smartened it up (Lessing, *Stories*, italics in the original 92).

The previous reference to actual places merges with the troubled times he not only witnessed but was part of. Doris Lessing has included words like “contacts” and names of places such as “Vienna” and “Prague” to round up the description of a particular atmosphere where the considerable risk the Nazi ideology posed not only to the Jewish nationals of Austria and Czechoslovakia but also on the French Jews is taken into consideration. By including these words in the narration, she has expanded the scope of it opening a space for the political terror Europe started to be filled with in the interwar years and which grew exponentially during the Second World War. The memories these places have triggered on the male protagonist not only prevent him from being able to recount them fluently but also make the woman look for something beyond the boundaries of the café “[h]e paused again, and again his face was twisted with nostalgia and involuntarily *she glanced over her shoulder down the street*” (Lessing, *Stories*, italics added 92). While he attempts to put his recollections into words, the woman looks outside as if waiting for the ghosts of his past to appear.

### 3.5. TRAUMATIC MEMORIES

According to a study carried out by the French physician, philosopher, and psychotherapist Pierre Janet in 1889—who was also considered to be one of the founders of Psychology—traumatic memories consist of “images, sensations, affective and behavioural states that are invariable and do not change over time.” He adds that these memories are “highly state-dependent and cannot be evoked at will,” however, they are elicited “in special circumstances” (van der Kolk 1995, 520-521). His description of traumatic memories includes the belatedness in retelling the event as well as their inflexibility and variability which renders the act of remembering into a “solitary activity. Moreover, they are “evoked under particular conditions which are reminiscent of the original” (van der Kolk 1991, 431). These statements are in accordance with what happens with the male protagonist's memory triggered





by the Parisian environment in general and the café in particular. In his case, it must have been his recollections of having spent time with his friends at that exact place that provoked the reconstruction of events regarding Marie. He retrieves a memory that he assumes had long been forgotten but it coincides with what Bessel van der Kolk (1995) categorises as traumatic amnesia in which “recall is triggered by exposure to sensory or affective stimuli that match sensory or affective elements associated with the trauma” (509) in coincidence with Janet’s postulates. Following this train of thought, Dominick LaCapra (1999) contends that to work through a “blameworthy activity” which may include “damages inflicted by victims on other victims –like the man in the story and Marie– an explicit acknowledgement of the situation is required (696, 697). In the narration, while he describes the event to the woman, he is reliving –acting out– an episode of his past, hence the necessity of distinguishing between the former experience and the current one to be able to look into the future (LaCapra 1999, 699). Even though the situation seemed not to be traumatic at the moment of occurrence, in the man’s mind it has been included with all the tragic circumstances prior to and subsequent that he went through and that shook the foundations of his position in the world. This concurs with van der Kolk’s assertion that recollections of traumatic episodes “appear to get fixed in the mind, unaltered by the passage of time” (1995, 508). The café, acting as a character in the story, caused the memories to be retrieved allowing the man to put them into words showing the powerful force exerted by the space on the protagonists. On the other hand, the woman’s memory of her homeland is prompted by the noticeable signs of the upcoming spring in which “the trees would be vivid green; the sun would pour down heat; the people would be brown, laughing, bare-limbed” (91), an image that she associates with the greenness and heat of her Caribbean environment, and differs from that of the man’s in that it is accessed spontaneously. Her trauma seems to be different from his in such a way that the recollection of her past is not a painful but a felicitous one of a bygone time in which the Caribbean space of her childhood brings images of her glowing with happiness. The subsequent, dramatic events she must have witnessed have traumatised her but her response to the stimulus produced by the Parisian atmosphere, not the café where she had never been before, is to transport herself to the place in which she was blissful. But, as they have grown so much apart, she is unable to share her memories with her partner and decides to remain silent (Lessing, *Stories* 91). She is, in LaCapra’s terms, “the secondary witness [...] who resists full identification and the dubious appropriation of the status of victim through vicarious or surrogate victimage” (1999, 717) given the fact that the man’s traumatic event took place in a time in which she was not part of his life. The scholar also speaks about “empathic unsettlement” which stands for how listeners address the victim’s problems by putting themselves in the other’s position without taking their place (1999, 723). The woman must be enduring a trauma of her own which readers can only infer from the subtle hints the author included in the narration. Moreover, it is increased by the man’s memory which exerted a profound impact on her to such an extent that “tears were pouring down her face” (95), perhaps bringing back recollections of old humiliations she was subjected to in her past. Her silence allows the man to take hold of the space of the café and start the confession of the



traumatic memory that seems to overwhelm him and which, according to Van der Kolk and Van der Hart (1991), “need[s] to be integrated with existing mental schemes” to “be transformed into narrative language” (447). To succeed he will need to join areas of experience – his past and his present– to achieve the existential unity indispensable for coming to terms with the guilt that is tormenting him since the moment he set foot in the Parisian space. Nevertheless, in the end, readers do not get a clear idea whether the man has worked through his traumatic memory since he humorously states “Darling, it’s not my fault; it just isn’t my fault” (95) or, in his recollection, he was just blaming the girl –as a “whipping boy”– for having put herself in such a position which caused his traumatic memory later on.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

To conclude this rereading of Doris Lessing’s short story, it is necessary to bear in mind some important concepts regarding space, trauma, and history that form the core of almost her entire *oeuvre*. First, the dyad place/space acquires considerable significance in the light of Spatial Studies since, in her narrative, she goes beyond the physical environment where the actions take place, and having depicted it, she pays heed to the atmosphere generated by the characters insofar as historical-social-spatial people who create their spatialities. On the one hand, the differentiation between public and private spaces brings to the fore the fact that they not only concretely represent structures, functions, and forms but also convey messages and include the gestures and sounds, which also bear meaning, by which the space is structured. Moreover, within its categorization, another place stands out: the liminal space where an overlapping of functions is present because of its characteristic of an in-between place. On the other hand, the dyad place/space can be labelled as traumatic when the individuals and the communities have undergone shocking events that have moved the foundations of their society and are noticeable in the diverse social groups. What is more, their memories of the incidents are incorporated into their new reality producing a disturbance in their minds which remains unaltered throughout the years and that requires a straightforward acceptance to work it through. Furthermore, Doris Lessing has included history in the narration to devise the spatiotemporal environment in which she wants her characters to interact to show how historical events exert power in people’s lives. By leaving precise markers and mentioning facts, she has opened a historical realm before her readers to give credibility to the narration. In so doing, the space not only turns into a “stage” to demonstrate how human beings become actors in a play they have not written but in which they have to perform faultlessly in order to survive but also a character whose role provides the ambience and awareness people need to face their existential tragedy.

In the end, the roles of space, history, and trauma in the story are decisive in the construction of the narration to present the readers with different perspectives from which to approach the devastation brought about by the armed conflicts and, more importantly, to recognise their own misfortunes in the situations undergone





by the characters to discover their own relationship with the space that surrounds them. All in all, when reading Doris Lessing's narrative, the reader discovers that what appears on the surface is incomplete; there is more that can only be interpreted by lifting the hidden layers that will lead to a thorough comprehension of the message the writer wants to convey by devising a particular plot and constructing distinct characters in time and space. By crossing spatiotemporal boundaries as well as public and private spheres not only does Doris Lessing enter a new realm of exploration but she also generates her Poetics of Space.

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