Worlds Made Flesh

Reading Medieval Manuscript Culture

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STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY AND CULTURE

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WORLDS MADE FLESH

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Lauryn S.Mayer

For Hannah and Ellie

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Series Editor's Foreword

Far from providing just a musty whiff of yesteryear, research in medieval studies enters the new century as fresh and vigorous as never before. Scholars representing all disciplines and generations are consistently producing works of research of the highest caliber, utilizing new approaches and methodologies. Among the volumes in the *Studies in Medieval History and Culture* series are studies on individual works and authors of Latin and vernacular literatures, historical personalities and events, theological and philosophical issues, and new critical approaches to medieval literature and culture.

Momentous changes have occurred in medieval studies in the past thirty years—in teaching as well as in scholarship. Thus the goal of the Medieval History and Culture series is to enhance research in the field by providing an outlet for monographs by scholars in the early stages of their careers on all topics related to the broad scope of medieval studies, while at the same time pointing to and highlighting new directions that will shape and define scholarly discourse in the future.

Francis G.Gentry

Preface

My research began innocently enough in a graduate seminar on chronicle histories. As I examined the various manuscripts of a chronicle narrative, I realized that these manuscripts were an untapped trove of information on the cultural history of medieval England. There had been almost no work done on them, and no studies that treated the manuscripts in depth. As I spent more time with them, I began to understand why: there was simply no convenient way to talk about the fourteen unique manuscripts that comprise the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscript family. A story contained in one did not appear in another; some manuscripts abbreviated narratives while others expanded them. In addition to these difficulties, the presence or absence of vital reading cues such as rubricated initials, paragraph marks, or marginal notes drastically changed the nature of the stories. Since I wanted to examine the dramatic differences among the manuscripts, and honor the family relationship between them, I could not restrict my study to one manuscript.

A second problem arose. The usual ways of talking about a literary text—our easy references to an author, an extant single work, or even a proposed dominant meaning— became quickly ludicrous when applied to fourteen manuscripts. How, for example, can an author, or "a text" both omit and include an account? How can it both emphasize a battle with rubricated initials and display an unusual lack of the same initials in the section? By extension, how can fourteen manuscripts with these variations conceivably contain anything like a stable discourse? Even within a single manuscript, the collaborative nature of the work argues against discursive unity.

The language of literary criticism itself failed me. I hadn't realized how much of our critical tools depend upon an author who may be invoked or discarded, a single text that may be examined for related themes, motifs, or ideologies, or a dominant/subordinate hierarchy encoded in the language itself, allowing for critical examination of subversion, conflict, and resolution. This dependence played out at the sentence level as well, as Elizabeth Bryan noted in her own work when trying to compare two Layamon manuscripts without ascribing a false authority to one:

> Instead of saying 'the Otho C. xiii manuscript *omits* a line contained in Caligula A. ix' or 'Otho *substitutes* a word with French etymology for a word with English etymology'—which would imply that Otho was directly derivative from Caligula, and it is not—I substituted phrases like 'Otho *does not contain* a line that Caligula *does contain*.' I—and my audience—could feel the loss of drama. 'Omits' and 'substitutes' imply a frame of reference, certain knowledge that one version is the complete one and in some sense better and more real, and the other, the one that 'omits' or 'substitutes,' is lesser, derivative, not valued. Where is the drama in 'contains' or 'does not contain'? If Otho 'does not contain' a line or a word or a passage, so what?*

Bryan's remark reveals the deeply embedded narremes in critical vocabulary. Words invoking stories—struggle, conflict, resolution, synthesis—inherently have a "drama" that holds audience interest and makes the analysis satisfying, since they echo the elements we have come to expect in other narratives. We read "omits" and "substitutes," for example as a struggle between the two manuscripts, whereas "contains" and "does not contain" put the manuscripts on stage without a script. This same dilemma appeared when I attempted to discuss the different readings in my manuscript family. Since I could not rely upon the vocabulary of literary criticism to discuss them, I found myself with a wealth of information that could not be fitted into a legible critical narrative. I would either have to abandon the project, or create a suitable vocabulary and analytical model.

The first solution was unthinkable. In two manuscripts of this family, Britain is founded by women who rebel against patriarchal authority in a particularly graphic manner. In others, Guinevere rather than Mordred is the author of the rebellion that destroys the Arthurian realm. Not only are these narratives fascinating in themselves, but they provide a startling historical precedent for more well-known rebels such as the Wife of Bath. These two examples are only a fraction of the neglected narratives in the manuscripts. As my research progressed, and expanded to include other texts such as the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* manuscripts, it became clear that more canonical works, such as *Beowulf* and *The Battle of Maldon,* could not be read fully without the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* manuscripts to which they responded. To abandon the project was to consign these texts again to silence, and to deprive medieval studies of invaluable resources.

The hunt for a vocabulary began. I needed a set of terms flexible enough to work within the collaborative production of a single manuscript, across a related family of manuscripts, and across members of different manuscript families. It also had to be transferable to interactions between canonical texts and chronicle

* Elizabeth Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture: The Otho Layamon* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999) xii.

manuscripts. At the same time, the model had to be specific enough to provide a solid basis of comparison in all these areas.

A long search through literary theory, narratology, and cybertheory provided some valuable insights but no completely adequate models. Cybertheory, working as it does with multivocal, nonlinear, and collaborative texts, has much to offer manuscript study, but it has not yet formed a coherent vocabulary for its own sphere. Recombinant genetics, on the other hand, has long had a model to discuss the lateral production of related but unique genomes. Just as the dispersive replication of DNA strands creates a set of replicants, each bearing a family resemblance but irrevocably changed by the act of recombination, a family of manuscripts shares a certain degree of similar material (accounts, manuscript practices such as marginal glosses or paragraph marks) but each manuscript is the unique product of the combination of narrative material and the conventions of scribal culture.

After I adopted this model, I began to search for a vocabulary that would express its dynamics while allowing for its coherent transfer to literary theory. Three terms—template, matter, and entity—finally emerged as fulfilling my criteria. When the narrative material (the matter) of a chronicle is unformed by combination with manuscript

practices (entities), and these entities have not yet worked on the narrative material, each can be said to be a template: an incomplete strand that cannot become a text without combination with the other strand. A detailed discussion of these terms appears in the introduction. The advantage of these terms, in light of my adopted model of dispersive replication, is multifold. They can account for recombinations within manuscripts (recombination of a single matter template with a single entity template) as well as readings across manuscripts (since we can see how a similar or variant matter template recombines with an entity template governing another manuscript). They can also be used to show how a manuscript or group of manuscripts may provide a template for canonical texts. As we shall see, collaborative manuscript practice as a whole may function as a template. In chapter four, for example, I show how early printers combined earlier manuscript practice and the requirements of mechanical mass production to create an "authorial" Chaucer.

I intended these models to be useful beyond the limits of this manuscript. There is much more work to be done, but I hope my model can help give manuscripts and their wealth a more prominent place in medieval studies.

My interest in manuscript recombination has informed my methodology. In each chapter, I have based my selection of manuscripts on the readings emerging from the recombination of matter and entity templates, without attempting to impose any *a priori* reading onto the manuscripts. I want to stress that these selected manuscripts *are not* and *cannot* be representative of a manuscript family or manuscript practice in general. I do argue that reading within and across manuscripts provides a valuable array of responses to a particular narrative, and that these lateral readings should be studied with the same attention given to "authorial" works or canonical texts. In my discussion of certain recombinations, I offer a demonstration of my model's value. No more, no less.

The disadvantage of working with chronicle texts is that one's audience, unlike medieval users, is unfamiliar with the circumstances and implications surrounding, say, Vortigern's rise to power, the startling pact between Cnut and Edmund Ironside, or the disastrous feud between the British generals Cassibel and Androge. In each case, accordingly, I have sketched out a necessarily brief summary of the matter template before turning to its recombination with the entity templates in the manuscript. The resulting readings of these recombinations honor the practice of looking at the products without reference to the entire manuscript. My goal is to show the complex readings as they appear *at that moment* in the manuscript. Those looking for a totalizing interpretation will be disappointed. Likewise, the conclusions drawn from these recombinations are appropriate to the readings under question. To assume, for example, that the championing of joint rule under Cnut and Edmund Ironside must imply a similar enthusiasm throughout the manuscript is fatal. While the model and its terms are designed to transfer across manuscripts and texts, the resultant readings have a decidedly local habitation.

The introduction begins with a general discussion of the problems manuscript practice poses for conventional critical models before turning to a more detailed description of my alternative model and its terms. In chapter one, this model is then applied to selected manuscripts of a thirteenth-century chronicle history, the manuscript family of the *Metrical Chronicle*. Each manuscript invites the user to "hear again" material already part of the cultural repertoire: the attempted conquest of Britain by Julius Caesar, and the

passage of dominion from the British to the Anglo-Saxons, among other events. My model shows how the recombinations in particular manuscripts produce drastically different readings of the material, and demonstrates the inadequacy of current "best text" or recensionist editorial theory.

Chapter two uses the model and terms described in chapter one to qualify current assumptions about the ahistorical nature of nationalism. In the process, it demonstrates how the model can be used more generally to challenge readings based upon "representative" manuscripts. I argue against the tendency to conflate medieval and modern nationalism by discussing the amorphous nature of nationalism and the methodological problems inherent in arguments for medieval nationalism, in particular the dependence of these arguments upon a model of author/text/dominant meaning. In place of the limiting concepts of "nation" and "nationalism" I offer the alternative concepts "coalitional alliance" and "strategic deployment of coalitional identity" as a way of describing the complex web of affiliations that characterized social identity in the Middle Ages. The chapter then looks at two periods in British history—the reign of Arthur, and the Danish invasions of England—as treated in two families of manuscripts. A detailed set of readings illustrate my concept of coalitional alliance, since the desire for internal political stability routinely overrides questions of ethnicity and "nation" in these recombinative treatments.

Chapter three uses the recombinant model to examine the relationships among three Old English texts typically interpreted without reference to the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* manuscripts, and to demonstrate the richer readings that can be obtained by resituating these three texts in their chronicle contexts. The entries for the year 937 recounting the battle at Brunanburh, when returned to their place in the *Chronicle* manuscripts, illustrate the tensions between a chronicle genre that insists upon the recital of an event and a heroic tradition that frames defeat and appeasement as "unspeakable." My analysis of *The Battle of Maldon* places the poem in dialogue with *Chronicle* entries for 991, showing how the *Chronicle* manuscripts' continuing narratives of internal instability, Mercian and Northumbrian collaboration with the invaders, and appeasement of the Danes is rewritten as an acceptable account of heroic stoicism and solidarity. The final section of the chapter reads *Beowulf* against the precarious state of Anglo-Saxon England, as recounted in the *Chronicle* manuscript entries. I argue that the poem provides a displaced area to speak of defeat and treachery, while examining the dangers history and memory themselves, the foundations of Anglo-Saxon poetry, pose to this culture.

The final chapter turns to another meeting of templates, this time of manuscript practice and early print culture, during an era when early printers struggled to create Chaucer the literary forefather from a recalcitrant set of manuscripts. The manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The House of Fame* form interpretive labyrinths that interrogate ideas of textual authority and frustrate monologic readings. When William Caxton, his successor Wynkyn de Worde, and rival printer Richard Pynson published their editions of these texts, they reshaped the manuscripts to fit contemporaneous ideas of an authorial Chaucer. Wynkyn de Worde's edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* tries to solve the famous crux in the fifth book by adding a final *envoi,* attributed to the *"auctor."* He thus creates a collaborative work that erases the sign of its own recombination. William Caxton, by contrast, creates a conclusion to the "unfinished" *House of Fame* in order to preserve the idea of a closed and controlled text. However, he adds his name to the conclusion in an

attempt to keep "Chaucer the author's" text free from contamination by other hands. These two paradoxical strategies highlight the kind of drastic editorial doublethink necessary to create a figure that the sixteenth century called "oure Chaucer," one that has directly influenced "our" Chaucer. In the final part of the chapter, I examine the implications that these early tactics have for our own scholarly practice, and the value of early printing practices for projects that denaturalize concepts of authorship.

Introduction

*Þ*ere was in þe noble land of greece a worþe king…called Dioclycian… And he spousid a gentilwoman callyd labana and he gate on her 33 doughters where off þe eldoste was called albyne…and so it was ordynd & don þat albyne þe eldoste doughter & all of her sisters were worþily married onto 33 kyngs and grete lords… & afterwards it befell so þat þis albyne bicame so stout and so sturne þat she told little of her lord and would not to hym obey…&all her ower sisters did so þeyr will. [The husbands complain to Dioclycian, who commands his daughters to obey their husbands]. *Þ*en dame albyn led all her susters ynto her chamber…and saide: 'ffirst wole ye wat ffair sisters þat our husbands gave complaynte to our faper upon, wherefore he hap so reproved & despised us & þerefore sisters my counsole ys þat wis nyghte when our husbands been all abedd þat we will an asente slo þym en yhand and þen may we lyve in pes'…and so they slo þem all. [Dioclycian orders the daughters to be cast out to sea with some provisions.] After many storms and tempests, þey at þe last were dryvyn & londed yn an ile þat was all willde and when þey were com to þat land dame albyne þe eldoste sister went firste oute of þe schyppe. And came to þe land and þen saide she to her susters 'as y am eldoste of us all and firste to þe ground I wyll þat þis land be called Albion affter my own name.'

Afterward þy tokyn wild bestis and etyn þe flesch off. *Þ*en þey be came wonder ffat and lusty an desired manys flessschly company more þan any other þyng. *Þ*an þe devyl þat is ready to all evyls toke a body off þe air & come into þe land of Albion & lay by þes women and þey conceived afterwards and brought forþ grete and horrible geants whereof Gogmagog was one…. And þey had þe land at þeyr will unto þe time þat Brute com and landed…and conquered þes geants everyone and callid þe land bretayne. [1]

> Engelond his a wel god lond ich wene ech londe best
> Iset in þe on ende of þe worlde as al in þe west
> *Þ*e see gep him al aboute he stond as in an yle
> Of fon hii dorre þe lasse doute bote hit be þory gyle
> Of folc of the sulue lond as me hap yse ywile
> From soupe to norþ he is long ieyte hondred mile
> & two hundred mile brod fram est to west to pende
> [A very long list follows of England's natural resources,
> principal rivers, islands, and largest cities.]
> Engelond hap ibe inome & iwerred ilome
> Verst poru grete louerdes þe emperours of rome
> *Þ*at wroyte & wonne engelond & þat lond nome

Supe þory picars and scottes þat to engelond come
*Þat*werrede & destruede ac al clene ne wonne it noyte
Supe þory engliss and saxons þat hider were ibroyt
*Þoru*brutons for to helpe hem & supe hom ouer come
*Þe*brutons þat hom heder broyte & þat lond hom binome
Supe hap englelond ibe iwerred ilome
of þe folc of denemarch þat beþ noyt yut ouercome
þat ofte wonne engelond and helde it bi maistrie
þe vifþe time ywan engelond þat folc of normandie
þat among us wonieþ yut & ssulleþ euere mo
þe ssulleþ her after in this boc telle of all þis wo [2]

The two chronicle history openings above illustrate a problem endemic to the study, editing, and teaching of medieval manuscripts. These texts share a similar subject (the history of England). They agree for the most part on what events merit narration. The manuscript culture that produced them depended upon a shared range of interpretations for manuscripts' attributes (rubrication, for example, was generally used to mark the importance of what it modified). Wording among the manuscripts is similar enough to mark them as a manuscript group.

But it is obvious from their openings that these two manuscripts [3] cannot be simply scribal variants of "a text." They present two radically different founding myths.

Sloane 2027 stars what Frances Dolan has called "unthinkable" women: daughters who disobey their fathers, wives who kill their husbands, women who flout the law. [4] Unlike conventional narratives surrounding female violence, however, the manuscript shows women whose acts and desires are neither controlled nor punished in the narrative. Albyne and her sisters, free, well fed, and sexually satiated, live happily ever after. [5] Nor is the sisters' rebellion ever condemned in the story. We hear of the husbands' complaints, and the father's wrath, but there is no indication that either is justified. The story recounts a battle for power but refuses to side with either of the contenders.

If there is any uneasiness with this story, it appears in two places that are of interest as they relate to textual production. First, there is the irreconcilable gap between the society envisaged by Albyne and her sisters, and the society that would place them under male rule. Following the massacre, Albyne and her sisters are promptly driven out of Greece. They then colonize a land the manuscript explicitly refers to as "willde" and empty, a territory that can be inhabited without challenge to existing forms of rule. Brutus' arrival on the island marks its instantaneous return to patriarchal authority, both political and textual. His landing and conquest are presented within the same sentence, marked by the permanent name change from Albion to Britain.

Second, in a space void of patriarchal authority, the only means of reproduction are framed as demonic. Satan impregnates Albyne and her sisters, who give birth to giants. [6] The transgressive desire of Albyne and her sisters is answered by excessive creations that cannot be contained in conventional categories. Unlike the careful genealogies that trace Brutus' descendents, the descendents of Albyne and her sisters have no names and no

descendents. They are a product of lateral proliferation, not stemmatic descent. Thus, they remain resistant to standard ordering principles.

The opening that appears in Caligula A. xi and others, however, presents the reader with a different protagonist in the land itself. Instead of the "willde" land Albyne encounters, England appears as a tidy and productive paradise whose boundaries are known, resources inventoried, and wonders documented. Laid out as a grid of bishoprics, intersecting roads, and major cities, the opening survey has made a colonized England ahistorical, already looming over the subsequent history. It thus functions like the reflexive mapping of Siam's boundaries described by Thongchai Winichakul:

> In terms of most communication theories and common senses, a map is a scientific abstraction of reality. A map merely represents something that already exists objectively 'there.' In the history I have described [colonial Siam] this relationship was reversed. A map anticipated spatial reality not vice-versa. In other words, a map was a model for, rather than a model of what it purported to represent. [7]

In each text the relationship between its opening and subsequent narrative demonstrates a double contingency. First, the opening cannot help but determine the reading of the following folios. The Albyne story creates a dramatic link between settlement, rebellion, gender, and internal discord. Gwendolyn's successful takeover of her husband's kingdom, Arthur's creation of an empire to compete with that of his Roman kin, Guinevere and Mordred's rebellion against Arthur, and the succession wars between Stephen of Blois and Matilda must be read against this opening. This same list of events, however, cannot be read the same way in Caligula A. xi. If it is, for example, the integrity, order, and plenty of the land that is important in the opening, this influence cannot but change the inflection of these events. Gwendolyn's bid for power tears the newly settled Britain in two. Arthur's quest for empire leaves the isle open to internal revolt, leading to the destruction of the unified kingdom he created. Stephen and Matilda's wars create a longstanding rift between king and barons, which will lead to Simon de Montfort and the baronial revolt in 1265.

The material presentation of each manuscript's opening matter creates another set of striking differences. The story of Albyne's founding of the isle appears in Sloane 2027 and Digby 201, but these two openings cannot be equated. In the Sloane 2027 manuscript, the story appears as a prose opening to a metrical chronicle; Digby 201's entire text is in prose, so that the story flows seamlessly into the rest of the narrative. Sloane 2027 leaves the opening story completely unembellished, leaving spaces for initials only after the narrative's end. Digby 201's Albyne has a dramatic foliate border around the opening page (a device generally used to signal the opening of a text) and a pattern of initials that obtains throughout the following text. The Sloane 2027 manuscript invites the readers to separate the Albyne history from the sections following, despite the existence of the narrative within the text, and the narrative's insistence upon the link between Albyne's rebellion and Britain's first settlement. Digby 201, by contrast, further links the story of Albyne to the matter of Britain by adopting a series of visual cues that write Albyne's story as the opening of a continuous text. Thus, any reading of the Albyne story in these two manuscripts must take into account the relationship between the

subject matter of the story and the way a particular instance of manuscript production intersects with that matter.

So far, even a severely limited glance at a few manuscripts makes two things obvious. First, the differing openings between the Caligula A. xi group of manuscripts and the Sloane 2027/Digby 201 group render any reconciliation of the two groups impossible. Second, even within a group that shares a similar subject matter, such as Sloane 2027/Digby 201, that subject matter will be irrevocably changed by its interaction with the process of manuscript production and its own array of textual codes. When the other ten manuscripts of the Caligula A. xi group, each the combination of an array of subject material with a variety of manuscript practices, are added to the discussion, the result is a community of thirteen manuscripts with enough strong similarities to invite their study as a group, but with too many overt differences to either assimilate all of them in a general summary, or select a few texts as representative of the whole.

A responsible reading of all these manuscripts cannot be based on current scholarly, editorial, or pedagogical practice. Critical theory does not yet have a model for addressing lateral narratives in a single text, nor the resources for exploring collaborative production of meaning across several manuscripts with the same genetic makeup. Undergraduate courses dependent upon "major authors" or "great works of literature" do not have the apparatus to incorporate texts falling outside the author/work model.

Moreover, our critical vocabulary is so dependent upon this model that it is difficult to speak outside of it. As a simple exercise, consider the sentence: "Try to discuss the play about a Danish prince's avenging of his father's death without mentioning its title or author." Several things become apparent. To make sense without an authorial or titular reference, the sentence leans heavily upon a false assumption: that there exists "a play" located outside its folios, printings, and performances. Second, the sentence postulates a retrievable single narrative. This "play" is about vengeance, rather than the nature of ambition or the relationship between loss and insanity. Even with this perspective in place, the discussion promptly becomes awkward, since the encoded abbreviations of author and title are excised. The fantasies of controlling author, single work, representative text, dominant reading, and identifiable narrative mutually support one another. Our dependence upon these structures for coherence limits our ability to challenge any one aspect of this group, a pattern that can be seen most specifically in self-conscious attempts to dismantle elements of the group. In his work on modernist use of the gloss, for example, John Whittier-Ferguson quotes with approval Lee Patterson's remarks on glosses' ability to challenge

> the assumption that there is a difference between the text and [the gloss] itself…[since] without warning we discover that [the gloss] has itself become a text or—more unsettling still—moved from the margins into the center to become an indistinguishable part of that to which it was originally merely a submissive addition. [8]

Patterson's evident desire to maintain a distinction between discrete texts, and to keep the ideas of central and marginal, dominant and submissive texts in place while admitting to the difficulty of endorsing these positions is reflected in the move made by Whittier-Ferguson throughout his book. Glossarial apparatus, he argues, is inextricably bound up

with the text it surrounds. Moreover, he expands the idea of the glossarial apparatus to include texts generally conceived of as outside the realm of a work: letters, critical essays, public speeches, and works related to the text under consideration. However, these elements are included *if and only if* they can be firmly linked to the figure of the controlling author. In his discussion of Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land,* Eliot's contemptuous dismissal of subsequent contributors to the poem's glossarial apparatus is mirrored in Whittier-Ferguson's language:

> Eliot's notes to *The Waste Land* offer a perfect illustration of apparatus that has grown so thoroughly familiar that we can scarcely read it apart from the *earnest additions and endless elucidations of subsequent editors.* This still growing body of notes nevertheless stands *in its original shape* as a characteristically elaborate and ambitious instance of modernist gloss. [9]

Whittier-Ferguson's need to keep the idea of the gloss bound to the figure of the author while insisting on the inextricability of text and gloss here has him writing in circles. Even if he dismisses the "earnest" and "endless" accumulation of editorial detritus to the "elaborate" original structure, he is bound by his own argument to keep it in view. Thus comes the strange conflation in the last sentence, where the accumulative subject is retrospectively linked to its original, authorial shape, as if Eliot, like God, could foresee the "fall" of his creation while allowing it to happen.

Likewise, Thorlac Turville-Petre, in *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity,* argues persuasively for study of texts across such genres as romance, clerical writing, and historiography, and for further examination of neglected chronicle manuscripts. His analysis makes an important claim for reading outside the author/title model, only to insist that the texts' importance lies in their conformance to a dominant single meaning: their early production of nationalistic discourse. Though he challenges medieval alterity, he still relies on the binary model of center and periphery, like Whittier-Ferguson. As Turville-Petre states in his preface: "The underlying contention of this book is that it is the similarities between medieval and modern expressions of national identity that are fundamental, and the differences that are peripheral." [10] The two expressions of structural support—"underlying" and "fundamental"—betray the work's need to ground itself in a monologic anachronism, in the absence of a generally organizing author or work. Moreover, while arguing for the further study of manuscript practice in its examination of British Library MSS Harley 2253 and Add. 46919, [11] Turville-Petre's study sweeps these considerations under the rug when turning to chronicle histories. The entire thirteen manuscripts of the *Metrical Chronicle* group are tidily assimilated into the earliest manuscript, British Library MS Caligula A. xi, and put under the control of an author with "a single and coherent ideological standpoint." [12] They can then be "represented" in some twenty pages. This same pattern obtains in his discussion of other chronicle manuscripts. What we can see here, again, is the impossibility of carrying on rigorous examination of manuscripts while insisting upon the validity of authorial intention, single meaning, or representative work.

Since the language of critical analysis as it stands cannot handle the multivalent complexities of a manuscript culture, it seems more logical to adapt the language to fit

the needs of the matter to be studied, rather than curtailing or truncating that study out of obedience to critical, pedagogical or editorial custom. Since the advent of hypermedia, the necessity for such a new language has become a pragmatically necessary concern.

At a 1999 conference on Computing in the Humanities, Matthew Kirschenbaum exploited the technological flexibility of VRML (Virtual Reality Markup Language) to challenge conventionally narrow interpretations of and strictures on narrative. [13] Within the VRML program, text appeared in a layered palimpsest mode, as semi-transparent letters that revealed others underneath. Lines of text moved around, disappeared, changed color, or faded away as they were read. Multiple narratives occupied a recursively embedded universe, as the slightest curve of a letter, when searched, was found to contain an entirely new path. In this multidirectional, fractal universe, it is impossible to determine a direction of reading or to establish a textual hierarchy. How do you teach a text like this? How do you even reach an ending, much less a reading? Traditional narratology, and the scholarly and editorial apparatus surrounding it, fail spectacularly here. However, the circumambient literary-critical culture threatens to strip these postmodern narratives of their complexity in the same way that it has reduced medieval manuscripts to non-representative texts coded as reliable versions.

The VRML narratives shown at the conference are part of an ongoing critical challenge to what hypermedia theorists refer to as "the flatland," a term used to describe writing and editing processes that treat the material properties of text as irrelevant to the "more important" issues of content. In the hypermedia theorists' and writers' view, "flatland" writing imposes normative standards of reading order, textual hierarchy, and spatial organization. These in turn privilege a given content over material presentation (a distinction artificial in itself), a central text over text labeled "introductory," "marginal" or "supplemental," and a narrative taxonomy that relentlessly sorts text by author, subject, or principal "message." Flatland writing and flatland editing have formed a symbiotic relationship, one that has been periodically contested (think of William Morris and the Kelmscott Press), but never in a way that the prevailing system could not re-assimilate.

Manuscript culture and electronic media allow for multivocality, collaborative textual communities, and non-agonistic dialogue between narratives. Conventional critical and editorial discursive practices fit N.Katherine Hayles' definition of reflexivity: they are "movement[s] whereby that which has been used to generate a system is made, through a changed perspective, to become part of the system it generates." [14] The machinery of critical practice produces the very model it claims to describe: a linear narrative pattern under the control of an author and accessible to a monologic (or at best, competitive dialogic) reading. When this machinery meets a text, parchment or electronic, that will not fit the pattern, it refuses the text, or re-generates it to fit existing parameters. Thus, the first flush of interest in hypertext literature has, in many cases, degenerated into fussy debates as to *which* older model should be used to make it legible: Literature or cinema? Newspaper or book? Moreover, even the most sophisticated of hypermedia theorists run into difficulties when they attempt to talk about hypertext and collaborative online communities through the language of conventional critical theory. Neal Stephenson's critique of current consumer preference for graphical user interfaces (GUIs) over command lines reveals itself as a nostalgic wish for an authorial voice assumed absent in visual media. This becomes most explicit when Stephenson links the loss of this voice

with a loss of authenticity and an alienation of the consumer/reader, using Disney as a prime example of this process:

> Disney is in the business of putting out a product of seamless illusion—a magic mirror that reflects the world back better than it really is. But a writer is literally talking to his or her readers, not just creating an ambiance or presenting them with something to look at. Just as the command line opens a much more direct and explicit channel from user to machine than the GUI, so it is with words, writer, and reader. [15]

The strange hierarchy here of written over visual production as the primary carrier of meaning, a move that seemingly renders meaningless millennia of artistic production, is taken a step further in Stephenson's further comments, in which the word itself is seen as a transparent medium through which to view the figure of the author:

> Some of Disney's older properties, such as Peter Pan, Winnie the Pooh, and Alice in Wonderland, came out of books. But the authors' names are rarely if ever mentioned and you can't buy the original books at the Disney store. If you could, they would all seem old and queer, like very bad knockoffs of the purer, more authentic Disney versions. Compared to more recent productions like *Beauty and the Beast* and *Mulan,* the Disney movies based on these books (particularly *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan*) seem deeply bizarre, and not wholly appropriate for children. That stands to reason, because Lewis Carroll and J.M.Barrie were very strange men, and such is the nature of the written word that their personal strangeness shines straight through the layers of Disneyfication like X-rays through a wall. [16]

The vocabulary is telling in this section: Carroll and Barrie stand as the guarantors of the "purer, more authentic" words that transcend Disney's corrupting and deviously anonymous textual appropriation. Even if we ignore the specific flaws with this argument (one wonders if Carroll's "personal strangeness" also "shines" through his mathematical treatises, or if the animators of Disney's *Alice in Wonderland,* who added some profoundly bizarre moments to the film not seen in the written text, would be happy to be defined as complicit hacks) the larger problem remains that there are an awful lot of texts out there that one would hesitate to dismiss as meaningless because of their lack of writing. Stephenson realizes this problem when he mentions Disney's current use of folktales stemming from an oral culture with no retrievable authors, and the consumer preferences of visitors to Disney World:

> If you followed these tourists home, you might find art, but it would be the sort of unsigned folk art that's for sale in Disney World's African- and Asian-themed stores. In general they only seem comfortable with media that have been ratified by great age, massive popular acceptance, or both. In this world, artists are like the anonymous, illiterate stone carvers who built the great cathedrals of Europe and then faded away into unmarked

graves in the churchyard. The cathedral as a whole is awesome and stirring in spite, and possibly because, of the fact that we have no idea who built it. When we walk through it, we are not communing with individual stone carvers but with an entire culture. [17]

While the cathedral is seen as reflective of an entire culture, Disneyland is seen not as a place validated and supported by a culture, but as a place in which the *intelligentsia* are uneasily aware of the duping of their so-called intellectual inferiors:

> If you are an intellectual type, a reader or writer of books, the nicest thing you can say about [Disney World] is that its execution is superb. But it's easy to find the whole environment a little creepy, because something is missing: the translation of all its content into clear explicit written words, the attribution of the ideas to specific people. You can't argue with it. It seems as though a hell of a lot might be glossed over, as if Disney World might be putting one over on us, and possibly getting away with all kinds of buried assumptions and muddled thinking. [18]

Stephenson is interesting because he specifically ties in arguments about attributed written text, visual images, and authenticity with explicit cultural critique: he acts as the Matthew Arnold of the computer world in this sense, and with the same kind of unconscious elitism that naturally transfers to historical periods. The cathedrals can be seen as innocent of ideological manipulation because their makers, here cast as simple stonemasons, *cannot* write or read according to Stephenson. They inhabit a prelapsarian world, innocent of text and therefore of the deliberate choosing of images that damns Disney. In the process, the cathedral can function as a synecdoche for a simpler medieval culture that can, like nature, be "communed with."

In their latest work, *Writing Machines,* N.Katherine Hayles and Anne Burdick find themselves faced with the problem of trying to create a critical vocabulary for approaching hypermedia within the parameters set by traditional critical language. Despite their laudable attempts to recognize the collaborative nature of text production (a recognition enacted in the joint attribution of creation to "writer" and "designer") and to move beyond the usual image-driven discussions of textual materiality, the project falls prey to the need to ground readings in a controlling figure: in this case, the user of the media. This need creates a curious return to something resembling early biographical criticism: interspersed between the introductions of useful new terms for analysis lies a group of sections that Hayles herself recognizes as autobiographical, albeit at a remove:

> In this experiment called *Writing Machines,* exploring what the print book can be in the digital age, only part of the story lies in the theories, concepts and examples articulated here. Another part, obvious from the moment you lay eyes on the book, inheres in the visual design. Still another is comprised by the people initiating change and resisting it, writing books and creating digital environments, struggling to see what its existence means and ignoring it altogether. Telling a fuller story requires these narrative chapters interrogating the author's position, her

background and experiences, and especially the community of writers, theorists, critics, teachers, and students in which she moves. [19]

As we move through *Writing Machines,* it becomes clear that the original community of users has been reduced to the figure of a single author of the particular book *Writing Machines,* and the earlier hints of a hierarchy implicit in the positioning of this community as the backdrop for the single author's movements and experiences is fulfilled as the biographical chapters accumulate.

Disappointing though these kinds of reactions may be, the future of hypertext studies is supported by the very linear/teleological narrative praxis it attempts to challenge. A fundamental assumption that the passage of time is linked to progressive change obtains in both literary criticism and popular culture. Theorists' amused glances backward at early literary criticism and the mantra "New and Improved!" share the same underpinnings of fantasy. Thus, even while hypertext fiction proves resistant to traditional hermeneutic patterns, those attempting to master it by traditional models nevertheless share an uneasy sense that it should not be reduced to these patterns. [20] Somehow, equating hypertext with cinema is retrogressive, unworthy of a new technology. Moreover, hypertext's implicit links with the Internet, with multimedia, digital imaging, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality models make a strong pragmatic argument for the creation of a language sufficient to describe its movements. There is within digital culture an ideological and utilitarian imperative to address its problems with "new and improved" language. [21]

Unfortunately, this same *telos* works against the creation of a new set of models for addressing medieval writing practices. Medieval manuscripts, with their multiple hands, collaborative textual production, and general lack of interest in fixing a text to an author, share a remarkable number of values and concerns with VRML, hypertext narratives, and multimedia. They are equally resistant to easy inclusion within conventional critical, editorial, and pedagogical models. However, the model of progress that saves hypertext and its analogues from neglect compels an inherently dismissive view of texts from the past, and from technologies viewed as quaint or primitive. In a culture that cherishes an image of itself as having evolved from more primitive origins, the past is compelled to play either the embryonic primitive forerunner of current practice, or romanticized/ demonized "Other." The same year, 1994, saw huge sales of CDs like *Chant,* and the box office success of *Pulp Fiction*. The monks' singing was marketed as an egress from the complex stresses of a despiritualized society. In retaliation for a brutal anal rape, a character in *Pulp Fiction* threatens to "get medieval" on his rapist, an efficient linking of abjected body parts, vicious behavior, and the "Dark Ages" rejected past. [22]

The force of this teleological paradigm has compelled medieval studies to accept two models of representation, even when they work ultimately against its own interests. One current method for making the Middle Ages "matter" to publishers, scholars, and students is to adopt what Theresa Krier has called the "whatever you can do, we can do earlier model." The medievalists' challenge to early modernists' claims for early individuality, subjectivity, and state formation. In their period, for example, has for the most part been to argue for the earlier formation of these paradigms, rather than to nuance them and risk losing some share of the scholarly market. [23] In so doing, they replicate the very presentist values they need to complicate. [24] Moreover, because presentist concepts do

not translate very well to the medieval period, the resulting scholarship looks necessarily weak and apologetic. The Middle Ages, then, is put forth as a worthy object of study on these terms, only to look like a less interesting and accessible model of concepts more easily studied elsewhere.

Another strategy exploits the romanticized/demonized vision of the past, and finds its selling points in mystic asceticism, spectacular practices such as public executions, the horrors of plague and leprosy, or the allure of Arthuriana. The appeal of this vision is the same as that governing the romanticized Gothic in the nineteenth century: an escapism that glorifies the past at the same time as it disavows, by its excesses, any relevance to the present.

At best, these two strategies only buy time for medieval studies, by accepting the current teleological model, and agreeing to the value judgments imposed therein. At worst, they back medievalists into a critical corner whereby they are forced to neglect or repudiate over three-fourths of their already small number of surviving texts, thus enforcing the idea that somehow, in ten-plus centuries and multiple countries, only a handful of even tolerable texts was produced. Any text deemed worthy within this framework must be explained by references to the author's genius, represented as being "ahead of its time." The picture of literary production from 500–1500 is that of a mucky wasteland, in which a few bewildered fine spirits, caught among the general dirt, mindless religious fervor, and overall cultural torpor, slog along, praying for the quick onset of the Renaissance. The relatively few texts represented even at specialized conferences such as the International Conference on Medieval Studies, the MLA's organization of medieval literature panels around the presence or absence of Chaucer, or the imperative to orient scholarship and publication in the area of major authors demonstrate the costs of collaboration with these models.

While these prevailing techniques of self-promotion are failing medieval studies, popular culture has never been more amenable to models operating in an oral/formulaic and/or manuscript culture. Caedmon and his table companions are recognizable to poetry-slammers and chat room addicts. Medieval models of incorporated memory and intertextuality are the stuff of tribute bands, mix tracks, cyberpunk, and multimedia. Hip-hop depends upon oral/formulaic patterns, as well as the call-and-response forms used in the mass. The Web could not function without the narrative lateralization, collaborative production, and active participation in a textual community characteristic of manuscript culture.

The difficulty here, of course, lies in dismantling the reflexive machinery of critical language to create a model that will accommodate medieval textual culture and speak to the rebirth of these types of narratives in contemporary media. At the same time, this new language must be comprehensible within an academic environment accustomed to the older system. The first steps towards this new critical theory require questioning and rethinking language at the level of vocabulary, searching other disciplines for models, and testing alternate ways of arriving at common evaluative ground.

How, for example, does one talk about a group of manuscripts that share similar content? The old author/work/edition model organized groups like this according to their relation to their purported author. One work, that least contaminated by "scribal interference" or closest in time to that of the "author" would be chosen as the most representative text, and would be used as the base text for an edition. This type of edition

was a *simulacrum* in the truest sense of the word: a textual production announcing itself as a reproduction, yet with no original. A model useful for the study of manuscripts' "communities on the page" [25] must take into account the resemblance between members of a group of manuscripts, a resemblance that demands intertextual analysis, while resisting the temptation to level their complexity by choosing a single manuscript as representative. In the next section, I offer some alternate terms to describe manuscript dynamics and demonstrate their use in manuscript analysis.

A theory of relationships—those of manuscripts to their sources, manuscripts to other manuscripts, manuscripts to their various users [26] —must have a set of terms that refer to the participants in this relationship, while gesturing towards the product of their interaction. Such terms must lie outside generally accepted models of reproduction (original/copy, parent/child, pure/hybrid) since these rely upon stemmatic models that underwrite the older system. At the same time, they must not attempt to provide a new set of limiting standards that will only reproduce the problems of the earlier system. The growth of recombinant genetics has provided science with a vocabulary for discussing sets of relationships that cannot be reduced to the idea of original and reproduction. A spliced link of genetic material changes both the inserted strand of code and the strand that has been spliced, since the two combine to form a new strand of code. This strand will then go on to reproduce itself, often in ways that cannot, at this time, be foreseen by genetic science. The relationship between strands effaces the distinction between original and copy, since the one or more combining strands cannot be said to be either. The only thing each strand provides is a probability of some of its attributes being reproduced, but this probability is dependent upon its interaction with other strands. To appropriate a term originally used in architectural construction, that has been adopted by biology, literature and software design, each strand offers a *template* for its reproduction, but each template can be acted upon, and changed, by another strand, in itself a template subject to change. The term "template," as a general term for interactions within manuscript culture, has several advantages. It denotes a legible system for making connections between materials, a vehicle that will support and distribute material accumulated upon it, and a system for organizing such materials. It is dependent for its value upon its interactions with other materials, and cannot be treated as an original. The template is only useful as part of a collaborative production of meaning.

If I, for example, decided to create a business letter, custom (whether or not encoded into my word-processing software) has dictated a generic and materialist template for my work: black ink is acceptable; crayon is not. Egregious jargon is encouraged; personal confession frowned upon. The template then governs our arbitrary categories of both "content" and "appearance," while allowing for a certain flexibility within these boundaries: I can select paper, font type, letter height, and a range of layouts; I can change the tone, the emphases, and the topic. The template alone is not the letter, nor can it be representative of business letters in general, only of the space that they occupy within a culture.

When we turn to medieval manuscript production, the idea of a template can be usefully applied to discuss the production of a specific manuscript as well as the intertextual dynamics among groups of manuscripts. I will outline what I think are the two most useful and transferable models before turning to their application within a specific group of manuscripts.

First, we can think of "matter" as a template. "Matter" cannot be equated with content, which implies a stable substance within that which contains it, but is rather the accumulation of texts that make up the ever-growing body of a subject. For example, the "matter" of Catherine of Siena could be said to be the long-term accumulation of details about Catherine, traditional models of hagiography, iconic history, political deployments of the saint, critical disagreements about her motives and influence (such as that between Bynum and Bell), and the 400-plus Web sites linked to her name. A narrative about Catherine may include any part or amount of this accumulated matter. It is not a rigid formula but an array of materials from which to compile a text. Just as a business letter template guides an array of salutations and closings, the matter template allows for choice of materials about Catherine.

When we turn to the manuscripts comprising the *Metrical Chronicle* group, [27] we can see clearly how flexible the idea of matter can be, even among a set of texts that share a large number of similarities. Each of these texts shares an interest in the "matter" of England's history, with the usual range of coverage in a manuscript running from the fall of Troy to the death of Henry III and accession of Edward I. [28] For the most part, they share an interest in the simultaneous development of British and Roman history, the long-running conflict between the British and the Anglo-Saxons, the sufferings endured by the Crusaders, and the depredations of the land under the Norman Conquest. Each manuscript laments the costs of conquest, the price of internal division, and the evils of treason. This is not to say, however, that each manuscript will highlight, or even include, the same emperors, the same descriptions of famine, or the same conquests. Rather, there is a general agreement among these manuscripts that these events *qua* events are important in a history of the realm. The *Historia Regum Brittaniae,* one of the chief sources mentioned for the history of British conquest and rule, is changed among the manuscripts of the group to fit its needs. Thus the long list of kings between Gurgustius, the king responsible for the population of Ireland, and Lud, founder of London, is excised from this group of manuscripts. A similar reduction appears in the manuscripts' account of Merlin's prophecies; they list the prophecies up to the mention of Arthur, but excuse themselves from any further description, because "the matter is so derk." Matter, thus, can be changed, adopted in part, or used word-for-word; in no case does it necessarily constitute a copy, in our sense of the word.

Nor does matter have to be consistent among a group of similar manuscripts, such as those of the *Metrical Chronicle Group*. The majority of manuscripts in the group spend an astonishing amount of space (about 19 folios on average) on a detailed account of Henry III's reign. For reasons as yet unknown, two of these manuscripts—Trinity R. 4.26 and CUL Ee. 4.31—condense Henry's reign into a few terse couplets:

> *Henry his sone came after and þis land þere nome*
> *And fifty yere and sixe helde þis kingdome*
> *And also twenty dayes and ded was ywis*
> *And buryed at Westminster þere his body yet is*
> Þere *were in his tyme two battailes in þe lande*
> *At lewes and at evesham as v understande*

Þat *were hered longe and yet no be foryot noyt*
Þerefore *in this book be þey noyte ywrought.* [29]

As we saw earlier, the opening *encomium* on the virtues of the land of England, found in the majority of the texts, is replaced in Sloane 2027 and in Digby 201 with the story of Albyne and her sisters. Add. 19677 appends a metrical romance to the end of the manuscript, one that offers a different reading of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. In short, there are enough common elements among the manuscripts to argue for a common template, and enough drastic variations to challenge the idea of the production of these texts as a simple reproduction.

Second, there is a template that permits a common interpretive currency among a manuscript culture's codes, a template I will refer to as an entity template. I use the term "entity" to refer to the type of arbitrary symbol recognized amongst a particular group of users as bearing a recognizable range of significance. Within SGML markup, for example, there is a general list of entities recognizable amongst large groups (editors, publishers, mathematicians), such as accent marks. This list can then be modified or expanded to suit the needs of more specialized users, *if the entity is agreed on by that group to have a restricted range of meaning*. The entity then interacts with the user on a third level, in that certain entities demand that the user collaborate on the production of meaning. For example, within SGML markup, the string "&" is code for the insertion of an ampersand into the text. "&" and ";" are the two limits of this string, marking it off from the rest of the text. The computer will recognize anything lying between "&" and ";"as an entity, and users of the code will read this string of marks in the same way. A more specialized group, working with older texts, might need to expand the list of entities to include one for the Tironian abbreviation of an "o" with a macron over it, the macron indicating that the "o" is followed by a nasal consonant. The new entity would be "ō," agreed upon by a group of users, and added to the computer's list of recognized entities. However, "ō" meaning as it does either "on" or "om," also relies on user input to determine its final decoding.

I use this technical example to make an important point: that entities may be legible within a group of users without being standardized. In fact, part of their usefulness lies in their ability to change in deployment, value, and range of meaning, while still providing a common ground for collaborative interpretation. This model has great potential as a way to study the "entities," the shared practices of encoding obtaining within and across texts. The entity template I propose recognizes parchment expenditure, initials, paragraph marks, glosses, illumination, rubrication and *nota* marks as entities bearing value. By being made part of the matter template of a manuscript, an event such as the death of Edmund Ironside acquires value. It then receives additional value if it has a greater number of pages devoted to it, if the event is marked by an initial, if that initial is further historiated, rubricated or embellished, or if there exists alongside it a *nota* mark, paragraph mark or gloss. The utility of this value system is that it is not dependent on information about the author, or about scribal intentionality. Entity presence on the folio is marked by the reader as bearing a certain kind of value, in the same way that a currency's standard is not dependent upon the status or intentions of the bearer. In a

restaurant, for example, I may have meant to leave a twenty-dollar bill as a tip, or I may have been careless; neither cause changes the exchange value of the bill.

