

Medieval Perspectives

17.2

Guest Editors

Marian J. Hollinger

Fairmont State College

Kristine T. Utterback

University of Wyoming

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary D. Edwards is a Rockette at Radio City Music Hall who does Art History on the side at Beltway Community College, District of Columbia, and elsewhere. When she is not executing precision high kicks or reading about painting and sculpture, she is organizing activities for the Venus of Dorset Association, for which see below.

ABOUT THE VENUS OF DORSET ASSOCIATION

This association was founded by Mary D. Edwards in 1999. She is President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer. The association meets annually at the summer solstice at the monument of the deity. Wearing low-slung tights and holding replicas of the ladle-slash-bat, the members congregate in the middle of the relief at the fallen ice-cream cone. Chanting, they proceed across the torso between the stretch marks and breasts, along the right arm and ladle-bat, and out of the hexagonal enclosure, moving in strength, self-esteem and beauty

Nineteenth Century Disciplines, Twenty-First Century Technologies, and Teaching Textual Competence in the Computer Age

Josephine A. Koster

for hundreds of years, medievalists have learned their textual competence in traditional ways: through hands-on work with manuscripts, formal training in paleography, hours of philology classes, exercises in editorial drudgery. While these were some of the less-loved courses in the medieval studies curriculum, they were deemed necessary to train scholars capable of handling and editing the texts of our discipline. In recent years, however, paleography and philology courses have fallen by the wayside in many graduate curricula, to be replaced by a variety of courses in critical theory, cultural history, gender studies, and the like. While the inclusion of these courses has broadened students' critical foundations, it has left little or no time for teaching traditional skills of textual competence, those that lay the groundwork for the kinds of editorial accomplishments that Ordelle Hill and Helen Bennett have demonstrated in their very successful careers.

In this essay I wish to consider what the effects of these curricular changes might be on future generations of medievalists and to demonstrate several exercises that demonstrate ways of teaching fundamental medieval studies critical skills such as paleography and textual editing to both undergraduate and graduate students using electronic media. They have proven successful in a variety of settings in helping students learn to read medieval hands, decipher difficult texts, solve codicological problems, and prepare or review critical editions using the computer. My aim, idealistic as it may seem, is to inspire the integration of old and new disciplines

as we move into our new millennium, and to build on the history of medieval scholarship and our newer critical perspectives to encourage better scholarship.

In many ways, most medievalists have become dependent on edited texts of the works we study; the increasing cost of travel, the shortage of research funds, and the growing reluctance of libraries to let outsiders handle their precious treasures mean that access to primary texts is becoming a luxury rather than a necessity or a usual occurrence to most medievalists. As the generation of scholars whose primary activities were the editing of texts retires and passes away—how few dissertations involving editing do we see these days?—we become, paradoxically, more like the "nineteenth-century" scholars we publicly disparage for their lack of textual sophistication. Even in this postmodern age, where we have come to accept the notion not only of texts but of authorship as both unstable physically and constructed socially, we must admit that the conclusions we draw rest firmly on foundations laid by scholars laboring in the now old-fashioned school of textual studies. Where would our work be without the Early English Text Society, the Anglo-Norman Text Society, the *OED*, the *MED*, the catalogs of Neil Ker and M. R. James, *Patrologia Latina*, and the other foundational works of medieval studies? The Norton Anthologies and Penguin paperbacks we now rely on for so many courses could not exist if this initial scholarship had not been undertaken.

And yet we are losing our sense of what those early explorers taught us, to our detriment. For instance, it is more and more common that an interesting work is published in an incomplete and inaccurate edition; good examples are Rigg and Brewer's so-called "Z-text" of *Piers Plowman* and the anonymous female prayer cycle found in Bodl. Holkham Misc. 43 (Koster 1999). How many more works are being published and written about based on inadequate texts? How many of our graduate or undergraduate students leave their programs with a solid grounding in textual compe-

tence—or even knowing that such grounding is needed? Let me contrast three voices for you that highlight this dilemma.

Lorraine Stock recently wrote on the Chaucer e-mail discussion list,

"[My institution] has no formal graduate courses that cover these areas, even in the history department, where these courses (e.g. in paleography) usually are housed. We also have lost and never replaced the faculty members from the language departments who represented medieval French, German, and Italian. When I retire, who knows what will happen to Chaucer? I find that when push comes to shove, if I want to spend some time on pronunciation and completely cover the course texts as well as contextual texts in Latin, French or Italian (in translation), and cover some relevant contemporary criticism, there is little time remaining to do more than remark about editing issues ad hoc when questions come up or the particular text seems to beg it. My guess is that the formal training of medievalists in these skills varies tremendously, and probably less is done in these areas now than in the past. If you are taught by someone who is him/herself interested in and practices editing, you are probably taught it to a greater degree than by someone who doesn't" (Stock).

And Norman Hinton added in the same discussion, "I used to lecture on some aspects of Chaucerian manuscript study in the early weeks of my CT class, and so far as I know, this was the only time the students heard anything like this, including the "Intro to Grad Study" course. Alas" (Hinton).