Like currency as well, its value within and among texts depends upon its behavior within and among texts, as with the fluctuations of the global market. For example, rubrication as a practice confers value on those sections of the text rubricated. However, the precise value depends, like the market, upon concepts such as scarcity and stability. If every other line in a text is rubricated, either we must conclude that this pattern is important for some reason, or that this particular text is suffering from rampant inflation, whereby the text is so flooded with red ink that its presence cannot be a guarantor of emphasis. Conversely, in a text that is consistently yet rarely rubricated, the hermeneutic value of these sections soars in comparison with other areas of the text. Likewise, what one might call the internal stability of a text will influence the reading of something like rubrication. If I am reading a text, and all of the names of kings are rubricated, for instance, until I get to William the Conqueror, how I read this absence will depend upon several variables. Does the rubrication start up again after this absence, or could it be read as a loss or change of scribal hand? If the rubrication ceases at this point on the initials, does it cease for other areas of the text? Does the grade of the script decrease, or the overall quality of the parchment? If not, and if the rubrication starts up again, I can assume, regardless of scribal intention, that this particular initial has a lower value than others within the text, and can construct an argument for the section to be read as a medieval reader might see it. Shifts in hand, dropoffs in rubrication, change in initial size or frequency: all of these may very well send a message to the reader, but this message must be measured against the other variables the template allows. Moreover, just as countries can fix, inflate, or attempt to protect the value of their currency, a particular manuscript can "set" relative values, within a given parameter, for its generally accepted value-bearing entities. For example, the height (in lines) of an initial adds a proportionate emphasis to the section so marked, if and only if that line height has a certain range of variation in the manuscript as a whole. Thus, if the majority of a manuscript's initials measure two lines in height, this two-line height becomes the default height against which other initial heights may be compared in value. An initial spanning three lines invites a reading with greater emphasis, while one only measuring one line in height invites de-emphasis. If all the initials, though, fall into the two-line category, then the reader must look at frequency, embellishment, color, or another set of variables to compare values. The size, rubrication, embellishment, and frequency of glosses, paragraph marks, *nota* marks and the like also conform to this internally structured system for comparing values. Again, I want to emphasize that these internal scales of value do not have to have anything to do with intention or design. One scribe might very well have left guidemarks for rubricated paragraph marks, which are then not filled in for whatever reason an analysis of the manuscript seems to support. Conversely, glosses might be added by one scribe, rubricated by another, and embellished by a third. The resulting accumulation of value in the third addition could not be said to be intended nor refused by the first or second.

Texts produced by the interaction of templates show a family resemblance, but one that resembles the hybridization of genetic recombination rather than a simplistic cloning of material. Add 19677, for example, shares a general frequency and location of initials with most of the other manuscripts, but does not share a height variation in initials. It thus

produces a hybrid reading that cannot be traced to, or assimilated into, a reading of its sibling manuscripts. Caligula A. xi and Harley 201 exhibit shifts in the default height of their initials. These shifts produce startlingly dissimilar readings, as the shifts interact with the events they modify, with the expectations set up by other sections of each manuscript and with the new template, that of default shifts, which in turn offers a guideline for creation/ interpretation. This model of recombination compels the analysis of each interaction of textual elements as a "cross" produced by the interaction of two or more templates, a hybrid that may share traits with its siblings, but cannot be identified with them. Unlike textual genealogy, however, the recombinant model refuses a hierarchical parent/child dualism, focusing instead upon the lateral production of sibling texts. Manuscript models are to the author/text/edition triad as conventional models for the study of biology are to artificial intelligence studies and cyborg theory. As C.G.Langton defines the difference:

> Biology has traditionally started at the top, viewing a living organism as a complex biochemical machine, and worked analytically down from there—through organs, tissues, cells, organelles, membranes, and finally molecules—in its pursuit of the mechanisms of life. Artificial Life starts at the bottom, viewing an organism as a large population of simple machines, and works upward synthetically from there, constructing large aggregates of simple, rule-governed objects that interact with one another linearly in the support of life-like, global dynamics. The 'key' concept in Artificial Life is emergent behavior. Natural life emerges out of the organized interactions of a great number of nonliving molecules, with no global controller responsible for every part. [30]

If we substitute the words "manuscripts" for "machines," and "author/text/edition triad" for "global controller" we can see how well Langton's definition can be used to describe manuscript culture. More importantly, if we adopt the idea of "behavior" as a concept that mediates between author-driven, monologic "meaning" and impressionistic, non-grounded reader response, we can use Langton's concepts of non-linearity, local determination of behavior, and emergent behavior to construct a critical model for a multi-vocal textual community operating upon, and operating by, a shared interpretive value system.

I began this introduction with the story of Albyne and her sisters, who carve out a new paradise by breaking the laws and conventions governing them. Their story provides a nice analogy for the creation of a new model and a new vocabulary to provide sibling manuscripts with a voice in medieval studies. It may be easier to teach, study, and research medieval texts by simply following conventional critical and editorial theory. It is certainly a "willde" and empty land that we face when we decide to change the rules to fit the texts, rather than choose the texts that fit the rules. However, the prospect of creating a new space for manuscripts is too exciting to pass up simply because of the difficulty involved.

In the following chapter, I venture into this "willde" land, taking these models and applying them to a reading of certain manuscripts in the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscript family. I want to stress that I am not attempting to fix a reading or value of these

particular manuscripts by focusing on two or three specific manuscripts, or by choosing a set of events or a group of entities to analyze. Instead, I choose two striking instances of matter and entity template recombination, and compare the readings offered by these new genotypes to alternate recombinations in other manuscripts of this group. By demonstrating the richness of possibility that comes from examining even a small sample interaction of these templates, I wish to provide a coherent challenge to a critical practice that flattens medieval texts to conform to twentieth-century author/work/edition/dominant meaning models.

NOTES

1. Sloane 2027, f. 2r. Reprinted courtesy of the British Library. All manuscripts will be referred to by their designated abbreviations (see appendix A). There are thirteen known manuscripts that are similar enough in matter that they have been considered a group (although usually attributed to copies of a text by Robert of Gloucester). These are: Caligula A. xi, Harley 201, Add. 19677, Add. 18631, Sloane 2027, Digby 205, Trinity R. 4.26, CUL Ee. 4.31, Magdalen 2014, Digby 201, Arundel 58, Hunterian 3.13 and Mostyn 259.
2. Caligula A. xi, f. 1r–4r. Reprinted courtesy of the British Library.
3. I am using Sloane 2027 and Caligula A. xi as representative (for this opening) of two groups containing differing openings. Sloane 2027 and Digby 201 open with the Albyne story; the remainder of the manuscript corpus does not.
4. Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) 21–25.
5. Compare this tale to the narratives of female aggression/transgression in the "subversive" filmic texts of the past decade: *Thelma and Louise, Fatal Attraction, Basic Instinct,* and *The Long Kiss Goodnight*.
6. The connection between this large group of women, demonic sexual activity, birth, and monstrosity is an early instance of the phenomenon described by Dolan: "[early modern] accounts of witchcraft and infanticide teem with women acting either alone or with other women. Such female separatism suggests the frightening possibility of an alternative social space dominated by women" (Dolan, 14).
7. Thongchai Winichakul, "Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of Siam." (dissertation, University of Sydney, [1988]) 110.
8. Patterson, Lee, "Commentary as Cultural Artifact" (*South Atlantic Quarterly* 91, [1992]:787–9) quoted in John Whittier-Ferguson, *Framing Pieces: Designs of the Gloss in Joyce, Woolf, and Pound* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 5.
9. Whittier-Ferguson, *Framing Pieces,* 5 (emphases mine).
10. Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996) v.
11. Turville-Petre, 181–183.
12. Turville-Petre, 17. The earliest manuscript is evidently selected as the one closest to this hypothesized author's "original" intent.
13. Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Small Worlds, Wide Webs: Building Bridges from Humanities Computing to Digital Culture," Scholarly Technology Group presentation, 7 October 1999.
14. N.Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Post-Human: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) 8.
15. Neil Stephenson, *In the Beginning Was the Command Line* (New York: Avon Books, 1999) 5. The title of the work itself gestures towards a desired prelapsarian connection between author and text as guarantor of meaning.
16. Ibid, 51.

17. Ibid, 51, 52.

18. Ibid, 52

19. N.Katherine Hayles and Anne Burdick, *Writing Machines* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 9.

20. Timothy Leary's anthem to digital culture makes the link between evolutionary, linguistic and technological fantasies explicit: "One of the greatest events in the evolution of our species came when we were able to use electrons, zeros, and ones as a language to communicate. We use this new language in computers with light, energy, and illumination. The key is in screens, defined by clusters of light" (back blurb, *Virtual Futures: Cyberotics, Technology, and Post-Human Pragmatism,* ed. Joan Broadhurst Dixon and Eric J.Cassidy [London: Routledge, 1998]). In this extraordinary quotation, the process of human development implies the fulfillment of narrative desire: with digital culture, we shall finally be handed the key to language and achieve enlightenment.

21. Witness the new crop of books on narratology that have sprung up in the wake of Web sites and hypertext fiction. See Janet Miller, *Hamlet on the Holodeck;* Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Poststructuralist Narrative Theory; Clicking In: Hot Links to a Digital Culture,* ed. Lynn Hershman Leeson, and *Virtual Futures: Cyberotics, Technology, and Post-human Pragmatism,* ed. Joan Dixon Broadhurst and Eric J.Cassidy.

22. For a compelling examination of Tarantino's film and its relationship to current ideas about the "medieval," see Carolyn Dinshaw's *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999) 184–206.

23. See David Aers, "A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists, or Reflections on Literary Critics Writing 'The History of the Subject,'" *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing,* ed. David Aers (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992).

24. A striking exception to this tendency is Caroline Walker Bynum's "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?" in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

25. See Bryan, chapter two and following.

26. Given the variety of roles that a person can adopt in interacting with manuscripts—reading, collaborative production, listening, physical contact (see Bryan, pp. 19–45 for discussion of the multiple roles made available by manuscript culture)—the term "users" seems more useful than the more limiting "readers."

27. See appendix A for a list of the manuscripts in this group.

28. Magdalen 2014 begins halfway through the reign of Arthur; Add. 19677 begins with the Anglo-Saxon rule. These are the only two exceptions to the general span of matter covered.

29. Trinity R. 4.26, f. 160v. Reprinted courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations will be taken from the manuscripts cited. Any quotations taken from the 1887 edition will be noted.

30. Langton, C.G., "Artificial Life" in *Artificial Life* 1, no 1, 2 (fall 1993/winter 1994):v, vi.

CHAPTER 1
The *Metrical Chronicle* Family and Manuscript Practice

In the previous section, I outlined the terms of my model. In this chapter, I want to demonstrate their value to a discussion of similar sections across a manuscript family: that of the *Metrical Chronicle*.

Before turning to the specific recombinations, it may be helpful to give an overview of the general matter template obtaining in the majority of the manuscripts. The general matter template begins with a description of Britain (or story of Britain's founding by Albyne), continues through Brutus' founding of the isle, the clash between the Romans and the Britons for supremacy, the arrival and conquest of the Anglo-Saxons, the brief reinstatement of British rule under Arthur, and the final loss of British hegemony with Cadwallader. The Anglo-Saxon portion of the history begins with a description of the five Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, their assimilation into the militarily superior Wessex, and the establishment of a regnal line from Æthelwolf through Alfred the Great. Its downfall begins with the invasion of the Danes under the reign of Æthelraed the Unready and culminates with the death of Edmund Ironside. A short Danish dynasty rules until 1042, when Edward the Confessor returns from exile. His death sparks the controversy that leads to the Norman Conquest, an event that the matter template describes as a full-scale disaster for Anglo-Saxon natives and "poure men" in general. The template then turns its attention to Pope Urban's crusade and its disasters before returning to the equally spectacular mismanagement of the realm under William Rufus. The accession of Henry I is marked as the return of English "kind" to the throne, through Henry's marriage to Matilda of Scotland, descendent of Edmund Ironside. Henry I is succeeded by Henry II, whom the template marks out as the agent of Thomas Becket's martyrdom. With the accession of Henry III, the template focuses upon the continual problem of baronial/monarchial strife, culminating in Simon de Montfort's rebellion, its fortunes, and its final collapse in the massacre at Evesham.

This general summary, though, can never be more than an inadequate outline. Within its parameters, and among the manuscripts, is an extensive interplay of related and accumulated matter. Nero giving birth to a monstrous frog, Queen Emma walking on red-hot plowshares to prove her chastity, the identification of Simon de Montfort's death with Christ's crucifixion—all of this narrative material forms part of what we must call the matter template.

Even within the disparate material, however, we can identify concerns common to all the manuscripts. The problem of internal discord, the threat of external invasion or internal treason, the necessity for peace and the problem of the poor inform the choice of matter in each manuscript's template. Although it is difficult to summarize all of this material, we can trace common strands in each manuscript. Of these, the most obvious is

the continued discussion of the problems of conquest, and the thread is most easily traced by following the cues given in the matter templates themselves.

What I will call the "passage of dominion lament" appears as matter in every member of the manuscript group. Before each recital of conquest, the narrative pulls back to recount the number of times England has been invaded, providing a list of conquerors, before the narrative moves on to include the conquest under consideration. The table in appendix B illustrates each lament and the surrounding events in full. A quick look at the table will reveal the way in which these matter templates offer a history of the realm: as a doleful list of battles for a mastery that is bound to be destructive, costly, and ultimately transient. Not only is the repetition of the list among folios a memorial cue inviting the user to link the battles, but it also insists upon the similarity between the acts of conquest, a similarity that militates against any sort of ethnic essentialist reading. The Danish incursions only stand out, for example, because they are more senselessly destructive than the others, not because they are linked to an idea about the Danes as a particular ethnic group. In addition, this recital of conquests is memorially linked by the use of repetitive words. First, the similar phrases such as "iwerred," "ylome" and "wonne" act as words unbound to a single event, rather acting as connectors between events. Second, the other sets of repetitive words in the event template invite the reader to create additional links. The repetition of "wo" and its synonym "sorwe" offer a reading of conquest as disaster rather than glory. Likewise, the insistent use of the formulaic lines "abbe yhurd" creates a link beyond the recital, beyond the manuscript, and even beyond the manuscript group. It hooks each grim narrative of conquest with an unspecified body of knowledge already known by the audience. The "material" the listener/reader has "already heard" could be the earlier material of the matter template, the body of histories s/he already possesses, or a type of historiographical model for writing conquest. These templates invite the user to hear again, in a different evaluative light, what has been heard already. In this next section, I pick up on the invitation, considering how the recombinations of entity and matter templates within manuscripts force the user to "hear again" two particular stories: the attempted conquest of Britain by Julius Caesar, using MSS Trinity R. 4.26, CUL Ee. 4.31, Arundel 58 and Digby 205, and the passage of dominion from the British to the Anglo-Saxons using Caligula A. xi, Sloane 2027, Digby 205 and Magdalen 2014. For those unacquainted with the respective narratives, I give a brief outline of the matter template before turning to its combination with the entity template.

The matter template for Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain is consistent throughout the manuscripts. After conquering France, Caesar looks westward, sees England, and makes inquiries about the land. The answer he receives advertises the virtues of the isle and notes its inherent link to Rome: "Me sede him þat it was brutaine no betere land nas/& þat folc was of troye & of brut icome." [1] Julius' reply acknowledges the kinship, but sees the British holding the island by themselves rather than paying fealty to Rome as "ayen kunde." In Caesar's view, recognition of kinship entails recognition of Roman authority. He sends a message to Cassibel, king of the Britons, ordering them to send their tribute and homage to Rome, and threatening them with invasion if they refuse. The template notes   the   proposed   invasion   as   a   shameful   breaking   of   kin   relationships:

& yut pat worse were
pe blod schedde of is owe kunde & defoulede so yere
& pe olde heinesse of priamus worrede so
Of was kunde hii come echone & pat were him lop to do.

Cassibel sends a message back to the emperor, arguing against the sending of tribute, since as kin, they should be requesting love and friendship, rather than "seruage." They conclude by announcing their resolution to fight rather than yield to Rome. Julius prepares his ships for invasion. Cassibel comes to meet them at the shore. The Roman forces are defeated, and they flee, as the text states, "agaste."

   A second Roman invasion is defeated by Cassibel's "mining" of the Thames with stakes, inflicting heavy losses on the Roman troops. To celebrate the victory, Cassibel holds a great feast at which his nephew is slain in a fight with the Earl of Kent's son. The king disbands the feast and orders the earl, Angdroge, to render his son up for trial at the king's court. The earl, fearing for his son's life, replies that the trial will take place in his own court. Cassibel is enraged by this response, and sends troops to take Androge's son into custody. The earl sends repeated messages in an attempt to mollify the king. Cassibel is implacable, however, and Androge sends to Julius Caesar, saying he will support him in another invasion, since Cassibel has proven an arrogant leader. The text quotes the letter in full:

Sire wite to sope pat sore ofpinkep it me
pat ich abbe for oure kinges loue iholde ayen pe
pat yif i poer nadde ibe pou addest him ouercome
ac vor he ap now pe maistrie such prute him hauep inome
pat nou me poru wam he ap of pe pe maistrie
Drive he wolde out of his lond mid grete vileinie
Ich him abbe iholde in is londe & mi mede per of is
pat he me wole driue of is lond vndesferued iwis
Vor oure godes ich take to witnesse pat oper gult non per nis
Bot pat inelle mi niueu pat a lute dude amis
Bitake him to Iugement to hongi oper to drawe
Ac ich wolde to sauui lif & lume bringe him to ech lawe

Although the letter stands in the matter template as proof of Androge's defection to Caesar, it also provides a forum in which Androge can air his grievances. Despite the obvious spin Androge gives the killing (as "a lute dude amis") the matter template tends to support Androge's indignation over Cassibel's persecution. The matter template then again underscores Androge's sufferings by turning to a picture of Cassibel busily

destroying the earl's lands and castles. The combined forces of Androge and Julius defeat Cassibel, take him prisoner, and force him to give tribute to Rome. The narrative of the matter template lays the blame on a series of events. Androge's betrayal of Cassibel to the Romans marks the first defeat of the Britons; the matter template mourns their propensity to internal strife:

> *So pat pis londe was ibroyt poru treason verst to grounde…*
> *Ou louert pe noble folc pat is of pis londe*
> *Wanne hii pe emperour of rome pat no lond ne miyte at stonde*
> *In bataile & all is ost ouercome twie*
> *& euere wolde as ich wene yif nadde ibe tricherie*
> *pere uore ich wene pat pis lond neuere iwonne nere*
> *bote it poru treson of pe folc of pe londe were.*

However, Cassibel's own actions are criticized in the poem through the attention given to the complaints of Androge. Androge's final speech to Cassibel echoes the concern throughout the matter template for the proper alliance between king and nobles:

> *Vor it is ech prince iwis & king vileinie*
> *To defouli is kniytes poru wam he ap pe maistrie*
> *Vor pe maistrie nis noyt a kinges ne be no so god*
> *Ac kniytes that vnder him viytep & ssedep hor blod.*

Cassibel's first break of the relationship, in persecuting Androge, has led to Androge's treacherous alliance with the Romans. The final summary balances blame between both actions:

> *In pis manere was engelond ibroyt verst in seruage*
> *& poru treson of pe sulue lond verst yef truage*
> *peruore a king ne mai noyt among is kniytes be*
> *To sturne of is iugement ac somdel him beise*
> *pat he ap to hom ned he not wiche stounde*
> *vor a such wille as ye isep broyte verst this lond to grounde.*

This even-handed judgment changes with the recombination of matter and entity templates. As I noted earlier, the entity template provides for a scale of value within the manuscript for the presence, frequency, and size of initials. CUL Ee. 4.31 has the highest frequency of initials in the manuscript, averaging four per folio. The default height of the initials in this manuscript is a one-line height, used in the majority of the initials in a consistent pattern through the manuscript. Thus, we can posit a value placed upon the

presence of one-line height initials assigned to a line, a greater value for two-line height initials, and so on. The high frequency of initials in the manuscript diminishes their value over the manuscript as a whole, and makes their variants in height stand out as a greater value marker. Within the matter template recounting the wars between Caesar and Cassibel, initials appear as follows. A four-line height initial opens the account of the Roman invasion, as it marks another "passage of dominion lament":

> *[E]ngelond ap ibe mid strengpe iwonne ilome*
> *& verst as ich telle can poru pe emperors of rome.* [2]

Cassibel's response to Caesar's demand for tribute is the next emphasized line, given a two-line height initial. A one-line height initial is assigned to the seizing of Caesar's sword by Nennius, a general of Cassibel's. The second two-line initial opens the passage showing Cassibel's victory over the Romans as the result of good king/vassal relations:

> *[C]assibel was glad ynou po he adde pe maistrie*
> *Vaire he ponkede is gode folc & gret cortesie*
> *Of yiftes delde among hom, euer as hii worpe were*
> *So pat ioye and murpe inou among hom was pere.* [3]

A series of one-line height initials follows, marking Caesar's return in force for a second invasion, Cassibel's victory feast, and the interruption of the feast by the death of Cassibel's nephew. A following one-line height initial marks Androge's frantic letters to the king and his promises to have his son make amends for the killing. A four-line height marks the opening of the letter Androge sends to Caesar, offering his service against Cassibel. The remaining initials for this section are one line in height. They mark Caesar's agreement with Androge, Androge's pleading for Cassibel's life, and the resulting friendship between Caesar and Cassibel.

If we read these initials according to the value system set by the entity template, we can see how this recombination invites the user to put the blame for Britain's tributary status squarely on Androge. The mitigating evidence of Androge's attempts at negotiation, his pleading for his former leader's life, and the resultant peace are given one-line height initials. In another value scale, these might be sufficient to draw attention to Androge's persecution and his subsequent attempts to repair the rift between Britain and Rome. However, they are dwarfed by the two-line initials that highlight Cassibel's defiant refusal to pay tribute ("Wite to sope pat we wullep vor oure franchise fiyte/& vor oure lond raper than we lese it wip vnriyte" [4]), his decisive first victory over the Romans, and his graciousness in rewarding his vassals. The two-line height initials inscribe the Britons as an independent and valiant people; the four-line height initials, the largest in this section, show the uselessness of this strength in the face of Androge's treachery. The first four-line height initial, which lists the Romans as the first conquerors of Britain, is answered in the second four-line height initial, which opens Androge's letter of defection to Julius. These four-line height initials underscore the tragedy of the loss of British

independence, and assign blame directly to Androge, emphasizing the matter template's own condemnation:

> [O]u louerd pe noble folc pat is of pis londe
> Wanne hii pe emperour of rome pat no lond ne miyte at stonde
> In bataile & al is ost ouercome twie
> & euere wolde as ich wene yif nadde ibe tricherie. [5]

This example shows clearly how the entity template provides a coherent scale of value while permitting values to change within the relative scale of the text. It also shows how a matter and entity template recombination changes our reading in a substantive fashion. A balanced assessment of the factors leading to the Roman conquest is shifted, by way of the variation in size of initials, into a strong condemnation of Androge.

The Trinity R.4.26 manuscript puts yet another spin on the narrative of the Roman conquest. In this case, the manuscript has a two-line default height for its initials, with a consistent average of three initials per folio. As in CUL Ee.4.31, this consistent frequency lessens the value placed upon any one initial's presence, allowing for a greater focus on the height of the initials. A two-line height initial opens the passage of dominion lament noted in CUL Ee.4.31. However, in this case the initial's appearing in default height places it on the same value scale as the majority of the initials in the manuscript marking regnal succession, fortunes of war, and exemplary characters. The next initial is another one of default height, marking Cassibel's first victory over Caesar and the Roman forces. Unlike CUL Ee. 4.31, Trinity R. 4.26 exhibits no marking of the correspondence between Cassibel and Caesar, a phenomenon that draws attention to Cassibel's victory as a military rather than ideological victory. The startling deviation from the default initial height comes with the return of Caesar for a second invasion:

> [I]ulius pe emperour wip strong poer inou
> Twu yer after pe bataile to engelond ayen drou
> & poyte to sle al pat folc & winne pe kinedom.… [6]

This initial is five lines in height, the largest initial in the Trinity R.4.26 manuscript, and the only one of that size. The only initial following it for this section is a standard two-line height initial marking the opening of Androge's letter to Julius. The effect of these initials on the reading invited is striking. Instead of a complex intertwined set of initials, with different scales of value, here the default value places the deviant five-line initial in high relief. The user's attention is directed to the promised onslaught of Caesar's forces in a material recreation of the massive army sailing towards England. The smaller two-line initial marking Androge's defection seems to minimize its importance, as the initial takes its place alongside the others marking succession, victory, and the like. However, when we read these two initials in light of the matter they are marking, we can see an ironic commentary on the fortunes of war, where a piece of paper accomplishes what a formidable emperor and massive fleet cannot. As the two-line initial quietly follows the

wake of the overwhelming five-line initial, it again comments on the uselessness of force against the more subtle threat of treason. One could argue that it provides a sharper critique of Androge's actions than CUL Ee.4.31, even though it does not link the letter with the conquest in as direct a fashion as CUL Ee.4.31 does. However, since our attention, via the initials, is directed to a picture of Cassibel as the victorious and generous leader, while his persecution of Androge is unmarked, Androge's action appears the blacker by the comparison.

Arundel 58 differs strikingly from these works, in that its initials are more concerned with the figure of the emperor as instrumental in the transfer of power. Since there are few initials in the Arundel manuscript (an average of one for every three folios) their value is accordingly high. The default height throughout the manuscript is a two-line height, with initials only rarely varying. In this section, a three-line height initial crowns the "passage of dominion" lament opening the narrative, before the entity template passes completely over sections marked by the other manuscripts and settles on the third invasion, and a value judgment on the emperor, who "louede nought by kynde." [7] The last initial in this section focuses on the emperor's reaction to Androge's insistence that he will not hand over Cassibel unless Cassibel's safety is assured. The emperor realizes Androge's power and agrees to a truce and payment of tribute. In this reading, the transfer of power is remarkably qualified by both an ambiguous aspersion on Caesar's familial affection or sexual practices, and by the attention drawn to Androge's military and political power.

Digby 205 displays a rich tapestry of possible readings in two kinds of initials. First, the manuscript has a high frequency of guide space left for one-line height rubricated initials, with only a small fraction of these guide spaces filled in with the rubricated initials. Second, it also contains guide rnarks for two-line, three-line, and four-line height initial spaces, none of which are filled in. Three potential avenues of interpretation are open here: we can focus on the presence of these guide spaces as a whole, and decide how to assign value within the entire group (initial presence or guide space size as the determiner of a value scale). Alternatively, we can make a conscious decision to assign the one-line height initials to a separate group, and place that value scale as presence of rubricated initials over presence of non-rubricated guide spaces (remembering that presence itself has a value within this model). The second group, made up of guide spaces only, can be discussed on a presence/ height value scale. Lastly, we can decide that rubrication/lack of rubrication will define the value scale, with initial line height as a secondary consideration.

If we look at the group of initials as a whole, and decide upon initial space height over rubrication/lack of rubrication as a value scale, a reading appears that shows the futility of military force to make good a larger problem of discord between groups that should be allied. The largest initial in this section, and one of the very few four-line height initials in the entire manuscript, appears in the "passage of dominion" lament ([]ngelond hath with strenthe ywonne") that introduces the invasion by Caesar. The next variable is a two-line height initial marking Cassibel's first victory over the Roman forces and his giving of gifts and thanks to his followers. The final variance in initial height opens Androge's letter to Caesar. Among these variable initials are a high frequency of one-line initials that mark various events such as Caesar turning to look towards Britain, Cassibel's entry into the first battle and the bloodshed therein, Cassibel's mining of the

Thames and his survey of the drowning Romans, and his subsequent ordering of the victory feast. These various topics together account for nine of the sixteen one-line initials in this section. The other seven, however, are concerned solely with the sending and receiving of messages between Cassibel and Caesar, Androge and Caesar, and Androge and Cassibel. Within this interpretive scale, this section in Digby emerges as a meditation on the diplomatic breakdown of peoples who should be allied, and the political consequences of these breakdowns, while subsuming all these concerns under the gloomy inevitability of the "passage of dominion."

If, however, we take the second interpretive path, separating the value scales of rubrication/lack of rubrication and initial line height, a much different picture emerges. Within the first group the two initials rubricated seem appropriate, since they mark Cassibel's entry into the first battle and the gore that follows: "[T]the kyng went towarde pe with faire hoste ynou"…"Men slou pat al we erpe aboute: stode as in flode/[E]r pe bataile were ydo; ful of rede blode." [8] This emphasis, along with the unrubricated initials focusing on Cassibel's mining of the Thames and his satisfaction at the sight of the drowning Romans, balance the interest in diplomatic strategy with a rather sanguinary taste for mass slaughter. When we look at the second group, the scarcity of initials forces user attention onto the "passage of dominion" lament, followed in value by the three-line height initials marking Androge's letter to Caesar, and finally by the two-line height initial that appears after Cassibel's first victory. This emergent value scale fits in precisely with the pattern of variant initials throughout the manuscript: the majority of initials varying from the one-line height default mark either the succession of kings, or events that dramatically change the political, cultural or religious landscape of the realm. In this section, the transfer of control from British to Roman hands is seen as most important, followed by the Androge's letter instigating that change, and finally by the force that letter undermines.

In these readings, I have attempted to show how a few variables surrounding a single entity—initial height, frequency of the initials, and presence as initials/ presence as guide spaces—create a widely diverse set of readings. In the next section to be discussed, I focus on the dramatic shifts in interpretation invited by the recombinations surrounding the passage of dominion from British to Anglo-Saxon hegemony. The four manuscripts—Caligula A. xi, Sloane 2027, Digby 205, and Magdalen 2014—are vivid examples of the way in which a story can be "heard again."

The matter template of the passage of dominion from the British to the Anglo-Saxons runs thus: according to the sources, around 450 AD a British earl named Vortiger wrested power from the current line of kings, promptly killing off the alien Pictish peoples who had helped him to power. In order to secure himself against Pictish retaliation, Vortiger made use of the newly arrived Angles and Saxons, turning them into local retainers and aristocrats. When the Anglo-Saxons staged a coup, the realm was divided between Anglo-Saxons and the native British, led by a line of kings from Aurelius Ambrosius through Arthur to Cadwallader, the last British king of the land. In the sub-section under consideration here, Cadwallader holds out against the Saxons for twelve years after his accession, but eventually falls prey to illness, while the country suffers a plague and the discontented Britons turn on each other. Plague, famine and unrest make the country uninhabitable, causing a mass exodus of the Britons from the island. While Cadwallader goes to seek help in Brittany, the Anglo-Saxons take advantage of the weakened British

inhabitants and drive them into Wales, where they remain. Cadwallader receives a promise of military aid from his kinsman. When they begin to gather their forces, Cadwallader receives an angelic vision. Because of the Britons' sinfulness, the angel declares, it is no longer God's will to sustain their presence in the land. They will have to remain content in Wales until the promised time when they will regain their lost territories. Cadwallader realizes he will never take back Britain and goes on pilgrimage to Rome, leaving the British in Wales and the Saxons with control of the isle. With this control comes the changing of the island's name from Britain to England, an event lamented in the matter template.

I will focus on the final section—from Cadwallader's accession to Saxon hegemony—in order to demonstrate the number of alternative readings available in a very limited number of folios. The recombined manuscripts use the flexible value scale of the entity template to create three entirely different interpretations of the final change from British to Anglo-Saxon dominion. Caligula A. xi uses a dramatic variance in the height and frequency of the initials to emphasize the loss of Britain's identity and name. Sloane 2027, through a different placement of initials, emphasizes the event as another in a long series of kingly successions. Digby 205 is remarkable for its lack of interest in the name change, an indifference that extends to a change in the matter template. A third variant reading occurs in Magdalen 2014, where the importance of the secular power shift all but disappears in relation to the attention devoted to the newly adopted Christianity of the Anglo-Saxons.

In Caligula A. xi, the initial frequency in this section drops from an average of two initials per folio to half that number, a process that by the principle of scarcity renders the initials in this section more conspicuous. The location of the initials emphasizes the brief rise and downfall of British fortunes in the wasteland left after Arthur's reign. The first initial in this section appears with the accession of Cadwallader, an event that spells a respite for the beleaguered Britons:

> *[C]adwallad is sone was after ymad king*
> *yong bacheler & stalwarde atte biginning*
> *& poru out wel wuste is lond & sauede þe brutons*
> *Stifliche al an tuelf yer ayen þe saxons.* [9]

This initial is two lines in height, the standard default height for the manuscript until folio 89r, where the default height changes to three lines for reasons as yet unknown. It links Cadwallader in a continuous line of kings from Brutus through Æthelraed II, the last king before the default change at folio 89r, and does not call any attention to his status as the last British king. Rather the progression of two-line height initials through the Britons and Anglo-Saxons demonstrates a continuous progression of kings, in contrast to the elements marking the power shift from British to Anglo-Saxon rule. The next initial in the section marks the loss of Britain's identity and name:

> *Here we englisse men mowe yse some*
> *Mid woche riȝt we beþ to þis land ycome.*

> *Ac þe wrecche welissemen beþ of þe olde more*
> *In woche manere ye abbeþ yhurd hou hii it abbeþ ylore.*
> *Ac þe feble is euere bineþe vor hii þat abbeþ miyte*
> *Mid strengþe bringeþ ofte þat wowe to þe riyte.*
> [Þ]o*brutayne was þus ylore & þe londes name*
> *To þe name of engelond yturned hom to gret ssame…* [10]

The loss of Britain and its language is given a towering seven-line initial, the largest in this manuscript, with a greater height disparity than any other in this group of manuscripts. Such a vivid marking, combined with the narrative of loss recounted in the matter template, produces a paradox. The event template insists upon the loss of identity suffered by the British, a loss that means their acts, language, and stories will be forgotten. Even as it gloomily forecasts this annihilation, inclusion of the change maintains a clear boundary between "British" and "Saxon," one that resists the homogenization threatened by this takeover. The entity template takes this paradox and aggravates it by placing a hypertrophic value upon the narrative of loss. We must remember what is written as having been already forgotten, and the event that has vanished from cultural memory is inscribed like a monolith on the memory of the user. The recombination also emphasizes the uneasy foundation upon which Saxon hegemony rests. The matter template stresses the earlier political, cultural, and linguistic power of the now-wretched Welsh. They are of the "olde more," or old root, a term emphasizing their tenacious hold in the land and their prophesied future flourishing. The English users are also, in the parallel uses of "riyte" (legal justification) and "riyt" (moral foundation) that begin and end this passage, caught in an uneasy ambiguity. The first "riyt" that appears seems to be a complacent remark upon the Britons' moral failings and subsequent loss of land, an explanation that occludes Anglo-Saxon aggression. By the end of the passage, however, the Anglo-Saxons are cast in the role of victors by strength, overcoming "þe riyt," now cast as Welsh. When the initial combines with the matter template, it adds another level to the complexity of the passage. Its gigantic height irresistibly draws the eye to the line it marks, thus inviting the user to overlook the polemic that precedes it. However, the line itself defined the change in name as a shameful event, and could also serve as a reinforcement of the passage. The recombination in this manuscript calls attention to and troubles the passage of dominion, while reminding us that transfer of specific political power, from king to king, remains a constant.

The second manuscript under consideration here, Sloane 2027, uses precisely the same matter template as Caligula A. xi. Thus, we can see how even a few shifts in the deployment of the entity template produces an entirely new text. Sloane 2027 contains no initials, but has space and guide-letters left for their later insertion. Since the entity template works on a relative scale of value within a particular manuscript, it is flexible enough to read these spaces and guide-letters as having comparative value *vis-a-vis* this manuscript as completed initials in another manuscript. A space equal to two lines in height is left for Cadwallader's accession (see passage above). There is no initial space assigned for the passage lamenting the loss of Britain's name, nor are there any names

given to the Anglo-Saxon kings directly following Cadwallader. The next two-line initial appears to mark another repetition of the invasion list, this time at the onset of Danish invasions during Aethelwolf's reign:

> *[O]f þe batayles of denemarch pat abbep ybe in pis londe*
> *pat worse were of alle opere we mote abbe an honde*
> *Worst hii were vor opere somwanne had ydo*
> *As romeins & saxons & wel wuste pat lond per to.* [11]

The next two-line initial is given to Æthelraed I, the first king to suffer a continuous series of invasions by the Danes. The list of kings runs through the manuscript in a steady line from Brutus to Cadwallader, then breaks off abruptly, ignoring the rulers of the five kingdoms and the eventual rise of Wessex. The initials begin again only with the reign of Æthelraed I.

The different placement and size of initials in this section provides a sharply variant reading from that given in Caligula A. xi. While the passage of dominion is not emphasized by the entity template, the readings emerging from this recombination invite the reader to move from the accession of Cadwallader to the first evidence of Anglo-Saxon downfall at Danish hands. Anglo-Saxon hegemony appears in the entity template recombination at the point where it is threatened with annihilation. Cadwallader and Æthelraed I are linked as two kings faced with the destruction of their realms, a point emphasized by the intervening initial connecting the Roman, Saxon, and Danish invasions. This recombination occludes the period of Anglo-Saxon growth, emphasizing instead the general rise-and-fall pattern of British and Danish fortunes alike. While Caligula A. xi overtly mourns the specific change from British to Saxon dominion, Sloane 2027 erases the difference in a larger picture of ruin.

Digby 205, by contrast, focuses on the line of succession in this section, giving even the kings Constantine, Conan and Malgo, given short shrift in the matter template, the same three-line initials that it does for figures like Uther and Arthur; it is the *passage* of succession rather than the individual successors that deserves attention. In the same fashion, another three-line height initial notes the transfer of political power from British to Anglo-Saxon, but gives it no attention beyond what is given to a minor king such as Malgo. Moreover, the matter template governing this manuscript has not selected the symbolic name change as important enough to be included in this section, preferring to forego mourning the loss of "Britishness" in its interest in the five new Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Digby 205 seems more interested in political structure than in the identities of its players, a phenomenon that will appear again in other manuscripts examined in chapter two.

The final manuscript, Magdalen 2014, provides yet another reading by placing the initials at a subordinate position within a larger scale of value. Here Cadwallader's accession is given a two-line initial (the text default) in an unbroken line of kings. The passage of dominion from British to Saxon is indicated with a paragraph mark at the beginning of the line: "Here we englisse men….," thus providing a different perspective on the passage as a decidedly unjust conquest. However, given the large number of paragraph marks in the manuscript, their relative value *vis-a-vis* the rarer initials is

diminished. The emphasis here falls upon the lines of kings—or it would, if there were not a drastically higher entity value present in this text.

This higher value occurs two folios earlier, at the point in the matter template when Archbishop Lawrence is being persecuted by the apostate Saxons. Lawrence and his fellows consider fleeing the country rather than attempting to reconvert the Saxons, a decision that would have threatened the final conversion of the Saxon kingdoms to Christianity:

> *Laurence pe erchebyssop al prest hym made also*
> *Vorto wende out of pys lond, as ys felawes adde ydo*
> *Þenyyt pat he adde imund vort abbe ywend amorwe*
> *He lay muchedel of the pe niyt in wo & in sorwe.*
> *To bydde god vor holy chyrche and vor cristendom*
> *So pat aslep atte laste vor werynysse hym nome*
> *Seynt Peter to hym come as pe slep hym toke*
> *& tormented hym sore ynou pat hech lyme hym oke*
> *& esste of hym wy he adde so vyllyche ys ssep vorsake*
> *Wipout warde among pe wolues pat in warde hym were bytake*
> *& wy of god ne of hym ensample he ne nom*
> *pat deyde bope in rode to susteyney cristendom*
> *Þys erchebyssop was adrad wel sore po he awok*
> *He hyede to pe kyng vor ech lyme hym oke*
> *& ssewed hym al pat cas & ys wounden some*
> *& bed hym ys lyf amende oper vp hym sulf yt ssolde com*
> *Þe kyng anon for drede ys false wyf vor soke*
> *Þat he huld in such hordom & cristendom toke*
> *And after Seyn Iust & Seynt Mellyt pe tueye byssopes*
> *sende*
> *So pat ayen to pys lond pes gode men bope wende.* [12]

In the matter template, this conversion of King Æthelbald saves the realm from returning to paganism, constituting a parallel passage of dominion story from Christian Britain to pagan England and finally to an England converted to Christianity. The visitation of St. Peter is a crucial turning point from paganism to Christianity, as the matter template makes clear. Christ's wounds, Peter's wounds, and Archbishop Lawrence's wounds are connected in the continuing apostolic mission.

The entity template in Magdalen 2014 recombines with the matter template to emphasize this event over every other in the manuscript. The opening lines of the folio, in which Lawrence decides to flee, are marked with exaggerated ascenders culminating in large blue and red hooked fish, one per ascender. The entire narrative on this folio is surrounded by a border of linked fish hooked on a line that is further emphasized by a

large border of rubrication within the outer fish border. Within this border, St. Peter's appearance and Lawrence's fear upon awakening, the two events that lead to the conversion, are assigned paragraph marks. Nothing like this appears in the rest of the manuscript; its effect is to imprint the story of the visitation and the subsequent conversion firmly upon the user's memory. Although the fish may be a visual pun on St. Peter as the fisher of men, they also, as Mary Carruthers has pointed out, serve to "hook" the memory of the user to the narrative. [13]

The matter template of the manuscript stresses the cyclical rise and fall of each successive power: British, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Norman. The recombination in this manuscript provides an inescapable reminder of a parallel passage of dominion from pagan to Christian. The extremely high value placed upon this passage by the entity template invites the reader to "hear again" the story of conquest, this time as one in which Cadwallader, the Wessex line, and the threatened Danish invasions pale beside a more important battle for the souls of the realm.

The most recent printed edition of a manuscript in the *Metrical Chronicle* family dates from 1900. [14] It is based upon the Caligula A. xi manuscript, with a few "scribal variants" included in the appendix. The edition has been stripped of the entity template except for the initials, which are not given in relative size. The startlingly different readings of the Cassibel/Caesar/Androge conflict disappear with this flattening of cues a medieval audience would have grasped. The story of St. Peter, with its rich memorial cues, does not appear as an alternate reading of the cycles of conquest. We are left with a drab skeleton that is supposed to "represent" the color, variety, and richness of the manuscript family.

In this chapter, I have attempted to create a model and a vocabulary to bring manuscript families and their wealth into mainstream medieval studies, and to provide for their coherent examination. While I believe that these manuscripts should be studied for their own merits, they can also challenge readings drawn from "representative" texts. In the next chapter, I demonstrate how chronicle manuscripts can dismantle anachronistic ideas of medieval nationalism by looking at alternative forms of community and affiliation in manuscript families.

NOTES

1. Caligula A.xi, f. 23r. Unless otherwise noted, quotations describing the matter template will be taken from Caligula A. xi.
2. CUL Ee.4.31, f. 73 v. Reprinted courtesy of the Cambridge University Library All letters in brackets refer to the letters receiving initials.
3. CUL Ee.4.31, f. 75r
4. CUL Ee.4.31, f. 74r.
5. CUL Ee.4.31, f. 76v.
6. Trinity R.4.26, f. 28r.
7. Arundel 58, f. 23r. Reprinted courtesy of the College of Arms.
8. Digby 205, f. 27r. Reprinted courtesy of the Bodleian Library.
9. Caligula A.xi, f. 77r.
10. Caligula A.xi, 78v.
11. Sloane 2027, f. 69r.
12. Magdalen 2014, f. 27v.

13. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture,* Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, vol. 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 219.

14. *The Metrical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester,* ed. William Aldis Wright (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1900).

CHAPTER 2
The Manuscript Challenge to Ideas of Medieval Nationalism

In the last few years, nation theory has been gaining a slow but firm foothold in medieval studies. The year 1999 saw the publication of Thorlac Turville-Petre's *England the Nation: Language, Literature and National Identity* and Nicholas Howe's *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England,* 1997 Janet Thormann's positing of Anglo-Saxon nationalism in *Anglo-Saxons and the Construction of Social Identity*. Besides these published works, the last few years of conferences at MLA and Kalamazoo show an increasing number of panels on medieval literature and nationalism. While "nation" and "nationalism" are becoming marketable concepts, there exists as of yet no systematic and rigorous examination of what a medieval "nation" or medieval "nationalists" might look like. Partly to blame is the "obviousness" of the term "nation" to contemporary consciousness, as well as the emotional weight inhering to the term. A third problem lies in the slippery nature of the word "nation," an amorphousness that lends itself to a variety of agendas. As Timothy Brennen notes:

> [the 'nation'] is both historically determined and general. As a term, it refers both to the modern nation-state and to something more ancient and nebulous—the *nation*—a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging. The distinction is often obscured by nationalists who seek to place their own country in an 'immemorial past' where it's [sic] arbitrariness cannot be questioned. [1]

Brennen's *caveat* is particularly appropriate when considering the attempts made recently by medievalists to form an unbroken line of continuity between the medieval and the modern by using what Benedict Anderson claims is "the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time." [2] However, his analysis shows that the way models of nation are bred, formed, and reproduced precludes their viability in medieval culture.

Anderson argues that once a plan for nation building is formed, this plan then has the power to become modular, and thus transferable:

> The Bolshevik revolutionary model has been decisive for all twentieth-century revolutions because it has made them imaginable in societies still more backward than All the Russias. (It has opened the possibility of, so to speak, cutting history off at the pass.)… In much the same way, since the end of the eighteenth century nationalism has undergone a process of modulation and adaptation, according to different eras, political regimes, economies, and social structures. [3]

Anderson's modular theory of nationalism posits a political "template" available for general use. Like the template discussed in chapter one, however, the nationalistic module relies upon political, economic, and historical circumstances to become specifically meaningful to those deploying it. The continual recombination of module and circumstance prevents nationalism from becoming a stable abstract:

> one tends unconsciously to hypostatize the existence of Nationalism-with-a-big-N (rather as one might Age-with-a-capital-A) and then to classify 'it' as an ideology. (Note that if everyone has an age, Age is merely an analytical expression.) It, would, I think, make things easier if one treated it as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion,' rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism.' [4]

Despite Anderson's own problematic assumption of nationalism as an anthropological given, his observation is sound. Since each instance of nationalism is dependent for its particular character upon the historical circumstances of its inception and development, there can logically exist no such thing as an abstract "Nationalism." What is given as "Nationalism" is the accumulative *matter* of nationalism, comprising the writings and events of nationalistic movements. The modular accessibility of nationalistic models invites abstraction, while its necessary recombination with its environment refuses it, leading to, as Anderson observes, "[nationalism's] philosophical poverty and even incoherence." [5]

The very "incoherence" of nationalism as an abstract invites appropriation of another kind, since it does not provide a strict or stable set of parameters for comparison. Following the historical projections of political nationalism, in which the current political state is "discovered" to have its formative roots in antiquity, medieval scholars have been increasingly "discovering" evidence of early nationalistic sentiments in English literature. In the wake of postcolonial studies, nation theory, and transnationalism, "nation" is a seductive term, especially for a medievalist trying to argue for her field's relevance to modern scholars and students. The problem lies in appropriating the categories for evaluation by which nationalism makes itself manifest: its inception in anti-colonial sentiment, its dissemination through the means of mechanical mass production, and its co-option and promotion by the ruling powers for their own interests. While these are (with more or less qualification) adequate markers for English nationalism from the sixteenth century on, they cannot be imposed *tout court* onto the medieval period without serious methodological errors. To put it bluntly, medieval England did not have the organized anticolonial impetus, the technology, or the centralization that would have fostered a nationalistic program.

To avoid these obvious pitfalls, medievalists arguing for a nationalistic agenda have committed an additional error: they have treated chronicle manuscripts of England's history as if they were created in the same manner, and with the same effect, as the products of mass mechanical reproduction. Thus, a manuscript that may have been part of a related family of manuscripts is selected as representative by an editor, denuded of most of its physical characteristics and textual entities, and given an authorial marker. In the process, it becomes what Anderson terms a historical artifact, a text that purports to be a link with the past, while denying the existence of its own historically specific production.

In this fashion, the mutually supporting structure of author/text/dominant meaning in turn provides the foundation for the similarly imagined triangle of nationalism/traditional editorial theory/ artifact. Two well-known scholars provide a clear example of this process. Janet Thormann argues for the "poetic" entries in the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* as instances of a national identity:

> The Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* makes history as it records events. Through the effort of arranging lists of events in a chronology, maintaining those records over a period of time in various manuscripts in various compilations, the writing of the *Chronicle* produces the idea of a nation, an Anglo-Saxon England that may legitimately lay claim to power. The textual records produced in this manner constitute a national past, they support the convictions of the nation's persistence in time. [6]

Thormann's argument depends upon two pre-emptive consolidations. First, she gathers a diverse group of regional identities (Northumbrian, West-Saxon, Mercian) into a meta-group of "Anglo-Saxons" and then conflates this already problematic category with a far from unified "England." With a unified land under the control of a single ethnic group, the stage is set for what Thormann carefully terms as a "discursive production" of the "idea" of nation. Just as, in Thormann's view, the collection of "records" somehow constitutes a national past, her own consolidated fantasy supports her idea of a medieval nationalism's "persistence in time." This focus on textual production is necessary for her leaps from language to community to nation:

> A common language undoubtedly provides a population speaking that language with an idea of community. It may motivate an idea of common nationality as well. The history and continuity of the English language is obviously crucial to an English national identity…. A body of traditional poetry, as well as the awareness of a common spoken language may work to define a sense of community, and [Roberta] Frank shows how *Beowulf* may have served nationalist ambitions. [7]

Thormann's argument here begins with an *a priori* assumption of nation as an ahistorical constant, and is shored up by a conflation between the terms "community" and "nation." This dependence, in turn must be reinforced by the idea of an "entry" maintaining its nature untouched by the material circumstances of its production. Manuscripts "contain" entries, but do not create readings, nor do they display any individual characteristics, acting in Thormann's view rather like many printed copies of an Ur-text, the *Chronicle*. Entries, like nationalism, are untouched by their environments. Because these entries are read as simply instances of a single Entry, they can serve the analogous agenda of "proving" a constant and dominant Nationalism. For example, Thormann's claims for the Brunanburh entries as nationalistic texts depend entirely upon her separation of the entries from their chronicle contexts, and for her reading of those entries as representing the entire corpus of entries for that manuscript. This reading, however, is negated by the alternate accounts in other members of the manuscript family. Likewise, Thorlac Turville-Petre's claims for early English nationalism in the chronicles rest upon his use of

selected sections in printed editions of manuscripts, a methodology dependent upon the myth of a representative monologic text under authorial control. [8] At times, this dependence not only ignores but occludes the evidence in the manuscripts. A discussion of "Robert Manning's chronicle" and its sources shows the cost of the conflation:

> In the second half of the chronicle Manning follows Langtoft as closely as he had followed Wace…. Yet in a particularly interesting passage he describes the extent of his search for authentic information on Havelok, a topic of particular concern for him and his Lincolnshire audience. [quote follows]… Searching through reliable authorities, 'stories of honour' he finds that no compiler mentions Havelok, and so passes on. [9]

Turville-Petre fails to mention, however, that the decision to exclude the Havelok story only occurs in one manuscript of the extent corpus, Petyt 511. [10] Lambeth 131, the other complete survivor, does not include the historical speculation and happily gives the entire Havelok narrative. If both manuscripts are examined, their differences argue strongly against an authorial figure and single "text": "Robert Mannyng" cannot in "his chronicle" both omit and include the story. This difference in manuscripts, therefore, is described as "scribal corruption" and one text is privileged over the other. In Turville-Petre's study, a dominant ahistorical idea of nationalism can only be supported by a monologic dominant single text. The Havelok narrative poses some serious challenges to an easy application of nationalism. The second section of this chapter explores those challenges, and offers an alternative way of reading Danish/English relations.

   Since problematic assumptions of early nationalism have been supported by the selective use of standardized texts attributable to an "author," it makes sense to begin our dismantling of these assumptions by scrutinizing the manuscript families of certain historical chronicles. I will be analyzing two distinct manuscript families. The manuscript family of the *Chronicle* (usually known as Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Story of England*) consists of Lambeth 131, Petyt 511, and a single leaf in Rawlinson 913. [11] The other manuscript family is that used in the previous chapter, that of the *Metrical Chronicle*. From this larger second family, I focus on various manuscripts with special emphasis on Caligula A.xi, Trinity R.4.26, Digby 205, Arundel 58, and CUL Ee.4.31. I am not pretending to cover the entire corpus of manuscripts in each family, or the full range of possible readings within and across the manuscripts. I have chosen the narrative "matter" to be discussed and the manuscripts to be scrutinized by the readings emerging from the manuscripts themselves. The recombinations in both the *Chronicle* family and the *Metrical Chronicle* family of manuscripts dramatically rework the matter of Arthur's quest for power. I look closely at a few of these recombinations, and note their complex deployments of "Britishness," chivalric community, and fealty. These recombinations argue for a reading of medieval social identity that refuses a simplistic imposition of proto-nationalism. The second section of the chapter returns to the Havelok narrative mentioned earlier in the *Chronicle* group of manuscripts. MSS Petyt 511 and Lambeth 131, with their respective omissions and inclusions of the Havelok tale, create a different context within which to read the Danish invasions during Æthelraed II's reign. Within the tale, the presence of Havelok in England complicates what it means to be "Danish" or "English"; the presence of the tale in the Lambeth 131 breaks down categories such as

"nation." I then turn to Petyt 511, noting the readings that result from the deliberate refusal of the Havelok narrative. The final section of the chapter turns to the *Metrical Chronicle* family of manuscripts. In the accord between Cnut and Edmund Ironside, and Cnut's subsequent consolidation of power, we can see how the coalitional alliances necessary to maintain political stability absolutely override any concerns about ethnicity and "nation." I have expanded the reach of this chapter to include discussions within a specific manuscript family and across the families of different chronicles, so that my arguments are supported outside a specific manuscript or manuscript family. I argue there are several terms more convincing than "nation" or "nationalism" to describe forces informing events in the manuscripts' accounts. As I move through this chapter, I will give each term, provide a brief and necessarily contingent definition, and examine its use value in context of the manuscripts. I have two aims. First, to provide a set of alternative terms to replace flawed concepts of "nation." Second, to illustrate the value of my recombination model to counter reductive impositions of nationalism onto chronicle manuscripts. In each section, I will give a brief outline of the matter template, the readings that emerge from the recombination of matter and entity templates in selected manuscripts, and an exposition of the challenges these readings pose for ideas of medieval "nationalism."

The first term I propose is one already in place in medieval culture, the idea of "coalitional alliance." By it I mean the complex networks that comprised the warp and woof of medieval political identity. A political figure such as Lot, for example, could be simultaneously the sub-king of Orkney, overlord of Denmark, subject of Arthur, member of the aristocracy, defender of the Church, and of British extraction, not to mention the possible other alliances through kinship, marriage, friendship, or political expediency. Any of these coalitional identities in turn imposes an additional set of ties. By his oath to Arthur, he is also tied to Arthur's own network of alliances. By his status as a member of the Church, he is a member of the body of Christ, comprising all of Christendom. Marriage and kinship ties bring their own sets of networks to negotiate. In addition, the necessity of upholding certain institutions brings its weight to bear upon events as well. I will give one brief example of this staggering variety of alliances. In Petyt 511 of the *Chronicle* manuscript family, we can see Richard I acting in a variety of subject positions. As a defender of the Christian faith, he is on his way to the Crusades. He diverts the ships twice: first, to fulfill his obligations to kin and save his sister Joan, imprisoned by Geffray of Tancred. Second, to deliver his own vassals from Isaac of Griffony. He leaves Isaac's realm in the hands of one Statin (a former retainer of Isaac), and leaves behind Robert of Thornham and Robert's men as peacekeepers. The people rebel, however, and install Isaac's cousin, a monk, in Statin's place. Robert apprehends the monk, and for his treason against Statin, hangs him, setting forth his reasons as follows:

> *To god þow made a vow, in þi professioun,*
> *his traitor ert þou now, þou did him a tresoun;*
> *for þe worldes blisse þou left þin habite*
> *…We toke þe als robboure in þis ilk cuntre;*
> *Þou reft þe king his honour þat felle not vnto þe*

> *… Þat lawe I salle þe make þat is in Richard lond.*
> *Galwes do ye reise & hyng þis cheitefe!*
> *…Better him were wiþ eise in clostre had led his life,*
> *þe seruise of his song recorded & lered,*
> *Þan chalange with wrong wat Kyng Richard conquered.* [12]

In this judgment, Robert acts as the agent of God's vengeance upon a recreant monk, the enforcer of Richard's right of conquest, and a representative of Richard's law. Richard, however, condemns Robert's actions, aligning himself with the sacrosanct office of king:

> *'Allas for vilenie,' said Richard the kyng.*
> *'þat a kyng suld so die, hanged for no þing.*
> *Roberd, þou ert to blame, þou did ageyn resoun.*
> *Certes, þou has don schame tille alle þat bere coroun.'* [13]

The act of anointing the monk, in Richard's eyes, has made him a member of "alle þat bere coroun." As such, shame done to him affects all the members of the regnal coalition. As Ernst Kantorowitz has argued, the king's two bodies, the personal and the body politic, cannot easily be separated. [14] In this case, Richard's first loyalty is to the *office* of king rather than to his own personal rights as the overlord of Griffony. With these conflicting agendas, Robert's only defense is to remind Richard of his other coalitional obligations:

> *'Sir,' said Roberd, 'þer of is not to speke.*
> *Late alle þis be sperd; on gods enmys we wreke.*
> *Siþne Philip hider cam, he gaf neuer non assaut;*
> *it were mykelle schame to mak suilk a defaut.'* [15]

Robert uses the multivalent nature of political coalition to re-ally himself with Richard as common enemies of the Muslims, and redirects the shame of hanging a king (an act already beyond repair) into the more immediate humiliation of the Christian army's inactivity, which Richard has power to amend.

Robert's multiple subject positions in this example make clear three important points about medieval social identity. First, that social identity is the product of a network of alliances. Second, that threads of this network may be predominant for a delimited time: Robert's quick shift from Richard's representative to fellow Christian refuses any totalizing identification with either role. Third, these threads of identity may be deployed strategically, in response to a specific threat to one identity (Richard's identification of himself as king in response to the execution of another king) or as a way of defusing a threat by invoking another alliance (Robert's reinscription of Richard as a fellow

Christian and crusader). This example also points out the danger in ascribing a blanket identity or ideology to a text. Robert's final response does not mean he essentially *is* a crusader, or that Christianity *is* his dominant identifying characteristic. It simply means that in this particular manuscript, at this particular moment, this is the aspect of his identity at the forefront. Thus, we need to examine what have been posited as early forms of nationalism as a historically specific deployment of coalitional identity in the face of a particular stimulus, rather than a representative instance of an ideological constant. Just as, within manuscript culture, templates recombine to produce a family of distinct but related texts, a historical circumstance acts upon a network of coalitions to produce a moment of identity appropriate to the circumstance, rather like Langton's theory of "emergent behavior" in artificial intelligence theory. [16]

In the first section of readings, I focus on the figure of Arthur in the *Chronicle* and *Metrical Chronicle* manuscript families. In the Arthurian material, we can see how the manuscripts frame him as a model of kingship, a founder of an international chivalric coalition, and a knight of romance, but never an emblem for British nationalism. The term "Britons" appears in the *Chronicle* manuscripts as short-hand for the combined forces under Arthur, and is used interchangeably with other terms such as "Arthur's men." In the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscripts, the term "Britons" is first used pejoratively by the Romans. Gawain's avenging of the insult validates the term, which is then used as a shorthand term for Arthur's forces. In neither family of manuscripts can the invoking of "Britishness" be used as evidence for an early form of nationalism, as the following section demonstrates.

"ALLES ON": ARTHUR'S CHIVALRIC COALITION

Although the figure of Arthur has been exploited since the reign of Henry VII as a symbol for the glory of England, the chronicle manuscripts are more concerned with his status as a paradigm of virtuous kingship and model of chivalry. [17] He is not seen as essentially British, since the historicity implicit in this characterization would weaken his value as accessible exemplar. Arthur's courtesy and courage create a unique coalitional alliance that disregards political and ethnic boundaries. The conditions for joining are courage in battle, courtesy, high chivalric standards, and loyalty to Arthur. Arthur is not so much king of Britain, but the leader of a cosmopolitan aristocracy, as a few examples will show.

In the manuscripts of both families, Arthur's feasts provide a means to show this coalition, and to assert its superiority over other forms of affiliation, such as ethnicity or alternate king/vassal relations. In Petyt 511's account of the feast at Caerleon, ethnic identifications are only used as a last resort:

> *Arthure sat opon we des,*
> *about him his mykelle pres*
> *of kynges, erles & barons,*
> *of unkouth knyghtes & Bretons.* [18]

The term "British" is a default term for those who cannot be grouped by class, and, since the list moves from the highest to the lowest classes at the feast, even those who are knights without an identity rank above ethnicity. This ranking makes perfect sense within Arthur's international coalition, which does not recognize national boundaries, but gathers its members around the Round Table by their chivalric use-value:

> *ffor his barons þat were so bold*
> *þat all the world pris of told,*
> *þat no man wist who was best*
> *ne in armes doughtiest*
> *did he ordeyne the rounde table*
> *…What knyght had bene in alle þe world*
> *þat his los had bene wele herd,*
> *were he Frankis, wer he Breton,*
> *Normand, Flemyng, or Burgolon,*
> *of whom he held his fe or how*
> *fro the west vnto Mongow,*
> *he was told of non honoure*
> *bot he had been with Arthoure*
> *& hadde taken of his lyvere,*
> *cloth or þing þat knowen mot be.* [19]

Each specific regional identity is conjured up, as is each feudal obligation, only to have its importance negated in relation to Arthur's chivalric coalition. The cumulative effect of the passage is to erase all signs of alternate coalitions by weighing them equally and then discarding them. One can be British or French, hold fealty to a minor lord or a king, and still be an unmarked member of the Round Table. Even individual prowess is occluded with the construction of the Round Table, "þat no man wist who was best, ne in armes doughtiest." This self-conscious levelling of alternate identities carries through in their protocol as well:

> *non sat first, non sat last,*
> *bot were bi þere euen kast;*
> *non sat hie, non sat lawe,*
> *bot alle euenly forto knawe;*
> *…Alle at ons doun þei siten,*
> *alle ons ros whan þei had eten;*
> *alle were serued of a seruys,*
> *euenli alle of on assise.* [20]

The matter template of the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscript family similarly stresses Arthur's cosmopolitan coalition:

> *Tuelf yer [Arthur] bileued po here mid noblye ynou*
> *& pe hexte men of moni londes aboute him uaste drou.*
> *Mid so gret plente huld is hous & mid so gret corteisie*
> *pat me ne miyte of so noble los man neuer vnderstonde.*
> *& pat per nas nour aboute kniyt of none londe*
> *pat me tolde of eny ping bote hii of sute were*
> *Of king arthures hous oper some signe per of bere.* [21]

Arthur's military conquests, and the conflict between realms, is muted in the text by its depiction of the conquered nobility's eager joining of Arthur's coalition:

> *Vor euere wan he nom a lond al pe bachelerie*
> *pat ayt was in pe lond he nom in is compaynie*
> *& of is mayngnage vp is coust & uor he was so hende*
> *Ech noble vawe was mid him uor to wende.* [22]

Although the matter template of the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscript family gives greater stress to Arthur's charisma as the organizing force behind the coalition, it still places the chivalric coalition over other forms of alliance, such as ethnicity or political boundaries. In the next set of readings, I will sketch out the narratives in the matter templates surrounding Arthur's reign, and focus on the Roman threat to Arthur and England, as the force that causes "Britishness" to emerge as a deployed identity.

   The matter template of the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscripts (with the exception of Add. 19677, which does not include the section on Arthur and begins with Cadwallader, and Magdalen 2014, which begins with the Mont St. Michel narrative) conforms to a great degree with that of the *Chronicle* manuscript family. The matter templates of both families trace Arthur's accession, his battles with the Saxons, and his subsequent conquests of Scotland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, and France. These victories culminate in the feast at Caerleon but are interrupted by the arrival of messengers from Rome, who bring an ultimatum from the emperor. Arthur must come to Rome, face judgment for his appropriation of lands belonging to the Roman Empire, and pay tribute, or expect an invasion from Rome. Arthur defends his title to the lands as right by conquest, and declares his own right to Rome by virtue of Belyn and Constantine, two British ancestors who had conquered and ruled Rome. Each side musters its forces and prepares to meet in France. Upon his arrival, Arthur is asked to save the land from a giant who has kidnapped Helena, Othel's niece. The narrative takes a turn to Celtic romance as it describes in detail the hand-to-hand combat with the giant and Arthur's victory. It then turns back to the battles between the forces of Lucius and Arthur, culminating in Arthur's complete victory over the Roman forces and his intention to march on Rome itself. Before this can

occur, however, word comes from Britain that Mordred has married Guinevere and taken over the kingdom. Arthur turns back and defeats Mordred in a Pyrrhic victory that costs him his life. He wills Constantine his kingdom, leaves for Avalon, and dies.

The turn of the chivalric coalition to disaster begins at the height of Arthur's success, the feast at Caerleon, where the Roman envoys vow to bring Arthur, England, and the countries he has won from them into subjugation under Rome. They charge Arthur with refusing to give tribute to Rome and robbing Rome of France and other tributary lands, and they threaten to crush England and the coalitional lands under the Roman yoke.

This message threatens Arthur, and by extension the entire coalition, since its existence depends upon Arthur's power and leadership. It makes sense, then, that the matter template in both manuscript families should emphasize the two coalitional identities under attack: the coalition's own fealty to Arthur, and the chivalric coalition itself. Following the message, Arthur summons a council of war, in which identities are invoked as the threat to each is discussed. Cadour's jocular response to the threat [23] embraces all members of the Round Table, who are falling prey to idleness and possible vice. Arthur's speech justifying an attack against Rome opens with an appeal, not to Britons, but to the assembled aristocracy:

Ye lordynges he sede þat ich abbe in conseil & in batayle
Ifonded as uor anante me þat nolde me neuere faile
Dow noupe al your wit per to me wel to consayle
& ich hopie we ssollew we lesse recche of we of þe romaynes tayle.
[24]

The council ends with each lord pledging a staggering amount of troops and arms to the war with Lucius. Just as ethnic identity is levelled at the Round Table, regional political concerns are ignored in favor of a combined assault against a common threat.

The text carries on the coalitional nomenclature up to the first battle with Lucius. Upon landing in France, the assembled army is termed "Arthur's men" and only begins to be termed "Britons" in response to an insult aimed at Gawain and Arthur's other messengers to the Roman camp:

Þis noble kniytes wende vorþ & hete lucye al so
Vor to wende out of france oþer we batayle do
Quintylian [Lucius'] neueu ansuerede atten ende
þat he nas noyt puder ycome out henne uor to wende
Ac to gouerni france þat riyte of rome was
& þat bote yelpinge & bost mid brutons noþing nas. [25]

Gawain, enraged at the insult, strikes off Quintilian's head. Since "Britons" are the identity threatened by this mockery, British identity comes to the forefront as Gawain

rewrites the term to stand for hard fighting. After he has cleft another knight, Marcellus, halfway through, he stops to add a meaning to the deed:

> *Go he sede to quintilyan in helle wer he is*
> *And seye him pat sire wawein him sende word pis*
> *pat suiche strokes we brutons conne yive ywis*
> *pat he seip pat with hom bote yulpinge & bost nis*
> *Vor ichot puder wou ssalt pin del pou miyt him ssewe.* [26]

From this point on, the matter template picks up the term "brutons" and uses it as shorthand for the coalition around Arthur, just as "Roman" denotes those who are fighting on behalf of Lucius. The only place in the text where we can see British as a privileged term comes in Arthur's speech to his own legion, and his "privy" knights. Here, pride in Britain and its knights is deployed to put fight into a tired army:

> *Min lueu priue kniytes pat euere abbep god ybe*
> *Vor nou as wide as is pe world me ne ssal youre pers yse.*
> *Ye abbep ymad leuedy brutayne youre owe lond*
> *Of prettene kingdoms pat we abbep in vre hond*
> *Wanne hii wolde of youre lond so villiche habbe truage*
> *& so noblement as ye bep bringe in so vil seruage*
> *Nutep hii noyt we chiualerye pat ye abbep in france ydo*
> *In norpweye & in denemarch & in ower londes al so*
> *Of hor stinkinge seruise pat ye abbep out ybroyt.* [27]

In this speech, the coalition's own investment in the chivalric ideal combines with the need to defend Britain and the lands "freed" from Roman tribute. Britain is cast as a lady, gifted with the freed lands, and now threatened by Rome. In this instance, we can see how different threads of alliance (regional interest, chivalric identity, and membership in the international coalition) are combined for maximum effect. This privileging of coalitional over ethic identity is preserved through the rest of the matter template, culminating in its insistence on Arthur as exemplar. The narrative, although stressing Arthur's victory and his reputation as "pe beste kniyt pat me wuste euere yfounde," makes clear its refusal of Arthur's immortal status:

> *& naweles we brutons & we cornwalisse of is kunde*
> *Wenew he be aliue yut & abbew him in munde*
> *wat he be to comene yut to winne ayen wis lond*
> *& naweles at glastinbury his bones suwwe me fond*
> *& were at uore we heve weued amvdde we auer vwis*

As is bones liggew is toumbe wel vair is
In we vif hundred yer of grace & vourty & tuo
In wis manere in cornwaile to dewe he was ydo. [28]

The matter template has no stake in Arthur's physical survival, since its agenda is to portray a model of chivalry, one whose usefulness would be weakened by regional affiliation. In fact, the narrative's insistence upon his physical boundaries in time and space (the double reference to the physical evidence of his death, and the date and location of his death and burial), indicates a desire to separate Arthur the paradigm from Arthur the legend. The adherents to the legend are those of his "kunde": the Welsh and Cornish for whom the legend is a strategic deployment in response to their straitened circumstances. Since the matter template is interested in Arthur as a transferable model of justice, courtesy, and courage, its own utter refusal of the legend could be explained as another defense of a particular coalitional identity of chivalric community against the specter of a British king coming back as a regional partisan.

Thus far, we can see how Arthur, far from being a figure of British nationalism, is celebrated in the matter templates for his construction of an international chivalric coalition, and a universally accessible model for good kingship. The readings bear out the overall theory of the nature of coalitional identity and its strategic deployment. "British" as an identity only appears when that thread of the social identity network is threatened (as in Quintilian's insult) when it is used as a term reinscribed and deployed against that insult, or as a rhetorical tactic to motivate a group of regional warriors.

Although the matter of the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscripts is for the most part the same, the readings that arise from the recombination of matter and entity templates are among the most diverse in the manuscript corpus, with surprising points of emphasis. I will focus on two manuscripts in this section: Trinity R. 4.26 and CUL Ee.4.31. These two manuscripts have the greatest number of initials in the section and the largest variation in initial size, and therefore may be easily examined for patterns of reading.

CUL Ee.4.31 has the highest incidence of initials in any of the manuscripts, with an average of four per folio. The section on Arthur conforms to this average, with no change in scribal hand. Thus, it provides a stable ground against which to read the placement of initials and their size variants.

While the matter template stresses Arthur's international coalition, the recombination of matter and entity templates produces a new reading of Arthur's rule, this time as a militaristic leader of subordinate peoples. Unlike the other manuscripts, in CUL Ee.4.31 his accession is given only a one-line height initial, a default height of lesser value than the two-line and two-line decorated initials also present in this section. [29] This recombinatory reading acknowledges the accession but does not mark it as a defining moment in his career. The initials cluster first around Arthur's battle with the Saxons at Lincoln, their pleas for mercy, and Arthur's avenging of their recreance at Somerset. Badolf, the leader of the attacking Saxons, is given a two-line initial as a formidable adversary of Arthur, a combination that emphasizes Arthur's final annihilation of the Saxon forces. The other two initials in this cluster emphasize first Arthur's mercy towards the surviving Saxons, and second his angry march toward Somerset to punish their later treachery. In this first cluster, the emphasis is on Arthur's courage, military

skill, and sense of justice, which provoke fear and anxiety in the outlying unconquered realms. An initial marks Arthur's response to the other kings' anxiety, and stresses the earlier picture of Arthur as conqueror:

> *[Þ]oþis good tydinge come to þis noble arthure*
> *Mid gode herte he wolde such tyding yhure*
> *He poyte come bi hom & bringe some to lure*
> *& to winne al europe yif he miyte dure.* [30]

Although Arthur's desire for empire is given relatively little mention in the matter template, the recombination with the entity template in CUL Ee. 4.31 recodes Arthur as a battle-hungry empire builder. His imperial aims, however, are modified in the recombination by the companion attention given to his sense of justice and personal chivalry. We can see these combined agendas in the next cluster, focused on the succession crisis in Norway. After the Norwegian king's death, the title was to fall to Lot. However, the Norwegian nobles refused his title, and installed a king of their own. A one-line initial marks the king's death, while a two-line initial marks Lot's son Gawain's youth, his residence at Rome, and his fostering by the pope himself. These two initials do not provide a direct justification for Arthur's invasion, but they establish Lot's claim to the throne, and provide a reason for Arthur to undertake his brother-in-law's defense and capture Norway in the process. Empire-building in this manuscript is linked with legal justification or codes of chivalry. This pattern bears out in the next cluster of initials, which mark Ffrollo's flight into Paris, Arthur's joyful acceptance of single combat, and the combat itself. The initials divert attention away from the earlier battle, stress Arthur's victory by marking Ffrollo's retreat, and set the stage for a noble conquest of France: a single combat between two leaders. The battle, conquering of territory, and surrender of France is symbolized by the cluster of initials. A two-line height initial marks the point in which Arthur gets in the first blow against Ffrollo:

> *[K]ing arthure ayen þe brest is felawe verst ahitte*
> *Ayen þe brust þat a vul & ne miyte no leng sitte.* [31]

Ffrollo's symbolic fall links with another initial marking the occasion when Arthur receives homage from the conquered French lords. The next cluster of initials links the image of the conquered French lords around Arthur with the assembled international coalition at the Whitsuntide feast. The first initial stresses the arrival of the diverse aristocracy:

> *[Þ]ebarons & kniytes wat of þis londe a day*
> *At þis round table were noman telle ne may*
> *Kinges þat were of yles as king of yrlonde*

Gilliam & al so malueys king of yslonde
Lot king of norwwey & doldam of godland
& the king of orcadas & of denemarch ich vnderstonde
Kinges ek of byyonde se as kay of aungeo
Bedewar of normandye Gwider of peyto
Ligger of coloyne & al so þe dosse pers
Of france were þer echon.... [32]

The second initial stresses Arthur's rule over this coalition, as it notes the extensive ceremony surrounding Arthur's approach to the throne, culminating in a picture of four subkings carrying swords of gold, to show the wealth and political power Arthur has over other kings. In the matter template of the Whitsuntide feast, Arthur's power is modified by the stress on the international coalition, and the joy of the feast itself. However, when we read this passage in light of the other initialed passages detailing Arthur's conquests and military prowess, this group centered around Arthur links with the group of Saxons begging for mercy, the kings giving tribute for fear of invasion, and the conquered French giving homage at Paris.

This manuscript's interest in justice and conquest also guides its presentation of the wars against Lucius. The messengers' arrival at the feast is given a two-line height decorated initial, as empires clash over contested territory. The next emphasis marks an evaluation of Lucius' demands: "*Þis* was a prout mandement & an heiuol dede." This initial does not appear in any other manuscripts. The initial, along with the next one marking King Howell's backing of Arthur's decision to wage war, tries to create a picture of a just war, one that the matter template calls into question in Arthur's speech:

[V]or me þincep mid vnriyt hii escheþ vs truage
Vor Iuli cesar hit nom verst mid strengþe & outrage
Vor descord & contek þat bituene vr eldorne was þo
He nom it verst mid vnriyt & broyte þat lond in þo
& þing þat is mid strengwe inome hou miyte it be mid riyte
Vor he nap reson non bote robberie & miyte
& mid as god reson mowe we of hom esse ywis
Bere he wanne þe truage þat bineþe is. [33]

Arthur begins by denying the legitimacy of the earlier Roman occupation, arguing that it was achieved through force without justification. However, he then bases his own claim to tribute on the earlier forceful occupation of Rome by Belyn and Constantine and goes on to exploit that rationale to demand tribute from Rome. The speech abandons any pretence to justification as it looks strictly to force as the deciding factor: "Bere he panne pe truage þat bineþe is." CUL Ee.4.31, in focusing user attention upon Howell's speech

rather than Arthur's, changes the meaning of Arthur's war with Rome, recoding it as a defensive measure and fulfillment of prophecy:

> *For yif we in pisse manere wendep we ne faylep on none wyse*
> *pat we wollep abbe pe maistrie wanne we defendy vre franchise*
> *& wo so an ower mannes god bi nime wole mid vnriyt*
> *Wip riyt he may is owe lese yif pe defendour ap pe miyte*
> *& wanne pe romeins aboute bep vs to binyme vr riyte*
> *Wip reson we wollep hom bi nime yif we mowe to gadere fiyte.* [34]

In the next cluster of initials, we can see how the matter template's strategic deployment of the term "brutons" is reworked by recombination. Two initials begin the cluster, marking the respective musterings of Lucius' and Arthur's troops. The combination of the matter and entity templates stresses the international nature of both armies, with Arthur's coalitional forces (noted earlier) matched by Lucius':

> *[S]on [Lucius] wide aboute is messagers ysent*
> *Vor to gadery to is help al pat poer of rome*
> *So pat ayen lanmasse alle pes kings to him come*
> *Of affric & of grece of spayne & of scryry*
> *Of medes and of parkes of ytours of libye*
> *…Alle pes kings and alle opere pat were bi este rome*
> *and alle pat to rome ssolde seruise to him come.* [35]

The next initial emphasizes Quintilian's disparaging taunt that labels the Arthurian coalition as "brutons." The recombination ignores Gawain's immediate avenging of the insult, and his reinscription of "brutons" as a validated term. Instead, the next initial links "brutons" again with the coalitional alliance as it marks Lucius' dismay over his defeat in the first battle.

   The cluster of initials surrounding the final battle performs yet another recombinatory reading, as the matter template's interest in chivalric coalition meets the entity template's emphasis on Arthur as just conqueror. Arthur's speech rhetorically connects the chivalric coalition in defense of the identity threatened by Rome, and reincodes the defense as appropriate to the Round Table heroes:

> *Min lueu priue kniytes pat euere abbep god ybe*
> *Vor nou as wide as is pe world me ne ssal youre pers yse.*
> *Ye abbep ymad leuedy brutayne youre owe lond*
> *Of prettene kingdoms pat we abbep in vre hond*
> *Wanne hii wolde of youre lond so villiche habbe truage*

> *& so noblement as ye bep bringe in so vil seruage*
> *Nutep hii noyt pe chiualerye pat ye abbep in france ydo*
> *In norpweye & in denemarch & in oper londes al so*
> *Of hor stinkinge seruise pat ye abbep out ybroyt.* [36]

For his "privy knights" Arthur places Britain at the forefront of the coalition, linking a necessary defense of the threatened land with the strategic appeal to regional pride. The entity template continues the agenda, assigning the corresponding speech by Lucius another two-line decorated initial. In another context, this might indicate an interest in Lucius personally or Roman military strategy in general. However, when read with the themes of justice, conquest, and coalitional alliance in this recombination, the attention given Lucius' speech again announces the danger to the chivalric coalition:

> *Mine noble kniytes to was poer & heste*
> *Alle londes ssole abuye to by este & bi weste*
> *penchep on youre elderne pat were so noble on miyte*
> *wat ne dradde noyt vor to ssede hor blod vor to winne hor riyte*
> *Ac euere vouyte as hom nere dep issape non*
> *& so hii wonne hor siegnorye & ouercome hor fon.*
> *& adde seruage of al pe world....* [37]

The emphatic initial plays up the single-minded quest for mastery evidenced in Lucius' speech, and reminds the reader of the "stinking seruise" laid upon Denmark and the other lands. Its tone and memorial cues clash strikingly against the rosier rewriting Arthur gives his conquest.

The entity template completes the Arthurian section with a sweeping picture of Arthur as conqueror. Lucius and Rome fall in the next two initials. A two-line decorated initial sums up the battle, and provides an ironic comment on the previous section so decorated, Lucius' speech to the troops:

> *Grettore batayle pan pis was ich wene nas neuere non*
> *But it were pulke of troy vor per was vnnepe non*
> *Prynce in al pe world pat ne moste be pere ower sende*
> *Fram pe west syde of world to pe est most ende.* [38]

The two decorated initials link Lucius' recollection of Rome's past mastery of the world with Arthur's present global victory. As in Arthur's justification of the attack on Rome, the matter template questions whether, in the outcome of the battle, there has been any moral victory. Arthur's victory leads him to plan a march On Rome, turning a defensive war into a blatant quest for empire:

Þo hadde king arthure ywonne fram þe west moste se
Anon to the mouns al þat lond & ar he come aye
*He þoyte winne al clene rome & al þat land þer aboute…. *[39]

In the matter template, Arthur's sweeping possession of lands is abruptly undercut with the arrival of the messenger from Britain:

A messager com fram þis lond & nywe tydinge sede
þat modred is neueu wam he bitok þis lond
Hadde ynome þis kinedom clanliche in is hond
& ycrouned him sulue king þoru þe quene rede
*& huld hire in spousbruche in vyl flesses dede. *[40]

The cost of conquest in the matter template is made clear, as the messenger's news reveals the hollowness of Arthur's victory. In the quest to preserve his holdings, his own kingdom has been seized and himself cuckolded by his own sister's son, supposedly his closest male relative. The messenger's arrival directly following Arthur's proposed march on Rome provides a nice commentary on Arthur's imperial dreams and their cost to other forms of coalitional alliance.

The final initial in this section combines its interest in Arthur as conqueror with the matter template's critique of Arthur's quest for empire. It marks the line of Arthur's wrathful homecoming:

Mid þe poer of lond hiderward he drou
*& mid þe kinges her bisyde hom þoyte er longe ynou. *[41]

Again, we see a picture of Arthur as conqueror, but this time, it is a mockery of his earlier conquests, and a sad commentary on the breakup of the coalition. His own kin and wife have turned against him, and his own power base has been turned into a fortress to be attacked.

The recombinations present in CUL Ee.4.31 provide us with a troubled picture of Arthur as a founder of the chivalric coalition, but one based upon an untenable policy of conquest. In Trinity R.4.26, the recombination of matter and entity templates forms another picture: this time of Arthur's progress from triumphant king to anguished invader of his own land. Like the majority of Trinity R.4.26, the greatest number of initials in this section are of two-line size. However, a variant initial shows up immediately in the recombination as a four-line height initial, twice the size of the default, marks Arthur's accession, and looms over the rest of the section. It is the only four-line height initial in the manuscript, and the initial is larger than the default height assigned to a king's succession. Three readings result from this recombination. First, Arthur is given twice the

value of the other kings in the manuscript, a reading that supports the general *encomia* given to Arthur in the matter template. Second, it is Arthur as king, rather than chivalric figure or conqueror, that this recombination wants to emphasize. Third, his position as king of England is more important than the conquests that form the coalition. The rest of the initials in the section are of default height, and greater emphasis must be laid, therefore, on their presence marking certain passages. Arthur's first battle against the Saxons is marked, as is his invasion of Ireland. The conquests of Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and France are not given initials, a curious deviation from the pattern of initials in most of the manuscripts. One could argue that if the manuscript interest is in Arthur as king of the immediate realm, the battles affecting the realm and its immediate neighbors would be of greater interest, but this must remain speculative. An initial is assigned to Gawain's fostering by the pope, an emphasis that may lend some moral gloss to his later killing of Quintilian. The Whitsuntide feast is given an initial, which recombines with the earlier interest in Arthur's kingship and the matter template's emphasis on Arthur's leadership of the coalition to stress his position as over-king. The arrival of the messengers from Rome receives an initial, as does Lucius' reaction to Arthur's response. The recombination of matter and entity in the Trinity manuscript does not mark any of the justifications or questions brought up by the two speeches, nor does it attempt to frame Arthur's response as more just than the matter template implies. However, initials do link the arrival of the messengers and Lucius' reaction to Arthur's response, perhaps in an implicit identification of two imperial powers, a connection that would play up the questionable logic of Arthur's speech. As in University, Quintilian's insulting use of the term "brutons" is connected to Lucius' dismay at his defeat in the first battle. Here, however, since the emphasis is less on the coalition than on Arthur's rule over England, "brutons" seems more evocative of a direct rewriting of a people as capable of defeating Rome. No initials are present for the final defeat of Rome, nor for the messenger's news of Mordred's betrayal, an interesting break given the attention to both in other manuscripts. The final initial occurs to mark Arthur's anguish at the results of the first two battles with Mordred: Gawain slayn, his men decimated, and Mordred twice escaped. From the first initial depicting Arthur as the supreme king in England, the text ends with an initial for a grief-stricken and broken king without a queen or country, a figure who has lost nearly every supporting alliance.

The recombinations in CUL Ee.4.31 and Trinity R.4.26, despite their differences, both examine a set of coalitions—between king and vassal, between different ethnicities in the pursuit of an international chivalric coalition, between hegemonic and tributary realms—that refuses a simplistic ideology such as nationalism. In the next section, I focus on another conflict, this time between the Danish and Anglo-Saxon contenders for control of England. In two families of manuscripts, we can see here how the questions of ethnicity or "nation" are again set aside, this time in pursuit of a desperately needed political stability. In the *Chronicle* family of manuscripts—MSS Petyt 511 and Lambeth 131—the presence or absence of the story of Havelok creates two very different readings of the eventual Danish/English alliance. In the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscripts Harley 201, Cotton Caligula A. xi, and Add. 19677, the entities governing the accounts of Cnut and Edmund Ironside's pact and the later consolidation of power by Cnut display a range of attitudes towards the matter of right king/vassal relationships, and their preeminence over questions of "nation."

MSS PETYT 511 AND LAMBETH 131: THE DIFFERENCE A DANE MAKES

One of the most striking recombinative differences between MSS Petyt 511 and Lambeth 131 lies in their treatment of the Havelok narrative. Petyt 511 weighs the evidence for and against the tale:

> *Bot I haf gret ferly þat I find no man*
> *þat has writen in story how Havelok þis lond wan:*
> *noiþer Gildas, no Bede, no Henry of Huntington,*
> *no William of Malmesbiri, ne Pers of Brindlyton*
> *writes not in þer bokes of no Kyng Athelwold*
> *ne Goldeburgh, his douhtere, ne Hauelok not of told.*
> *…Bot þat þis lewed men vpon Inglish tellis,*
> *right story can me no ken þe certeynte what spellis.*
> *Of alle stories of honoure þat I haf þorgh souht,*
> *I fynd no compiloure of him tellis ouht.*
> *Sen I fynd non redy þat tellis of Hauelok kynde,*
> *turne we to þat story þat we writen fynde.* [42]

This is in perfect keeping with the manuscript's usual reliance on at least one written authority, and its distaste for popular oral history. [43] However, the thorough listing of authorities, the eagerness to demonstrate the pains taken in looking through them, and the unusual inclusion of archeological evidence point to an anxiety in this manuscript over the excision of the Havelok narrative. A look at MS Lambeth, which does include the Havelok tale and does not include the self-conscious examination of source evidence, gives us a different historical background for later Danish/Anglo-Saxon relations. The story given in Lambeth runs thus: During Alfred's reign, Gunter invades England, wars with Alfred for a long time, is converted to Christianity, makes peace with Alfred and returns overseas. Shortly afterward, an unnamed British king invades Denmark and demands the tribute that was given earlier to Arthur. Gunter refuses, joins in battle with the British king and is mortally wounded. Gunter's wife Helen takes the child Havelok (Gunter's son) and escapes with a mariner who fosters the child. When Havelok is grown, he sails to the court of Edelsy, a British king ruling the territory from Northumberland to Rutland. Edelsy has married his sister Orwayn to Egelbert, a Danish king holding the territory from Colchester to Holland. Orwayn and Egelbert die shortly after, leaving their daughter and heir Argille in the care of Edelsy. Havelok and Argille marry, but are disinherited by Edelsy. Havelok sails back to Denmark, wrests the crown from Edulf, then king of the Danes, and sails back to England to win his wife's land back. He is successful and at the last, as the tale says, "[it] so befel that vnder Hauelokes schelde, al Northfolk and Lyndeseye holy of hym þey held."

    The inclusion of the Havelok story in the Lambeth MS produces a chain of effects upon the manuscript, and upon its audiences' reading of the later Danish hegemony. First,

the Danish presence in England is given historical legitimacy, as a previous legal settlement of Lindsey and Northumbria. Thus, the division of England between Cnut and Edmund Ironside has a solid precedent in the earlier partition of territory between Egelbert and Edelsy, and the later division between Edelsy and Havelok. Next, it provides Lindsey with an earlier set of coalitional obligations, and thus a motivation for holding with Cnut against Æthelraed. The narration of their rebellion, and its punishment by Æthelraed, clearly condemned in Petyt 511, [44] in Lambeth 131 becomes the result of a more complex set of coalitional alliances. Lindsay has a historical precedent for declaring fealty to the Danes. Third, it narratively legitimates the Danish presence in England by its use of elements present in earlier matter templates. The British king arriving to demand "truage" from the Danes, on the historical grounds of their former subjection under Arthur, echoes two former historical events: Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain, and Lucius' message to Arthur.

> *Oure ancessoure, Iulius Cesar,*
> *Wan Bretayn, ert pou not war,*
> *& toke treuage perof long,*
> *foure hundreth yere we gan it fong* [45]

Gunter (already favorably portrayed by his conversion to Christianity and his friendship with Alfred) is placed in a position analogous to Cassibel and Arthur, two kings that the manuscript openly admires for their defiance of Rome. An audience trained to read the two earlier demands for "truage" as unjust is positioned to react sympathetically to the Danish situation. The covetousness of the invading British king is matched at home by the grasping and unscrupulous Edelsy, intent on the takeover of Danish holdings in England. Far from being hostile invaders, the Danes are portrayed as the victims of an unjust appropriation of territory. The genre itself provides another important validation to an audience familiar with romance narratives. As Victor Turner has noted, the romance genre is inherently conservative and legitimating. The hero is cast out, voluntarily exiles himself, or is separated by accident from his rightful sphere (whether throne, class, or title), and returns as the tested and approved possessor of it. For an audience trained by romances and history, Havelok's possession of Lindsey and Northumbria is doubly validated.

Lambeth 131's choice of particular events from the "matter" of Denmark provides an alternative reading of the Danish invasion as another cycle in the continually shifting power structure between Britain and Denmark, even as it also incorporates other elements from that matter: the treachery of Astrild, the prophecies of St. Dunstan, Æthelraed's disastrous rule, and Cnut's rise to power. In order to see how the Havelok story affects the Lambeth MS, we need to look at the way the Petyt MS frames the events, and examine the different perspective offered by deliberate refusal of the Havelok story.

The narrative related in Petyt 511 centers on two treacherous figures. Astrild, the second wife of Edgar, step-mother to Edward the Martyr, and mother to Æthelraed II murders Edward to ensure her son's succession to the throne, an act that brings down the wrath of God upon England in the form of the Danes. The narrative is careful to frame

this as providential history, both by the speech of St. Dunstan and by the compacting of events:

> *For þe luf of þe, þi broþer did [Astrild] slo*
> *þerfore þou and þine salle weld it with wo,*
> *& sone after þi daies, þe reame salle men se*
> *gouerned þorgh aliens kynde & euermore fro þe.* [46]

Directly after the coronation, an unambiguous portent supports the prophecy:

> *A rede cloue in þe skie about Ingland gan sprede;*
> *So mykelle blode it rayned, þe erth wex alle rede.*
> *þe folk was affraied & alle heuy als lede.*
> *þe toþer yere next of his coronment,*
> *þe Danes vp aryued…* [47]

The manipulation of time here, in which there is no activity in the realm between the first year of Æthelraed's reign and the second, underscores the link between the prophecy, the celestial signs, and their fulfillment. The Danes themselves are in an interestingly liminal position. Like the red cloud, they move threateningly over the realm, but appear in response to the corruption and violence already present in England. The positioning of the Danes as God's punishment, rather than as a threat to English identity, allows later on for relatively smooth transition from English to Danish dynastic rule.