On the other hand, recent Ph.D. Robert Ladd of Indiana University—Purdue University Fort Wayne feels no lack from the shortage of time spent on textual competence. He writes,

"I can't vouch for my own practice, which is as yet

unformed, but I can describe how it is done at University of Wisconsin, where I was trained. They do a little introduction to manuscripts in the initial Old English course, and some discussion of editing and pronunciation issues in the Chaucer course. We also had occasional readings from manuscript facsimiles in the weekly Old English reading group. Then there was a one-semester catch-all course, in which we learned basic "medievalist skills." The course was required before prelims, and the professor, Sherry Reames, took a course overload at least once when I was there, because the class did not always have enough students for the University to count it. One semester hardly qualifies me as an editor, of course, but I did learn what would be entailed if I did want to be one. . . . At any rate, some of you from older, more rigorous traditions might justifiably scoff (when did Harvard stop making people translate things back and forth between Old and Middle English?), but I don't feel particularly untrained, though textual scholarship is not my main interest." (Ladd)

I'm sure Ladd is not untrained. And I'm aware my own background puts me squarely on the other side of this divide. I had the benefit of studying with George Kane, Malcolm Parkes, Jeanne Krochalis, David Dumville, and David Ganz; I can never ignore the issue of textual competence, though there were times when I wished I could have. I know that students trained today have a better grounding in critical theory than I had, and that they learn in classes the cultural and sociopolitical perspectives that I've had to learn by my own efforts over the years. Obviously, there are tradeoffs. But all three of the voices I quoted before worry me a great deal—the courses disappear, the colleagues have not been replaced, the subjects get a few mentions in a class, one faculty member runs a workshop as an overload. To me this paints a picture of fundamental knowledge being undermined. The question is, can we do something about this? Can we find ways to re-introduce these nineteenth-century tools into our twenty-first century classrooms?

My answer is yes, and what follows will demonstrate several "nineteenth-century" textual manipulation exercises that can be productively used in a classroom—be it a classroom devoted to medieval literature, to a general survey, to a literary theory class, or to an introduction to literary studies classroom. Most of the tools are low-tech indeed, and could be duplicated using handouts instead of the web page I regularly use (<http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/sema2000.htm>). I'm offering these as an inspiration to all of us to challenge ourselves and our students to recover some sense of what it means to use an edited text—a lesson that is as valuable to the postmodernist as it is to the medievalist. What I hope this might begin is an exchange of ideas of other ways we can achieve these ends, and perhaps eventually a web page, listserv, or even publication of such resources for other instructors to use.

The first exercise gives simple practice in learning how to recognize medieval letter forms, using xeroxed pages from Jean Preston and Laetitia Yeandle's *English Handwriting 1400-1650*. This can be assigned as homework or done in class; students simply have to prepare a transcription of the first folio of the Princeton manuscript of *The Mirour of the blessedde lyf of ihesus cryst* (Preston 8-9) and check it against the printed transcription to see what letters they don't recognize (Figure 1). In class, I usually assign students to do this in teams; they can help each other. If I am in the computer-equipped classroom, I sometimes improvise with this exercise, showing students how to cut and paste letters out of the image, and sometimes spelling their names; sometimes I show them Thorlac Turville-Petre's clever insertion of his own name as the scribe of *Piers Plowman* (Figure 2) as a way of showing what you can do with a good photo editor.

Students love this exercise—they tell stories of sitting in dorm lounges working on transcriptions with their friends hanging over their shoulders to see what they're doing. (If time permits, you can do more to teach medieval letter forms using