Instrumental in this shift is the second figure of internal treachery, Duke Edrik. Throughout the folios dealing with struggles between Æthelraed and the Danish forces, most of the blame falls on Edrik for the worst Anglo-Saxon military losses. No sooner does Æthelraed buy off Sweins' forces than Edrik invites a combined Norwegian and Danish force to invade through Kent, meanwhile drawing off Æthelraed's navy to the decoy target of Sandwich. Æthelraed is forced to raise more money to buy off this attack, while Edrik encourages Swein to return with his forces. However, Petyt 511 and Lambeth 131 frame this part of the narrative as Edrik's treachery towards Æthelraed as king, not towards the realm or the Anglo-Saxons as a whole: "Alle was þorgh Edrik, þat mykelle was to blame;/he was þe kynges counseilore and did him mykelle schame." [48] Edrik's treachery is his abuse of his position as counsellor and his breaking of the king/vassal tie. As the narrative continues, Edrik is responsible for division of the kingdom between the two contenders for the throne, Edmund and Cnut, for Cnut's return in force for a confrontation with Edmund, for Edmund's assassination, and ultimately for the murder of Edmund's heirs: "Edmund had a sonne & childre no more;/þorgh Edrikes conseile, Knoute did him slo." [49] Edrik appears in these manuscripts as a continuous figure of treachery and unrest, only purged when Cnut orders him hanged on his wife's advice:

> *Listen me, Lord Knute, if it be þi wille,*
> *How he betraied my lord & my sonne fulle ille.*
> *Whilom Eilred my lord he him bitraist to yow,*
> *& my sonne Edmund þorgh treson he slouh,*
> *& if he regne long, ye schul haue þe same.*
> *He was never with no man þat he ne did him schame.* [50]

Emme's speech nicely summarizes the manuscript's treatment of the political situation. The primary threat to the realm is located in the breakdown of the king/ vassal relationship, not in the ethnic background of the ruler. Paradoxically, Edrik's treachery towards all who occupy the throne ties together Æthelraed, Edmund, and Cnut as holding the same position *vis-a-vis* the threat posed by Edrik. This attitude is repeated throughout the manuscript. Æthelraed is condemned for breaking the proper line of inheritance, Edrik for breaking the bond between king and vassal. The Danes themselves are only condemned in a few instances: when they directly threaten the survival of London, the symbolic heart of the realm, and at Swein's attack upon the prosperity of the towns and upon the relics of St. Edmund:

> *Now comes Suane eft agayn with cristes malison,*
> *þe lond leid to taliage so mykelle on ilk a toun*
> *þat noiþer erle no baron of alle þer heritage*
> *myght not lyue þeron to gif þer taliage;*
> *treuage als he asked of Saynt Edmunde wing,*
> *þe corsaynt & þe kirk he thretre for to brennyng,*
> *& bot he had his askyng, þe lond he suld destroye.* [51]

In short, the Danes are condemned, like Edrik and Æthelraed, as they pose a threat to the network of spiritual power, material prosperity, and political stability necessary for the health of the realm. Their "Danishness" is not marked as an essential characteristic. Cnut and Edmund are reconciled and divide the kingdom to the relief and joy of the population. Cnut's consolidation of power after Edmund's death is noted without commentary, [52] and even his execution of Edmund's nearest kin is blamed on the tainted advice of Edrik. Only after Cnut's death does Petyt 511 (as does Lambeth 131 also) sum up his reign in terms less than flattering: "Seuentene yere was he kyng þorgh conquest & desceit."

The matter template shared among the *Metrical Chronicle* manuscripts locates the Danish takeover as a consequence of the murder of Edward the Martyr (978) by his stepmother and her co-conspirators. His death raised his stepbrother Æthelraed II to the throne with the general approval of the Anglo-Saxon nobility. The matter template uses the figure of St. Dunstan to foretell the Danish invasion as the proper punishment for the

Anglo-Saxon collaboration with Edward's murderers. Æthelraed's reign is marked by two major invasions under Swein Fork-beard and his son Cnut. His response to the first invasion marks him as a weak and treacherous king who pays off the Danish fleet to return to Denmark, then fortifies himself with Norman allies and massacres the remaining Danish inhabitants. This act only brings on a second wave of retaliatory invasions that crushes the remaining Anglo-Saxon forces and sends Æthelraed into exile. It is only under the generalship of Æthelraed's son, Edmund Ironside, that the Anglo-Saxons begin to gain back ground although the forces of both Anglo-Saxons and Danes, equally matched and equally battle-weary, remain locked in expensive and bloody stand-offs. When the exasperated troops finally demand peace or single combat, Cnut and Edmund agree to a joint rule that promises peace and stability. This prospect is cut off by the subsequent murder of Edmund Ironside. Although Cnut punishes the traitors, he nonetheless exiles or hunts down Edmund's kin, marries Edmund's mother, and forces parliament to declare him officially Edmund's heir, He leaves a stable realm behind for his descendents Harald and Harthacanute.

"WHAT IS ÞIS GIDIHEDE?": PARAGRAPH MARKINGS IN CALIGULA A. XI, HARLEY 201, AND ADD. 19677 AND THE OLD KNIGHT'S SPEECH

The manuscript family of the *Metrical Chronicle* shares a matter template not found in any other verse chronicle manuscripts. After a series of pitched battles between Cnut and Edmund Ironside, the two forces come together for the eighth time around Gloucester:

> *Vpe seuerne hii smite in a stude & so vaste me slou*
> *þe gode bodies in eiþer half þat it was deol ynou*
> *Mid blod we erþe was iheled þat piþe it was to wite*
> *& noþer partye ne miyte þe maistrie al bi yite.*
> *Ne hii ne miyte yese uor we niyte þe batayle to fol ende*
> *Hii departede mid sor ynou amorwe ayen to wende.* [53]

The narrative emphasizes the cost of these continued battles and the impossibility of a clear victory for either side; it breaks the action with each side wearily waiting for the next day's assault. This dreary picture prepares the audience for the exasperation of one of Edmund's retainers:

> *As edmond sat mid is ost aniyt in such solas*
> *As folc miyte þat vorwounded & sor & wery was.*
> *& speke of þis batayle hou it miyte be god*
>
> *An old kniyt þer ros vp & biuore þis folc stod.*

Ich am he sede mest fol peruore as foles wolle
Mi fole red yif ye wolle ihure uerst ssewi icholle
Miche ping we abbep yseye & vr eldrene vs ek sede
Anguisse & sorwe we abbep ynou of wel more we mowe drede.

We fiytep & bep ouercome & no maistrie we ne sep
Hou miyte we be bote ouercome pat pus defouled bep
Despoiled & vorwounded & vr strengpe lese vaste
Vre felawes & vre owe lif we dredep ek atte laste
Wanne ssal vre reste come & pe endinge of vre wo
& among vs sikernesse & pais ich drede neuere mo
Edmond ne mai be ouercome uor is strengpe ywis
Ne pe king knout vre foe vuro he so quoynte ys
Wat may wanne oure ende be bote wanne is kniytes echone.
In eyper side be aslawe & vr maystres bileued one.
Oper hii miyte wanne acordi oper fiyte hom sulue twu
Wat reson is pat hii ne mowe as wel noupe so
pe wule hii abbep eni aliue pat hom mowe serui & drede
Nere hom noyt bope uairor so wuwat is pis gidihede.
per were wule in engelond at on time kinges fiue
& alle hii were riche ynou & of noble liue

& nou to lute to hom tueye al engelond is
& ofte wo so coueitew al al lesep ywis
Yif eiper king so moche wilnep to be louerd her
pat hor noper nele abbe felawe ne per
Fiyte hom sulue tueye pat louerd wole be one
Wy nere hom noyt so betere nou wane panne hor
Kniytes echone
& hor folc were aslawe al & hii bileued all bare
Y ne founde wo hom seruede in anguisse ne in care
Ne wo mid hom in nede pat lond defendi miyte
Here of pat sowe seggep ye as bi youre in siyte
Nadde pis kniyt follische is reson ysed
pat his felawes naade sone ynome hor red
& sede alle mid one moupe we ensentep per to
pat wis tueie kinges acordi oper bataile hom sulue do. [54]

The old knight's speech is carefully framed as the advice of a "fool" (those traditionally permitted to give unwelcome advice to the monarch without penalty), and throughout the speech, he is careful to paint his suggestion as based upon experience, past tradition, and political advantage to each sovereign. However, his terming of Edmund and Cnut's battles as "gidihede," the implicit refusal to fight a foolish war, and the accusation of avarice levelled at both rulers points up the extremes to which he will resort to preserve a coalitional alliance more important than blind adherence to Edmund's military policy. He argues for the preservation of the mutually beneficial bond between the king and those who serve him, and between the inhabitants of the land and those who defend it. The strength of this coalition is depicted in his picture of the ludicrous situation of Cnut and Edmund, their followers decimated, battling it out for the nominal leadership of a ruined land. Without the material backing of a prosperous realm, and without followers, kingship becomes a meaningless term. According to this logic, if Cnut and Edmund continue their battles, they will be fighting for pride and greed, and may as well be fighting without their followers as with them, saving the forces behind them a good deal of trouble. The force of the speech, and the unanimous agreement from the remainder of the troops, highlights the way in which a serious threat to one aspect of a coalitional bond produces a reinterpretation of the relationship between peoples. Cnut and Edmund's followers are not English and Danes, but a single military group necessary to preserve the realm, now not divided up into the territories held by each leader, but "the lond" that must be defended. The agreement implicit within the knight's speech is that the forces of each leader will be combined, either by accord or by the outcome of Cnut and Edmund's single combat. In short, the necessity of preserving the spirit of king/knight relationships leads to the refusal to follow the letter of Edmund's campaign. In the same manner, the question of Danish or English victory is pushed aside for the more important issue of a force (whether Danish, English, or a combination thereof) to defend the land. The question of whether this constitutes a military coup is begged by Edmund's eager acceptance of the resolution, and the division of land is done in a manner acceptable to both parties. Cnut offers Edmund half of Denmark in return for half of England, and stresses the political advantage to be gained by both leaders:

> *Ware uore ich desirit mest þin grace & þin loue*
> *þat þou of alle min londes me be felawe & per.*
> *& ich mot ek of engelond be þi parciner*
> *Vor yif we to gadere beþ & al clene of one rede*
> *Norþweye & ech oþer land & ech prince vs wole drede.* [55]

Any lingering difference between the Danish and Anglo-Saxons is mitigated by their recognition of the dangers posed by outside invaders to a divided and war-weakened realm (Harley 201, to make the threat palpable to a fifteenth-century audience, has substituted "France" for "Norway" in the manuscript). Cnut's recommendation is validated by the narrative, which mourns the death of Edmund as the loss of security promised by the Danish/Anglo-Saxon alliance:

> *& yif hii adde in gode loue longe iliued beye*
> *Me adde poru alle cristendom yspeke of hom tueye*
> *& ech prince & ech lond, ydouted hom tuo*
> *Ac edmond was al to rape alas to depe ydo.* [56]

The common matter template of the manuscripts provides one example of a Danish/Anglo-Saxon coalition. When we turn to the specific manuscripts of Caligula A. xi, Harley 201, and Add. 19677, we can see how the recombination of matter and entity template in each manuscript provides a further level of complexity to the political network. As I stated in the previous chapter, the entities in each manuscript must be studied for their given value within the text. In this section, I will be looking at one set of entities—the paragraph marks used to call attention to lines of text—and examine each in light of their given value within each manuscript. I then turn to their interactions with the matter template of the old knight's speech and its consequences, and examine the particular hybrid readings produced by these recombinations.

The paragraph marks in Caligula A. xi are plentiful, but their unusual frequency within this section marks it as one of greater emphatic value within the manuscript. Although three of the marks (those of lines 1, 4, and 36 in Table A, Appendix 3) could be explained as either noting a change from third-person narration to direct speech or the reverse, the remainder do not follow any pattern legible under those qualifications. It seems safe to evaluate these as lines noted for emphasis. With this assumption, the Caligula A. xi paragraph marks emphasize the amount of historical authority and experience the old knight and his hearers share: "Muche ping we abbeth yseye & vr eldrene vs ek sede." The invocation of this rhetorical cominonplace supports, by its reference to both experience and history, the past varieties of rule under which England has flourished, and the sufferings it is now undergoing through Cnut and Edmund's desire for sole rule. The appeal to experience carries through to the next marked line, reminding the audience of the past seven fruitless battles with Cnut's forces. That line in turn lends its force to the next marked line, which draws a grim picture of the probable outcome of this continual conflict: "Wat may panne oure ende be bote wanne pis kniytes echone/ in eyper side bep aslawe and vr maystres bileued one." The picture given of the solitary and victory-obsessed kings fighting among the slaughtered bodies of their knights is contrasted in the next marked line with the picture of the ease, wealth, and stability of an earlier England under five kings. It provides, in this contrast, a reason for refusal to support a fight for sole rule. In this set of paragraph marks, the defense of the land from outside invasions is muted, and the threat to internal stability is emphasized. The additional picture of the five kings ruling in peace provides a foil to Edmund and Cnut, the two for whom half of England is not sufficient, and underscores the accusation of avarice given earlier.

Harley 201 as a whole is much more sparing of its paragraph marks, which cluster around Edmund Ironside. In this case, since the entity template for this manuscript does not usually mark voice changes or verse paragraphs, we can more easily accept those marks that appear as emphatic without the qualifications necessary in Caligula A. xi. As Table B (Appendix 3) shows, those appearing in the old knight section focus on Edmund Ironside. The marked lines trace a path from Edmund's discussion of the battle to the old

knight's invocation of history and experience, this time linked as a reply to Edmund's initiation of the discussion, and finally linked with praise of Edmund for his strength. In this set of paragraph marks, the focus is subtly turned from the old knight as leader to Edmund as a leader strong enough to fend off Cnut and wise enough to seek advice from his experienced knights. The paragraph marks continue with Edmund's acceptance of the idea of single combat, his great strokes against Cnut and Cnut's fear of him, and Edmund's acceptance of Cnut's offer. As wary as one has to be of a continued agenda in paragraph marks, the consistent emphasis on Edmund's strength, virtue, military prowess, and courtesy justify drawing the earlier reading as one stressing Edmund as agent.

Add. 19677 provides a third recombination as it contrasts Edmund's strength with his present political situation. In Table C (Appendix 3), the paragraph marks call attention to the sardonic "solas" experienced by the wounded and exhausted soldiers, and implicitly give it as the effect of Edmund's strength and Cnut's military cunning. The focus here is not on the moral imperative to defend the land, preserve the king/knight relationship, or avoid covetise, but on the pragmatic resolution of a military standoff.

In each case, the lack of interest in "Englishness" or "Danishness" constitutes a necessary qualifier to the idea of "a" medieval nationalism; what we see instead is an interest in internal stability and safety that overrides any concern about the identities of those maintaining and defending it. The next section takes this argument a step further and shows another set of concerns: how a consolidation of power itself proves dangerous to other affiliations that should be honored: the duty owed to political alliances, to kin by marriage and to God.

"AL ONE KYNG": CNUT'S KINGSHIP, THE DANISH SUCCESSION, AND INITIALS IN CALIGULA A. XI, CUL EE. 4.31, AND ADD. 18631.

As I noted earlier, the *Metrical Chronicle* matter template depicts the first years of Cnut's reign as a ruthless consolidation of power. By intimidating the parliament into making him Edmund's sole heir, marrying Aethelraed's queen Emme, and driving Edmund's kin into exile, Cnut systematically appropriates the political and symbolic space of the Wessex line. However, the matter template continually contests Cnut's legitimacy by calling attention to each process of acquisition. After Cnut punishes Edrik and his son for their murder of Edmund Ironside, the matter template announces "Knout was þo al one king, as wo seiþ of engelonde/ Of norþwey of denemarch & gre þoer adde an honde." [57] No sooner is Cnut declared sole ruler, than the matter template carefully traces the steps by which he disinherits Edmund's kin:

> *King knout þoyte hou he miyte best her offe do*
> *To binime hom hor eritage & mid woch wrong he miyte*
> *& mid treson bote he adde som colour of riyte*
> *Vor wanne many may do wat he wole & vnriyt ynou*
> *Ofte he bringþ uor coueitize to riyt þe þur wo*
> *He made a gret parlement & broyte heyemen þer to*

> *As wo seip inele no ping wipoute lokinge do*
> *Þobed he pe court segge sow & riyt vnderstonde*
> *Wat vorepard wer were ymad & fourme of engelond*
> *Bituene him & king edward pe wule he was aliue*
> *& wan Edmond made is eir of is lond wipout striue*
> *& wan of is yonge sones wardein ek ydo*
> *& wat ping he adde signed to is breperen al so*
> *Her of he let him segge sow as it were in glosinge*
> *Vor he kepte he sede mid vnriyt of none monnes pinge.* [58]

The matter template is careful to emphasize Cnut's skillful manipulation of the processes of justice, even as it notes how these processes are corrupted by Cnut's underlying message to the assembled barons. Cnut orders the representatives of parliament to "segge sop" (speak the truth) at the same time they must "riyt vnderstond" the nature of the truth they are telling. The phrase "riyt vnderstond" is a particularly brilliant manipulation of language here, since it could mean "understand what is right," "understand rightly" or more formally, the equivalent to "let it be known that." This play of language continues through the speech, as Cnut frames the "uoreward" or treaty that Edmund made "wule he was aliue" to divide both kingdoms with Cnut, to an agreement made while Edmund was alive to leave his kingdom to Cnut. The repetition of "& wan" (and whom) furthers the link between the treaty dividing the territory during both kings' lifetimes to a will being forged by Cnut even as he speaks. The pious assurance Cnut gives at the end of the speech further confuses legal "riyt" with ethical "riyt," a point the text laments directly after the barons invest Cnut with the legal right to England. "Alas alas pe tricherie pat me miyte ise pere." This decision is one that people may easily "ise," done in broad daylight by parliamentary consent, and stands as a direct violation of the idea of king/parliament relationship, in which each party is required to act as a check on the other, for the good of the realm. By deliberately manipulating the language of political alliance to disinherit Edmund's kin, and by corrupting the bond between king and parliament, Cnut is guilty of as damning a treason against Edmund Ironside as the more private earlier assassination of the co-ruler.

> *In to a chaumbre foreine pe gadelinge gan wende*
> *pat king edmond com ofte to & in pe dunge war*
> *Hudde him binepe in pe dunge pat nomon nas ywar*
> *Þope king er to come is nede uor to do*
> *we luper pef yare was mid is arme per to*
> *& smot him poru we fondement & poru we gottes*
> *riyt.* [59]

This is a "privy" murder in both senses of the word, since it is done in the most solitary and personal of settings, and since it is the last place one would expect a treacherous attack. The matter template stresses the loathsome nature of the hiding-place ("in the dunge" occurs twice in quick succession) in order to play up the vulnerability of Edmund and the shameful nature of the assassination. The traitor escapes the hue-and-cry, and is only caught when he openly boasts of his deed. Cnut orders his punishment in the form of a perverse reward, the first time we see his facility with language:

> *Þou seist sop quap pe king pou ast muche ydo vor me*
> *Icholle wel pin mede yelde bi pe treupe ich ou to pe*
> *Icholle make pe hey mon bi time ich abbe ipoyt*
> *pat pou ne ssalt of win liflode neuere carie noyt…*
> *[Cnut] yef him such auancement as he wolde he suor is ow.*
> *pat he ne dorste neuer eft carie of mete ne of clow.*
> *A robe he let him ssape uerst of blod red scarlet were.*
> *pe ssarpe stones bi pe stret is tailors were.*
> *Vor he let him mid hors to drawe fram strete to strete.*
> *Þat we peces folle of is ffless aboute moni & grete*
> *…Suppe he let smite of is heued bi pe ssoldren as me sey*
> *& let it sette vp on pe tour of londone an hey*
> *& so he was hey man ymad as he bihet him to is mede* [60]

Edrik's son is tricked by not seeing the meaning behind Cnut's words: "hey" as physical rather than social position, death as loss of care about finding food and clothing, and reward for what Edrik's son has done, not what benefits have accrued to Cnut by the murder. The London parliament, perhaps trained by this grisly spectacle, interprets Cnut's speech as he wishes, and thus consents to another act of treachery against the Wessex line. The lines following Edmund's murderer's punishment and the rigged parliament are similar:

> *Knout was po al one king as wo seip of engelonde*
> *Of norpwei and of denemarch & gret poer adde an honde* [61]
> *po he was of al engelond king wipoute mone*
> *He bigan to cupe anon wat he was king one* [62]

These two couplets are joined by a third, coming after Cnut's attempt to have Edmund's two sons killed:

> *King knout of all engelond was po king al out*

Me de dar noyt esse weper he were kene po and prout. [63]

This couplet in turn is followed by a recounting of Cnut's anxiety over the threat posed by Edmund's other kin and his decision to marry Emme, Æthelraed's queen. This pattern of couplets acts in the same way the "passage of dominion" laments function, as I described in chapter one. They link Cnut's regnal activities as progressive steps in the consolidation of power. However, unlike the passage of dominion laments, their effect is not to underscore Cnut's hold upon the realm. Rather, by insisting on each instance that Cnut has now complete power over the realm, only to follow it by the presence of another threat that must be quelled, the couplets instead insist upon the injustice of Cnut's reign, and upon its politically precarious position. Cnut's kingship is something that must be continually refashioned and guarded. The last section of the matter template dealing with Cnut's reign follows a progress in which he becomes increasingly arrogant, until finally he challenges the elements themselves, ordering the tide to cease rising, since it touches the land that is under his control. When it fails to obey orders, Cnut is humbled:

> *Wite he sede alle men wan on erpe woniep her*
> *pat it nis bote pe pure mase eni kinges poer*
> *ne pat no man nis wurpe to be icluped king*
> *Bote pe heie king of heuene pat wroyte alle ping*
> *…peruore ich bihote god pat ine ssal kinges croune*
> *Neuere bere an erp vor mi poer is per doune*
> *He wende him uorp to chirche & biuore pe rode com*
> *& mid mek herte pitoslicche is kinges croune nom*
> *& sette is vpe pe rode heued & sede pat he alone*
> *Was worpe to croune bere & oper kinges none*
> *…& me seip pat he ne bar neuere pe croune of engelonde*
> *Ac he ne bar pulke ne non oper per after ich vnder stonde*
> *Suipe god mon he bi com…. * [64]

Cnut is redeemed in the text only after he symbolically strips himself of the kingship; the text recasts him as a good "mon" not a good king, and only after he makes amends to Edmund by endowing the church holding his body. Because Cnut has broken his coalitional ties with Edmund, appropriated the inheritance due to Edmund's kin, and corrupted the legal relationship between king and baron, his method of rectifying the situation must be in relinquishing the crown that symbolizes his status as "al one king": one without regard for coalitional ties and obligations. In publicly resigning his crown at the church altar, he reforges the relationship supposed to exist between secular and spiritual rule, while reversing the progressive consolidation of power by refusing to wear a crown again during his reign.

When we turn to the recombinations in each manuscript of this matter template and the entity template of initials, it becomes clear that the conflict in the matter template

between Cnut's kingship and legitimate rule is reframed differently by the existence and placement of the initials in the manuscripts.

Add: 18631's use of initials encourages a dismissal of Cnut as a legitimate king. Although the manuscript gives each succeeding king after Brutus an initial marking his accession to the throne, [65] there is no initial for Cnut, making it at odds with all of the other members of the manuscript family except Magdalen 2014. [66] A user looking for the succession of kings by initials would move from Æthelraed to Edmund Ironside to Harald; without an initial, Cnut is effectively erased from the list. This excision is not the result of a change of hand, or of a general lack of initials in this section. Nor can it be discounted as a simple omission, since Cnut's reign takes up a good four folios in the manuscript. In this case, the recombination of the matter and entity templates serves to reinforce the matter template's depiction of Cnut as ruling illegitimately, by removing his textual symbol of kingship, in a move similar to Cnut's relinquishing of his crown. Harald, Cnut's successor, receives an initial, but not Harald's successor Harthacanute. In this case, Add. 18631's recombination is puzzling, since the conferral of a legitimate kingship marker is given to a figure clearly marked in the matter template as inferior to Harthacanute:

> *Harald pe kinges sone knout after him was king*
> *Ykrouned he was at oxenford a ssrewe poru alle ping*
> *Of pe kunde he was of denemarch of pe eror wif ybore*
> *pe lasse he louede englissemen & engelonde peruore.* [67]

The dichotomy between English and Danish "kunde" does not appear earlier in the manuscript, and it follows the coalitional model here, in that threats from Harald's "shrewishness" to the inhabitants of the realm produce a coalitional identity of English "kunde" not present in Cnut's more diplomatic relationships with the barons. However, the matter template makes clear that it is Harald, rather than Harthacanute, who is the foreign king, symbolized by the exile and return of Emme, Cnut's link to Edmund's "kunde." The conferral of an initial upon Harald may be a desire to acknowledge one type of succession, (that passing from king to heir) over the parliamentary election that placed Harthacanute on the throne, one that would have been made questionable by the corruptible nature of the barons stressed in the accessions of Æthelraed and Cnut. The passage of succession in Add. 18631 then, would run from Edmund Ironside (the heir of Æthelraed) to Harald (the heir of Cnut) to Edgar (the heir of Edmund Ironside). It seems here that Add. 18631 preserves a pattern of legitimate process of accession, rather than questioning the individual right to the throne. Sloane, by contrast, gives a legitimating initial to Harthacanute and not Harald, giving added weight to the matter template's preference for Harthacanute as the legitimate heir, both through the bloodline of Emme and through the assent of parliament. The line in Sloane 2027 runs from Edmund Ironside to Cnut to Harthacanute, thus making the question of legitimate succession dependent upon legal agreement, first between Edmund and Cnut, then between Harthacanute and the barons electing him. Caligula A. xi gives initials to Edmund Ironside, Cnut after his punishment of Edmund's murderer, Harald, and Harthacanute, thus forming its pattern by tracing those who occupy the throne of England, without making a determination about

their fitness to rule. Trinity R. 4.26 and CUL Ee. 4.31 only give Cnut an initial after he is declared Edmund's successor by the parliament of barons, following that initial by ones for Harald and Harthacanute. In these cases, the initial for Cnut recombines with the matter template to point up both the legal validity of Cnut's accession, and its lack of ethical soundness. In the same manner, Harald and Harthacanute are given initials as they are the legal possessors of the throne, without regard to the evaluations given in the matter templates.

The granting or withholding of initials reveals in each manuscript a particular judgment on legitimate kingship. In no case, however, can they be said to hold a nationalistic agenda. Cnut is punished for his perversion of the proper forms of coalitional alliance—his duty towards Edmund's kin, his manipulation of the Parliament that poisons the relations between king and vassals, and the arrogance that blinds him to his own place in creation. Harald and Harthacanute are given recognition according to the manuscripts' definition of legitimate rule. Any definition of English "kunde" as superior to Danish can be traced to a strategic championing of a threatened group. Not only is it more difficult to postulate a medieval nationalistic agenda in the face of this net of coalitional identities, but it is infinitely less rewarding to do so.

This chapter reveals the value of the recombination model in challenging the imposition of nationalism onto the medieval period. It notes the dependence of such blanket impositions upon an author/text/edition model, and examines how such assertions unravel as they are faced with the complex recombinations of manuscripts and their families. It proposes the new term of "coalitional identity" to define these relationships, one that honors the way in which medieval social identity was formed, expanded and defended. On a larger scale, it provides a model by which other theories (feminist, postcolonial, queer theory) and their dependence upon or independence from author/text/edition models may be evaluated and their use-value in the face of manuscript practice tested. As a final note, it questions the motivation behind our own collaborative production of the medieval past. In the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the three factors Anderson cites as necessary for the dissemination of nationalist ideology: anti-colonial sentiment, the means of mass mechanical reproduction, and a centralized power. While these do not appear in the Middle Ages itself, I would like to propose that they can be found within medievalism. The Middle Ages has been "colonized" by modernists and early modernists. By this I mean that it has been, like the less-developed countries whose labor supplies first world technology centers, made to act as primitive Dark Ages to the "sophisticated" and "complex" later periods, acting as a necessary defining point past which these later periods can develop. In other words, if the Middle Ages, for these critics, was not primitive, the accomplishments of 1600 on would form part of a continuum. For scholars seeking to promote the unique qualities of their field of study, continuum is not a valid marketing tool. I would like to suggest that the recent surge of interest in a posited medieval "nation" springs first, from anticolonial sentiment towards early modernists' and modernists' depictions of the Middle Ages, and from the modular quality of critiques developed by early modern and post-colonial critics. If, for example, one can argue for a conception of the early modern English nation as ruled by Elizabeth, defined as Protestant, and supported by print culture, the "model" of charismatic leader, unifying ideology and reproduced text is seen as transferable to the Middle Ages. As this chapter has demonstrated, however, this transfer can only be accomplished by ignoring

the medieval period's own complexity: the endless recombinations of manuscript culture, and the complex threads of coalitional identity.

NOTES

1. Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form," *Nation and Narration,* ed. Homi K.Bhabha (London, Routledge, 1990) 45.
2. Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991) 3.
3. Anderson, 157.
4. Anderson, 5.
5. Anderson, 5.
6. Thormann, Janet, "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Poems and the Making of the English Nation," *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity,* ed. Allen J.Frantzen and John D.Niles (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997) 27.
7. Thormann, 62.
8. See chapter one, notes 9–11.
9. Turville-Petre, 19.
10. See Table 1, p. 11 for manuscript shelfmarks and abbreviations.
11. See Table 1 for the full shelfmarks of these manuscripts. In the following discussion of these manuscripts, I will be relying upon Idelle Sullens' edition of the manuscripts (*Robert Mannyng of Brunne:* The Chronicle, ed. Idelle Sullens, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies 153 (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1996)). Although Sullens gives Mannyng as the author of these manuscripts, my practice is to treat the edition as a variorum edition of three manuscripts; thus, there will be no bibliographic reference to Mannyng as author. All quotations from these manuscripts will be taken from this edition, with the specific manuscript cited. Per Sullens' editorial practice, I will be giving both folio and line numbers for quotations.
12. Petyt 511, f. 146v, 1. 4259–4272.
13. Petyt 511, f. 146v, 1. 4289–4292.
14. Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) 172.
15. Petyt 511, f. 147r, 1.4293–4296.
16. See chapter one, 35.
17. MSS Petyt 511 and Lambeth 131, f. 62v, 1. 10337–10342 (when both manuscripts are cited, the matter is the same in both manuscripts; I will be using folio numbers from Petyt 511 in these cases): "He toke so mykille of curtasie/withouten techying of any him bie/that non myght con more, noiwer worgh kynde ne crefte of lore /In alle answere he was fulle wys; of alle manhede he bar we pris." Caligula A. xi: "Bot to sigge ssortliche per was ver ne ner/Of prowesse ne of corteisie in pe world is per/Is los sprong so wide sone of his largesse/Of strengpe & of is corteisie & off is prowesse. To pe verrost ende of we world" (f. 59v).
18. Petyt 511, f. 67v.
19. Petyt 511, f. 62v.
20. Petyt 511, f. 62v.
21. Caligula A.xi, f. 59r.
22. Caligula A.xi, f. 60r.
23. Caligula A.xi, f. 63r. "Sire he sede her biuour ich abbe ybe sore adrad/Leste pat ydel lif pat pine men abbep yhad/Nou moni day out of los & in sleupe hom broyte/Vor wanne men beth al ydel pat er batailes soyte/Hor ydelnesse hom ssal bringe to sunne of lechery/To tauerne & to sleupe & to hasardrie."
24. Caligula A.xi, f. 63r.
25. Caligula A.xi, f. 66r.

26. Caligula A.xi, f. 66v.
27. Caligula A.xi, f. 67v.
28. Caligula A.xi, f. 70v. (The matter is the same in all manuscripts with the exception of Add. 19677 noted above.)
29. Unless otherwise noted, all the initials can be assumed to be one-line height.
30. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 106v.
31. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 120r.
32. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 115v.
33. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 116r.
34. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 116v.
35. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 117r.
36. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 13 1v.
37. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 131v.
38. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 133r.
39. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 133r.
40. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 133v.
41. CUL Ee. 4.31, f. 133v.
42. Petyt 511, f. 102r, 1. 520–538.
43. The exception is narratives of Arthur, which the text allows under St. Paul's dictum.
44. "Eilred per lege lord, him pei alle forsoke/& per hede Kyng Knout pei pan toke /Now rises Eilred & gadres oste stark/& chaces Kyng Knoute in tille Danmark /Whan pe Danes were out pat timbred him his tene,/Lyndeseie he destroied quite all bidene. It was pam self to wite pei lete of him so lite;/pe wrong was alle pairs, pe kyng did bot right" (Petyt 511, f. 108r, 1.1065–1070).
45. Lambeth 131, f. 68r, 1. 11255–11258.
46. Petyt 511, f. 106r, 1. 847–850.
47. Petyt 511, f. 106r, 1. 849–858.
48. Petyt 511, f. 107v, 1. 975, 976.
49. Petyt 511, f. 109v, 1. 1168, 1169.
50. Petyt 511, f. 109v, 1. 1174–1178.
51. Petyt 511, f. 108r, 1. 1023–1029.
52. "Knoute vnto London came with grete pride/He asked pe barons in pat parlement /if he schewed a ping opher waies he ment/if Edmunde pe kyng phan to acorde went,/if he saued to his heyers eiper lond or tenement/Ilkon said pat Edmunde pe kyng/spak no worde perof at per sauhtillyng." (Petyt 511, f. 109r, 1. 1148–1154). Although the text mentions Cnut possessing the sin of pride, this seems a mild reproach compared to the polemic levelled against Edrik.
53. Caligula A.xi, f. 93v. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
54. Caligula A.xi, f. 93v, 94r. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
55. Caligula A.xi, f. 94v. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
56. Caligula A.xi, f. 95r. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
57. Caligula A.xi, f. 95v. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
58. Caligula A.xi, f. 96r. The matter is the same in all manuscripts.
59. Caligula A.xi, f. 95r. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
60. Caligula A.xi, f. 96v. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
61. Caligula A.xi, f. 96r. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
62. Caligula A.xi, f. 96r. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
63. Caligula A.xi, f. 96v. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
64. Caligula A.xi, f. 98r. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.
65. An exception occurs in folio 17r, where the initial marks the line "After king Gurgunt, kenges manyon…." Here, though, the initial is placed to mark the passage of succession, thus still retaining the link between accession of throne and entity marking thereof.

66. Sloane 2027, Add. 19677, Harley 201, Trinity R. 4.26, CUL Ee. 4.31 and Digby 201 give initials for Cnut.
67. Caligula A. xi, f. 98v. The matter is the same in all the manuscripts.

CHAPTER 3
The Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* Manuscript
Family and Heroic Poetry

> This English triumph [Brunanburh]…can be seen in
> retrospect as a climactic step in a series of events…that
> assured the ultimate unity of England. [1]
>
> We further believe that *Maldon* is a literary product
> exhibiting a special dialectic relation between fiction and
> reality: precise historical references on the one hand
> prevent a reception of the text as mere fiction, whereas on
> the other hand the highly artistic presentation rules out a
> direct identification with the historical events of 991. [2]

In the previous two chapters, I demonstrated how the model of dispersive replication and
its accompanying concepts—the template and lateral reproduction—enable us to read
across manuscripts. This ability, in turn, provides an effective and responsible way to
challenge recent attempts to impose an anachronistic concept of nationalism upon these
manuscripts.

The dispersive replication model is not limited to a particular kind of text, since it only
demands the interaction of two templates to produce a text. That text produced then has
the power to act as a template in turn, combining either with another produced hybrid,
with a more general matter template, or with a template informing the production of other
texts. Oral-formulaic tradition fits this latter criterion. Like the manuscript entity template
discussed earlier, oral-formulaic tradition guides the production of texts by assigning a
legible common ground of value to certain phenomena such as half-lines, set-pieces, and
compounds, while allowing these phenomena to adapt to differing textual needs (the
adaptive phrase "ides ellenrof" is only one example among many). [3]

In this chapter, I examine the recombinations produced when a template from an oral-
formulaic tradition recombines with an inherited template from Latinate chronicle
tradition. The hybrids produced are the sibling manuscripts of *The Anglo-Saxon
Chronicle*. [4] These new recombinative manuscripts then combine again with the texts of
Beowulf and *The Battle of Maldon,* which react to and reproduce conflicts within the
Chronicle manuscripts. Analysis of the two-stage recombination will highlight the
innovative strategies present in the *Chronicle* manuscripts and yield richer readings
through dialogue between chronicle and canonical texts. As we proceed, traditional ways
of talking about the texts will be called into question.

The citations that introduce this chapter attest to conventional wisdom about these
texts. The chronicle entry for 937 recounting the battle at Brunanburh is either taught as a
freestanding heroic poem stripped of its contextual surroundings, or as evidence of a

progressively "English" history that never happened. *The Battle of Maldon* has become an object of debate over the poem's status as history or fiction, and also serves as a case study for a larger controversy about the "linguistic" turn in historiography. [5] *Beowulf's* own interrogation of the dangers of history has been largely ignored in recent championing of the heroic ideal, [6] itself a historically situated backlash against earlier Robertsonian studies. The problems in these analyses stem from two forms of anachronism: the imposition of twentieth-century narrative theories onto medieval texts and their analysis under positivist constructs of "history" or modernist notions of "fiction." In this chapter, I want to make three arguments. First, that chronicle poems cannot be studied responsibly apart from the chronicle entries informing them. To do so is to strip them of their full meaning and relegate them to the reductive generic category of poetry. Second, that *The Battle of Maldon* cannot be adequately described by the twentieth-century categories of "history" or "fiction," nor by any proposed dialectic between these genres. Rather, it destroys these very boundaries. As a work that responds to concerns articulated in the chronicle entries, it enters into a dialogue with the manuscripts while refusing to reproduce their narratives of the event. In doing so, it creates a heuristic history, one that attempts to influence future events by its specific invocation of a recognizable past event. Twentieth-century models of history and fiction cannot accommodate this use of the past. The former is crippled by its adherence to a positivist ideal; the latter by romanticized notions of the individual author and the isolated text. Third, I argue for a closer relationship between *Beowulf and* the *Chronicle* manuscripts, as the poem provides a space for the unspeakable subjects of cowardice and defeat. Earlier I discussed the problems inherent in tackling medieval manuscripts with twentieth-century narrative models. It is my contention that the specific critical difficulties surrounding the chronicle entries, *The Battle of Maldon,* and *Beowulf are* at least partially explained by a continued adherence to these inadequate analytical tools.

The *Chronicle* poses an insuperable challenge to modernist concepts of author, work, and narrative. Existing in seven variant manuscripts over a period of three centuries, the product of generations of collaborative work and commentary, it refuses assimilation to any current critical paradigm, and has suffered the consequences. Frustrated by the complexity of the work, critics shrink from historiographic analysis of the manuscript corpus, and focus instead upon isolated, easily recognized forms of narrative contained within specifically chosen manuscripts. Thus, work on the Brunanburh entry has largely ignored the surrounding chronicle material and excludes from serious consideration variant readings of the entry itself. Four of the five manuscripts dealing with the battle contain the well-known formulaic entry. What, however, are we to make of the two radically different entries in manuscripts E and F? [7] E simply states: "Her Aepelstan cyning ledde fyrde on Brunanburh." [8] We do not know if there was even a battle at Brunanburh, much less a decisive native victory. F gives a bit more detail: "Her Æwestan cing and Eadmund his broper laedde fyrde to Brunan byri. and par gefeht wip Anelaf, and Xpe fultumegende sige haefde." [9] F throws an entirely different spin on the well-known secular character of the text, taking agency out of the hands of Æthelstan and Edward and making Christ the ultimate victor. Twentieth-century narrative models cannot afford a collaborative text in which there may or may not have been a battle, where the outcome is ambiguous, or where victory is simultaneously attributed to Anglo-Saxon valor and divine intervention. Thus, the two recalcitrant entries are excluded from "the poem" and

the remaining four framed as a coherent whole. This single entry is representative of the methods by which the chronicle as a whole has been studied: the particular manuscript entries "recognized" within traditional narrative models have been pillaged from the more complex whole, losing much of their inherent interest and force as a result.

The Battle of Maldon suffers similarly from being treated as an isolated work. Written around 998, it is contemporaneous with the chronicle entries for the battle. Given this, it is surprising that more attention has not been paid to its relationship with the chronicle manuscripts. Rather, it has generated a heated and futile debate about its status as a "historical" or "fictional" text, a battle which has spawned a long series of more specific arguments, each dependent upon the text's inclusion in one of these two genres. [10] Each critic, regardless of generic banner, operates under a set of assumptions about history and fiction that take their cues from twentieth-century narrative models. If the text is seen as a "fictional" or "poetic" work, it is implicitly ahistorical: the poet is working from a set of oral formulas and poetic traditions which have their own literary history, but which do not interact with non-literary discourses. This set of assumptions explains the surprising neglect of the chronicle manuscripts, and the critical treatment of the poem. More recently, a series of articles and books have attempted to set *Maldon* within a historical context. While these provide a corrective to earlier ahistorical treatments of the poem, they face a different set of narrative restrictions that prove equally obstructive. Narrative models governing fiction champion the author; those ruling history would rather pretend the author didn't exist. Twentieth-century narrative models frame history as reflective and objective: they tell us that the past can be read transparently, rather than acknowledging that our readings of the past are themselves the products of historical circumstance. Thus, historical readings of *Maldon* have been, for the most part, working with some questionable assumptions. The idea that *Maldon* is an eyewitness account has been generally discounted, although this assumption still holds in a variety of introductory texts. [11] The more subtle variation on this theme is to assume that certain elements of the poem can be explained by recourse to historical "truths" taken from texts whose historical veracity in modernist terms is open to question. Helmut Gneuss, for example, attempts to settle the vexed question of Byrhtnoth's *ofermod* by quantifying the Viking and Anglo-Saxon forces at Maldon. [12] Even more subtle challenges to the history/fiction debate find themselves trapped within a set of generic assumptions, and inevitably forced into one category or the other. W.G.Busse and R.Holtoi, for example, attempt to get around the dichotomy by positing a dialectic between history and fiction, but close their analysis by representing *Maldon* as a mirror of Anglo-Saxon social change. [13] The most promising development in *Maldon* analysis has come from Mary Richards, who treats the poem as part of a historical process. In her study of the manuscript context of *Maldon,* she argues that the text takes on a new meaning in post-Conquest England. Compiled with hagiographies of Anglo-Saxon saints, it becomes a challenge to Norman authority on both secular and spiritual grounds. [14] In this sense, *Maldon* is "historical" but in a productive, rather than reflective sense. My examination of the poem uses this definition of history, and looks at how *Maldon* engages in a dialogue with the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* manuscripts: how it is produced by them, and in turn produces a corrective history of the event.

In the final section, I position *Beowulf* as a text that answers the constraints placed on speaking defeat in the *Chronicle* entries. I argue that the stylistic features of heroic poetry

allow an Anglo-Saxon audience to identify with a variety of groups and situations in the text. At the same time, *Beowulf's* status as text provides a boundary within which to explore problems of defeat and cowardice that vex the *Chronicle* manuscripts. In the first part, I examine the close relationship between political power and the dissemination of history. From there, I turn to history's dangerously productive power. I argue that *Beowulf,* while acknowledging the didactic value of exemplary history, discloses the dangers inherent in its narration. As narrated history, the Heorot *scop's* song and the old warrior's speeches become forces that create future events. Far from being a passive exemplary narrative, history becomes a dangerous agent in its own creation. *Beowulf* can thus be seen as a text concerned with the deployment and reproduction of the past. Like the chronicle entries and *Maldon,* it seems unable to integrate historiographic self-consciousness with the demands of heroic narrative.

The writers and compilers of these early texts struggled to speak in two registers: the heroic and historiographic. In doing so, they created a set of hybrid narratives which frustrate our own set of narrative "boxes" and generic pigeonholes.

READING THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH IN ITS CHRONICLE MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT

Although most who have written about the poem mention its inclusion in the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle,* none has analyzed the ways in which the text interacts with its surrounding entries. Editors are content to give an introductory historical overview to the entry, a practice that at best only hints at the relationship between this particular battle and its predecessors. More dangerously, such editorial decisions fall prey to generalizations and teleological narrative models. In the citation from Bright's *Grammar,* for instance, we can see how even a responsible editor imposes an erroneous historical perspective upon the poem. He casts the battle as the climactic event in a series of events leading to the formation of an English nation, and is forced to ignore the long series of Anglo-Saxon losses, territorial divisions, and internal conflicts to do so. Other critics make even less mention of the entry's context. Greenfield and Calder briefly define it as a "chronicle poem" present in four manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle,* limiting their analyses to the heroic elements present in the poem. [15] Janet Thormann redefines it exclusively as a heroic poem and links it to conventions found throughout the genre. [16] Others tackle particular elements found within the poem, ignoring its origin. All of these approaches stem from a long-standing unease about the relationship between "historic" prose and heroic poetry in the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle,* one voiced first by Milton: "the *Saxon* Annalist, wont to be sober and succinct…, now labouring under the weight of his Argument, and over-charg'd, runs on a sudden into such extravagant fansies and metaphors, as bare him quite beside the scope of being understood." [17] While twentieth-century critics are less vocal about their discomfort, they reinforce the same dichotomy between poetry and prose by treating the poem as a freestanding work and neglecting a detailed examination of its contextual materials. This process creates three problems. First, it subtly encourages a concomitant neglect of the *Chronicle* manuscripts. Second, it imposes an anachronistic division between prose and poetry onto the period. Third, it actively discourages precisely the process by which the poem can be "understood": an

examination of the chronicle manuscripts as recombinant material incorporating and developing formulas from both the heroic and chronicle genres. To close this gap, I will first discuss earlier chronicle entries themselves as new forms designed to address the conflicting claims of traditional heroic *topoi* and the chronicle genre. In this light, we can see that the entries, far from being prosaic in the pejorative sense, are conscious and sophisticated attempts to speak in two narrative languages. Moreover, by employing rhetorical techniques from heroic poetry, the chroniclers create a set of what may be termed "chronicle formulas," prescriptive ways of reading analogous to poetic "set-pieces." Finally, I will be turning to the entries for 937, the battle of Brunanburh, arguing that the rhetorical power of manuscripts A, B, C, and D depends upon a knowledge of the earlier chronicle entries. They are overtly composed in reaction to the events of the preceding decades, and their common ending is the product of a strategy developed to narrate an earlier battle. I will then turn to manuscripts E and F, and note how these variants contribute to a collaborative picture of the battle.

Even a cursory glance at the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* shows marks of its intrinsic recombinative nature. Dates are listed sequentially in Latin, while corresponding events are written in Anglo-Saxon. This visual dichotomy encapsulates the conflicting narrative models present in the manuscripts. The Latinate model of sequential dates views history as a progression from one year to the next, with events ordered strictly by chronological sequence. This pattern reflects not only long-standing Roman bureaucratic practices, but the Christian emphasis on temporal conformity and standardization, seen most vividly in Bede's *Historia*. By contrast, Anglo-Saxon texts play fast and loose with chronology, juxtaposing present, past, and future events to heighten the drama of a scene, foretell the future, or meditate on the present state of affairs. One only has to think of trying to rewrite *Beowulf* in strict chronological order to appreciate the difference between these two models of narrative time. Moreover, in Anglo-Saxon texts, it is the contents of a time period, rather than the passage of time, which determines its narrative presence: history is organized by events. This difference in genre accounts for the presence in the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* of a phenomenon that frustrates twentieth-century historians, and causes the chroniclers to be dismissed by them as "primitive": [18] the presence of what might be called "empty years." For instance, D provides a detailed entry for 926, telling of the appearance of lights in the sky, Sihtic's death, King Aethelstan's succession, and his subsequent conquest of the neighboring kings. The next entry in Anglo-Saxon is for 934, recounting Aethelstan's successful expedition to Scotland. Between these entries are eight years marked only by their Latinate dates. Twentieth-century scholars have cited scribal neglect, political turmoil, or sloppy historiography as possible explanations for these *"lacunae,"* but this is to impose modernist interests onto Anglo-Saxon historiography. If history for the contemporary audience meant regnal, episcopal, and military history, then the more likely explanation is that for the years between 926 and 934 nothing of note occurred. The Anglo-Saxon chroniclers, the heirs of both native tradition and Latinate practices, wanted to note both important events and their place within a temporal framework. For them and for their audience, this recombinative account satisfies both sets of criteria: it recounts the events of interest, and provides a method of reckoning exactly how many years had passed between these occurrences. This type of narrative conflation appears to pose no problem for the chroniclers. Latinate dating practices can be easily assimilated into a culture which itself places a high value

on computation. Skill at calculation and dating is given throughout the corpus as an attribute of the wise, and is listed among the respected skills in the Old English *The Gifts of Men*.

When we turn to the content of the chronicle manuscripts, however, we find the chroniclers faced with a much more difficult problem. Beginning with the first recorded Danish expedition in 832, the political and military history of the Anglo-Saxons becomes focused almost exclusively on Anglo-Saxon/Danish struggles. With a few exceptions, most of these battles ended in Anglo-Saxon defeat. From the years 832 to 1017, the entries recounting these battles make up seventy percent of the whole, and almost eighty percent of the entries tell of defeat or pacification. The second conflict facing the chroniclers stems from this troubled marriage of two narrative models: the chronicle narrative, which insists on inclusion of important political and military events, and the heroic tradition, which demands an account of praiseworthy deeds. The chronicler selects the important events of the year in question, based upon their significance for the realm. Atmospheric portents, episcopal history, regnal succession, and unusual famines or harvests are interwoven among the histories of battles. Thus, the chronicle posits important, not exemplary events, as the first criteria for selection. The epic genre, however, demands that its narrative be didactic: that it show its audience models of generous kings, politic queens, courageous heroes, and loyal thanes. Shameful deeds, cowardly warriors, or bad kings must be set against a positive exemplar [19] or relegated to silence. This latter pattern can be seen best in the long-standing formulaic half-line: "x had no reason to boast about y." It demonstrates the need for silence, since it works by opposition, [20] while invoking the cultural imperative to remain silent about deeds less than praiseworthy. When its writers and compilers created the chronicle manuscripts, they were confronted with a seemingly insuperable problem: how does one speak about the traditionally unspeakable?

When we turn to the specific manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* and the sections leading up to the battle at Brunanburh, we can see that, far from being "primitive" or "unconscious" reproductions of events, they display a sophisticated self-consciousness struggling to address these two conflicting imperatives. The chronicle demands that important events such as the continued pattern of invasion by the Danes, the defeat of the Saxons, and the humiliating payment of tribute be recorded. The formulaic poem insists that this is shameful material unworthy of narrative. The *Chronicle* entries illustrate the problems the chroniclers faced and the solutions they adopted. Their general strategy was to satisfy the chronicle requirements by reporting the events, but they framed their reports in a way which partially accommodated the traditions of heroic narrative. Within this general guideline, three strategies are particularly visible. First, vocabulary is carefully chosen to emphasize Anglo-Saxon agency, while downplaying the deeds (and victories) of the invading Danes. The chronicle entry for 837 in E provides a concise example of the first tactic. It carefully separates the act of slaughter from Danish agency:

> … Æþelhelm ealdorman gefeaht wiþ þa Daeniscan on Port mid Dorsaeton,
> 7 se ealdorman wearþ of slaegen, 7 þa Daeniscan ahton waelstowe
> geweald. [21]

The primary agent, given first attention here, is Æthelhelm. The Danish victory is recounted in two deliberately muted clauses. The phrase *se ealdorman wearþ ofslaegen* employs the passive voice and deletes the Danes as agents of Æthelhelm's death. [22] The final phrase, *pa Daeniscan ahton waelstowe geweald,* appears over and over in the narrative of Danish victories, but is relatively rare in heroic poetry. [23] When it does occur in the Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus, it is used to describe enemy victories. The phrase indicates either the adoption by heroic poetry of a formula used extensively in the chronicle, or a shared tradition of encoding the opposition's triumphs. Within the chronicle manuscripts, it is one of a set of what I term "chronicle formulas," ways of describing common occurrences that depend upon, and produce, a set of expectations in the audience. The phrase *waelstowe geweald* grudgingly acknowledges the Danish victory while balking the victors of the praise due to military prowess.

We can see the difference in technique when the chronicle recounts the rarer Anglo-Saxon victories over the Danes. The entry for 851, for example, describes the double victory of Ealdorman Ceorl and King Aethelwulf:

> Her Ceorl aldorman gefeaht wip haepene men mid Defena scire aet Wicgan beorge, 7 waer micel wael geslogon 7 sige namon;…7 py ilcan heare cuom feorþe healf hund scipa on Temese mupan 7 braecon Contwaraburg, 7 Lunden burg, 7 gefleimdon Beorhtwulf Miercna cyning mid his fierde, 7 foron pa sup ofer Temese on Suprige, 7 him gefeaht wip Æpelwulf cyning 7 Æpelbald his sunu aet Aclea mid West Seaxna fierde, 7 paer paet maeste wael geslogon on haepnum herge pe we secgan hierdon op pisne 7 wearþ an daeg, 7 paer sige namon. [24]

The text differs strikingly from the earlier entries telling of Danish victory. Agency is given to Æthelbald and Æthelwulf throughout the narrative: they *fought,* they *inflicted,* they *had the victory*. *Sige namon,* the phrase specifically linking victory to the Anglo-Saxons, is another chronicle formula used to give Anglo-Saxon victories a particular rhetorical force not present in the duller *waelstowe geweald*. The chroniclers, by labelling the Danish invaders as "heathens," link this victory implicitly to the Christian faith of the Anglo-Saxons, a strategy casting the victorious army as the chosen *comitatus* of the Almighty. Most strikingly, the final phrases of the entries evaluate the event as one worthy of song. The chroniclers enter into the narrative in *scop* fashion, giving the event its place in oral history: *paer paet maeste wael geslogon on haepnum herge pe we secgan hierdon op pisne*. The overt coding of this battle as worthy of memory attempts to ensure its narrative triumph over the bleaker iteration of defeat.

The narrative pattern is consistent throughout this section of the chronicle: Anglo-Saxon victories are given in an emphatic form; Danish victories in a much more restrained fashion. By this method, the chroniclers fulfill the requirements of the chronicle genre while deploying the rhetorical techniques of heroic poetry to ensure the memorial survival of Anglo-Saxon victory.

The second strategy employs a feature of the poetic interlace structure of heroic poetry and uses it to salvage events worthy of note from episodes which should be kept silenced. As John Leyerle noted, events in Anglo-Saxon heroic poetry can be taken out of a linear temporal sequence and placed where they will have the greatest effect. [25] Thus, in

Beowulf, the brightness of Heorot is darkened by the temporal conjunction of present splendor with future catastrophe:

> Sele hlifade/heah and horngeap; heapowylma bad,/lapan liges; ne waes hit lenge pa gen,/paet se ecghete apumsweoran/aefter waelnighte waecnan scolde. [26]

Present and future events are intertwined to underscore the hall's majesty and the tragedy of its destruction. In poems like *Beowulf,* the *Seafarer,* and others, the interlacing weaves together discrete events in temporal disjunction. When the chroniclers were faced with narrating Anglo-Saxon defeat, they turned to this familiar method of temporal manipulation to sweeten unpalatable events. The resulting narratives are an innovative hybrid, one that demonstrates the chroniclers' ingenuity in adapting the tools of heroic poetry to the demands of the chronicle genre. While keeping the chronological sequence of events in an entry, this internal interlacing breaks up the events into discrete temporal narratives and employs chronicle formulas to heighten temporary Anglo-Saxon triumphs. We see this technique summarized in the entry for 871:

> Paes ymb. iiii. niht gefeaht Æpered cyning 7 Aelfred his bropor wip alne pone here on Æsces dune 7…7 pa hergas begen gefliemde, 7 fela pusenda ofslaegendra 7 on-feohtende waeron op niht…7 waes ymb. ii. monap gefeaht Æpered cyning 7 Ælfred his bropor wip pone here aet Mere tune, 7 hi waeron on tuaen gefylcium, 7 hi butu gefliemdon 7 longe on daeg sige ahton, 7 paer wearp mycel waelslyht on gehwaepere hond, 7 pa Deniscan ahton weal stowe gewald. [27]

The temporal sequence followed in the first battle lists first the struggle between the two armies, then the final victory of the Anglo-Saxon forces. The second battle, however, ends in a Danish victory, and it is here we can see this interlace strategy adopted by the chroniclers. The chronicle cannot change the events themselves (the Danes have won the battle, after all), but it deploys narrative expectations and interlace technique to emphasize the time during the battle in which the Saxons were victorious. Alain Renoir has discussed how much heroic poetry relied upon a set of audience expectations surrounding particular formulas: "familiarity with an oral-formulaic system leads the listener to construe some formulaic utterances within a context which automatically brings to mind associations likely to influence interpretation." [28] I would like to extend Renoir's analysis by arguing that an audience trained in oral-formulaic associations would also develop a general practice of cumulative reading that would carry over into texts such as the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* manuscripts. In this way, the encoding of earlier entries would train the reader to respond in a specific way to a similar framework in a later entry. In the above example, we can see how the narration of the first battle sets up the way in which the second battle should be read. The enemy's defeat is defined as their being "put to flight," the same phrase used for the initial repulse in the narration of the second battle. An audience "trained" by the first narrative to read the phrase as a code for victory would then interpret the second phrase in the same manner. Likewise, the term *sige* provides a memorial cue to the other entries in which this term has been used: those

recounting decisive Anglo-Saxon victories. The deployment of expectation here creates an internal interlacing that divides the second battle as two discrete events: victory and defeat, a pattern acceptable within the heroic register. Moreover, this interlacing emphasizes the initial Anglo-Saxon gains and downplays the final Danish triumph.

In the entry for 853 we see how a third strategy combines with the first two in an attempt to silence a Danish victory:

> Pa py ilcan geare Ealhere mid Cantwarum 7 Huda mid Suprigium gefuhton on Tenet with haepnum herige 7 aerest sige namon 7 paer wearp monig mon ofslaegen 7 adruncen on gehwaepere hond. [29]

The phrase *sige namon,* used in the earlier entries to denote the final success of the Anglo-Saxon forces, is changed to signify a partial success. The entry continues to balance the dead on both sides, and transforms the narrative of ethnic defeat into the individuated deaths of two leaders. What may be spoken within the heroic register (the partial victory of the Anglo-Saxons, the deaths of leaders) is given pride of place. The final victory of the Danes is implied by the phrase "at first," thus satisfying the requirements of chronicle history, but it is muted in the same fashion as the earlier entries. We have to read carefully through the account, noting the phrases "at first" and understanding the deaths of the two ealdormen as representative of their forces, to interpret this as an Anglo-Saxon defeat.

In trying to speak about the unspeakable, the chroniclers produce collaborative texts employing chronicle and heroic discourse. The result is a set of manuscripts whose entries are intradependent. The correct reading of one entry is dependent upon a knowledge of the rhetorical devices by which events are encoded. Moreover, the manuscripts influence and are influenced by heroic poetry: they exchange concepts, formulas, and narrative practices. This intra-and interdependence blocks a responsible reading of a single entry or an entry taken out of manuscript context. In this next section, I return to the entries for the 937 battle at Brunanburh in order to show why *Chronicle* entries cannot be reduced to a single, freestanding work. Within each manuscript, the entry is dependent for its reading upon the preceding events. Among the manuscripts, the variant readings demonstrate ways in which a single historical event can be inscribed. I first look at the four manuscripts A, B, C, and D, those containing the well-known formulaic entry, and see how this common entry responds to earlier Anglo-Saxon/Danish encounters.

Up to the year 865, the *Chronicle* has recounted two types of interaction between the peoples of England and the invading Danes: either the ravaging of a particular area by the invaders or a pitched battle between the Anglo-Saxon and Danish forces. With this year, however, a new type of relation begins. The Anglo-Saxons begin suing for peace, appeasing the Danish invaders with continual, humiliating payments of tribute. The entry for 865 is typical:

> Her saet se haepen here on Tenet, 7 genamon frip wip Cant warum, 7 Cantware him feoh geheton wip pam fripe, 7 under pam fripe 7 pam feoh gehate se here hiene on niht up bestael, 7 oferhergeade alle Cent eastewearde. [30]

Despite the coding of the Danes as treacherous and criminal (the movement and raiding by night is a theme which occurs frequently in describing Danish military movements), the *Chronicle* has nothing positive to offer on the Kentish behalf, since no fighting occurred, and the Kentish people surrendered without a struggle. This pattern becomes the norm for Danish/Anglo-Saxon relations, and not even the presence of a formidable army can guarantee any notable bravery on the Anglo-Saxon side. Thus, the combined attack of Burgred and Æthelred on the Danish encampment at Nottingham in 868 reaches an ignoble conclusion:

> Her for se ilca here innan Mierce to Snotengaham, 7 paer winter setl namon; 7 Burgraed Miercna cyning 7 his wiotan baedon Ædered West Seaxna cyning 7 Ælfred his bropor paet hie him gefultumadon, paet hi wip pone here gefuhton. 7 pa ferdon hi mid Wesseaxna fierde innan Mierce op Snotengaham, 7 pone here paer metton on pam geweorce, 7 paer nan hefelic gefeoht ne wearp, 7 Mierce frip namon wip pone here. [31]

The chroniclers, faced with no battles to recount and lacking even partial victories to extol, must resort to desperate stratagems to preserve any shred of Anglo-Saxon dignity. Even unsuccessful pursuits are noted and pockets of resistance emphasized. Surrenders and offers of tribute are recast as honors and offers of hostages by the Danes. The entry for 876 shows the length to which the chroniclers try to reframe a humiliating and token agreement of peace:

> Her hiene bestael se here into Werham Wessseaxna fierde, 7 wip pone here se cyning frip nam, 7 him pa apas sworon on pam halgan beage, pe hie aer nanre peode noldon, paet hie hraedlice of his rice foren; 7 hie pa under pam hie nihtes bestaelon paere fierde se gehorsoda here into Escanceastre. [32]

Despite the blatant failure of this strategy, the entries for 877 and 878 recount precisely the same negotiation. In addition, the already-troubled West-Saxon kings are being plagued by a series of internal divisions. The Mercian kingdom, by 874, has become a puppet government under Danish control, as the entry notes:

> Her for se here from Lindesse to Hreope dune, 7 paer wintersetl nam, 7 pone cyning Burgraed ofer sae adraefdon…7 py ilcan geare hie sealdon anum unwisum cyninges pegne Miercna rice to haldenne, 7 he him apas swor 7 gislas salde, paet hit him gearo waere swa hwelce daege swa hie hit habban woldon, 7 he gearo waere mid him selfum, 7 allum pam pe him laestan woldon. to paes heres pearfe. [33]

By 894, the Danes establish a formidable presence in the eastern kingdom, and develop a series of informal ties with the East Anglians and Northumbrians:

> On pys geare, paet waes ymb twelf monab paes pe hie on paem east rice geweorc haefdon geweorht haefdon, Norp hymbre 7 East Engle haefdon

> Ælfrede cyninge apas geseald, 7 East Engle fore gisla. vi. 7 peh ofer pa treowa, swa oft swa pa opre hergas mid ealle herige ut foron, ponne foron hie, oppe mid, oppe on heora healfa on. [34]

In 901, this ad hoc set of alliances is formally cemented when Æthelwold rebels against the choice of Edward as Alfred's successor:

> Pa gerad Æpel wald his faedran sunu. pone ham aet Winburnan, 7 aet Tweoxn eam butan þaescyniges leafe 7 his witena. Pa rad se cyning [Edward] mid firde [olþhe ge wicode aet Baddan byrig wiþ ꝼin burnan…pa under pam pa be stael he hine on niht on weg, 7 gesohte pone here on Norðhymbrum. [35]

With this allegiance in place, the Anglo-Saxons are forced to endure the shameful victory, in 904, of a combined Anglo-Saxon and Danish invasion. "Her com Æðelwold hiðer ofer sae mid eallum pam flotan pe he begitan mihte, 7 him to gebogen waes on East Seaxe." [36]

The *Chronicle* stresses the blurring of boundaries between Anglo-Saxon and Dane, the continual surrender of the Anglo-Saxons, unmarked by any deeds worthy of note, and the humiliating negotiations for peace with a force contemptuous of the vanquished. The dominant note is one of shamed resignation "7 frip namon wip pone here." [37]

It is in these terms which we must read the entry for 937, when Aethelstan and Edmund vanquished the combined forces of Olaf and Constantine. The chroniclers finally have material that answers both sets of narrative criteria: as a decisive Anglo-Saxon victory, it is both an important event, and a victory worthy of song. Thus, five of the seven manuscripts abruptly abandon their laconic style for the meter and style of heroic poetry. Muffled for years by the less than heroic behavior of the Anglo-Saxons, the chroniclers now gleefully boast of native exploits, imposing silence in turn upon the Danes and Scots:

Costontinus

har hilde ring   hreman ne porfte

maecan gemanan… [38]

gelpan ne porfte

beorn blanden feax   bil geslehtes

eald inwiðða   ne Anlaf py ma

mid heora here lafum   hlehan ne porftun

pat heo beadu weorca   beteran wurdun

on camp stede   cul boðgehnades

gar mittinge   gumena gemotes. [39]

The extensive formulaic variations provide a direct response to the accounts of earlier battles: here Anglo-Saxon aggression is stressed, and it is the invaders who must bear the weight of shameful retreat, along with the silence that must accompany it.

The Brunanburh entries reunite the Anglo-Saxon people in a pair of victories that occludes the intervening years of defeat and division. In the final lines of the entries for 937, we can see how the strategy noted earlier for the 851 entry is woven into a heroic narrative that still fulfills the sequential requirements of the chronicle:

Ne *wearð* wael mare

on þisne eiglande	aefer gieta
folces gefylled	beforan þyssum
sweordes ecgum	þaes we us secgað bec
ealde uðwitan	siððan eastan hiðer
Engle 7 Seaxe	up becoman
ofer brade brimu	Brytene sohtan
wlance wig smiðas	Weealles ofer coman
eorlas ar hwate	eard begeatan. [40]

The final lines of the entries employ a double strategy to combine oral and chronicle history into a seamless web of Anglo-Saxon triumph. Just as the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain is backed by both authorities—books and traditional oral lore—so the chronicle combines typical heroic formulas of battle-beasts and spear-clashes with the phrases developed from the 851 entry. This strategy memorially links the battle with the heroic narratives of a distant past, recalls the similarly worded triumph in the midst of the Danish invasions, and ties the three periods of victory into a narrative thread which puts the Danish victories under erasure. Within the history contained in the battle of Brunanburh, the Danish presence is recalled only to be conquered, silenced, and forgotten.

What the A, B, C, and D manuscripts attempted to do for English history—provide a seamless narrative which elides the intervening years of defeat and disgrace—scholars have attempted to repeat in their analysis of the manuscript entries. E and F's entries refuse an easy assimilation, and have therefore been excluded from the critical conversation surrounding the event. The entry for E questions the importance and outcome of the battle. The fight may not have been considered important enough by the E chronicler to merit a longer entry, or there may have been political agendas that precluded a lengthy *encomium* to Æthelstan. F notes.the victory and the players, but reframes the battle as a specifically Christian victory. Without a lengthy analysis of E and F, there is no way of knowing whether these two chroniclers were following a narrative agenda differing from those of A, B, C, and D. Even without such analysis, however, it is obvious that we do not have a contemporary consensus about the impact or the interpretation of the 937 battle. Any study that attempts to read the battle as the beginnings of English nationalism must confront F, which redraws the battle lines at the boundaries of Christendom. Likewise, attempts to paint this as the climactic triumph of a

process begun in Alfred's reign is severely qualified by E, which denies the battle any historic importance. Arguments for scribal neglect and ignorance will not hold water. Dorothy Whitelock has demonstrated that E and F were the products of chroniclers who had manuscripts of A, B, C, and D to work from. [41] We must regard these two variant manuscripts as deliberate revisions of the formulaic entry that are integral to the chronicle corpus.

TELLING IT AGAIN AND AGAIN: *THE BATTLE OF MALDON* AND THE ANGLO-SAXON *CHRONICLE MANUSCRIPT FAMILY*

I have emphasized the importance of reading the battle of Brunanburh in its chronicle context. The next poem under consideration here, *The Battle of Maldon,* needs likewise to be read against the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle's* historiographic strategy, since this reading provides a way out of relatively nonproductive arguments about its "historical" or "fictional" status.

The entries for the year 991 in manuscripts A, C, D, and E tell of Saxon defeat and the decision to pay tribute to the Danish forces. A tells of defeat and peacemaking:

> Her on þissum geare com Unlaf mid prim 7 hundnigentigon scipum to Stane, 7 forhergedon we on ytan, 7 for þa banon to Sandwic, 7 swa banon to Gipes wic, 7 pe eall ofer eode, 7 swa to Maeldune; 7 him paer com togeanes Byrhtnoð ealdorman mid his fyrde, 7 him wið gefeaht. 7 hy pone ealdoman waer ofslogon, 7 waelstowe ge weald ahtan. 7 him man nam syððan frið wið 7 hime nam se cing syððan to bisceopes handa. [42]

C, D, and E, by contrast, devote only a line to the battle itself, focusing instead upon the general decision to pay tribute to the Danes:

> Her waes G[ypes]wic ge hergod. 7 aefter paem swyðe raðe waes Brihtnoð ealdorman of slagan aet Maeldune. 7 on pam geare man ge raedde paet man geald aerest gafol Denisan mannum. for pam mycclan brogan pe hi worhton be pam saeriman. paet waes aerest. x. pusend punda. [43]

The *Chronicle* entries, as I noted earlier, demonstrate a marked embarrassment about peacemaking and payoffs. Narratives recounting episodes of pitched battle were more easily assimilable to the *Chronicle,* even if those battles ended in Saxon defeat. The chroniclers could then make a victory out of resistance, underscoring the amount of time the Saxons held the field, and implicitly praising their refusal to surrender. Alfred's stand against the Danes in 878 provides a good example of this strategy:

> Her hine bestael se here on midne winter ofer tuel[f]tan niht to Cippanhamme, 7 geridon Wesseaxna lond 7 gesaeton mycel paes folces 7 ofer sae adraefdon, 7 waes opres pone maestan dael hie geridon, butan

pam cyninge Ælfrede. 7 he lytle werede un iepelice aefter wudum for, 7
on morfaestenum; [44]

In the chronicle entries, the battle at Maldon appears ignominious: A simply states that
Byrhtnoth fought against the Danes and was defeated. C, D, and E provide even less of a
heroic narrative: Byrhtnoth is killed almost as an afterthought; his defeat motivates the
humiliating decision to pay tribute to the Danes.

I want to argue that the poem arising from this incident is linked with the chronicle in
three ways. First, it specifically rewrites the more ignoble episodes in the entries.
Byrhtnoth's defiant rejection of treaties and tribute are meant to drown out the long
history of such tactics within the chronicle entries. Second, it finds itself haunted by the
history of Anglo-Saxon submission to Danish aggression. As it attempts to produce an
alternate history of Anglo-Saxon/Danish relations, it finds itself recalling to memory the
very text that it is trying to superscribe. Third, it marks a unique exchange between the
chronicle and heroic genres. For the first half of the poem, up to Byrhtnoth's death and
the flight of the Anglo-Saxons, it involves itself in a chronicle discourse that works
against the heroic agenda: it notes the tactical errors, the warriors' failings and the rift
between *beot* and behavior. As if to counter this movement, the second section of the
poem rewrites the scene to conform to its opening picture of a valorous and united *folce*.

Against the *Chronicle* background of tribute payments, Danish occupation, and
divided loyalties, *Maldon* creates an exemplary fantasy. In the exchange between the
Viking messenger and Byrhtnoth, one can read another dialogue, one between a shameful
history of submission and a desire to create a new history of Anglo-Saxon resistance. The
Viking messenger begins by rewriting the chronicle history of tribute as a particularly
outrageous request for unearned treasure:

Me sendon to pe   *saemen snelle,*

heton be secgan   *paet pu most sendan raðe*

beagas wið gebeorge;   *and eow betere is*

pat ge pisne garraes   *mid gafole forgyldon*

pon we swa hearde   *hilde daelon*

Ne purfe we us spillan,   *gif ge spedap to pam;*

we willað wið pam golde grið faestnian

Gy pu pat geraedest   *pe her ricost eart,*

pat pu pin leoda   *lysan wille,*

syllan saemannum   *on hyra sylfra dom.* [45]

This demand for tribute appears nowhere in the account of the battle itself, and the
explanation for its presence must lie in its representative function. In general, it provides
a summary of the Vikings' demands throughout the tenth century. Since it is framed as an
unfulfilled conditional demand, what cannot be mentioned in the *Chronicle* can be
discussed in the poem: recognition of Danish military superiority, confession of
cowardice, and acceptance of the crushing terms of the Danish sellers' market: "hyra

sylfra dom." Specifically, it is a way of talking about the decision to buy off the Viking attacks on a yearly basis, a strategy that casts the Anglo-Saxons as a people more willing to pull out their purses than their swords. Tribute payment can be introduced as an option in the poem, provided it is promptly and decisively refused. In Byrhtnoth's contemptuous and defiant reply, the text attempts to rewrite tenth-century pragmatism:

Gehyrst pu, saelida,   *hwaet pis folc segeþ?*

Hi willaþeow to gafole   *garas syllan,*

aettrynne ord   *and ealde swurd,*

pa heregeatu   *we eow aet hilde ne deah.*

Brimmanna boda   *abeod eft ongean,*

sege winum leodum   *miccle lapre spell,*

paet her stynt unforcud   *eorl mid his werode,*

pe wile gealgean   *epel pysne,*

Æpeleredes eard,   *ealdres mines*

folc and foldan: *feallan sceolon*

haepene aet hilde!   *To heanlic me pinceþ*

pat ge mid urum sceattum   *to scype gangon*

unbefohtene,   *nu ge pus feor hiþer*

on urne eard   *in becomon.*

Ne sceole ge swa softe   *sinc gegangen:*

us sceal ord and ecg   *aer geseman,*

grim guþplega,   *aer we gofol syllon.* [46]

This speech works to heal the internal rifts in the West-Saxon kingdom, displace the Danish presence, and paint a picture of loyalty and courage among the Anglo-Saxon people. The Danes here are no longer the occupying forces, but *saelida* and *saemanna*: outsiders who are removed from *pysne epel,* which is in turn cast as wholly Anglo-Saxon. *Æpelraedes eard,* from the site of conflicting loyalties ruled by an infamously incompetent leader, is rewritten as a realm of people fiercely loyal to their prince: "her stynt unforcud eorl mid his werode/*p*e wile gealgean e*p*el *p*ysne,/Æ*p*elredes eard, ealdres mines/folc and foldum." Ethelred himself is replaced by two leaders who are paradigms of courage, experience, and wisdom: Offa and Byrhtnoth. In the assembled troops and their leaders, we are given a microcosm of an idealized realm. This emphasis on unity and courage, deployed against the *Chronicle* background, helps explain some long-standing questions about the text.

Critics of the poem have engaged in heated debates about Byrhtnoth's *ofermod,* arguing for or against the Anglo-Saxon ealdorman's military strategy, but their analyses are stunted by viewing the poem in isolation. If we read *Maldon* in its *Chronicle* context,

it becomes clear that the poem is written against the practice of peacemaking and payment. Thus, Byrhtnoth's *overmod,* rather than being "foolhardy pride" or "superfluous courage," is precisely the excess necessary to counterbalance a long history of Anglo-Saxon compliance to Danish demands. In order to exemplify Anglo-Saxon honor and courage, the poem has to show the warriors' absolute willingness—as a people—to engage in battle. This imperative shapes the poem, from the early symbolic gesture of Offa's kinsman to the last-ditch fighting of Byrhtnoth's warriors. Byrhtnoth's rejection of tribute is not his decision alone, but an example of Anglo-Saxon scorn and outrage. In his answer to the Viking messenger, he acts as the mouthpiece for the assembled troops: "Gehyrst þu, saelida, hwaet *þis folc* segeð/Hi willaðeow to gafole garass syllan/aettrynne ord and ealde swurd." Similarly, his decision to allow the Danes to cross the river demonstrates the battle-readiness of his army: "Gað ricene *to us.*" This last decision, although evaluated as a tactical error in giving the Vikings *to fela landes,* allows the Anglo-Saxons to achieve in the poem what the *Chronicle* has denied them: *tir aet getohte*. From this standpoint, Byrhtnoth's outraged rejection of payment, and his later decision to allow the Danes to cross the river, must be seen as cultural victories rather than strategic errors.

I am not arguing that *Maldon* is solely a revisionist history. This rewriting of the *Chronicle* entries forms one strand of a complex interlaced set of lateral narratives present in the poem. Side by side, woven over and under the noise of speeches and spear-shaking is the possibility of another story, one already written in the *Chronicle* accounts: betrayal, cowardice, flight, and defeat. Two kinds of signals are given to the reader. We see a demand for courage and loyalty fulfilled but we are also forced to recognize that these are not inherent qualities. Byrhtnoth must shape his warriors into last-ditch fighters by driving off the means of escape; the youth's release of the hawk would be an unnecessary gesture were it not for the possibility of defection. Even this opening display of courage is haunted by the possibility of disgrace, a possibility repeated in Byrhtnoth's continued exhortations to his troops. As he urges them not to succumb to fear, to stand fast, the poem irresistibly reminds the reader of the presence of potential cowardice.

If we can read *Maldon* as the fantasized representation of territorial unity and valor against a clearly designated outsider, we can also see how the poem discusses, and attempts to resolve, this problem of internal separation among the English inhabitants. The hints in this opening are more fully developed, as the narrative moves to Byrhtnoth's death and its consequences. With the fall of the symbolic *folc-cyning,* the battlefield again resembles the fractured chaos of Æthelraed's realm:

Hi bugon þa fram beaduwe	*þe waer beon noldon,*
þaer wordon Oddan bearn	*aerest on fleame,*
Godric fram guþe,	*and þone godan forlet*
þe him maenigne oft	*mear gesealde*
he gehleop þone eoh	*þe ahte his hlaford,*
on þam geraedum	*þe hit riht ne waes*
and his broðru miðhim	*begen aerndon,*
Godwine and Godwig,	*guþe ne gymdon,*

ac wendon fram pam wige	*and pone wudu sohten,*
flugon on paet faesten	*and hyra feore burgon,*
and manna ma	*ponne hit aenig* **mæð***waere,*
gyf hi pa geearnunga	*ealle gemundon*
pe he him to dugupe	*gedon haefde.*
Swa him Offa on daeg	*aer asaede,*
on pam mepelstede,	*pa he gemot haefde,*
paet paer modelice	*manega spraecon*
pe eft aet pearfe	*polian noldon.* [47]

Just as one political division in the tenth century spawns others, flight in battle becomes an infectious force, first contained within a kin-group (the sons of Odda) and then spreading to an unspecified swarm of deserters. This particular representation splits the chorus of defiance and courage voiced through Byrhtnoth and undermines the carefully crafted picture of a valiant Anglo-Saxon people. In addition, it creates a rift between *modlic* words and less-than-exemplary behavior, one that dangerously echoes the empty oaths sounding through the chronicle narratives. If the opening picture of bravery is to be restored, three things must happen. First, the fragmented people must be brought back together. Second, the rift between words and deeds must be repaired. Third, a new picture of solidarity must be created to counter the earlier break in the cultural shield-wall.

Having created the rift, the narrative then hastens to repair it. Directly following the account of desertion and Offa's reported remark to Bryhtnold, the narrative "starts over" with a new picture of the ealdorman's death and its consequences:

Pa weard afeallen	*paes folces ealdor,*
Æpelredes eorl:	*ealle gesawon*
heorðgeneatas	*pat hyra heorra laeg.*
Pa paer wendon **forð**	*wlance wegenas,*
unearge men	*efston georne,*
hi woldon pa ealle	**ober** *twega:*
lif forlaetan	**obbe** *leofne gewrecan.* [48]

This rewritten scene stands in direct opposition to the earlier one. The warriors think and move as a single unit: "ealle gesawon," "hi woldon…ealle." Far from beating a retreat, they throw themselves into the battle with renewed force. The same haste depicted in the earlier flight becomes the speed with which they hurl themselves at the Vikings. The rift between words and deeds is healed in two ways. Each warrior accomplishes his *beot,* thus cementing the bond between word and deed. In addition, the narrative uses the traditional rhetorical tool of explaining intentionality to bind the warriors' thoughts, speeches, and actions into one seamless depiction of courage.

This second account of Byrhtnoth's fall accomplishes *within* the poem the work that the first revisionist thread attempts to do for the *Chronicle* entries: to provide a cultural exemplar that will stand against an earlier account of less exemplary behavior. This tactic appears again when Offa tries to bolster the morale of the remaining troops. In evaluating the situation, he rewrites the mass desertion as the catastrophic consequences of individual cowardice:

	Us Godric haefd,
earh Oddan bearn,	*ealle beswicene:*
wende paes formoni man,	*pa he on meare rad,*
on wlancan pam wicge,	*pat waere hit ure hlaford;*
for pan **wearð***her on felda*	*folc totwaemed,*
scyldburh tobrocen.	*Abreode his angin,*
pat he her swa manigne	*man aflymde!* [49]

Offa's speech restores a kind of orthopaedic unity to the army. Godric is damned as an isolated deserter who has literally led astray a loyal, but mistaken people. The warriors' "mistake" in following their supposed leader has led to a military disaster, the break in the shield wall. However, this narrative tactic acts as another shield-wall against the earlier rift in the picture of unity. Defeat now can be pinned to a tactical mistake rather than a mass retreat.

As the poem progresses, the links between this battle of Maldon and the problems of ninth- and tenth-century England become more pronounced. The poem, in describing the faithful band of warriors defending Byrhtnoth's corpse, reunites the warring factions around a single ruler. The Northumbrians, damned in the chronicle for their continued collaboration with the Danes, [50] are restored to grace by the presence of another outsider noted for his fighting against the Vikings:

Him se gysel ongan	*geornlice fylstan;*
he waes on **Norðhymbron**	*heardes cynnes...*
He ne wandode na	*aet pam wigplegan,*
ac he fysde ford	*flan genehe;*
hwilon he on bord sceat,	*hwilon beorn taesde,*
aefre embe stunde	*he sealde sume wunde*
pa hwile **ðe***he waepna*	*wealdan moste.* [51]

This character sketch first refuses the *Chronicle* narratives citing the Northumbrian refusal of aid to the Anglo-Saxons, and then reforges political unity through the warrior's dis-membering of the common enemy. The other group under a cloud in the chronicle is the Mercians, who are consistently noted for their immediate surrender to Viking attacks. Their continued compliance in the chronicle is redeemed by the Mercian warrior's *beot:*

Ic wylle mine aepelo	*eallum gecywan*

pat ic waes on Myrcon   *miccles cynnes...*

Ne sceolon me on paere   *weode wegenas aetwitan*

paet ic of disse fyrde   *feran wille,*

eard gesecan,   *nu min ealdor* ligeᴆ

forheawen aet hilde. [52]

Each group condemned in the chronicle is saved in the poem by the depiction of an opposite behavior: the Northumbrians who turned against the Anglo-Saxons here turn in a fury upon the Vikings: the Mercians who submitted to the Vikings without a battle remain fighting to the death. These revised pictures, however, derive their force from the very chronicle entries that haunt them. There is nothing special about a Northumbrian hero unless the audience remembers the former agonistic relationship between the two peoples. To remember the past is to conjure up the very specters of defeat and submission the text is trying to exorcise.

In *Maldon* and the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle,* there is a different collaboration between the chronicle and heroic genre than the one we have seen within the chronicle texts. The chronicle cannot talk at length about the more shameful practices of ninth- and tenth-century history, since these events must be muffled as far as the genre will allow. The heroic poem cannot relate the entries directly, since there is nothing heroic in defeat. This poem, however, can adopt models developed in the chronicle, such as the praise of resistance, and combine such models with traditional pictures of *comitatus* loyalty to salvage a cultural victory out of a military defeat. In doing so, it creates characters who can recite "spells": narratives and histories about the untouchable subjects of cowardice, coded messages about the past sent from text to audience.

SINGING WHAT CANNOT BE SPOKEN: *BEOWULF* AND THE *ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE* MANUSCRIPTS

Sorh is me to secganne   *on sefan minum*

gumena aengum,   *hwaet me Grendal* hafaᴆ

hynᴆo *on Heorote*   *mid his hetewancum,*

faernida gefremed; [53]

Where the entries for *Brunanburh* and *Maldon,* respectively, rewrite the long-term narrative of defeat and appeasement, either by emphasis on an isolated victory or by transformation of defeat into defiant unity, the text of *Beowulf* follows a completely different strategy: displacing the Anglo-Saxon shame onto a series of analogous groups whose chronological and geographical distance provides a place for the unspeakable, while the constants of internal instability, feud, doomed alliances, and war provide a common ground between the action of the poem and the events related in the *Chronicle*.

There is no need, for my argument, to enter into the dating controversy that has grown up around *Beowulf*. Whatever *Beowulf's* date is, from the 700s to the manuscript's date of

the tenth century, it narrates the same kinds of events found in any sample of the chronicle entries. The entries for the years between 700 and 1000 recount the continuing struggle between the Anglo-Saxons and Britons for control of the island, the clashes between the kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia, the strategic alliances formed between these several kingdoms, and the later relentless assaults by the Danish raiding-armies. Thus, the triumph of Scyld Scefing, the diplomatic stratagems of Hrothgar, or the reckless ambition of Hygelac would echo several eras in the chronicles' four centuries of history. Even a very specific incident, such as the Geats' landing on Danish soil, would find cognates in the original Anglo-Saxon landings in Britain, in the Pictish assaults, or in the first of the Danish landings in Anglo-Saxon territory. The passage in *Beowulf* recounts the friendly though cautious encounter between the Geats and the coastguard of the Spear-Danes, in which the latter is careful to balance praise of the arriving force with a stern demand for their intentions:

Hwaet syndon ge	*searohaebbendra,*
byrnum werede	*pe pus brontne ceol*
ofer lagustraete	*laedan cwomon,*
hiƀer ofer holmas?...	
	Naefre ic maran geseah
eorla ofer eorƀan,	*ƀonne is eower sum,*
secg on searwum;	*nis paet seldguma,*
waepnum geweorƀaƀ,	*naefne him his wlite leoge,*
anlic ansyn.	*Nu ic eower sceal*
frumcyn witan,	*aer ge fyr heonan*
leassceaweras	*on land Dena*
furper feran. [54]	

The tense diplomacy manifested in the coastguard's speech might bring irresistibly to mind the fatal arrogance, depicted in the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle,* of the men meeting the first shiploads of Danish arrivals:

> on [Breohtric's] dagum comon aerest. iii. scipu Norðmanna of Hereda lande. 7 the se ge refa paer to rað. 7 he wolde drifan to ðescininges tune py he nyste hwaet hi waeron. 7 hine man of sloh pa. [55]

The entries emphasize that it is the reeve's mishandling of the situation that causes the attack. The reeve assumed they were merchants rather than militia, spoke to them haughtily, and, per Alfred's law, tried to force them to accompany him to the king's presence. In light of this entry, the Danish coastguard's courtesy and interest in their identities stands out by contrast. However, as Roberta Frank has noticed, this specific entry is not necessary for the connection to be made; a general knowledge of the often violent ends of such encounters would be sufficient for comparison. [56]

Moreover, the audience would neither need nor desire a simplistic one-to-one comparison between, say Beowulf and Byrhtnoth, or between Hygelac and Æthelraed II. With its language operating through kennings, compounds, appositives, and multiple comparatives, the Anglo-Saxon formulaic tradition mitigated against such a limiting relationship. For example, Beowulf is compared simultaneously to Sigemund, Heremod, and Hrothgar, in a strangely slant fashion. He is like Sigemund, but not like the bad king Heremod. There is no other man between two seas more fit to rule a realm, but this praise is not meant to affect Hrothgar's standing: "Ne hie huru winedrihten wiht ne logon/glaedne *Hrobgar* ac paet waes god cyning." [57] Beowulf is not identified completely with any of these characters, but is situated among them in an intricate comparative network. These multiple comparisons also allow for an inclusivity because Beowulf simultaneously occupies the place of the solitary warrior Sigemund, the position of proper behavior within a society forfeited by Heremod, and the tense balance between his potential and Hrothgar's experience. This type of accumulative comparison is found throughout the Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus. Thus, an Anglo-Saxon audience could compare its situation with the position of any group in the poem at any particular time. This view may seem obvious to specialists, but it seems necessary to stress the flexible subject positions available to the poem's hearers or readers.

Moreover, it is necessary to speak of two general positions occupied simultaneously by a hearer of the poem. First, there may be an identification with a person or group within the poem, an identification dependent upon a shared set of cultural mores. Second, the poem's position as a work, with its generic markers, set pieces, and formulas, permits it a certain freedom of distance from its hearers. We may identify with the characters in a fairy tale, but the traditional textual boundaries of "Once upon a time" and "they lived happily ever after" disconnect the tale from the hearer's immediate social environment. At the same time, however, these boundaries form an alternative sphere to the situation of the audience. What is not possible outside the tale is allowed within its parameters.

In *Beowulf,* the conflation of historical and mythic geography allows its hero to occupy positions unavailable to the audience (long-distance armor-burdened swimmer, invader of the hell-hall of the mere), while it places him firmly within a known people. In a more subtle way, it permits the lengthy exploration of themes such as defeat, treachery, or cowardice, since the iteration of these themes occurs in a tale about other groups. In the next section, I will outline first how the relationship between speech and political stability is explored in the poem, before turning to the way the boundaries of the poem provide a place for the unspeakable, because unheroic, actions of the Anglo-Saxons during the Danish invasions. In the process, I will highlight particular areas of the poem that would have resonated with an Anglo-Saxon audience, and invited comparison between their similar situations.

The poem begins with the Danes in a position analoguous to that of the Anglo-Saxons around 827, after the displacement of the Britons and the rise of Wessex:

Oft Scyld Scefing   *sceapena preatum,*

monegum maegwum   *meodosetla ofteah,*

egsode eorl[as],...

Pa waes Hrodgare   *heresped gyfen,*

wiges *weorðmynd,*

georne hyrdon,

magodriht micel. [58]

þaet him his winemagas

oðð þaet seo geogoð geweox,

Right behavior, political power, and speech are tied closely throughout the text. An earlier Beowulf's deeds bring him the spoken praise that acts like a disseminated credit rating:

Beowulf waes breme

Swa sceal (geong g)uma

fromum feohgiftan

þaet hine on ylde

wilgesipas,

leode gelaesten;

in maegþa gehwaere

blaed wide sprang...

gode gewyrcean,

on faeder (bea)rme,

eft gewunigen

ponne wig cume,

lofdaedum sceal

man gepeon. [59]

Likewise, Scyld and Hrothgar's power is not manifested so much in continuous displays of force, but with the powerful speech of those whose words are backed with reputation. Scyld's rule of his people is characlerized as "wenden wordum weold wine Scyldinga/leof landfruma lange ahte." [60] Hrothgar's thanes' loyalty is characterized as their eagerness to hear his speech, [61] and his control over his territory is figured as his speech echoing through the realm: "se þe his wordes geweald wide haefde." [62] Since speech, however, is the way in which power is allotted and disseminated, lack of power either manifests itself in silence (the formulaic half-line *hreman ne þorfte* mentioned earlier) [63] or in adverse publicity leading to disaster. Grendel's predations not only render Heorot silent but strip it of its meaning as the power center of a conquering people, a meaning spread about through the medium of song:

Waes seo hwil micel;

twelf wintra tid

wine Scyldinga,

siðra sorga;

ylda bearnum

gyððum geomore,

hwile *wið* Hropgar,

fyrene ond feahde

torn geþolode

weana gehwelcne

forðam [secgum] wearð,

undyrne cuð

þaette Grendel wan

hetenidas waeg

fela missera. [64]

What the poet presents us here is a once-powerful kingdom weakened by twelve years of depredations. The coast-guard's final remark ("Ic to sae *wille,/wið wrað werod* wearde healden.") is not gratuitous; [65] it is the Danes' good fortune that Beowulf's earlier

obligation has compelled him to come with aid, rather than with hostile arms. In the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle,* for example, it is precisely this kind of story that encourages the continuing arrivals of Anglo-Saxon invaders to Britain. Vortiger invites the Anglo-Saxons to Britain to help, in the absence of the Romans, in the struggles against the Picts. Such open acknowledgment of weakness leads to disaster:

> Se cyning Wyrt georn gef heom land on suðaneastan þissumlande. wiþþanþe hi sceoldan feohton wiþPyhtas. Heo þa fuhton wiþPyhtas. 7 heofdon sige swa hwer swa heo comon. Hy þasendon to Angle, heton sendon mara fultum. 7 heton heom secgan Brytplana nahtscipe. 7 þes landes cysta. [66]

With the failure of Beowulf's retainers, Wiglaf explicitly links their loss of land and status to the spread of the story of their cowardice. [67] On a larger scale, the news of Beowulf's death, rather than the death itself, spells disaster for the Geats:

> *Nu ys leodum pen*
> *orleghwile,*   *syþþanunder[ne]*
> *Froncum ond Frysum*   *fyll cyninges*
> *wide weorded.* [68]

It is not only shameful, but dangerous to speak of defeat, treachery, or failure.

Running side by side with this imperative of silence, however, is a stated need to speak about loss or disaster. Usually relegated to women (Hildeburh and the female mourner at Beowulf's pyre are two obvious examples), the act of speaking one's sorrow seems only permissible to men under certain conditions. The last survivor's speech in *Beowulf* is provoked by the complete annihilation of his people; likewise, the catastrophic loss of two sons calls forth the sorrow of Hrethel:

> *Swa biþ geomorlic*   *goemlum ceorle*
> *to gebidanne,*   *þaet his byre ride*
> *giong on galgan;*   *þonne he gyd wrece,*
> *sarigne sang*   *þonne his sunu hangað*
> *hrefne to hrodre,*   *ond he him helpe ne maeg*
> *eald ond infrod*   *aenige gefremman.* [69]

In both cases, speech is allowed after there is no danger to the speaker's people. Likewise, both the messenger and the female mourner in the final lines *of Beowulf* are allowed to display their people's weakness only after their downfall is a foregone conclusion. Otherwise, the appropriate behavior is silence. Heorot's silence after the onset of Grendel's attacks is made most visible by the link of strength, projected victory, and speech with Beowulf's arrival:

> *Þa waes eft swa aer*   *inne on healle*

wrydword sprecan,

sigefolca sweg,... [70]

þeod on saelum,

In the same manner, Beowulf's courteous reply to the coast guard demonstrates the diplomatic skill needed to combine two statements: acknowledgment that the news of Grendel's assaults (and thus, the Danes' failed defense) has spread as far as Geatland, and assurance that this news has not lessened his estimation of the Danish king:

Habbaþ we to þaem maeran

Deniga frean;

wesan, waes ic wene.

swa we soþlice

þaet mid Scyldingum

deogol deadhata

eaped þur egsan

hynþu ond hrafyl.

þurh rumne sefan

hu he frod on god

micel aerende

ne sceal þaer dyrne sum

Þu wast, gif hit is

secgan hyrdon,

sceaþona ic nat hwylc,

deorcum nihtum

uncuþne nið,

Ic þaes Hroðgar maeg

raed gelaeren,

feond ofersydeþ— [71]

In Beowulf's careful rewriting of the "sad songs" sung about the Danish failure, the attacks upon Heorot are framed fore and aft with praise for the king. Beowulf himself becomes less the avenging warrior than one of many advisors to Hrothgar, the one who can help the king overcome this particular enemy. Grendel's assaults are framed as malicious night-slaughter, unlawful warfare, again making the Danish defeat less shameful. In these seven lines, Beowulf rewrites the earlier news in a way that delicately separates the usual association between negative news and corresponding lack of political stability; Hrothgar is still in control.

Hrothgar himself reworks Beowulf's arrival as a debt owed to him for Ecgtheow's fault, [72] and only after this picture is in place does he allow himself to speak about the continued assaults upon the hall. In the lines opening this section, the emphasis is on the sorrow he feels in having to speak about the humilation of Grendel's success, rather than on the attacks themselves. The alliterative link of *sorh* and *secganneon* points up the source of his distress, just as the link between *hynþu* and *Heorote* emphasizes the shaming of a lord within his own sign of sovereignty and the symbol of his people's power. [73]

Within the poem, speaking about defeat and failure is represented as dangerous for the characters, but the genre of heroic poetry permits a freer space within which to explore issues of treachery, defeat, and weakness. Since these phenomena are constants throughout the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, it is not necessary to pin down a specific date for the poem, and to assign an unnatural one-to-one correspondance between event and

poem. We can look at the poem as another kind of recombination: a text in which one can talk simultaneously about crises besetting kingdoms from the sixth to the ninth century.

Grendel's attacks provide the most direct analogue to the Danish assaults upon the Anglo-Saxons. His attack is focused upon Heorot, the symbolic center of Hrothgar's kingdom. [74] The poem stresses the bewildering nature of Grendel's attacks: they display a ruthless disregard for the usual methods of conflict resolution:

Swa rixode   ond wiðrihte wan,

ana wid eallum,   Oð þaet idel stod

husa selest.

                                    …sibbe ne wolde

wiðmanna hwone   maegenes Deniga,

feorhbealo feorran,   fea pingian,

ne paer naenig witena   wenan porfte

beorhtre bote   to banan folmum;

(ac se) aeglaeca   ehtende waes,

deorc deapscua,   dugupe ond geogupe,

seomade ond syrede. [75]

Like the monster's continued onslaught, the Danish invasions of England occupy the majority of the chronicle entries from 832 to 1000. For long stretches of the chronicle's narrative, each entry begins in a similar grim fashion, with another account of a raiding army's attack. The usual Danish strategy was a lightning strike upon a particular area, without any demonstrated interest in long-term relations with the Anglo-Saxons. Peace negotiations in one area, (usually at a great cost to the Anglo-Saxons) only bought a temporary respite for that specific region, as the entries demonstrate:

> Her saet se haeðene here on Tenet, 7 ge nam frið wiðCantwarum. 7 Cantware heom feoh be heton wið þam friðe. 7 on pam feoh be hate se here hine on niht up be stael. 7 ofer hergode ealle Cent easte warde. [76]
>
>   Her hine be stael se here into Waerham West Seaxna fyrde. 7 sibban wiðpone here se cyning friðnam. 7 him pa gislas sealdon pe on pam here weorpuste waeron to pam cyninge. 7 him pa abassworon on pam halgan beage, pe hi aer nanre peode don noldon pet hi hreðliceof his rice foron. 7 hi pa under pam bi nihtes be staelon paere fyrde se gehorsade here into Exan ceastre. [77]

A careful inspection of the entries from 832 to 1000 shows the parallels between the Spear-Danes' responses to Grendel and the Anglo-Saxon responses to the Danish invasions. The entries from 832 to 860 show the Anglo-Saxon forces continually engaging in battle with the Danish, although the Anglo-Saxon forces were defeated in three out of four battles. Perhaps because of this record, the entries from 860 to 1000

usually recount (in a brief and shamed fashion) the conciliation of the Danes, the tribute offered to them, and the continual breaking of the peace by various subsets of the invaders. As the invasions continue, the chronicle turns from any efforts to claim even partial victory, giving instead a terse account of Anglo-Saxon cowardice and the condition of the isle under the invasions. The entries for 993 and 1001 are typical:

> Her on þissum geare waes Baebban burh to brocon. 7 mycel here hude paer ge numen, 7 aefter pam com to Humbran muþe se here. 7 paer mycel yfel ge wrohtan ægðer ge on Lindes ige ge on Norðymbran. Pa ge gaderode man swiðe mycele fyrde. 7 pa hi to gaedere gan sceoldan. pa on stealdon pa here to gan aerest pone fleam. paet was Fraena. 7 Godwine. 7 Fridegist. [78]
>
>   Her com se here to Exan muþan. 7 up beeoðan to ðere byrig. 7 paer faestlice feohtende waeron. ac him man swiðe faestlice wiðstod. 7 heardlice. Da gewendon hi geond paet land. 7 dydon eall swa hi be wuna waeron. slogon 7 beorndon. Pa ge somnode man waer ormaete fyrde of Defenisces folces. 7 Sumor saetisces. 7 hi þa to somne comon aet Peonnho. 7 sona swa hi to gaedere fengon. pa beah seo Englisce fyrd. 7 hi waer mycel wael of slogan. 7 ridan pa ofer paet land. 7 paes aefre heora aeftra syð wyrse ponne se aerra. 7 mid him pa mycele here hude to scipon brohton. 7 wanon wendon in Wiht land. 7 paer him ferdon on buton swa swa hi sylf woldon. 7 him nan ping ne wiðstod. ne him to ne dorste scip here on sae. ne land fyrd. ne eoden hi swa feor up. Waes hit pa on aelce wisan hefig tymma. forðam we hi naefre heora yfeles geswicon. [79]

In fact, throughout this later section, the only successful action undertaken by an Anglo-Saxon is that of treachery and conspiracy with the Danes. Aethelwold's rebellion and joining of the Danish forces in Northumbria is the most striking example, [80] but the chronicle notes several acts of treachery disastrous to the Anglo-Saxon forces. The entry for 992 recounts the tactics of a group of Anglo-Saxon nobles:

> Da ge raedde se cyng 7 ealle his witan paet man ge gaderode pa scipu pe ahtes waeron to Lunden byrig. 7 se cyng pa be taehte pa fyrde to laedene Ealfrice ealdor man. 7 Porode eorl. 7 Ælfstane. 7 Æscwige. 7 sceoldan cunnian gif hi muhton pone here ahwaer utene betraeppen. Da sende se ealdorman Ælfric. 7 het warnian wone here. 7 pa on pere nihte ðehi on ðone ðæi to gaeðere cumon sceoldon. ða sceoc he on niht fram paere fyrde him sylfum to mycclum bismore. [81]

The phrase *to mycclum bismore* (to his great disgrace) is a rare editorial outburst in the *Chronicle* manuscripts, [82] which prefer to relate the bare event if no positive spin can be put on it. The cultural imperative to remain silent about the less-than-heroic behavior of one's group forces its iteration onto other groups such as the Geats and Danes in *Beowulf*. In this text, the continual humiliation of a besieged and powerless group is given voice on several occasions. After the second assault, the thanes stage a mass retreat from the hall, while their lord spends his time in futile brooding:

Swa *ða* *maelceare*	*maga Healfdenes*
singala *seað,;*	*ne mihte snotor* *haeleð*
wean onwendon;	*waes paet gewin to* *swyð,*
law ond longsum,	*pe* *on ða* *leode becom,*
nyðwracu *nipgrim,*	*nihtbealpa maest.* [83]

Through the narrative, we are able to see the humiliation and anguish that Hrothgar is so reluctant to discuss, and to hear what is not said in the abrupt entries of the *Chronicle*. Moreover, the text lays plain, in the voice of the Danish king, the dangerous rift between speech and power that Grendel's attacks have wrought:

Ful oft gebeotedon	*beore druncne*
ofer ealowaege	*oretmecgas,*
paet hie in beorsele	*bidan woldon*
Grendles *guðe*	*mid gryrum ecga.*
Donne waes peos medoheal	*on morgentid,*
drihtsele dreorfah,	*ponne daeg lixte,*
eal bencwelu	*blode bestymed,*
heall heorudreore. [84]	

I have insisted before that a poetic tradition of kennings and multiple comparisons allows its audience to assume a variety of identifications. Although the first section of the poem makes mention of Hrothulf's usurpation of the Danish throne, it does so in an oblique fashion, relying upon the audience's knowledge of history. With the dragon attack in the second section, however, the poem begins a full exploration of the problem of betrayal, and its repercussions for an already besieged people. In so doing, the poem invites the audience to compare the situation of the Geats to their own. Leaderless, surrounded by hostile forces, and weakened by treachery and cowardice from within, the Geats of the final thousand lines of the poem bear a striking resemblance to the beaten Anglo-Saxons under the hapless Aethelraed II. The invading Danes, already specifically linked with dragons in the *Chronicle* manuscripts, [85] strengthen the association by their incessant gathering of war-booty and their habit of burning what lies in their path.

While the *Chronicle* manuscripts focus upon the Danish depredations, and spend as little time as possible on the many instances of Anglo-Saxon flight from battle, the poem mercilessly exposes the shameful behavior of Beowulf's retainers in two speeches from Wiglaf. The first critique comes in the speech itself. The warriors need to be reminded of their duty, as they shrink back to the woods: [86]

Ic ðæt *mael geman,*	*paer we medu pegun,*
ponne we geheton	*ussum hlaforde*
In biorsele,	*ðe us ðas* *beagas geaf,*

paet we him *ða guðgetawa*   gyldan woldon,

gif him pyslicu   pearf gelumpe,

helmas ond heard sweord....

                                        Nu is se daeg cumen,

paet ure mandryhten   maegenes behofad,

godra *guðrinca*;   wutun gongan to,

helpan hildfruman,   wenden hyt sy,

gledegesa grim! [87]

Wiglaf's speech leaves the retainers with no excuse as he links the weapons they are wearing, the obligation these entail, and the present urgent need for their use. His use of history in this case is futile, since he cannot compel them to battle. It is only after he emerges alive from the battle as the historical repository of their cowardice that the past has the power to punish:

Þaet, la, maeg secgan   *se ðe* wyle *soð* specan,

paet se mondryhten,   se eow *ða* madmas geaf,

eoreðgeatwe,   pe ge paer on *standað*,

ponne he on ealubence   oft gesealde

healsittendum   helm ond byrnan,

ower feor *oððe* neah   findan meahte,

paet he genunga   *guðgewaedu*

wrað forwurpe,   *ða* hyne wig beget.

Nealles folccyning   fyrdgesteallum

gylpan porfte;...

Ic him *lifwraðe*   lytle meahte

aetgifan aet gude,   ond ongan swa weah

ofer min gemet   maeges helpan;

symle waes *ðy* saemra,   ponne ic sweorde drep

ferhðgeniðlan,   fyr *unswiðor*

weoll of gewitte.   Wergendra to lyt

prong ymbe peoden,   pa hyne sio prag becwom. [88]

Although Wiglaf goes on to state the material consequences attendant upon their cowardice (consequences that would only be too familiar to an Anglo-Saxon audience), the real attack in his speech lies in the alternate history he presents to them. As a survivor and victor of the battle, his presence proves that the enemy can indeed be defeated. His speech underscores this message in a relentless equation: since one additional fighter reduced the dragon's power, the presence of even a few more men might have saved Beowulf, and by extension, the Geatish people. It is an equation made also in the *Chronicle,* although in a less overt fashion:

> Her gewende se here eft eastweard into Frommuban. 7 paer aeghwaer up eoden swa wide swa hi woldon into Dorsaetan. 7 man oft fyrde ongean hi ge gaderode. ac sona swa hi to gaebere gan sceoldan. Ponne wearb paer aefre purh sum ping fleam astiht. 7 aefre hi [the Danes] aet ende sige ahton. [89]

The entry here carefully tries to avoid speaking about the shame of continuous Anglo-Saxon retreat by obfuscating both the agents and the chronology. "Sum ping," rather than a group of people, starts a retreat. Moreover, the temporal interlacing mentioned earlier, by which the Danish victory is given only after a delay, here comes up against the earlier phrase that notes the complete lack of fighting. The armies should have met, but the encounter was forestalled by a pre-emptive Anglo-Saxon retreat. However, the continuous attention to the armies' presence and preparation places them in the position of Beowulf's retainers: a waste of good armor. Wiglaf's speech forces the audience to reflect upon their own history of compliance and count its cost in the light of an alternative narrative.

Thus far, I have focused on the dangers of history's dissemination as it affects a group's political stability and prosperity. In this next section, I want to discuss the necessarily affiliate nature of Anglo-Saxon culture which mandates selective excision of the past to preserve affiliations. The speaking of history in this case becomes dangerous, with a potential for destroying present ties through the iteration of past emnity. This kind of spoken history is heuristic: it does not talk about the past, rather recites the past to move its contemporary audience. We need to see Anglo-Saxon texts as history of a certain genus: texts intended to produce attitudes and actions in the world, and thus *create* a desired history. When we look at the use of the history in texts such as *Beowulf,* it becomes apparent that history's heuristic power holds the same promise and threat as the hero's strength. Carefully constrained and deployed, it provides a set of didactic *exempla* that maintain a culture. Articulated in the wrong context, or consumed by the wrong audience, it unleashes the force of the past onto the present, with disastrous consequences. Like Heremod, who turned his strength against his own people, the narratives surrounding battles, feuds, and other *topoi* of the heroic mode can consume their audience.

The past in Anglo-Saxon literature serves two functions: it enables the audience to read the present, and it attempts to influence the present by holding up heuristic models from the past. The repetition of past events in *Deor,* for example, can be read in both of these lights: as an explanatory narrative, it provides case studies of tragedy which have passed in order to draw a parallel with present misfortune:

Welund him be worman	*wraeces cunnade,*
anhydiy eorl,	*earfowa dreah*
heafde him to gesippe	*sorge 7 lonyath*
wintercealde wraece,	*wean oft onfond*
sippan hine Nitwad	*on nede leyde*
swoncre seonobende,	*on syllan monn.*
paes ofereode;	*pisses swa maeg.* [90]

If we read the "maeg" in the second half-line of line seven as a conditional verb, the past becomes *exemplum*. The transitory nature of misfortune, marked by its very status as historical and thus time-bound, paradoxically becomes the means by which the past and present are linked in a continuum: all things pass. Both poet and audience can take comfort from the unchanging nature of mutability. If we take "maeg" as an imperative, the chain linking past and present changes in nature and power. The recitation of past events becomes part of a charm, using the event's parallel to the narrative present as a tool of sympathetic magic. Thus, the past here has the power to produce events in the future in a more direct sense than the heuristic power of *exemplum*. It is the *act* of reciting the past which forces a change in present circumstances. The link becomes a causal one, rather than a didactic parallel.

Both these types of heuristic history come into play within *Beowulf*. The opening lines define history as didactic, teaching by example:

HWAET! WE GAR-DEna	*in geardagum,*
peodcyninga	*prym gefrunon,*
hu ꝥa aepelingas	*ellen fremedon!...*
Beowulf waes breme	*blaed wide sprang*
Scyldes eafera	*Scedlandum in.*
Swa sceal (geong gu)ma	*gode gewyrcean*
fromum feohgiftum	*on faeder (bea)rme,*
pat hine on ylde	*eft gewunigen*
wilgesiꝺas,	*ponne wig cume,...* [91]

In the same manner, Hrothgar provides the departing Beowulf with the negative exemplum of Heremod as a *caveat:*

	Du scealt to frofre weorꝺan
eal langtpidig	*leodum winum,*
haeleꝺum to helpe...	
	Ne wearꝺ Heremod swa...

ne geweox he him to willan,   *ac to waelfealle*

ond to deaðcwalum   *Deniga leodum;* [92]

These exemplary narratives are presented unproblematically, perhaps because they deal with the subjects of generosity and good kingship. When the narrative turns to specifically heroic behavior, it runs into what Edward B. Irving succinctly described as the conflict haunting the heroic ethos: "that in its very strength and beauty, in its cohesive loyalties and allegiances, lie inevitable forces of destruction and anarchy." [93] As Irving notes, each heroic act sets the stage for further aggressions. The longstanding feud between the Swedes and the Geats stands as one example. Hygelac's raid on the Frisians, an event parallel to Scyld's overturning of enemy mead benches, sets the Frisian-Geatish conflict in motion. One could even argue that it is precisely Beowulf's superhuman status and his heroic isolation that have aggravated the situation of the doomed Geats at the end of the poem. Lacking diplomatic and marital ties with the opposing nations, the Geats stand and fall with Beowulf. From the confident praise of Scyld's raids at the beginning of the poem, to the grim prophecy of Geatish annihilation which closes the work, there is an uneasiness evident about both the necessity and dangers of heroic history: the same values that build a kingdom may destroy it. At this point, I would like to turn to the second heuristic power of history, the potential contained in the act of its recitation. Here the subjects of heroic narrative (its battles, feuds, and allegiances) with their own inherent dangers, are made even more volatile by being articulated. This danger is first brought to light in the construction of Heorot: Side by side with its physical rise is the rise of a narrative, present in the *scop's* song, which posits Heorot and its inhabitants as the direct successors to an ancient feud:

Da se ellengaest   *earfoðlice*

prage gepolode,   *se pe in pystrum bad,*

paet he dogora gehwam   *dream gehyrde*

hludne in healle;   *paer waes hearpan sweg,*

swutol sang scopes.   *Saegde se pe cupe*

frumsceaft fira   *feorran reccan,...*

Swa ða drihtguman   *dreamum lifdon,*

eadiglice,   *oð ðaet an ongan*

fyrene fre(m)man   *feond on helle;...*

          se pe moras heold,

fen ond faesten;   *fifelcynnes eard*

wonsaeli wer   *wearðode hwile,*

siþðan him Scyppend   *forscirfen haefde*

in Caines cynne—... [94]

Grendel's pain and rage, and his subsequent attacks on Heorot, arise from the *recitation* of his history. The *scop,* in chanting Genesis, reminds both men and monster of the ancient feud between the kin of Cain and those of Abel. The narrative places the race of man in a direct antagonistic relationship with the race of monsters, and refuses any possible closure as it depicts a timeless hostility. Thus, the true danger to Hrothgar's dream stems from the imposition of Biblical history onto a specific time and people. It is not the raising of Heorot that provokes Grendel, nor the passing out of treasure. Grendel springs into being with the opening chords of the *scop's* narrative, one that continues to form him as the passage progresses. At first, we see him as simply an *ellengaest,* shadowy in form. It is only with the biblical narrative that Grendel receives a local habitation and a history, setting him in emnity with the children of men. Until the story of Genesis is narrated, Grendel is a passive entity: he *holds* the outer darkness and *endures* pain. Upon hearing his story, he reproduces it to the letter. His massacres of God's chosen, (symbolized by the God-guarded *gifstol*) reiterate the contents of the tale, while his unceasing and relentless assaults reproduce the eternal and irreconcilable nature of the primary feud.

This pattern is seen even more clearly when Beowulf discusses Hrothgar's political strategy for dealing with the Heatho-bards. In creating a hypothetical event at the future marriage-feast, he discusses the double face of heroism. The historian at the feast is an *eald aescwiga*. The phrase economically displays him as possessing the desired qualities of loyalty, experience, and valor. However, it is precisely his experience of past history, and his recitation of it to the representative of another generation, the *geong cempum,* that shatter the fragile marriage alliance:

Meaht *ðu*, min wine,   mece gecnawan,

þone þin faeder   to gefeohte baer

under heregriman   hindeman *siðe*,

dyre iren,   þaer hyne Dene slogon,

weolden waelstowe,   *sybban* Widergyld laeg,

aefter haelewa hryre,   hwate Scyldungas?

Nu her þara banena   byre nathwylces

fraetwum hremig   on flet gaed,

morðres gylped,   on þone madþum byred,

þone þe *ðu* mid rihte   raedan sceoldest. [95]

It is not the event of the battle that causes the projected marriage slaughter, but the texts that narrate it. Implicitly, the history is there to be read in the armor of the Danes, the cause of the old warrior's anger. However, the crucial act is its recitation in a particular rhetorical model. Against the law upheld by the marriage contract, and the new community of Dane and Heatho-bard, the old warrior recounts the history so as to cast out the Heatho-bards, and reframe the fortunes of war as an unpunished crime. The Danish victory is given the same grudging half-line present in the chronicle entries, *weoldan waelstowe,* a formula that here places the emphasis on the slaughter of the

Heathobards. This incendiary rhetoric reaches its climax in the casting of the defeat as murder, a theme underscored by its repetition in the speech: "thara banena," "morthres gylpeth." In this narrative logic, the young warrior is bound by an imperative antithetical to the marriage feast: to act "mid rihte" and punish the slayer of his kin. These are literally fighting words, which act in the same way as the incantations in *Deor*. They inescapably change the face of history:

Manaþ swa ond myndgaþ

sarum wordum,

paet se faemnan wegn

aefter billes bite

Ponne bioþ(ab)rocene on

absweord eorla;

weallaþ waelniþas,

aefter cearwaèlmum

maela gehwylce

oþ þaet cymed,

fore faeder daeþum

blodfag swefeþ,...

þa healfe

(syþ)þan Ingelde

ond him wiflufan

colran weordaþ. [96]

In this grim prophecy, the text reveals history itself as something monstrous, a power lurking in the shadows that can strike at the heart of the hall. Just as the young warrior cannot reconcile two conflicting imperatives, the text refuses to assimilate its intertwined heroic and historiographic narratives. Beowulf, in summing up the Danish/Heathobard analysis, backs away from the implications of his own story and recasts the conflict within the familiar territory of allegiances and enmity: "Wy ic Heatho-Bear[d]na hyldo ne telge,/dryhtsibbe dael Denum unfaecne,/froendscipe faestne." [97]

This closing move attempts to displace the dangers of the past onto an isolated and thus safer group identity. At this point, the text turns its interrogation upon itself, as it displays the process by which a general dynamic such as feud becomes the specific allegiances and antagonisms of its players. The two narrative threads within Beowulf's prophecy echo the question woven through the poem: what is produced by narratives of the past? The text faces a conundrum: its narrative structure cannot help but provide the fuel for the very practices it questions, and its only solution is to lay its own practice open to question.

The textual quandry in *Beowulf* provides a remarkable parallel to the problem surrounding twentieth-century analyses of early texts. We too are caught within a narrative framework and critical vocabulary that produces the very practices we condemn: selective editing, monologic readings, biased or reductive studies of multi-vocal texts. Perhaps a partial solution lies within an accepted formulaic practice. We have no problem accepting a string of imagistic phrases used to describe a battle, a king, or a hero, nor do we insist that one phrase can stand for the whole. On a textual and intertextual level, we need to develop the kind of narrative theory that can look at a group of collaborative manuscripts in the same manner.

NOTES

1. F.G.Cassidy and Richard N.Ringler, eds., introduction to *The Battle of Brunan-burh,* in Bright's *Old English Grammar and Reader,* ed. F.G.Cassidy and Richard N.Ringler (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971) 162.

2. W.G.Busse and R.Holtoi, "*The Battle of Maldon:* A Historical, Heroic, and Political Poem," *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings,* ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994) 188.

3. The formulaic "eorl ellenrof" ("courageous/powerful man") transfers without strain to "ides ellenrof" ("courageous/powerful woman") in such works as *Judith* and *Elene*.

4. Hereafter referred to as the *Chronicle*. I will be using A as the citation manuscript in the cases in which the matter is the same. All quotations for A, E, and F will be taken from *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel,* ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929). All translations are my own, checked against the translations in Michael Swanton's edition and translation of the *Chronicle*.

5. For an example of both voices in the debate, see Helmut Gneuss, "*The Battle of Maldon* 89: Byrhtnoth's *ofermod* Once Again" in *Old English Shorter Poems,* 149–172, and W.G.Busse and R.Holtoi, "*The Battle of Maldon:* A Historical, Heroic, and Political Poem" *Old English Shorter Poems,* 185–97. For an overview of the debate over the nature of history, see Roger Chartier, *On the Edge of the Cliff: History, Language, and Practices,* trans. Lydia G.Cochrane (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) 1–10; Keith Jenkins, "On Being Open about Our Closures" *The Postmodern History Reader,* ed. Keith Jenkins (New York: Routledge, 1997) 1–35, and Gabrielle Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *The Postmodern History Reader,* 180–203.

6. See Edward B.Irving, *Rereading Beowulf,* University of Pennsylvania Press Middle Ages Ser. 53 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) and Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry,* Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

7. See Table 1 for manuscript shelfmarks and abbreviations.

8. *Chronicle,* E, f. 35v, "In this year Æthelstan led an army to Brunanburh."

9. *Chronicle,* F, f. 57v, "In this year Æthelstan and Edmund his brother led an army to Brunanburh and there fought with Anlaf, and with Christ's aid had the victory."

10. See O.D.Macrae-Gibson, "How Historical Is *The Battle of Maldon*?," *Medium Aevum* 39 (1970) 89–107 and A.D.Mills, "Byrhtnoth's Mistake in Generalship," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 67 (1966) 14–27 for early examples of generic categorization.

11. An introductory chapter to *Maldon's* historical context provides a nice example of this assumption: "From his position on the mainland side of a causeway in the Blackwater estuary, Ealdorman Byrhtnoth heard the messenger's demand for tribute and responded defiantly that he would rather stand and fight. Nothing could diminish our admiration for his brave response, or for the loyalty he displayed towards his king: 'Tell your people…that here stands an earl of unstained reputation, who intends to defend his homeland…'" (Simon Keynes, "The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon," *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991,* ed. D.G.Scragg (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1991) iii.

12. Gneuss, *"Battle,"* 154.

13. Busse and Holtoi, 194.

14. Mary P.Richards, "*The Battle of Maldon* in Its Manuscript Context" in *Old English Shorter Poems,* 173–84.

15. Richards, 149.

16. Janet Thorman, "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Poems and the Making of the English Nation" in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity,* ed. Allen Frantzen and John D.Niles (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997) 28.

17. John Milton, *The History of Britain,* ed. George Philip Krapp (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932) 233.

18. See Haydn White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *On Narrative,* ed. W.J.T.Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) 1–23. White's argument is a good example of the difficulty in thinking outside the narrative box. He argues against earlier readings of the chronicles as primitive historiographies, only to posit an overall primitive consciousness as the explanation for annal and chronicle narrative models.

19. The contrast of Beowulf and Heremod, or the earlier and later Modthrith, are typical patterns.

20. The condemnation of the Jutes in *Beowulf,* for example, is given by means of Hildeburh's silence: "Ne huru Hildeburh herian worfte/Eotena treowe," *Beowulf,* 1. 1071, 2a. This and all subsequent quotations are taken from *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg,* ed. Fr. Klaeber (Lexington: D.C.Heath & Co., 1950).

21. All translations have been checked against Michael Swanton's edition and translation of the *Chronicle* manuscripts (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* ed., trans. Michael Swanton (New York: Routledge, 1997). *Chronicle,* E, f. 28v, "Ealdorman Aethelhelm with the people of Dorset fought against the Danish army at Portland, and the ealdorman was slain, and the Danes had possession of the battlefield."

22. Journalism employs the same tactic to separate agent from event.

23. Bessinger's *Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* lists only seven occurrences of "waelstowe" and only four of the phrase with the verb "weoldan" (*A Concordance to the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records,* ed. Jess B.Bessinger (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) 1978).

24. *Chronicle,* A, f. 13, "In this year Ealdorman Ceorl with the contingent of the men of Devon fought against the heathen army at Wicganbeorg, and the English made great slaughter there and had the victory…. And King Aethelwulf and his son Aelthelbald fought against them at Aclea with the army of the West Saxons, and there inflicted the greatest slaughter [on a heathen army] that we ever heard of until this present day, and had the victory there." Emphases mine.

25. "To the *Beowulf* poet, as to many other writers, the relations between events are more significant than their temporal sequence, and he[sic] used a structure that gave him great freedom to manipulate time and concentrate on the complex interconnections of events." John Leyerle, "The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*," *University of Toronto Quarterly,* 37 (University of Toronto Press, October 1967) 1–17.

26. *Beowulf,* 1. 81b–85, "The hall towered, high and wide-gabled. It awaited the hostile flames, grievous fire; it was not then at hand that sword hate of in-laws after deadly hostility should awake."

27. *Chronicle,* A, f. 14, "Four days later King Ethelred and his brother Alfred fought against the whole army [of Danes] at Ashdown…and both enemy armies were put to flight and many thousands were killed, and they continued fighting until night…. And two months later, King Ethelred and his brother Alfred fought against the army at Meretun and they put both to flight and were victorious far on into the day, and there was a great slaughter on both sides, and the Danes had possession of the battlefield."

28. Alain Renoir, "Oral-Formulaic Context: Implications for the Comparative Criticism of Mediaeval Texts," in *Oral Traditional Literature,* ed. John Miles Foley (Columbus: Slavica, 1981) 416.

29. *Chronicle,* A, f. 13, "Then the same year Ealhhere with the people of Kent and Huda with the people of Surrey fought in Thanet against the heathen army, and at first had the victory, and many men on both sides were killed and drowned there."

30. *Chronicle,* A, f. 13v, "In this year the heathen army encamped on Thanet and made peace with the people of Kent. And the people of Kent promised them money for that peace. And under cover of that peace and promise of money the army stole away inland by night and ravaged all eastern Kent."

31. *Chronicle,* A, f. 13v, "In this year the same army went into Mercia to Nottingham and took up winter quarters there. And Burgred, king of the Mercians, and his councilors asked Ethelred, king of the West Saxons, and Alfred his brother to help him fight against the enemy. They then went with the army of the West Saxons into Mercia through Nottingham, and came upon the enemy in that fortress and there occurred no serious battle there, and the Mercians made peace with the enemy."

32. *Chronicle,* A, f. 14v, "In this year the enemy army slipped past the army of the West Saxons into Wareham, and then the king made peace with the enemy and they swore oaths to him on the holy ring, a thing which they would not do before for any nation, that they would speedily leave his kingdom. And then under cover of that they—that mounted army—stole by night away from the English army to Exeter."

33. *Chronicle,* A, f. 14r,v, "In this year the army went from Lindsay to Repton and took up winter quarters there, and drove King Burgred across the sea…. And the same year they gave the kingdom of the Mercians to be held by a foolish thane of the king; and he swore oaths to them and gave hostages, that it should be ready for them on whatever day they wanted it, and he would be ready himself and all with him at the enemy's need."

34. *Chronicle,* A, f. 33r, "In this year, twelve months after the Danes had built the fortress in the eastern realm, the Northumbrians and East Angles had given King Alfred oaths, and the East Angles had given six hostages; and in spite of these oaths, as often as the other Danish armies went out in full force, they went with them or on their behalf."

35. *Chronicle,* A, f. 20r, "Then the aetheling Aethelwold, his father's brother's son, rode and seized the residence at Wimborne and at Twinham, against the will of the king and his councillors. Then the king [Edward] rode with the army until he encamped at Badbury near Wimborne…. Meanwhile the aetheling rode away by night, and went to the enemy army in Northumbria."

36. *Chronicle,* D, f. 44v, "In this year Aethelwold came over the sea with all the ships he could muster, and submission was made to him at Essex." (Note how the phrase "submission was made" allows the chronicler to avoid directly recounting the Anglo-Saxon surrender.) A simply states: "Her com Aedelwald hider ofer sae mid paem flotan pe he mid waes on East Sexe. (In this year came Aethelwold over the sea with the ships who he was with into Essex)."

37. *Chronicle,* A, "and they made peace with the invading army." The change in noun from "sige namon" to "frith namon" underscores the humilating nature of the transaction; it is an anti-battle.

38. *Chronicle,* A, f. 26v, "Constantine, the old warrior, had no reason to exult about the sharing of swords." The matter is the same in B,C, and D.

39. *Chronicle,* A, f. 26v, "He had no need to boast, the grey-haired man, about the battle, nor did Olaf any more, with the survivors of the army, need to gloat that they were better in warworks on the battlefield, in the clash of battle-standards, the meeting of spears, encounter of men." The matter is the same in B, C, and D.

40. *Chronicle,* A, f. 27r, "There was never a greater slaughter of folk felled by the sword's edge before this, as books and the old lore-masters tell us, since the Angles and Saxons came here from the east over the broad waves, proud warriors sought out Britain, glorious nobles overcame the Welsh, held the land." The matter is the same in B, C, and D.

41. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1961) xvi, xvii.

42. *Chronicle,* A, f. 29v, "In this year [991, A has 993] Olaf came with 93 ships to Folkestone, and ravaged round about it, and then from there went to Sandwich, and so from there to Ispwich, and overran it all, and so to Maldon. And Ealdorman Byrhtnoth came against him there with his army and fought against him; and they killed the ealdorman there and had control of the field. And afterwards peace was made with them and the king stood sponsor to him at his confirmation."

43. *Chronicle,* E, f. 39v, "In this year Ipswich was ravaged, and very soon afterwards Ealdorman Byrhtnoth was killed at Maldon. And in that year it was determined that tribute should be paid to the Danish men because of the great terror they were causing along the Saxon coast. The first payment was 10,000 pounds." The matter is the same in C and D.

44. *Chronicle,* A, f. 14v, "In this year after midwinter after twelfth night the enemy army stole in to Chippenham and occupied the land of the West Saxons and settled there, and drove a great part of the people across the sea, and conquered most of the others except for King Alfred. He went with difficulty through woods and moor-fastnesses with a small force."

45. All quotations from *The Battle of Maldon* are taken from *Bright's Old English Grammar and Reader,* ed. F.G.Cassidy and Richard M.Ringler (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1971) 361–371. Like all modern editions of the poem, it is taken from Oxford Bodleian Library Rawlinson B. 203, the eighteenth-century copy of the damaged London British Museum Cotton Otho A.xii. All translations are my own. *Maldon,* 1. 29–41, "The bold seamen sent me, ordered me to say that you must quickly send treasure in exchange for protection. And it is better for you that you buy off this spear-rush with tribute, than that we so fiercely deal out battle. We do not need to destroy ourselves, if you are rich enough. We will with that gold confirm a truce. If you who lead the army are powerful, that you will ransom your people, and give tribute to the seamen by their own reckoning."

46. *Maldon,* 1. 45–61, "Do you hear, seafarer, what these people say? They want to deliver you a tribute of spears, ancient swords and deadly points, wargear that will not help you at battle. Messenger of the Vikings, go back to your people and announce a more hateful message: that here stands, undisgraced, a lord with his company, who will defend this homeland, the land of Aethelraed, the lord of my people and land: the heathen will fall at battle. It seems humiliating to me if he, unfought, should go back to his ship with our tribute money since he has invaded this far into our territory. Nor shall he so easily receive treasure: we shall mix point and edge, grim battleplay, before we shall give tribute."

47. *Maldon,* 1. 185–201, "Then those who did not want to be there fled from the battle. There the children of Odda became the first in flight, Godric from battle, and abandoned the good man who had many times given him horses. He leaped on that war-horse which belonged to his lord, which it was not right for him to mount on, and his brothers with him, both galloped, Godwine and Godwig, did not stay for battle, but fled the battle and sought out the woods, flew to that shelter, and protected their lives. And many more than was honorable, if they then recalled all the favors that he had done for them, the experienced warriors. Just as Offa had said to him earlier that very day on the meadbench, when they had a meeting, that many there spoke bravely, that would not endure in turn at need."

48. *Maldon,* 1. 202–208, "Then the leader of this people was fallen, Aethelraed's earl. All of the household retainers saw, that their lord lay dead. Then the valiant thanes went forth, undaunted men hastened eagerly. They all wished for one of two things: to give up their life, or to avenge their beloved lord."

49. *Maldon,* 1. 237b–243, "Godric, the cowardly son of Odda, has betrayed all of us. Too many men thought, when he rode on the horse, on that splendid steed, that it was our lord. Because of that, the people on the field were divided, the shield wall broken. May his actions fail, that he here so many men put to flight."

50. See pages 128, 129 above.

51. *Maldon,* 1. 265–272, "The hostage began to eagerly help them. He was from Northumbria, of bold kin. He did not at all shrink from the battle-play, but often shot forth arrows; sometimes he pierced shields, sometimes he tore men. All the while he dealt out wounds to many, while he could wield weapons."

52. *Maldon,* 1. 216, 217; 220–223a, "I will make my nobility known to all, that I was of a mighty family from Mercia…. The nobles of that people shall not reproach me that I would go from this levy, seek out shelter, now that my lord lies low, hewn at battle."

53. *Beowulf*, 1. 473–476a, "It is a sorrow to me in my heart to say to any man, what Grendel has with his hatred has brought about, shame in Heorot."

54. *Beowulf*, 1. 237–240a, 247b–254a, "What are you, armored men, dressed in mail, who have come bringing a tall ship this way over the sea-road, here over the waves…. I have never seen a better lord on earth than is one of yours, the man in war-gear; he is not a man made good by weapons, unless his countenance lies, his glorious appearance. Now I want to know your origins before you go further, spies on the Danish land."

55. *Chronicle*, A, f. 25r, v, "…in Breohtric's day first came three ships of Northmen of Hordaland and the reeve rode to there and he wanted to drive them to the king's town because he did not know what they were and they killed him there." The matter is the same in B, C, D, and E.

56. Roberta Frank, "Skaldic Poetry and the Dating of *Beowulf*" *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. Colin Chase (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 126.

57. *Beowulf*, 1. 862, 863, "They did not reproach their lord at all, gracious Hrothgar, for that was a good king."

58. *Beowulf*, 1. 4–6a, 65–67a, "Often Scyld Scefing harassed enemies, took mead-benches from many peoples, terrified lords…then was Hrothgar given success in war, fame in battle, so that his retainers eagerly heard him, until his group of young retainers grew, a great band."

59. *Beowulf*, 1. 18–25, "Beowulf was famous, his glory spread widely…. So should a young man do good works, give splendid gifts while in his father's house, so that companions will remain with him when war comes. A man will prosper anywhere through praiseworthy deeds."

60. *Beowulf*, 1. 30, 31, "…when, as the friend of the Scyldings, he ruled with his words, the beloved leader governed."

61. *Beowulf*, 1. 64–65a, "*Þa* waes Hroðgare heresped gyfen,/wiges weordmynd, pat him his winemagas/georne hyrdon," translated above.

62. *Beowulf*, 1. 79, "he who ruled widely with his words."

63. See page 120 above.

64. *Beowulf*, 1. 146b–153, "It was a long time, twelve winters' trouble endured, that the friend of the Scyldings suffered sorrow, much grief. After that it became known openly to the children of men, through mournful songs, that Grendel fought for a long time with Hrothgar, did many wicked deeds."

65. *Beowulf*, 1. 318b–319 "I must go back to the sea and keep watch against hostile peoples."

66. *Chronicle*, A, f. 7r, "King Vortigern gave them land in the southeast of this land on condition that they should fight with the Picts. They then fought with the Picts and had the victory wherever they went. Then they sent to the Angles and ordered them to send for more people and bid them tell about the worthlessness of the Britons and the richness of the land."

67. *Beowulf*, "Nu sceal sincwego ond syrdgifu/eall ewelwyn eowrum cyne/lufen alicgean lonrihtes mot/paere maegburge monna aeghwylc/idel hweorfan syppan aepelingas/feorran gefricgean felam eowerne/domleasan daed" (1. 2884–2891a). "Now must the receiving of treasure, the giving of swords, all comfort and love of homes end for your people. Every man of your kindred will be deprived of his right to land when foreign nobles hear of your flight, your shameful deed."

68. *Beowulf*, 1. 2910b–2913a. "Now the people must expect war, when the king's fall becomes widely known to the Franks and Frisians."

69. *Beowulf*, 1. 2444–2449, "So is it hard that an old man should endure that his son should ride young on the gallows. Then he may tell a story, a song of sorrow, when his son hangs for the joy of the raven, and he, old and experienced, can not support him, give any help."

70. *Beowulf*, 1. 642–644a, "Then there was again as before powerful words spoken in the hall, the people in joy, the noise of a victorious folk."

71. *Beowulf,* 1. 270–279, "We have a great errand to the glorious one, the king of the Danes. I do not think anything needs to be kept secret: you know whether it is so, as we have truly heard, that against the Scyldings some enemy, I know not what, a doer of loathsome deeds in the dark night, shows strange slaughter, evil, and injury. I may openly advise Hrothgar, how he, good and wise, may overcome the foe."
72. Interestingly, this reworking is in response to the first diplomatic misstep in Beowulf's visit. When he portrays himself as the sole savior of the defeated Danish, Hrothgar strikes back with a pointed reminder of Beowulf's obligations.
73. This same pattern manifests itself in the indignation experienced by Beowulf about the dragon's attack on his own hall. *Beowulf,* 1. 2324–2327b, "Pa waes Beowulf broga gecyþed/snude to soþe paet his sylfes ham/bolda selest brynewylmum mealt,/gifstol Geatas." ("Then it was made quickly known to Beowulf that his own home, the best of halls, the giftthrone of the Geats, was melted in waves of flame.") The association of the leader's home with the symbolic center of the Geats echoes the earlier description of Hrothgar's hall.
74. The use of a representative building for a people would have been a familiar one to the audience. For example, in a manuscript from Bury St. Edmunds, depicting the maryrdom of their founder, a group of Danish ships surround England, depicted as a single fortress with a small amount of land surrounding it.
75. *Beowulf,* 1. 144–146a, 154b–161a, "So Grendel ruled and battled against right, one against all, until the best of halls stood empty…. He did not want peace with any of the Danish men, would not cease his deadly hostility, or pay compensation. No man had any reason to expect generous repayment at the slayer's hands. The monster was relentless against the young and old retainers, the death-shadow lay in wait and ambushed them."
76. *Chronicle,* E, f. 30r, "In this year [865] the heathens settled at Thanet, and made peace with the people of Kent, and the people of Kent promised them treasure for that peace, and under that promise, the invading army stole away by night and ravaged all eastern Kent." The matter is the same in B, C, D, and A.
77. *Chronicle,* E, f. 31v , 32r, "In this year [876] the invading army stole from the West-Saxon army into Wareham and afterwards the king made peace with the raiding army and they gave him the worthiest hostages who were men next to the king, and they swore oaths on the holy ring, that they were never willing to do before to any realm, that they would quickly go from his kingdom, and under that oath, the army stole away by night into Exeter." The matter is the same in A, B, C, and D. See also for the entries for 877, 878 and 917.
78. *Chronicle,* E, f. 40r, "In this year [993] Bamburg was destroyed and a great amount of plunder taken there. And after that the raiding-army came to the mouth of the Humber and did much evil there both in Lindsey and in Northumbria; Then a very great army was gathered and when they should have come together then the leaders of the army were the first in flight: That was Fraena and Godwine and Frithugist." The matter is the same in A, B, C and D.
79. *Chronicle,* E, f. 40v, 41r, "In this year [1001] the raiding-army came to the mouth of the Exe and from there went to the town and determinedly attacked it but the people there stoutly withstood them. Then they went around that land and did what they were used to: killed and burned. Then they assembled a great levy of Devon people and Somerset people and they came together at Pinhoe; and then as soon as they met together the English army fled and they made great slaughter there and rode over that land and ever afterwards it was worse than before and the raiding army carried off a vast amount of plunder to the ships and they went into the isle of Wight and there they went around just as they pleased and no one at all withstood them, either with a ship army or a land army. It was then in every way a heavy time, since they never retreated from their evils." The matter is the same in A, B, C, and D.
80. See page 129.

81. *Chronicle,* E, f. 39v, "Then the king and all his advisors decided that the ships worth anything should be brought to London and the king gave the command of the army to Aldorman Aelfric and Earl Thored and Bishop Aelfstan, and Bishop Aescwig to lead, that they should try to trap the raiding-army outside. Then Aldorman Aelfric sent and commanded that the raiding army should be warned and then the night before the day they were supposed to have come together, he stole away from the army by night, to his great disgrace, and the raiding army escaped then."

82. This comment is peculiar to *Chronicle* E; *Chronicle* F more obliquely notes the depth of the betrayal: "Ac Aelfric ealder man. an of wam pa se cyng haefde maest trupe to. het gewarnian pone here… [But Aldorman Aelfric, one of those that the king most trusted, ordered the raiding army to be warned…]"

83. *Beowulf,* 1. 189–193, "So in these troubled times the son of Halfdane was constantly disturbed, nor could the wise one change for the better; that affliction was too long, loathsome and continual that had fallen upon his people, hostility and violence and the greatest of night terrors."

84. *Beowulf,* 1. 480–487a, "Many times, drunk with beer, they would boast, warriors over the ale-cup, that they would await in the beer-hall Grendel's attack with grim edges. Then in the morning was this meadhall spattered with gore, when day lightened all the ale benches steeped in blood, a blood-stained hall."

85. *Chronicle* E, f. 25v, 26r, "Her waeron rede forebecna cumene ofer Norðanhymbraland. 7 pat folc earmlice bregdon; paere waeron ormete lig raescas, 7 waeron ge seopene fyrene dracan on pam lyfte fleogende. Ƿam tacnum sona fyligde mycel hunger. 7 litel aefter pam paes ilcan geares on. vi. Idus Ianr earmlice heðenra manna hergung aðiligode Godes cyrican. in Lindisfarena ee. Ƿurh reaflac. 7 man sleht." ["In this year [793] were terrible portents come over the land of Northumbria and horribly frightened that people; there was lightning and fiery dragons seen flying in the air and right after these omens there was a great famine, and soon after that in the same year on January 6 the raids of heathen men miserably ravaged God's church in Lindesfarne by looting and manslaughter."] The matter is the same in F, B, C, and D.

86. *Beowulf,* 1. 2596–2599, "Nealles him on heape handgesteallan,/aeðelinga bearn ymbe gestodon/hildecystum, ac hy on holt bugan,/ealdre burgan. [Nor did his comrades, the sons of lords, stand around him in a group, but they fled to the woods, saved their lives.]"

87. *Beowulf,* 1. 2633–2639, 2646–2650a, "I remember that time, when we drank mead, that we promised our lord in the beerhall, he who gave us these rings, that we would pay him back for these war arms, the swords and hard helmets, when he was in need. Now is the day come, that our lord greatly needs good warriors. Let us go to help our lord in this terrible fire."

88. *Beowulf,* 1. 2864–2874a, 2876–2883. "So, he may say, he who will speak truth, that our lord, who gave you these treasures, the war-gear that you're standing in here, when he on the mead bench often gave out to the hall-sitters, helmets and mail, the strongest things our lord could find near or far, that he completely threw away that armor, when war came upon him. The king of the people had no need to brag about his battle-companions…. I could give him little protection in the fight, but even so beyond my power I was able to help my kinsman. The deadly foe was ever the weaker as I struck with the sword, the fire welled out more weakly. There were too few defenders around our king, when trouble was upon him."

89. *Chronicle,* E, f. 40v, "In this year [998] the raiding-army turned eastward again into the Frome mouth and there went up along as widely as they wanted into Dorset. And often there was an army put together against them, but as soon as they should have met, something always started a retreat and the Danes always at the end had the victory. "The matter is the same in B, C, and D. See also the entries for 865, 917 and 999.

90. *Deor,* 1. 1–7, "Weland the brave earl knew the vengeance of woman, suffered hardship, continual affliction, winter-cold exile after Nithad put him in distress, weak-limbed and unhappy man. That passed, so may this." (*Deor,* ed. Kemp Malone, Methuen Old English Library A. Poetic Texts 2 (London: Methuen, 1949).

91. *Beowulf,* 1. 1–3; 18–23, "Listen! We have heard of the glorious feats of the Spear-Danes in days past, how the lords did brave deeds…. Beowulf was renowned, his fame spread wide. Scyld's offspring in Sweden. So should a young man do good deeds, give splendid gifts while in his father's house, so that in old age they will stand by him, dear companions when war comes."

92. *Beowulf,* 1. 1706b–1712, "You will be a lasting consolation to your people, a warrior to help them. Heremod was not so…he did not become a delight to them, but a slaughter and death to the Danish people."

93. Edward B.Irving Jr., "The Feud: Ravenswood," *A Reading of Beowulf* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) 184.

94. *Beowulf,* 1. 86–91, 99–101, 103b–107a, "Then the fierce spirit painfully endured sorrow, he who waited in the darkness, that he each day heard joy, noise in the hall. There was the sound of the harp. Scops sang sweetly. He who knew told the creation of earth from farback reckoning…. So the retainers lived in joy, blissfully, until that one began, a fiend from hell performed wicked deeds…he had held the moors, the fens and wood-shelters, the home of the race of monsters, unhappy man, occupied all the while, since the Lord had condemned those in the race of Cain."

95. *Beowulf,* 1. 2047–2056, "Do you recognize, my friend, the sword, the rare iron, that your father bore into battle, the last time under a helmet, where the Danes slew him, the fierce Scyldings held the battle-field, after Withergyld lay dead, after the fall of warriors. Now here some son of his murderer walks on the hall floor, exulting in the weapon, boasts of the murder, and bears the heirloom, that you by right should wield."

96. *Beowulf,* 1. 2057–2060, 2063–2067, "So he reminds and provokes at every opportunity with wounding words until that time comes, that for his father's deed the woman's thane after the sword's bite lies stained with blood…. Then will the lords' oaths on both sides be broken after deadly hate wells up in Ingeld, and wife-love will be colder after the seething of sorrow."

97. *Beowulf,* 1. 2067–2069a, "Therefore I do not think the Heatho-bards loyal, their part in the peace faithful, or their friendship fast."

CHAPTER 4
Caxton, Chaucer, and the Creation of an
Auctor

In a famous passage from *1984,* Winston reluctantly throws away a photograph contradicting the state's formation of its own history. The act is horrifying in its depiction of a totalitarian regime, but comforting on a larger scale. The photo is presented before it is destroyed. Its status as a guarantor of historical truth remains untouched by its physical destruction. The photo also reminds us of the historicity of the totalitarian state itself, that its very anxiety to recreate its past testifies to its vulnerability. What is often overlooked here is the parallel between the two products of mechanical production: the photo and the newspaper article Winston is revising. In a kind of analogous doublethink, we trust a historical artifact even as the text insists upon the instability of all such evidence.

This image is a nice analogy for the investigations into early Chaucer publications. The majority of critics eagerly seize upon the editions in which Chaucer is already a familiar and stable *auctor*. These editions, as historical artifacts, satisfy a desire for origins while maintaining an authorial figure safely removed from historicity and its dangers.

The importance of early printed works by Caxton, de Worde, and Pynson in constructing an authorial Chaucer has been completely overlooked by critical emphasis on the later editions of Thynne and Speght. [2] These two later editors, however, were not creating an author, but expanding upon readings of Chaucer already put into circulation by earlier printed editions. By the time Thynne published his edition of the *Works* in 1532, Caxton's editions and reprints had been circulating for fifty years, Pynson's for forty-five, and de Worde's for fifteen. The editions of Thynne and Speght were hardly revolutionary. They inherited a model of authorial construction and an audience with a half-century history of accepting this paradigm. It is Caxton, at the boundary between manuscript culture and print technology, who begins the widespread dissemination of the authorial figure.

In his first edition of *The Canterbury Tales,* Caxton forges the first link between the medieval poet and the early modern *auctor*. Wishing for his printed work to be treated with the respect accorded to *de luxe* manuscripts, [3] Caxton stresses the innate excellence of his subject matter:

> we ought to gyue a synguler laude vnto that noble & grete philosopher Gefferey chaucer the whiche for his ornate wrytyng in our tongue may wel haue the name of a laureate poete/For to fore that he by hys labour enbelysshyd/ornated and made faire our englisshe/in thys Royame was had rude speche & Incongrue/as yet it appiereth by olde bookes/whych at thys day ought not to haue place ne be compared emong ne to hys

> beauteuous volumes/and aournate writynges…he comprehended hys maters in short/quyck and hye sentences/ eschewing prolyxyte/castyng away the chaf of superfluyte/and shewyng the pyked grayn of sentence/vtteryd by crafty and sugred eloquence. [4]

In marketing Chaucer, Caxton appealed to the humanist ideals whose value in England was on the rise. Caxton's Chaucer is not only a philosopher in himself, but also one whose writings fall under the approved Aristotelian dictum of instruction and delight. The "pyked grayn of sentence" is sweetened by the poet's "sugred eloquence." [5] Chaucer, then, can stand beside classical writers and Continental poets as the "English Vergil" and the native Petrarch. Again, in his epilogue to *Boece,* Caxton cites Chaucer as the writer who has made England's language a thing of enduring beauty:

> And furthermore I desire & require you that of your charite ye wold praye for the soule of the sayd worshipful mann Geffrey Chaucer,/first translatour of this sayde booke into englissh and enbelissher in making the sayd langage ornate & fayr whiche shal endure perpetuelly. [6]

These two passages summarize not only the desire for a past author, but the difficulty of constructing such a figure. Caxton's prose is barely able to contain its multiple internal conflicts. Praise for Chaucer's language grates against condemnation for its source; assurances of its eternal value rest uneasily on its creator's dust. Chaucer himself is both the creator of meaning and a text whose conclusion depends upon the collaboration of pious readers. In these first printed works, we can see a tense summary of the obstacles confronting the creation of Chaucer.

To begin with, early publishers were caught in a dilemma. England had to have a laudable series of works from the past, but these works had to accomplish two functions. First, they had to reflect continuity between the past and present, so that the sixteenth century could "recognize" its younger self two centuries earlier. Second, they had to erase the historicity of the works, so that culture could be founded upon immutable truths. As Anderson notes, "[i]f nation-states are new and historical, the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past." [7] The same model can be applied to the nation's chosen foundational literature. The Lancastrian political state is to be expressed through the carefully forgotten creation of literary ancestors. To fulfill these two functions, Chaucer-as-*auctor* must be a medieval author who transcends the medieval to become "timeless," as the idea is defined by sixteenth-century ideals.

Added to this complexity was another problem. The construction of a literary genealogy was an anxious process, an activity that had to be carefully controlled. As Richard Helgerson has argued, "early modern" culture continually defined itself against an abjected "Other": the acorn-eating Goth associated with the Middle Ages. [8] To avoid any possible acquaintance between Chaucer and the Goths, the newly published Chaucerian texts framed him as an early champion of Renaissance values shining forth from an abyss of Gothic barbarity. The first imprints by William Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde, and Richard Pynson introduced a "Chaucer" selected from his surroundings. Caxton praises Chaucer's rescue of the English language for posterity.

> he by hys labour enbelysshyd/ornated and made faire our englisshe/in thys Royame was had rude speche & Incongrue/as yet it appiereth by olde bookes/ whych at thys day ought not to haue place ne be compared emong ne to hys beauteuous volumes/and aournate writynges. [9]

Caxton attempts to place linguistic barbarity safely in the past, but the very methods of cultural transmission—the "olde bookes" of Chaucer's writings—also preserve the undesirable aspects of the Middle Ages. To minimize this conflict, Caxton, Pynson, and de Worde routinely modernized older terms and introduced Latinate spellings to create a Chaucer who was "ahead of his time."

Second, these early editors and publishers had to contend with a manuscript tradition that placed greater emphasis on the reader's role in making meaning. Mary Carruthers has shown the ways in which textual authority was produced by a series of readerly glosses upon a writer, rather than lying inherent in the writerly text itself. [10] Elizabeth Bryan argues that the medieval idea of writing did not make sharp distinctions between the acts of writing, copying and compiling. [11] The physical evidence of manuscripts bears out the importance of the reader in making sense of texts. Early manuscripts were compiled according to various agendas: the needs of a specific audience, a particular interest in a subject, or an interest in a generic category. The early fifteenth-century manuscript London British Library MS Add. 18631, for example, contains a chronicle history, a popular romance and the Latin text of Genesis, materials grouped together by a common interest in origins, but varying in language, genre and date. This same pattern obtained for manuscripts containing Chaucerian texts. For example, the manuscript Wiltshire Longleat House MS 258 containing *Anelida and Arcite* compiles it with *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and *The Assembly of Ladies,* forming an anthology of love complaints. [12]

I want to stress here that it was not the innovation of print culture itself that was responsible for the formation of the author. The introduction of a technology is usually accompanied with a format designed to smooth the transition from one form to another. The use of the word "horsepower" to describe engine capability and the continued dependence, within the computer market, of hardcopy symbols of writing and filing demonstrates how slowly a culture acclimates itself to different models. Similarly, early printed materials were designed to look as much like manuscripts as possible. Typefaces reproduced the Flemish Batarde of fifteenth-century deluxe manuscripts. Spaces were left in the printed text for rubrication. Wynkyn de Worde's own financial success depended largely upon a manuscript tradition of reader compilation: the majority of his texts were small pieces, easily assimilable into individual miscellanies. What I want to focus on, rather, is the difficulty of constructing an originary *auctor* and single voice from a tradition that stressed multivocal texts and collaborative authority.

RIFFS ON FAME'S TRUMPET: EARLY EDITIONS OF *THE HOUSE OF FAME*

Sufficeth me. as I were ded

That no wight have my name in honde.
I wot myself best how y stonde;
For what I drye, or what I thynke,
I wil myselven al hyt drynke,
Certeyn, for the more part,
As fer forth as I kan myn art. [13]

Post obitum, Caxton voluit te vivere cura Willelmi, Chaucer clara poeta, tui. Nam tua non solum compressit opuscula formis Has quoque sed laudes iussit his esse tuas. (After your death, renowned poet Chaucer, the care of William Caxton was that you should live, for not only did he print your words in type but he also ordered these your praises to be placed here.) [14]

In *The House of Fame,* "Geffrey" the narrator/writer denies the social nature of textual memory, insisting on an isolated interaction with his art. However, his declaration is made both within a narrative about the dissemination of texts, and as part of a text meant to be read and circulated among the Ricardian court. In response to this disingenuous dismissal of fame, Caxton takes "his name in honde," relying upon the technological advances of the press to preserve the art and reputation of the *auctor*. In both cases, however, the writers are uneasily aware of the arbitrary nature of textual transmission and the editorial scaffolding necessary to support the construction of an author. This problem is made acute when two of England's earliest printers, William Caxton and Richard Pynson, tackle the most self-conscious of Chaucerian [15] texts, *The House of Fame*.

The first part of this chapter section provides a brief overview of Caxton's prologues—noting both his awareness of editorial praxis and his concerns about its consequences—before turning to the more specific problem of the Chaucerian prologues and epilogues. In the process, I examine the way in which Caxton's privileging of *res* over *verba* shifts when applied to Chaucer, whose specific language is given the transferable quality and didactic value of an underlying *sentens*. [16] From there, I turn to what I consider the central problem in Caxton's publication of *The House of Fame:* [17] when you have constructed an *auctor,* what do you do when the *auctor* himself launches a full-scale assault on the concepts of *sentens* and *auctorite*? The final section focuses on Caxton's own editorial intrusion into the work as a self-conscious response to the issues raised by the narrator. To create an authorial Chaucer, Caxton exploits the very collaborative processes he damns in manuscripts. His edition of *HF* is a recombinative product of his own created "Chaucerian" template and the issues raised by his source manuscript. This recombination in turn, however, calls attention to the collaborative process and thus the historicity of Chaucer-as-*auctor*. When Richard Pynson, King's Printer to the Henrician court and the publisher most closely allied to monarchic concerns, issues his edition, he carefully excises any evidence of the collaboration to create a seamless link between the texts of Caxton and "Chaucer." I hope by this analysis to provide a corrective to the critical neglect of Caxton's edition, [18] and demonstrate the

need for further study of these early printers, who were poised at the transition between scriptorium and press.

Caxton's voiced concerns about his editions and publications have been critically dismissed as extended humility *topoi* or publisher's "blurbs." N.F.Blake, for example, has intelligently refocused attention on Caxton as a self-conscious publisher and arbitror of style. His discussion of Caxton's prose, however, tends to conflate anachronistically Caxton's tentative steps to establish a publication model with the professional caution and experienced opportunism of a modern publishing house. Thus, the interpretive and editorial issues Caxton confronts in particular works are minimized by Blake's reductive definition of them as "marketing strategies"'"; the hesitant prose that results is cited as evidence of Caxton's lack of linguistic mastery, rather than a response to a problem with language inherent in the works themselves.

To view Caxton's prose in the light of fifteenth-century English book production, however, is to allow a critical shift from Caxton's supposed idiosyncrasies and pragmatic stratagems to his entangled relationship with the reading public. In 1476, when he opened the first printshop in England, the number of *scriptoria* operating in London was roughly twenty-six, with an estimated yearly output of a thousand manuscripts. Caxton's press, which could print runs of several hundred copies, could match that quantity in two weeks. Moreover, his one or two compositors could do the work of hundreds of scribes. In short, Caxton could produce and disseminate texts on a previously unimaginable scale, and could make those texts available, as he put it, "good chepe." This reduction in cost put Caxton's productions well within the reach of the literate middle class, a group previously restricted from the costly circles of aristocratic manuscript circulation. This range and volume had three important effects on reading and editorial practices. It dispersed a great number of homogenous volumes of the same work, it closed off the texts from the circulation necessary to foster collaborative production and it burdened Caxton with the additional responsibility of "teaching" the middle and upper middle classes what texts to choose, how to approach them, what they were to learn and who they were to emulate. As opposed to the incremental authority granted to the glossed manuscript, Caxton's editions would have to promote a new and different claim to authority, that of the collated, reduced, and "standard" issue of a work.

Caxton himself voices an awareness of the immensity of the change and its attendant responsibilities; the epilogue to the first book printed in England, the *Recuyll,* marks the difference between manuscript and print:

> [it] is not wreton with penne and ynke as other bokes ben/to thende that euery man may haue them attones/ffor all the bookes of this storye…were begonne in oon day and also fynysshed in oon day. [19]

As a large-scale distributor to "every man," Caxton was acutely conscious of his texts' determinative power, a force moving inexorably from the printshop to the corners of the realm. In his edition of Cicero, Caxton presents himself as a political advisor for the safety of the commonweal:

> 'I aduysedly have seen/ouer redde and considered the noble. honeste/and uertuous mater necessarily requysite vnto men stepte in age/and to yong

> men to lerne/… And the mater and commynycacioun of this said book…is
> moche behoefful to be knowen to every man. vertuous & wel-disposed, of
> what-some euer eage resonable that he be. Thenne by cause I haue not
> seen ony of the same here to fore I haue…put it in enprynte &
> dilygently…corrected it/to th'entente/that noble/vertuous, and wel
> disposed men myght haue it to loke on & to vnderstonde it. And this book
> is not requysite ne eke conuenyent for euery rude and symple man…but
> for noble/wyse/& grete lordes gentilmen and marchauntes that haue seen
> & dayly ben occupyed in maters towchyng the publyque weal' [20]

Caxton's paragraph nicely summarizes three concerns that continue to inform his prose:
the desired relationship between literature and "commun profyt," the reception of his
books by a diverse array of readers, and the means by which these readers may be
brought to an interpretive consensus, one Caxton sees as vital for the political health of
the realm. The textual market becomes, in Caxton's prose, the medium to reform the
economic, political, and judicial spheres. Caxton intervenes between the text and the
reader, uncovering and re-presenting the desired *sentens*. The text intervenes between the
reader and the public, correcting the individual members for the good of the whole. The
corrected reader is then in the position to beneficently direct the flow of goods or statutes
throughout the realm. The link between textual and official bodies is made even more
explicit in Caxton's prologue to the *Caton,* a text he dedicates to the City of London
itself, as a cure for its degenerative illness:

> I haue translated it oute of frensshe in to Englysshe…whiche I presente
> vnto the Cyte of london…. For as me semeth it is of grete nede/ by cause I
> haue knowen it in my yong age moche more welthy prosperous & rycher
> than it is at this day/And the cause is that here is almost none/ that
> entendeth to the comyn wele but only euery man for his singuler prouffyte
> [21]

This model, however, requires that the diverse readers of this replicated text produce a
common reading, a *desideratum* that assumes the existence of a retrievable truth in the
text and the possibility of its linguistic and mechanical reproduction. In his attempts to
formulate a standard style to suit the standardization of texts, Caxton justified his editions
and translations with the traditional concept of a retrievable meaning, an underlying truth
existing beyond the verbal veils:

> Saynt Paul doctour of veryte sayth to vs that al thynges that been reduced
> by wrytyng/ben wryton to our doctryne/And Boece maketh mencion that
> the helthe of euery persone procedeth dyuercely/Thenne sythe it is soo
> that the cristen feyth is affermed and corrobered by the doctours of holy
> chryche/Neuertheless the thynges passed dyuersly reduced to
> remembraunce/engendre in vs correction of vnlauful lyf. [22]

For Caxton's purposes, however, the things "dyuersly reduced to remembraunce" require
yet a further reduction to a common style that will most easily convey the meaning to the

greatest number of readers. In so doing, he is forced to exclude regions and peoples from the linguistic "commons":

> certaynly it is harde to playse euery man/by cause of dyuersite & chaunge of langage… And thus bytwene playn rude/& curyous I stande abasshed. but in my Iudgemente/the comyn termes that be dayli vsed ben lyghter to be vnderstonde than the olde and auncyent englysshe/… And yf ony mon wyll entermete in redyng of hit and fyndeth suche termes that he cannot vnder-stonde, late hym goo rede and lerne vyrgyll/or the pystles of ouyde… For this booke is not for e[u]ery rude [and] vnconnyng man to see/but to clerkys and very gentylman that vnderstande gentylnes and scyence. [23]

Caxton attempts to mediate between regional differences—"Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte. egges or eyren?" [24] —but his "comyn" terms only serve to create a fictive temporal "commonplace," removed from "auncyent" and illegible English. This rhetorical sidestep masks the reflexive quality of Caxton's prose: it creates the community it purports to describe. Those outside the Latinate circle were faced with two choices: learn the newly standard English of the printed material, or find a way to change the "egges" back into "eyren." The textual evidence hints at the determinism and limitations of Caxton's project. Of the manuscripts copied from Caxton's editions, most are translations of the standardized texts into various regional dialects. [25]

Caxton's prologues and epilogues demonstrate a marked concern about the ability of language to convey truth, about the independence of content from style.

With Chaucerian texts, however, he is on firmer ground, since it is the conflation of style and *sentens* that produce Chaucerian "authority." Among the "clerkes, poetes and historiographs" praised for the *content* of their writing, Chaucer's virtue lies in both style and content:

> for [Chaucer's] ornate wrytyng in our tongue may wel haue the name of a laureate poete/For to fore that he by hys labour enbelysshyd, ornated and made faire oure englisshe/in thys Royame was had rude speche and Incongrue [26]
>   shewyng the pyked grayn of sentence/vtteryd by crafty and sugred eloquence. [27]

A close look at the passage reveals that Chaucer-as-*auctor* is the means by which Caxton will attempt to forge a common language for the realm. The inclusive phrases "oure tongue" and "oure Englisshe" mask the difference in tongues noted in the previous prologue. Caxton's publication and propagation of Chaucer is designed to put into material practice the exclusion of "rude speche." In his publishing policy, Caxton was as much forging as following popular taste. He deliberately ignored the market for alliterative works in the vernacular, preferring even the labor of translating foreign works to printing native material he considered aesthetically lacking. [28] In Chaucerian texts he found a native English poet whose work was sufficiently close to Continental models to be an *exemplum* for the new standard English. This propagation appears again in the

epilogue to *HF,* in which Chaucerian style appears as the aesthetic standard by which to judge other writers—"For of hym alle other haue borowed syth and taken/in alle theyr wel sayeng and wrytyng"—and in *The Boke of Curtesy* in which it appears as much a part of manners as personal hygiene. Paradoxically, it was precisely Caxton's conflation of *verba* and *res* that allowed general Chaucerian style to be separated from its particular content and transferred into the program for standardization.

In order for this program to succeed, the originary standard itself must possess a certain degree of authority. Caxton's discussion of the second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* gives a new view of textual authority as the unchanged words of the author, rather than the collaborative *auctorite* of the circulated manuscript. [29] Caxton cites this very collaborative practice as the stain upon the first edition:

> I wold at ones endeuoyre me to enprynte it agayn/for to satysfye thauctour/ where as to fore by ygnoraunce I erryd in hurtyng and dyffamyng his book in dyuerce places in settyng in somme thynges that he neuer sayd ne made. [30]

In contrast to the separation between author and text discussed by Carruthers, [31] the author here is a ghostly presence floating behind the text and inextricably linked to it. Any wound given the book scars the author, who must be given satisfaction. The only way for Chaucer's style to become an authoritative disseminated standard was to bind the text to the fantasy of an individual originary author.

With this strict editorial agenda in mind, Caxton's own recombinative addition to *The House of Fame* textual family becomes the more surprising. It is the only Chaucerian text in which he intruded upon the content itself, reproducing the very fault he blasted in earlier manuscripts: "settyng in some thyngs that he neuer sayd ne made." Since there is no retrievable pragmatic reason governing Caxton's change of policy, we can only assume that there was something in the poem itself that provoked this editorial response.

Recent articles have discussed later Renaissance editors' discomfort with *HF*. As Carol Martin notes, "[f]or editors who regarded Chaucer not only as the English Homer who legitimated literary production in English but also as an author whose work was especially compatible with the religio-political aims and authority of Henry VIII, *The House of Fame* posed a particularly awkward problem." [32] Martin and others, however, focus almost exclusively on the later editions of Thynne and Speght, [33] and gloss over the editorial efforts made by Caxton and Pynson. These early printers laid the foundation for editing *HF*. Beginning with Caxton's edition in 1486 and noting the revisions Pynson made to the edition sixty years later, we can trace the changes from a late-medieval printshop still invested in ideas of collaborative authority and a Henrician King's printer who cannot publish a multivocal text. Before turning to the printers' works, I want to look at the places in *HF* that would have been particularly worrisome to a printer such as Caxton.

In *HF,* Geffrey the narrator is forced to confront many of the issues that plagued Caxton the printer: the ambiguity inherent in texts, the inevitably reductive nature of editorial decisions, and the power of mass reproduction.

In contrast to the heuristic texts in *The Parliament of Fowls*—"And out of olde bokes, in good feyth,/Cometh al this newe science that men lere" [34] —the narrator's books in *HF* are a source of social, political and linguistic sterility. As the eagle notes to Geffrey:

> *thou hast no tydynges*
> *Of Loves folk yf they be glade,*
> *Ne of noght elles that God made;*
> *And noght oonly for fer contree*
> *That there no tydynge cometh to thee,*
> *But of thy verray neyhebores,*
> *That duellen almost at thy dores,*
> *Thou herist neyther that ne this;*
> *For when thy labour doon al ys,…*
> *Thou goost hom to thy hous anon,*
> *And, also domb as any stoon,*
> *Thou sittest at another book.* [35]

Amidst the teeming swarm of lists in *HF,* this cluster of erasures—in which the image is conjured up only to be destroyed—is only repeated one other place in the poem: in the description of the textless wasteland of lines 480–491. [36] These two parallel passages demonstrate the same necessary negative capability seen in Caxton's prologues: we cannot and yet must trust the text to hold a meaning and a message. [37] The same hermeneutic instability appears in material form in Geffrey's description of the pillars. Of all the texts lining the hallway, he singles out for attack Britain's own bedtime story, the fiction of its origin. The story of Troy is held up only by a shaky tension between discrepant *auctorites* and the hollow pillar of Lollius. [38] Chaucer displays the construction of authority in a dynamic reversal of early modern authorial amnesia and ties it to a favorite fiction of national origins. Interrogation of authorizing processes appears as well in the relationship between the prologue's opening books One and Two. In the first prologue, Geffrey offers an array of interpretive possibilities. This array is reduced in the second opening, where Geffrey's second presentation of the dream performatively enacts the process of editorial decision.

The first prologue confronts the reader with a chaotic text. Under the general term "drem" Geffrey gives the reader a deliberately mixed list of categories within which there is no way to privilege one definition over another. Any recoverable rneaning is further deferred by the temporal *impossibilia* placed on interpretation: one can only determine an "illusion" from an "oracle" by a retrospective process of comparing narrative with experience, a process denied by the boundaries of the dream-vision itself. Even this forbidden process of interpretation, however, could not be affirmed or transferred. In Chaucer's invocation, the meaning of dreams is produced by the particular dreamer's constitution or circumstances. The only mention of a possible illuminating truth is strangled at birth, linked to the cumbersome and opaque flesh of the dreamer:

yf the soule of propre kynde
Be so parfit, as men fynde,
that yt forwot that ys to come
and that hyt warneth alle and some
Of everych of her aventures
Be avisions or be figures,
but that oure flessh ne hath no myght
to understonde hyt aryght
For hyt is warned to derkly. [39]

From an impossible proliferation of meanings, Chaucer uses his own "figures" to impose an evaluation and interpretation upon the dream:

Now herkeneth every maner man
That Englissh understonde kan
And listeth of my drem to lere,
For now at erste shul ye here
So sely an avisyon. [40]

This second prologue identifies language as a fit medium for *sentens,* (so long as one understands the language of transmission, one can "lere" the meaning) and subsequently demands a retrospective re-reading of the dream from this position. We are now hearing the dream "at erste" and receiving the way to interpret it: from the string of evaluative judgments and categorical definitions, the dream is finally fixed as a "sely avisyon." Geffrey's narration substitutes for the authorizing and verifying experience that would prove a dream prophetic and for the textual authorities that would verify such dreams' existence. The famous prophetic visions of other figures are brushed aside in three lines: "Isaye, ne Scipion;/ne kyng Nabugodonosor,/ne Pharoo, Turnus, ne Elacanor,/ne mette such a drem as this." [41]

Reduction of meaning, reproduction of narration and dislocation of authority also free dreaming from its individual specificity: this "avisyon" is available to "every man." The very process of reduction, however, points to the poverty of interpretive possibility offered in the second prologue when compared to the first and notes the inadequacy of words as a medium for fixed meaning. From the list of terms and evaluations, Chaucer has chosen two ambiguous within themselves. "Sely" contains a range of nuances from "blessed" to "insignificant;" "avisyon" can be either prophecy or delusion. Within the chosen terms lurks the same confusion present in the larger array, this time conveyed within the equally "derk" figures of English. Chaucer's second prologue presents a drastic editing of the first, without accomplishing the type of interpretive consensus it implicitly promises. For both the narrator and Caxton, to edit is to become aware of the limitations of language. Neither "egges" or "eyren" can adequately stand for the reality it

is supposed to represent. Each choice in an edition, moreover, is a reminder of the choices that could have been made. This reminder becomes explicit when Geffrey enters the house made up of text, the glass temple of Venus. Here, the narrator paints himself as the simple reader of the textual temple, an unintrusive reporter of its words and images. The neutral phrase "there saugh I" opens every descriptive passage, framing the narrative as a transparent window on the event. [42] When he comes to retell the story of Dido and Aeneas, however, he gives an aside to the reader that casts suspicion upon the earlier transparency of this narration:

> *What shulde I speke more queynte,*
> *Or peyne me my wordes peynte*
> *to speke of love/Hyt wol not be;*
> *I kan not of that faculte*
> *And eke to telle the manere*
> *Howe they aqueynted in fere*
> *hyt were a long proces to telle*
> *And over-long for yow to dwelle.* [43]

The narrator perversely forecloses topics of love and courtship in the interest of brevity, only to provide his readers with a thirty-line *occupatio* in its place. In case we didn't catch it the first time, "Geffrey" repeats the excising process shortly thereafter, interrupting the high drama of Dido's death scene to add apologetic footnotes:

> *And al the maner how she deyde,*
> *and alle the wordes that she seyde,*
> *Whoso to knowe hit hath purpose*
> *Rede Vergile in Eneydos*
> *Or the Epistle of Ovyde,*
> *What that she wrot or that she dyde;*
> *and nere hyt to long to endyte,*
> *Be God, I wolde hyt here write.* [44]

As before, this excuse is followed by a lengthy digressive list, this time of other forsworn men. In both cases, the narrator is paradoxically showing us what he is hiding in a narrative equivalent of editorial marks. The "whole text" of Vergil and Ovid is brought up to highlight the reduction in this tale, just as the topics under erasure display the pictures that the narrator, but not the audience, is privileged to see. The digressions support Geffrey's reconstruction of the story. We are now forced into an identification of Dido with other hapless women in history. The narrator's blatantly fictive dramatization of Dido's concerns [45] becomes a narrative reality in the republication of her fate: her "fame" is as the abandoned lover of Aeneas, not the queen of Carthage. The narrator's

reconstruction of reality here blurs even the comforting line he has drawn, in his interjections, between appearance and essence, substance and accident: "Alas, what harm doth apparence,/ Whan it is fals in existance!" [46] His editorial maneuvers here mark him as a more dangerous seducer than Aeneas, since he is able to make the appearance the essence, by altering the existing appearance of the text. Dido's delicate political situation, carefully depicted by Vergil, disappears in the narrator's version. The political disaster of a rulerless and besieged realm is swallowed up in the depiction of individual grief and the sententious list of *exempla*. Unlike Lady Meed or Francesca, [47] we have only half the text to read and a particular interpretation to adopt. Moreover, the narrator locates changes in meaning within the process of publication itself. We have already seen the revision and edition of a text in the narrator's reproduction of the temple narrative. The visit to Fame's house provides a view into the distorting and uncontrollable nature of textual dissemination, a process that destroys any possibility of a retrievable *sentens* by authorizing an arbitrary interpretation.

In the second part of the work, the eagle whiles away the journey to the palace by describing the similarly aerial voyages of speech to its natural place in Fame's realm. In doing so, he echoes contemporary confidence in the immutable nature of an underlying truth: speech and texts are unchanged in the process of reproduction:

> *ryght thus every word, ywis*
> *That lowd or pryvee spoken ys,*
> *Moveth first an ayr aboute*
> *and of this movyng, out of doute*
> *Another ayr anoon is meved…*
> *Everych of ayr another stereth*
> *More and more, and speche up bereth.* [48]

The air functions in a way similar to the mechanical actions of the press. The text is replicated over and over, its specific integrity assured by the essential identity of the different "cercles" in which it is transmitted. Although the text shares the same essence as the vehicle of its transmission [49] the presence of air medium is muted, reduced to a physical carrier of an unchanged text: "speche up bereth." Speech moves by "kynde," not editorial decision, to the place of its publication. There is no suppression or revision of texts in the process. All sound arrives eventually at the palace and all in its original form. As the eagle describes it, the texts act as a window through which to view the originary authors:

> *Whan any speche ycomen ys*
> *up to the palys anon-ryght*
> *hyt waxeth lyk the same wight*
> *which that the word in erthe spak*
> *Be hyt clothed in red or blak*

> *And hat so verray hys lyknesse*
> *That spak the word, that thou wilt gesse*
> *That it the same body be.* [50]

In the earlier chapters, we saw how the "red" and "black" of manuscript practice made meaning, producing a unique family of sibling documents. In the eagle's speech, these types of manuscript recombinations are reduced to meaninglessness. The "red" and "blak" writing is called up only to be transformed into the body of the original author, an identification supported by the emphasis on speech over writing. In order for the texts to arrive untouched by the circles of reproduction and dissemination, they must be firmly tied to a single, identifiable, authorizing source. The eagle's anxious insistence upon the likeness between speaker and sound is meant to counter the close relationship between the text (the sound) and the medium that carries it.

The power of reproduction and edition appears with the texts' entry into the palace. In constructing both the building and its practices, Chaucer interrogates the way in which a text is transmitted and its *auctorite* affirmed. Both the house of Fame and house of Rumour function materially as editors and promotional publishers of texts: Fame's palace preserves or destroys the names of the famous; the beryl walls enlarge the writing contained within. Rumour's house circulates and compiles texts at a dizzying speed:

> *And every wight that I saugh there*
> *Rouned everych in others ere*
> *A new tydyng prively,*
> *Or elles told al openly...*
> *Thus north and south*
> *Wente every tydyng for mouth to mouth,*
> *And that encresing ever moo,*
> *As fyr ys wont to quyke and goo*
> *From a sparke spronge amys*
> *Til al a citee brent up ys.* [51]

In both places, magnification and dissemination of a text carries distortion of meaning as its necessary consequence. Publication and truth are mutually exclusive terms. Of the groups of narratives that come running to Fame to be published, [52] all but one are wrenched from their earlier meaning, a process that Geffrey is careful to document in its entirety, as he describes one group after another. A group after good fame, for example, receives this chilling response:

> *blow her loos, that every wight*
> *Speke of hem harm and shrewednesse*
> *In stede of good and worthynesse.*

> *For thou shalt trumpe the contrayre*
> *Of that they han don wel or fayre.* [53]

Every text is more or less rewritten, while the earlier meaning vanishes and the new edition floods the market:

> *And therto oo thing saugh I wel*
> *That the ferther that hit ran,*
> *The greater wexen hit began,*
> *As dooth the ryver from a well.* [54]

In a reversal of the image of biblical truth as nourishing river, this stream of reproduction not only separates *sentens* from medium, but uses the very volume of dissemination to create an interpretive consensus. Caxton's dream of a common language is here given a nightmare quality. Since the mass-produced texts are on "every tonge," there is no space for a dissenting voice. The only alternative to editorial revision is the death of the text. Fame's sole agreement to make the words "cosyn" to the deed is to sentence both to silence. [55]

The act of mass production leads to one kind of editorial revision; the process of editorial selection leads to yet another. During his visit, the narrator has been doing his own arbitrary selection and evaluation of candidates for publication and fame. He chooses names from the multiplicity of lists, singles them out for display and calls attention to his own editorial process. One passage in particular displays his knowledge of the attendant consequences:

> *Ther herde I trumpe Messenus*
> *Of whom that speketh Virgilius*
> *Ther herde I trumpe Joab also,*
> *Theodomas, and other mo;*
> *And alle that used clarion*
> *In Cataloigne and Aragon*
> *That in her tyme famous were*
> *To lerne, saugh I trumpe ther.* [56]

In these brief lines, Geffrey performs an editorial construction of authority. Messenus' expertise is trumpeted to the reader, while the authority of the "other mo" is muted into an anonymous generality. The mention of Virgilius underscores the dependency of fame on textual transmission, a theme introduced in the manuscripts of *Anelida and Arcite:*

For hit ful depe is sonken in my mynde
With piteous hert in Englyssh to endyte
This old storie, in Latyn which I fynde,
Of quene Anelida and the fals Arcite
That elde, which that al can frete and bit
As it hath freten mony a noble storie
Hath nygh devoured out of oure memorie. [57]

The link between text, memory, and fame given in this passage is enacted within the description of the musicians. Geffrey adds the named musicians to the reader's memorial stock, as a source of future reference and authority, but allows the unnamed ones to fade a second time into oblivion, a vivid reminder of what he chooses not to publish.

The two processes—dissemination and authorization—clash in the final section of the work. [58] The texts make a mad stampede towards an unnamed *auctor:*

Atte laste y saugh a man
Which that y [nevene] nat ne kan;
But he semed for to be
A man of gret auctorite…. [59]

The figure, coming as it does after a brutal exposure of appearance's mendacity, and a relentless interrogation into the capricious construction of authority, cannot but be parodic. The parody, however, does not satisfy the reader's need for textual closure and authorized meaning. The long-standing critical hunt for the figure's identity illustrates a fetishistic desire inherited from Caxton's prologues. There must be an extant underlying meaning, even if the text's project has been to destroy all interpretive certainty from the opening lines.

Caxton's ending displays this editorial crux. We know that he read the text closely: the excisions he has made to the work are done with surgical precision, retaining the integrity of the couplets and only omitting what he considered "voyde wordes." Caxton's manuscript however, was an interesting recombination that ended at line 2093, at the standoff of *lesyng* and *sothsawe*. A particularly ambiguous text is about to be published. Its double *sentens* is ready for departure onto the market of readers and rumormongers. Under Caxton's agenda, however, the published text cannot leave with character of sententious falsehood. [60] Nor can it be separated, held together as it is by the end of the manuscript. Caxton is forced to make a drastic editorial decision about a text that exposes the dangers of editorial praxis. In response, he carefully skirts the issues of editorial choice and the attribution of authority and creates a recombinative ending that is

curiously appropriate to the text. His conclusion sends the reader back to the opening ambiguities of the poem:

And wyth the noyse of them two Caxton
I sodeynly awoke anon tho
and remembryd what I had seen
and how hye and ferre I had been
In my ghoost and had grete wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Had let me knowen and began to write
Lyke as ye haue herde me endyte
Wherefore to studye and rede alway
I purpose to doo day by day
Thus in dremyng and in game
Endeth thys lytyl book of Fame.

I find no more of this foresaid worke/for as it may be wele understande/this noble man Geffray Chaucer/fynisshed it at the said conclusyon of the metyng of lesyng and sothsawe: Where (as yet) they ben checked and may nat departe. Which worke as me semeth is crafely made/and digne to be writen and knowen: for he toucheth in it right great wysedome and subtell undertandlyng/ and so in all his workes he excelleth n myn opinyon/all other writers in Englysshe/for he writeth no voyde wordes/but all his mater is full of hye & quicke sentence/to whom ought to be gyuen laude & praise for his noble makyng and writyng: And I humbly beseche & pray you among your prayers/ to remember his soule on which & on all christen soules I beseche Jesu have mercy. Amen. [61]

Caxton models his ending upon the ending of Chaucer's other dream vision, *The Parliament of Foules,* [62] which he printed six years earlier. Blake has used the general similarity of the two endings as grounds for dismissing Caxton's verse as a critical response to the poem's issues. Caxton's creation, per Blake, is "merely a way of concluding the poem as quickly as possible." [63] This assumption in turn provides more fuel for his depiction of Caxton as a pragmatic opportunist, more interested in ledgers than literature. A close look at the verses, however, reveals that Caxton attempts to close a text that by its very participation in the processes of dissemination cannot be brought to closure. Although the plot elements are roughly identical to that of the PF ending, the focus has changed from reading to writing as the means to truth. Chaucer picks up a book; Caxton picks up a pen. In addition, the *auctor* is as ambiguous a figure here as he appears in the original ending. Caxton, in writing the ending, is playing Chaucer. He mimics Chaucer's style to finish the piece, adds the name "Caxton" to the margins to mark his inclusion and proceeds to blur the boundaries between the two authors by the wordplay of the lines. The awakening "I" of the verse could be read as either Chaucer the

narrator, awakened by the noise of the quarrelling texts, or Caxton, shaken out of his reading by the discordant "ending." Similarly, the use of the verbs "wryte" and "endyte" have the same multiplicity of meaning as the "avysion" mentioned earlier. Since both words can stand for an array of scribal practices, we can determine neither precisely where Caxton's "writing" begins, nor the identity of the "I" who "endyt"ed the text. [64] The determining and ordering agent could be the demands of Chaucerian style, the existence of the edited text, or the decision of Caxton himself to create a finished text. We are left with no clear figure of authority and no way out of the text. Unlike the previous dream visions, Caxton's verse ends with the reader still in the dream [65] surrounded by a multiplicity of meanings and still under the onus of proper interpretation.

By marking his part in the ending's creation (the word "Caxton" appears in the right margin next to the beginning of this ending), Caxton also marks his continuing participation in a medieval set of reading practices that invited collaborative and accumulative authority. The necessity of an authoritative Chaucer requires a return to the author. Caxton, however, was working at a time when authority could be transferred upon a manuscript by the attention paid to it. Thus, Chaucer is authorized in this text in two ways: by Caxton's conscious construction of him as an author and through the addition given to his text. Caxton is quick, though, to end the text with a solid picture of Chaucer as *auctor*. In this edition, we can see a liminal moment between the ideas governing manuscript production and the newer *desiderata* of print culture, illustrated strangely in Caxon's use of collaborative practices to support his construction of a standardized *auctor*.

Like the ever-increasing flood from Fame's palace, Caxton's addition spread from press to press in a process that helped solidify and propagate a "standard" version of the text. In 1526 Richard Pynson issued his own edition of *HF*. [66] As was noted earlier, Pynson was working within a Henrician political system that needed an originary, stable, and sententious Chaucer. Thus, the troublesome *HF* begins with a heading that organizes it under the rubric of "Chaucer": "The prologue of Geffray Chaucer/authore of this worke." He kept Caxton's ending, but removed the name "Caxton" from the margin, reframing the ending from collaborative to authorial. The first words of Caxton's epilogue were changed from "I fynde" to "There is." Caxton's epilogue leaves open the possibility of multiple texts. The second, however, chains *HF* to the ending given by Pynson and shuts off any interpretive possibility. Moreover, without the marker of "Caxton" in the margin, the phrase "fynisshed it at the sayd conclusyon" can refer to the *mater* of the poem, rather than the physical point of ending. The publication of dangerous ambiguity is "cheked" by Pynson, but only by the editorial erasure of the collaborative history embedded in the text. Collaborative creation of meaning functions like the historical evolution of the state: something that must be carefully forgotten.

AUTHORIZING CHAUCER: WYNKYN DE WORDE'S EDITION
OF *TROILUS AND CRISEYDE*

In the early sixteenth century, Wynkyn de Worde, the foremost printer of secular literature under Henry VIII, broke with his usual publishing policy and the traditions set out by his predecessor William Caxton. He discarded Caxton's earlier edition of *Troilus*

and Criseyde and, despite the great expense of labor and material, published a dramatically different version of the poem. Within the history of secular printing, this revision was no prodigy: Caxton had revised his earlier edition of *The Canterbury Tales* in 1489. However, Caxton had the luxury of patronage, private income from trade and a virtual monopoly on the secular print market. He could afford the time to make extensive revisions, if he felt these would improve the work and increase sales. His heir and successor de Worde was not as fortunate.

De Worde inherited a growing middle-class readership and a more competitive print market, two factors that demanded a change in publishing policy. To dominate the market, de Worde farmed out translation work, aggressively entered into contracts with writers and fed the print-hungry public with a flood of publications. H.S.Bennett notes that "between 1492 and 1532 [de Worde's] imprint appears on over 700 works." [67] To achieve this staggering output, he reprinted works without editorial revision [68] and showed no interest in any type of work that would slow the presses. Why de Worde would choose to create a new edition of *Troilus and Criseyde* that required him to reset copy for the entire work, write arguments for each book, redesign the format to accommodate woodcuts and create an entirely new ending for the whole needs some explanation.

The answer to this riddle lies, I believe, in the sixteenth-century junction of political power, cultural production and print technology. De Worde's edition was produced in 1517, eight years into Henry VIII's reign and thirty years into the Tudor production of a centralized government. Beginning with Henry VII's full-scale abolishment of local aristocratic power centers and establishment of "new men" whose loyalty was to king rather than kin, the feuding factions that had dominated the previous century were replaced by a tightly knit web of power centered around the Crown. Henry VII's fiscal competence and vision allowed his successor to inherit an England of relative internal harmony, economic health and enhanced stature in Continental diplomacy. [69]

The events of the fifteenth century, however, had taught Henry VII that a unified England depended as much on cultural myths as massed troops. Henry himself became king under the power of the Pendragon banner rather than any inherently strong claim to the throne. England's newfound political stability needed to be supported by the creation of a national literature that could serve as an aesthetic and moral guidepost to contemporary writers and a discursive common-place for its readers. The early printers provided the means for this mass dissemination of texts. As I mentioned earlier, Caxton's press could turn out more copies in a month than the entire scribal force of London in a year. This figure increased exponentially as print technology developed further and the market grew. De Worde, in 1517, could have had as many as four presses running simultaneously. The Crown was quick to recognize the value of harnessing this new technology for its own aims. Henry VII commissioned de Worde and Richard Pynson to print out a set of statutes in 1499. Pynson, de Worde's foremost competitor, was given the post of King's Printer in 1508, a position that required him to print out the laws and statutes of the Crown on a regular basis. [70] De Worde himself was connected to the court of Henry VIII by the favor of the king's grandmother, Margaret Beaufort. Thus, from these two printing houses came the reams of paper that established both the legal strictures and cultural expansion of sixteenth-century England. Edicts and editions supported each other in a chain of paper linking the nation's readers.

Just as the Tudors turned to the figure of Arthur to provide their missing ancestry, they sought out medieval texts from which the "early modern" [71] period could trace the beginnings of a national literature. [72] For this literature to be foundational, however, required a reputable *auctor* and a retrievable set of textual messages, a structure meant to be mutually reinforcing. In the same manner that political stability was to be ensured by centralized government, cultural stability was to be anchored upon an ancestral figure with a recognizable *sentens,* an impeccable pedigree and a demonstrable affiliation with Tudor values. Chaucer, who refused the "primitive" "rum, ram, ruf" of Northern alliterative poetry in favor of Latinate models and whom Lydgate had already crowned "laureate poete," was the writer of choice.

As we have already seen, however, Chaucerian texts turned out to be stubbornly resistant to foundational ideals. This textual recalcitrance appears clearly in the most popular Chaucerian text of the sixteenth century, *Troilus and Criseyde*. As Clare Kinney notes, any attempt to create a single interpretation of the text demands that attention be drawn away from the multiplicity of meaning in those texts. [73] By the end of the poem, interpretive possibilities have multiplied to the extent that no critical apparatus can contain them. The reader is faced with what Murray J.Evans has called an excess of endings:

> Medieval rhetorical treatises and practice suggest that the medieval poet had a wide range of choice of endings to a poem. A comparison…with the ending of *Troilus* reveals that at least eight of the thirteen [rhetorical] *topoi* are present. [74]

By giving such a shopping list of possible endings, none of which is wholly endorsed nor rejected, the manuscript endings [75] demonstrate the arbitrary nature of *any* ending. As the endings accumulate, moreover, they elude a monologic reading in two ways. First, their differences preclude incorporation into a final reading. Second, they cannot be easily separated, since each passage is memorially linked to the others by the use of key words. Thus, the reader must deliberately "forget" certain sections of the endings in order to create a single conclusion.

One example of this textual web should be sufficient to demonstrate the inexorably interlaced nature of the manuscript endings. The section most often used as evidence for a monologic reading of the text proves to be inescapably multivocal:

> *Lo here, of payens corsed olde rites!*
> *Lo here, what alle hire goddes may availle!*
> *Lo here, thise wrecched worldes appetites!*
> *Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille*
> *Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!*
> *Lo here, the forme of olde clerkis speche*
> *In poetrie, if ye hire bokes seche.* [76]

Although the repetition of the phrase "Lo here" connects each line in the stanza, this apparent unity is misleading. It invites the reader to a place of summation, of final meaning, only to land her in a labyrinth. To get a clear idea of the impossibility of constructing a single meaning for this text, it is necessary to examine the obstacles blocking any single interpretive path.

The deliberately ambiguous phrase "here" sets the first trap. Everything depends on what we designate as "here" in each line. If by "here," in the first four lines of the stanza, we mean the story of Troilus and Criseyde's relationship, then this stanza seems to respond to the previous stanza's call to prayer. If, however, by "here" is meant Troilus' ascent into the eighth sphere, then it seems that the "wrecched worldes appetites" are simply irrelevant in the superlunary regions. This first instance of multiple interpretive possibilities is doubled by the abrupt change in tone from lines five to six of the stanza. The vehemence is gone and in its place a quieter statement and a possibly different locus of argument. "Here," with its different tone, may very well refer to the previous five lines, as a "forme" of argument used by the "olde clerkis." At this point, the reader is again forced to choose a narrative path. Since we cannot tell who is meant by the vague "olde clerkis," [77] we cannot determine whether this reference to the "forme" of old books is meant to damn the content of pagan literature, censure the clerical practice of condemning these works, or simply make a quiet reference to outside sources.

If we choose the first path and read the lines as condemning pagan poets' celebration of wordly pleasure, we are confronted with a problem in the last line's self-conscious reference to other "bokes." We cannot help but remember this text's own dependence upon pagan literature. If older texts cannot be trusted because of their worldly bent, neither can this "litel bok," with its multiple references to classical works and its professed desire to follow in their footsteps:

> *But litel bok, no makyng thow n'envie,*
> *But subgit be to alle poesye;*
> *And kis the steppes where as thow seest pace*
> *Virgile, Ovide, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.* [78]

We must either distrust this last line, or discount the entire textual project. If we choose to read this passage as a critique of clerical anti-pagan polemic, we are forced to discount the vehemence of the first five lines, as well as the doctrine of *contemptus mundi* introduced in the earlier stanzas.

Moreover, the reference to outside texts calls the project of monologic interpretation itself into question. In lines 1772–1785, references to authoritative "bokes" undermine the possibility of any text to hold stable meaning. Dares is cited as someone who can tell a different story of Troilus, with an alternate *sentens*. [79] The text thus affirms past *auctors* as those who give a meaning, but asserts the possibility of constructing a new meaning by a choice of elements in a tale: in this case, love over war. The next stanza takes the argument a step further by arbitrarily insisting on a new *sentens* that retrospectively changes the content of the story:

> *N'y sey nat this al oonly for thise men,*
> *But moost for wommen that bitraised be*
> *Thorugh false folk—God yeve hem sorwe, amen!—*
> *That with hire grete wit and subtilte*
> *Bytraise yow. And this commeveth me*
> *To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,*
> *Beth war of men, and herkneth what I seye!* [80]

The passage constructs a sententious *auctor* of the desired school: one who provides a clear message, or "effect" of the text and whose voice validates the reading: "herkneth what I seye." This message, however, forces the audience to reread the entire story as the betrayal of Criseyde by Troilus and the subtle Pandarus and to acknowledge the limitations of condemning a single actor in the tragedy. This perspective in turn, however, violates the idea of a single author with a unitary message, since it forbids us to adopt the limited vision of this passage's *auctor*.

The end of the text, then, puts the reader in a labyrinth in which she knows ahead of time that each path from text to message is both valid and inadequate. Valid, because one can trace a recognizable thread from story to *sentens;* inadequate, because any unitary meaning requires a conscious editorial effort. The multiple endings and indeterminate narration of the poem presented an obvious problem to sixteenth-century publishers invested in the idea of a sententious and authoritative Chaucer.

De Worde attempted to resolve this problem in the most audacious editorial revision to date. He invented an auctorial "Chaucer," whose voice was designed to drown out that of the troublesome narrator. De Worde surrounded the narrative labyrinth of Book Five with an authorial voice instructing the reader on the proper interpretation. At the beginning of Book Five, de Worde's added argument reduces the complex web of narratives to an attack upon Criseyde. This argument displays for the reader an invented Chaucerian voice firmly in control of the book's *sentens:*

> This *my* laste booke of Troylus consequently foloweth and sheweth how
> that Cresyde fell to the love of Dyomede, and he unto her love & how she
> forsoke Troylus after her Departyinge out of Troye contrary to her
> promyse. [81]

The complex portrait of Criseyde's dilemma, the stratagems of Diomede and the interpretive demands of the final books are left out and a simplistic message forced upon the reader via the authoritative voice of "Chaucer."

The woodcuts de Worde chose to illustrate this argument cast Criseyde in an even more negative light. A pair of woodcuts is meant to represent the parting of Troilus and Criseyde that opens the fifth book. The composition of the two is identical: mounted figures in conversation. This similarity, however, only shows the characters of Troilus and Criseyde in greater relief. The top woodcut shows a figure meant to be the sorrowful Troylus, sharing his grief with a sympathetic Pandarus. The panel below it provides a

stark contrast to the faithful Troilus, as Diomede converses with two smiling and coquettish women, one of whom is clearly Criseyde. [82] This panel provides a preemptive reading of Criseyde's relationship to Diomede. The earlier manuscripts stress Criseyde's grief in leaving Troilus and her initial disinterest in Diomede. Her later capitulation to him must be read through a complex series of lenses the narrator provides: her need for a protector in the Greek camp, the opacity of her character itself, [83] and the narrator's own refusal to provide a definitive reading. [84] The illustration in de Worde's print edition, however, turns Criseyde from Troilus to Diomede immediately and elides the depth of Criseyde's attachment to Troilus. Criseyde in these woodcuts is "slydyng" at an unprecedented speed.

De Worde employs these prescriptive readings to prepare the reader for the unitary ending he attempts to impose at the end. Following the final prayer of the manuscripts' endings, he announces the presence of the "auctor," and writes his own conclusion under the *aegis* of a Chaucerian voice:

The Auctor

And here an ende of Troylus hevyness (1)
As touchynge Criseyde to hym ryght unkynde (2)
Falsly forsworn destouryng his worthynes (3)
For his treue loue she hath hym made blynde (4)
Of feminine gendre that woman most unkynde (5)
Dyomede on her whele she hathe set on hye (6)
The faythe of a woman by her now maye you se (7)

Was not Arystotle for all his clergye (8)
Vyrgyll the cunnynge deceyved also (9)
By women inestymable for to here or se (10)
Sampson the stronge, with many a thousand mo (11)
Brought in to ruyne by woman mannes fo (12)
There is no woman I thynke heuen vnder (13)
That can be trewe and that is wondre (14)

O parfyte Troylus good god be thy guyde (15)
The moste treuest louer that euer lady hadde (16)
Now arte thou forsake of Cresyde at this tyde (17)
Neuer to retourne/who shall make the gladde (18)
He that for us dyed and soules frome hell ladde (19)
And borne of the vrygyne to heuen thy soule brynge (20)
And all that ben present at theyr latre endynge. (21)
AMEN

Thus endeth the treatyse of Troylus the heuy (22)
By Geffraye Chaucer compyled and done (23)
He prayenge the reders this mater not deny (24)
Newly correcked in the cyte of London (25)
In flete strete at the sygne of the sonne (26)
Imprynted by me wynkyn de worde (27)
The M.CCCCC and XVII yere of our lorde. (28) [85]

This addition mimics the structure of the final ending with its multiple apostrophes, juxtaposition of human and divine spheres and first closing prayer. De Worde's imitation, however, forces these echoed elements into a single coherent *sentens* and links them with the book as a whole. Troilus' "heuynesse" recalls the injunction to lovers in Book One to "think on passed heuynesse" (*Tr.,* 1. 24), while recasting the terms of that recollection. We are supposed to see our own future as lovers in Troilus' downfall. In the same fashion, the singular story of Troilus' journey "from wo to wele, and after out of joie" (*Tr.,* 1. 4) becomes the process all (male) readers must suffer, as women and fortune are equally duplicitous: "Diomede on her whele she hath set on hye" (1.6). The vehement "Was not" echoes the *repetio* of "Lo here" and "Swich fyn" that in the earlier manuscripts' endings destroys the stanzas' unity from within. In de Worde's addition, it becomes a simple tool for emphasis, locking Samson, Virgil, Aristotle and Troilus in a cast of deceived thousands and using the specific story of Troilus and Criseyde in a discourse illustrating the vulnerability of men against the pervasive falsity of women.

Even the broken *telos* of the manuscripts' endings is repeated in de Worde's addition, but with a difference. After the story of deceived worthies in lines 8–14, the story of Troilus starts again in lines 15–18, with an apostrophe that calls attention to this process: "*Now* arte thou forsake of Criseyde at thys tyde." [86] The fragmented narrative in this addition, however, only enforces its message more firmly. Troilus' story, repeated before and after the list of historical victims, is "now" the story of every human relationship in history. With the story's message made ahistorical, out of time, the reader is free to compare the endless futility of human relationships to the eternal comfort of divine love. Since the troublesome "feyned loves" [87] in the manuscripts' endings is simplified to the deceptive Criseyde, the catechismic "Who shalle make thee gladde" is easily answered.

De Worde, moreover, attempts to resolve the uneasy doctrine of *contemptus mundi,* problematic in the manuscripts' endings, via another identification between general mutability and female duplicity. De Worde forges a link between the transience of the world and the inconstancy of women: "There is no woman, I think heuen under that can be trewe" (1.13). Thus, the problem within the manuscripts' endings of reading Troilus and Criseyde's failed relationship as a symbol of the "brotelnesse" of all human loves is solved in this addition by casting Criseyde as a symbol for all women: "The fayth of a woman by her nowe may you se." [88]

Similarly the limitless nature of divine language that Bonnie Wheeler has ascribed to the manuscripts' final Trinity prayer is harnessed in de Worde's addition to a single meaning. Wheeler argues that the poem's final authority can only lie in mystery. The

reader is reminded that "God binds everything, and remains unbound; the language in which we are told this is that of scribing, of writing." [89] A prayer commenting upon the limits of literary authority and the unbounded nature of the Word cannot be allowed to stand within a text designed to be read "properly." De Worde's revision, in lines 19–21, gives us instead a straightforward and circumscribed narrative of Christ's birth and sacrifice, a story of the single author of salvation.

As a salvific mirror image, de Worde sets up the Chaucerian *auctor* as the alpha and omega of this addition. In large type, centered on the page, the words "The Auctor" loom over the following text, providing a visual symbol of the early modern period's fantasy Chaucer: an imposing presence surveying its textual domain. This authorial domain is bounded on the other end of the addition by the prescriptive closing prayer. The narrator's earlier prayer gave interpretive power to the reader, who is charged with understanding the text correctly:

> *So prey I God that no myswrite the,*
> *Ne the mysmetre for defaute of tonge;*
> *And red wherso thow be, or elles songe,*
> *That thow be understood, God I biseche!* [90]

This stanza, introducing a text open to readerly change, allows for multiple interpretive performances (reading or singing) and sets "understanding" as its only condition. As Mary Carruthers argues, a memorially trained medieval reader's full understanding of a text relied upon its incorporation into the reader's memory, where it became internalized, linked to other texts via memorial cues and changed in the process. The text was "understood" when it became part of the reader's networked memory. [91] In this sense, the narrator's prayer for understanding in the manuscripts' endings does not refer to a particular message (which we could not disentangle from the interpretive maelstrom anyway), but to the proper process of readerly incorporation.

In de Worde's addition, however, the reader is limited to either acceptance or refusal of the single given message: "Thus endeth the tretyse of Troilus the heuy/ By Geffrey Chaucer compyled and done/He praying the reader this mater not denye." [92] "Geffrey Chaucer" is responsible for all aspects of the text; the phrase "compyled and done" attempts to include every possible act of writing in a single phrase, as "done" can refer to copying, glossing, or rubrication. [93] In de Worde's addition, all aspects of manuscript culture are here taken over by the *auctor*. The reader's only interpretive avenue is to accept the "mater" of female duplicity, the subject and *sentens* of the addition.

De Worde's addition links *auctor,* work and message in a new Trinity, the early modern conception of paradisiacal harmony. Again, the message is underlined by the physical presentation of the text. The addition, framed by the authorial presence, becomes a universe unto itself, where the retrievable *sentens* turns in harmony with the recognizable creator, a universe in which language can be understood precisely by being authorially circumscribed.

As Mary Douglas has argued, however, the drawing of such boundaries reveals the demarcations of the bounded system, thus laying it open to interrogation and challenge. [94] This addition, by creating a bounded little world of author, text and message, irresistibly

draws attention to the textual territory outside of this domain. "Auctor" as Chaucer now stands between the revision and the previous Book Five, thus blocking its own assimilation to the rest of the work.

The publishers and editors who followed Caxton, Pynson, and de Worde used their texts, copied their strategies of authorial construction and confronted the same obstacles. Thynne's introduction to his edition of the *Works* echoes the wording of Caxton's 1489 prologue point for point:

> in [Chaucer's] workes is so manyfest comprobacion of his excellent lernyng in all kyndes of doctrynes and sciences/such frutefulnesse in wordes, wel acordynge to the mater and purpose/so swete and plesaunt sentences…and suche sharpnesse or quycknesse in conclusyon/that it is moche to be marueyled/ howe in his tyme/whan doutlesse all good letters were layde a slepe thoughout ye worlde…[that] suche an excellent poete in our tongue/shulde as it were (nature repugyning) sprynge and a ryse. [95]

Stow reiterates Caxton's praise of Chaucer's "hye sentence" in a poem advertising Chaucer's moral usefulness. Speght likewise follows early examples in stressing the sententiousness of Chaucer. In his 1598 edition of the *Works,* tiny manicula point out parts of the text suitable for incorporation in memory and miscellany. Richard Kynaston's Latin translation of *Troilus and Criseyde* takes its cue directly from de Worde. Kynaston excises troublesome passages in Book Five to create an actively malign Criseyde. [96] In each case, however, they have also reproduced the early obstacles in constructing an author and his works. Thynne's introduction is haunted by the same Gothic figures that troubled Caxton fifty years earlier. Speght's manicula abruptly break down in Book Five of the *Troilus,* as the narrative derails the possibility of a stable *sentens.* [97] Kynaston can only construct a coherent picture of Criseyde via a reductive translation.

De Worde took a multivocal, labyrinthine text and attempted to contain it within an early prototype of what Foucault has called the "author function." The enormity of his project, the dramatic revisions that had to be made to the text, and the failure of his efforts provide a nicely distanced model to critique de Worde's children, the scholars and editors who have inherited these early constructions of the Chaucerian figure. They have also, however, inherited a text that fiercely resists any attempt at monologic interpretation. Despite almost six centuries of analysis and debate, critics have not been able to pin down "the meaning" of the text. Faced with a text that cannot be assimilated to conventional critical paradigms, the standard practice has been to blame the narrator or attempt to resolve the dilemma. The treatment has been to reconstruct the ending to fit our idea of an author in control of his text, leading it confidently to a unitary and climactic finale. Thus from D.W.Robertson's imposed Augustinian reading through Elizabeth Salter's analysis of the narrator's final (though reluctant) submission to the doctine *vanitas vanitatum,* critics have noted the multiplicity of endings only to dismiss them in favor of an overarching meaning and definitive message. Even the critics who are willing to argue for an open end to the text are haunted by the need to find a single meaning. Murray's argument for Chaucer's self-conscious rhetorical multiplicity is finally reduced to reliance upon the apostrophe as the meaningful trope, while Wheeler

uses Dante as the master key to the text. Even Rosemarie P.McGerr, whose analysis of the resistance to closure in the poem provides a needed corrective to these earlier studies, finds herself unable to think outside of a paradigm of competing discourses, a model that implies a possible, though infinitely deferred resolution.

Herein lies the power and paradox of the poem. The "author function" has created from manuscripts a seminal Chaucer and his collected works. *Troilus and Criseyde,* its problem child, cannot be as easily dismissed as other texts that do not conform to conventional narrative models. Thus, we can use the poem as a highly visible example of our current critical inadequacy. For if, as Pandarus states, "the strengthe" of a tale is "in the end," we can pit the strength of these multiple and irreducible endings against twentieth-century narrative theory and note where it breaks down in the face of the text. Rather than endlessly rereading the text to make it fit our practice, we can revise our practice in light of these kinds of resistant texts. In looking at the early printers, we can see where "our" Chaucer began to form, thus providing needed historical boundaries around a "timeless" author.

In a recent panel, Lisa Kiser reminded Chaucer scholars of the need to pay attention to "what we agree to overlook in the readings of canonical texts": the aspects that do not agree with our comfortable ways of studying and presenting them. Her striking phrase "agree to overlook" echoes Renan's formulation of historical amnesia, "oublie bien des choses." Both imply two stages of erasure: a deliberate excision followed by an equally calculated forgetting of the processes of excision. A third step I would add in the area of literary studies is the naturalization of orthodox methods of enquiry. When Kiser presented her list of hypothetical topics of examination, most were greeted with the insider laughter that marks the boundaries of proper enquiry. Only after she used this laughter as the mark of these boundaries, (thus putting it into a proper format of interdisciplinarity) were the topics treated as seriously innovative. The critical dismissal of Caxton, de Worde, and Pynson stems not only from a refusal to connect the mechanical process of printing with editorial consciousness, but from a deeper refusal to investigate too closely into the mainstay of medieval studies. If our figure of "Chaucer" has a beginning, it also is subject to the limitations of time, taste and memory and therefore has a foreseeable ending. It is these forgotten decisions to forget that make "Chaucer," in the strictest sense of the word, "immemorial."

NOTES

1. See Elizabeth Kirk's discussion of Caxton's prologue to Malory and Reynart the Fox in "'Clerkes, Poetes and Historiographs': The Morte Darthur and Caxton's Poetics of Fiction," in *Studies in Malory,* ed. James W.Spisak (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1985) 275–295.
2. This neglect can be traced to an anachronistic differentiation between the roles of printer and editor. Despite the extensive revisions, editorial decisions and self-conscious presentations displayed in the publications of the early printers, critics refuse to accord their work the attention given to the later publications by Thynne, Stow and Speght. The result has been an elision of these early texts. The *Riverside Chaucer,* for example, omits any mention of Caxton, de Worde, and Pynson. Its list of early editions begins with Thynne.
3. Wendy Wall has shown that the respect accorded to manuscripts over print lasted well into the seventeenth century. Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 1–47.

4. William Caxton, "Prohemye to Canterbury Tales," Second edition [1484] in *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton,* ed. W.J.B.Crotch, Early English Text Society, vol. 176 (London: Oxford University Press, 1928) 90.

5. N.F.Blake's rigorous research has demonstrated how Caxton turned to Lydgate's praise of Chaucer and the diction of the *Tales* themselves for this prologue (N.F.Blake, *Caxton's Own Prose* [London: Deutsch, 1973] 43). However, his argument that Caxton's use of these works reveals a lack of critical self-consciousness in Caxton's writing fails to recognize Caxton's agenda of combining the various *encomia* into a portrait of a proto-humanist. This is recombinative compiling and does not indicate a lack of creativity or initiative. Rather, it illustrates the problems of imposing modern publishing-house criteria onto early printing houses.

6. Blake, *Prose,* 37.

7. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991) 11.

8. Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 30–33.

9. W.J.B.Crotch. *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton* Early English Text Series, vol. 176 (London: Oxford University Press, 1928) 90.

10. Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 189–220.

11. Elizabeth Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture: The Otho Layamon* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999) 19–32.

12. James E.Blodgett, "William Thynne," *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition,* ed. Paul G.Ruggiers (Norman, OK: Pilgrim, 1984) 39.

13. Chaucer, *The House of Fame,* 1. 1876–1882. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Chaucer will be taken from *The Riverside Chaucer,* ed. Larry D.Benson et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1987).

14. Epilogue to Caxton's edition of Chaucer's *Boece,* repr. Blake, *Prose,* 60.

15. Unless otherwise noted, I will be using the term "manuscript family" to refer to the manuscript family of a particular text or texts, "Chaucerian" to refer to the early printed works (whether by Chaucer or not) that self-consciously align themselves with the figure of Chaucer as author.

16. I am indebted here to Elizabeth Kirk's article: "'Clerkes, Poetes and Historiographs': Caxton's Poetics of Fiction," in *Studies in Malory,* ed. James Spisak (Kalamazoo: University of Western Michigan Publications, 1985) 275–295.

17. Hereafter referred to as *HF*.

18. Recent critical work on early printed editions of *HF* has focused exclusively on Pynson and Thynne's editions. Blake devotes a scant paragraph to the work, viewing the work as another example of Caxton's slapdash editing.

19. Caxton, epilogue, The *Recuyll,* in Crotch, 7.

20. Caxton, prologue, *Of Old Age,* in Crotch, 42, 43.

21. Caxton, prologue, *Caton,* in Crotch, 77.

22. Caxton, prologue, *Charles the Grete,* in Blake, *Prose,* 66

23. Caxton, prologue, *The Boke of Eneydos,* in Crotch, 108.

24. Ibid.

25. N.F.Blake, *William Caxton and English Literary Culture* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991) 412.

26. Caxton, prologue, 2nd edition of the *Canterbury Tales,* in Crotch, p. 90.

27. Ibid.

28. Caxton's assessments of Chaucerian and provincial styles cannot be seen as an index of general opinion. Wynken de Worde ran a successful press on alliterative romances and more provincial ecclesiastical writers, demonstrating both the market for alliterative works and the specific agenda carried out by Caxton in dismissing them.

29. The practice of illuminating and glossing printed books demonstrates the retention of collaborative methods of "authorizing" a text. Caxton's insistence upon the original words of the author seems to be connected with his desire to see his press connected with a standard. Blake, among others, has noted the similarity between Caxton's printer's mark and the marks used by merchants as guarantors of a particular quality and standard. (See Blake, *Caxton's Literary Style,* 37)

30. Caxton, prologue, second edition of the *Canterbury Tales,* in Crotch, 90.

31. Carruthers, 90.

32. Carol A.N.Martin, "Authority and the Defense of Fiction: Renaissance Poetics and Chaucer's House of Fame," in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance,* ed. Theresa M.Krier (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998) 40.

33. Two notable exceptions are Julia Boffey's study of Pynson's Dido (Julia Boffey, "Richard Pynson's *Book of Fame* and the Letter of Dido," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19 [1988] 339–353) and A.S.G.Edwards' remarks on Pynson and Thynne's editions of *HF* (A.S.G.Edwards, "Pynson's and Thynne's Editions of Chaucer's *House of Fame,*" *Studies in Bibliography: Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 42 (1989) 185–186).

34. *PF,* 1. 24, 25.

35. *HF,* 1. 644–652, 655–657.

36. Despite the numerous other interpretations given to the desert, I maintain that the wasteland is precisely the absence of text: Chaucer moves from a house that is literally made of words into a place with "nothing to rede" and is only rescued from "illusion" by a Dantean allusion.

37. "the gret Omer;/And with him Dares and Tytus/Before, and eke he Lollius,/ and Guydo de Columpnis,/And Englysshe Gaudfride eke, ywis;/And ech of these, as I have joy,/Was besy for to bere up Troye… Oon seyde that Omer made lyes,/Feynynge in hys poetries,/And was to Grekes favorable;/Therefore held he hyt but fable" (*HF,* 1. 1466–1472; 1477–1480).

38. *HF,* 1. 43–51.

39. *HF,* 1. 509–513.

40. *HF,* 1. 514–516.

41. The writing on glass could be seen as another critique, since the very marks upon a transparent medium destroy the transparency for the extent of the mark.

42. *HF,* 1. 245–252.

43. Ibid, 1. 375–382.

44. "For thorgh yow is my name lorn,/And alle myn actes red and songe/Over al thys land, on every tongue" (*HF,* 1.346–348). The gloss in Oxford Bodleian Library MS Fairfax 16 underscores the relationship of publication to reproduction of reality. "Rumor de veteri faciet ventura timeri; cras poterut fieri turpia sicut heri."

45. *HF,* 1. 265, 66.

46. See Carruthers, p. 231, on the story of Francesca and its relation to textual editing.

47. *HF,* 1. 809–813; 817, 18.

48. "Soun is noght but eyr ybroken;/And every speche that is spoken/Lowd or pryvee, foul or fair/In his substance ys but air" (*HF,* 1. 765–768).

49. *HF,* 1. 1074–1081.

50. *HF,* 1. 2043–2046; 2075–2080.

51. These are given as groups of people, but since the people of Fame's house are embodied sounds and writing, I am using the broader definition of text.

52. *HF,* 1. 1626–1630.

53. *HF,* 1. 1650–1653.

54. To the petitioner's request that she "Hyde [their] werkes," Fame grants it point for point, the only instance in which she does so: "'I graunte yow alle your askyng' /Quod she; 'let your werkes be ded'" (*HF,* 1. 1700, 1701).

55. *HF,* 1. 1243–1250.

56. Anelida and Arcite, 1. 8–14.

57. Despite the critical quest for a proper ending and a named figure, I contend that the text as it stands is the only appropriate way for the piece to conclude. Some analyses here, then, will take the ending as given.

58. *HF,* 1. 2155–2158.

59. See Kinney, Clare, "Thomas Speght's Renaissance Chaucer and the *solaas* of *sentens* in *Troilus and Criseyde*" (in *Refiguring Chaucer in the Renaissance,* 70–84) for a clear look at the problems of contextually unstable *sentens*.

60. The book of Fame made by Gefferey Chaucer, ed. William Caxton (London, 1483).

61. *PF,* 1. 693–699, "And syth the shoutyng/whan the song was do/the fowles made at her flight away/I woke and other bokes toke me to/To rede vpon/And yet I red alway/I hope ywis to rede so somme day/that I shal mete somme thinge for to fare/the better and thus to rede I wil nat spare" (cited in N.F.Blake, *Caxton and Chaucer,* Leeds Studies in English 1 [1967] 26).

62. Blake, however, overlooks an even more expeditious ending available to Caxton: that of *The Book of the Duchess* ("This was my sweven; now hyt ys doon").

63. See note 10 above.

64. "Thus in dreaming and in game/Endeth thys lytyl book of Fame" (Caxton, *HF,* 1. 11, 12).

65. The Book of Fame, ed. Richard Pynson (London, 1526).

66. H.S.Bennett, *English Books and Readers I: 475–1557* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969) 190.

67. Henry R.Plomer cites a striking instance of de Worde's haste: "When reprinting *The Horse, the Sheep and the Ghoos,* [de Worde] got hold of a copy that wanted one leaf. He evidently did not know about this and never discovered its loss, but printed the book exactly as he found it" (Henry R.Plomer, *Wynkyn de Worde and His Contemporaries,* [London, Grafton & Co., 1925] 59).

68. Nelville Williams, *Henry VIII and His Court* (New York: Macmillan, 1971) 13–20.

69. Plomer, 127–132.

70. This phrase itself demonstrates the continuing importance of this strategy for valorizing a period of literary production. The change in terminology from "Renaissance" to "early modern" reflects a desire for origins similar to that governing the creation of Chaucer within that period.

71. The emphasis on the state deployment of nationalism, the Tudor imperative to shore up dynastic power and the use of mechanical reproduction in this period provides a much earlier instance of the juncture that Benedict Anderson argues appeared in the early nineteenth century (Anderson, 47–65).

72. Kinney, 69.

73. Murray J.Evans, "'Making Strange': The Narrator (?), the Ending (?), and Chaucer's Troilus," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 87 (1986) 218–28.

74. From this point on, I will be designating as "the manuscripts' endings" the passages found in the MSS that Root characterized as type B, one of which was the base text for Caxton's edition of the poem (these endings show no significant variation from the manuscripts [Cambridge, Cambridge University, Corpus Christi College, MS 61; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 817; and Cambridge, Cambridge University, St. John's College, MS L.1] used in *The Riverside Chaucer*). This wording is necessary to indicate both the irreducible multiplicity of Book Five's close and to call attention to the process of creating a single edition from a number of manuscripts. I will be using the terms "addition", "de Worde's addition," or "additional ending" to refer to de Worde's 1517 revision of these endings (*The noble and amerous ancyent hystory of Troylus and Cresyde in the tyme of the syege of Troye. Compyled by Geffraye Chaucer,* ed. Wynkyn de Worde [London, 1517]). For ease of reference, all line numbers marked *"Tr"* refer to *The Riverside Chaucer* edition of Troilus and Criseyde.

75. *Tr.,* 1. 1849–1855.

76. Since "in" in this period can hold an array of meanings from "in" to "on" to "about," even the prepositional phrase "in poetrie" does not provide a definite direction.

77. *Tr.,* 1. 1789–1792.

78. "And if I hadde ytaken for to write/The armes of this ilke worthi man,/Than wolde ich of his batailles endite;/But for that I to writen first bigan/Of his love, I have seyd as I kan—/His worthi dedes, whoso list hem heere,/Rede Dares, he kan telle hem alle ifeere" (*Tr.,* 1. 1765–1771).

79. *Tr.,* 1. 1779–1785.

80. Emphasis mine.

81. Although the expense of customized woodcuts frequently caused the printers to use woodcuts from previous works, the argument for the reading of these figures still holds, since their recombination with the words of the printed text creates a new image. I believe the presence of two women underscores a later polemic against female duplicity, of which Criseyde is held up as the latest *exemplum*.

82. C.David Benson, "The Opacity of Chaucer's Criseyde" in *Chaucer's* Troilus and Criseyde: *"Subgit to alle Poesy"* ed. R.A.Shoaf and Catherine S.Cox (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies v. xvii 1992) 18–28. Benson specifically argues that the representation of Criseyde implies a self-conscious acknowledgement of the limitations of authorial power.

83. "I fynde ek in stories elleswhere,/Whan through the body hurt was Diomede/Of Troilus, tho wep she many a teere/Whan that she augh his wyde wowndes blede, /And that she took, to kepen hym, good hede;/And for to helen hym of his sorwes smerte,/Men seyn—I not—that she yaf hym hire herte" (*Tr.,* 1. 1044–50).

84. I have added line numbers for ease of reference. They do not appear in de Worde's 1517 edition.

85. De Worde's epilogue, 1. 17, emphasis mine.

86. Bonnie Wheeler remarks that the question leads the reader into a set of choices, which will determine a reading. If we read "feyned" loves as individual treachery, we are still free to celebrate human relationships within this world. If, however, "feyned loves" refers to all worldly attachments, then we "are damned to a sterile existence" (Bonnie Wheeler, "Dante, Chaucer, and the Ending of Troilus and Criseyde," *Philological Quarterly* 61:2 [Spring 1992]: 105–23).

87. De Worde's addition, 1. 7.

88. Wheeler, 120.

89. *Tr.,* 1. 1795–8.

90. See Carruthers, pp. 179–188.

91. De Worde's addition, 1. 22–24.

92. Elizabeth Bryan has demonstrated that medieval scribal culture did not make our distinctions between writing, copying and compiling. (See Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture: The Otho Layamon*.) In de Worde's text, we can see the beginnings of this distinction. He is trying to place all levels of creation under the aegis of "Chaucer." In so doing, he demonstrates the high value placed on "compyling" while at the same time giving the author credit for the work.

93. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970) 1–17.

94. William Thynne, introduction, *The workes of Geffray Chaucer newly printed with dyuers workes whiche were neuer in print before,* ed. William Thynne [London, 1532], quoted in Blodgett, p. 35.

95. See Lawrence V.Ryan, "Chaucer's Criseyde in Neo-Latin Dress" (*English Literary Renaissance,* 17:3, 1987, 288–302) for a full discussion of these excisions.

96. Kinney, p. 77.

97. "It is this recognition of our own dual natures, our own embodiment of contraries like amor and caritas, with the resulting ambiguity in our words and ends, that is the true 'end' of the poem" (Rosemarie P.McGerr, *Chaucer's Open Books: Resistance to Closure in Medieval Discourse* [Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998] 118). Like Wheeler, McGerr challenges the idea of unity, only to close the text by relegating meaning to mystery.

Appendix A:
List of Manuscripts and Abbreviations

The *Metrical Chronicle* Manuscript Family

Cambridge, Cambridge University Library MS Ee. 4.31 [CUL Ee. 4.31]

Cambridge, Pepysian Library, Magdalen MS 2014 [Magdalen 2014]

Cambridge, Trinity College Library MS R. 4.26 [Trinity R. 4.26]

Flintshire, Lord Mostyn's Library MS 259 [Mostyn 259]

Glasgow, Hunterian Museum MS 3.13 [Hunterian 3.13]

London, British Library MS Add. 18631 [Add. 18631]

London, British Library MS Add. 19677 [Add. 19677]

London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A. xi [Caligula A. xi]

London, British Library MS Harley 201 [Harley 201]

London, British Library MS Sloane 2027 [Sloane 2027]

London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58 [Arundel 58]

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 201 [Digby 201]

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 205 [Digby 205]

Cambridge MS The *Chronicle* Manuscript Family

London, Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS 511, Vol. 7 [Petyt 511]

London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 131 [Lambeth 131]

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Miscellany MS D. 913 [Rawlinson 913]

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Manuscript Family

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 173 [A]

London, British Library MS Cotton Domitian Aviii [F]

London, British Library MS Cotton Domitian Aix [H]

London, British Library MSS Cotton Tiberius Aiii, Avi [B]

London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius Bi [C]

London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius Biv [D]

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud 636 [E]

Appendix B:
Passage of Dominion Laments in the *Metrical Chronicle* Manuscripts

1. Opening lament. (f. 3v):

> *Engelond hap ibe inome & iwerred ilome*
> *Verst poru grete louerdes pe emperours of rome*
> *Þat wroyte & wonne Englelond & pat lond nome*
> *Suppe poru picars & scottes pat to engelond come*
> *Þat werrede & destruede ac all clene ne wonne it noyt*
> *Suppe poru engliss and saxons pat hider were ibroyt*
> *Þoru brutons for to helpe hem & suppe hom ouer come*
> *Þe brutons pat hom heder broyte & pat lond hom binome*
> *Suppe hap engelond ibe iwerred ilome*
> *Of pe folc of denemarch that bep noyt yut isome*
> *Þat ofte wonne engelond and helde it bi maistrie*
> *Þe vifpe time ywan engelond, pat folc of normandie*
> *Þat among us woniep yut and ssullep euere mo*
> *We ssullep her after in wis boc, telle of al pis wo*

2. First Roman invasion (f. 20v):

> *Engelond hap ibe mid strengp iwonne ilome*
> *& verst as ich telle can poru pe emperors of Rome*

3. Attacks by Scots and Picts (f. 37v):

> *Of pe wo pat per ap in pis lond ybe*
> *poru pe emperours of rome, here ye mowe yse*
> *In oper manere of scottes & picars as ich sede*
> *Habbep iworred pis lond, icholle telle pe dede*

4. Defeat of Britons by Anglo-Saxons (f. 78v–79r):

Here we englisse men mowe yse some
Mid woche riyte we bep to pis lond ycome
Ac pe wrecche wellissemen bep of pe olde more
In woche manere ye abbep yhurd hou hii it abbep
ylore
Ac pe feble is euere binepe vor hii that abbep
miyte
Mid strengp bringep ofte pat wowe unto the riyte.

5. Invasions by Danes, (f. 79v):

Of pe batayles of denemarch we mote abbe an honde
Worst hii were vor opere somwanne adde ydo
As romeins & saxons & wel wuste pat lond per to
Ac hii kepte hit holde noyt bote robby & ssende
& destrue & berne & sle & ne coupe abbe non ende
& bot lute it nas worp pei hii were ouercome ylome
Vor mid ssipes & gret poer as prest ef some hii come.

6. Norman Conquest (f. 107r-v):

Muche ap pe sorwe ibe ofte in engelonde
As ye mowe se & er ihure & vnderstonde
Of moni bataile pat ap ibe & pat men pat lond
nome
Verst as ye abbep ihurd, pe emperours of Rome
Suppe saxons & englisse mid batayles stronge
& suppe hii of denemarche pat hulde it so longe
Atte laste hii of normandie pat maisters bep yut here
Won hit & holdep yut icholle telle in wuch manere

All folio numbers refer to Caligula A. xi.

Appendix C

Table 1 The old knight's speech and paragraph marks in Caligula A.xi.

As edmond sat mid is ost aniyt in such solas
As folc miyte pat vorwounded & sor & wery was.
& speke of pis batayle hou it miyte be god
An old kniyt per ros vp & biuore pis folc stod.
Ich am he sede mest fol peruore as foles wolle
Mi fole red yif ye wolle ihure uerst ssewi icholle
Miche ping we abbeth yseye & vr eldrene vs ek sede
Anguisse & sorwe we abbep ynou of wel more we mowe drede.
We fiytep & bep ouercome & no maistrie we ne sep
Hou miyte we be bote ouercome pat pus defouled bep
Despoiled & vorwounded & vr strengpe lesep vaste
Vre felawes & vre owe lif we dredep ek atte laste
Wanne ssal vre reste come & we endinge of vre wo
& among vs sikernesse & pais ich drede neuere mo
Edmond ne mai be ouercome uor is strengpe ywis
Ne pe king knout vre foe vuro he so quoynte ys
Wat may panne oure ende be bote wanne pis kniytes echone.
In eyper side bep aslawe & vr maystres bileued one.
Oper hii miyte panne acordi oper fiyte hom sulue twu
Wat reson is pat hii ne mowe as wel noupe so
pe wule hii abbew eni aliue pat hom mowe serui & drede
Nere hom noyt bope uairor so wuwat is pis gidihede.
per were wule in engelond at on time kinges fiue
& alle hii were riche ynou & of noble liue
& nou to lute to hom tueye al engelond is
& ofte wo so coueitep al al lesep ywis
Yif eiper king so moche wilnep to be louerd her
pat hor noper nele abbe felawe ne per
Fiyte hom sulue tueye pat louerd wole be one
Wy nere hom noyt so betere nou pane panne hor
Kniytes echone
& hor folc were aslawe al & hii bileued all bare
Y ne founde wo hom seruede in anguisse ne in care
Ne wo mid hom in nede pat lond defendi miyte
Here of wat sowe seggew ye as bi youre in siyte
Nadde pis kniyt follische is reson ysed

Ƿat his felawes naade sone ynome hor red.
& sede alle mid one moupe we ensentep per to
pat pis tueie kinges acordi oper bataile hom sulue do

Lines with paragraph marks in bold.

Table 2 Paragraph marks in Harley 201.

As edmond sat mid is ost aniyt in such solas
As folc miyte that vorwounded & sor & wery was.
& speke of pis batayle hou it miyte be god
An oldkniyt per ros vp & biuore pis folc stod.
Ich am he sede mest fol peruore as foles wolle
Mi fole red yif ye wolle ihure uerst ssewi icholle
Miche ping we abbeth yseye & vr eldrene vs ek sede
Anguisse & sorwe we abbep ynou of wel more we mowe drede.
We fiytep & bep ouercome & no maistrie we ne sep
Hou miyte we be bote ouercome pat pus defouled bep
Despoiled & vorwounded & vr strengpe lesep vaste
Vre felawes & vre owe lif we dredep ek atte laste
Wanne ssal vre reste come & we endinge of vre wo
& among vs sikernesse & pais ich drede neuere mo
Edmond ne mai be ouercome uor is strengpe ywis
Ne pe king knout vre foe vuro he so quoynte ys
Wat may panne vure ende be bote wanne pis kniytes echone.
In eyper side bep aslawe & vr maystres bileued one.
Oper hii miyte panne acordi oper fiyte hom sulue twu
Wat reson is pat hii ne mowe as wel noupe so
pe wule hii abbew eni aliue pat hom mowe serui & drede
Nere hom noyt bope uairor so wuwat is pis gidihede.
per were wule in engelond at on time kinges fiue
& alle hii were riche ynou & of noble liue
& nou to lute to hom tueye al engelond is
& ofte wo so coueitep al al lesep ywis
Yif eiper king so moche wilnep to be louerd her
pat hor noper nele abbe felawe ne per
Fiyte hom sulue tueye pat louerd wole be one
Wy nere hom noyt so betere nou pane panne hor
Kniytes echone
& hor folc were aslawe al & hii bileued all bare
Y ne founde wo hom seruede in anguisse ne in care
Ne wo mid hom in nede pat lond defendi miyte
Here of wat sowe seggep ye as bi youre in siyte
Nadde pis kniyt follische is reson ysed

Þat his felawes naade sone ynome hor red
& sede alle mid one moupe we ensentep per to
pat pis tueie kinges acordi oper bataile hom sulue do.

Table 3 Paragraph marks in Add. 19677

As edmond sat mid is ost aniyt in such solas
As folc miyte that vorwounded & sor & wery was.
& speke of pis batayle hou it miyte be god
An old kniyt per ros vp & biuore pis folc stod.
Ich am he sede mest fol peruore as foles wolle
Mi fole red yif ye wolle ihure uerst ssewi icholle

Miche ping we abbeth yseye & vr eldrene vs ek sede
Anguisse & sorwe we abbep ynou of wel more we mowe drede.
We fiytep & bep ouercome & mo maistrie we ne sep
Hou miyte we be bote ouercome pat pus defouled bep
Despoiled & vorwounded & vr strengpe lesep vaste
Vre felawes & vre owe lif we dredew ek atte laste
Wanne ssal vre reste come & we endinge of vre wo
& among vs sikernesse & pais ich drede neuere mo
Edmond ne mai be ouercome uor is strengpe ywis
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pat pis tueie kinges acordi oper bataile hom sulue do.

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