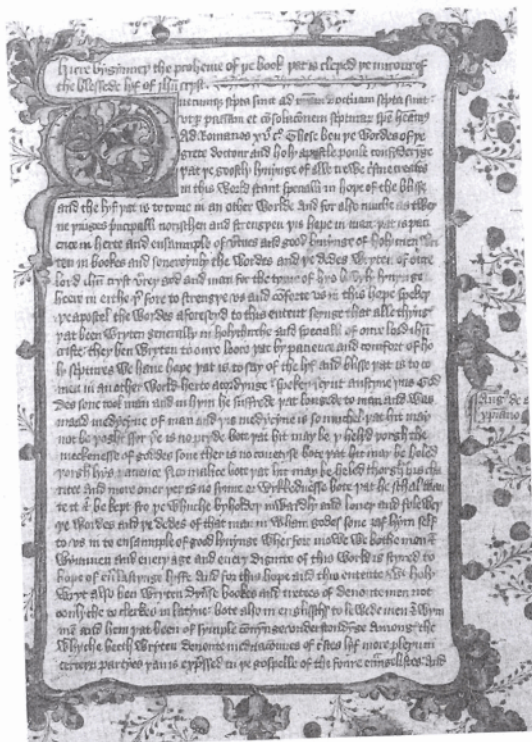


Fig. 1

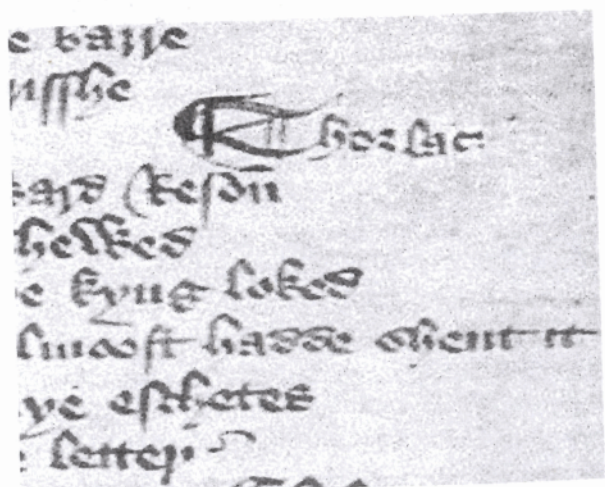


Fig. 2

programs like Bernard Muir's *Ductus*.) I usually combine this exercise with hands-on contact with examples from my personal collection of manuscript leaves as a way of introducing material culture.

The second exercise in textual manipulation is called "Is the catalog right?" and uses a reproduction of one of the flyleaves of a Wycliffite New Testament at the University of Pennsylvania (Figure 3). The text is one dear to my heart, as it formed the subject of my master's thesis, but I value it more for its pedagogical value than its intrinsic literary merit, which is nil.

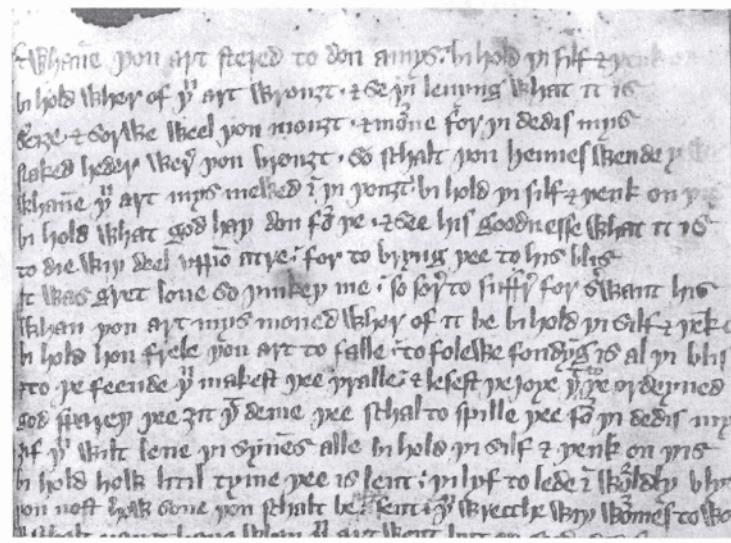


Fig. 3

According to Zacour and Hirsch's *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the University of Pennsylvania Libraries to 1800*, the page contains "miscellaneous sermon notes" (Zacour 50). I ask students to transcribe the manuscript and think about whether or not the cataloguers are correct; then I ask them to look at an edited version that makes clear that the text is, in fact, a rhymed collection of moral verses, and reconsider their answers. The first eight lines of the text read

Whanne þou art stered to don amys, bihold þi silf &
 þenk on þi[s]:
 Bihold wher of þu art wrouȝt & se þi lenyng what it is.
 Seie & sorwe weel þou mouȝt, and morne for þi dedis
 mys.
 Naked heder were þou brouȝt; so schalt þou hennes
 wende, y wis.
 Whane þu art mys mewed in þi þouȝt, bi hold þi silf
 and þenk on þis:
 Bihold what god haþ don for þe, and se his good-
 nesse what it is:
 To die wiþ deel uppon a tre for to bryng þee to his blis.
 It was gret loue, so þinkeþ me, so sore to suffre for ser
 want his.

(Koster 30)

It usually amazes students that editors of a major university's catalogue could mistake a poem for sermon notes, and we discuss how both an editor's expectations of what might be recorded on a Bible's flyleaves and the unfortunate effects that fading and cropping a manuscript to fit into an Elizabethan binding may have. If the editors had taken the time to decipher the entire text, they wouldn't have described it this way—but they did not take the time to create such an edition; no one did until a graduate student needed a master's thesis subject. The exercise makes students reflect, first, on what it takes to edit the text of a poem that exists only in one damaged manuscript and what layers an editor puts onto a text to bring it into a "print" form. And second, this exercise challenges students to consider what the strengths and limitations of published descriptions are. If one had not seen the manuscript, but only the catalog description, would one know to ask questions about it?

The third exercise is called "Can I trust my textbook?" For this activity, I have students look at the end to the

Parson's *Prologue of the Canterbury Tales* (X 67-74) in a standard text and compare it to the manuscript, using *Hengwrt* and *Ellesmere* as reference points. The lines in most editions read

Oure Hoost hadde the worders for us alle;
 "Sire preest," quod he, "now faire yow bifalle!
 Telleth," quod he, "youre meditacioun.
 But hasteth yow; the sonne wole adoun;
 Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
 And to do wel God sende yow his grace!
 Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly here."
 And with that word he seyde in this manere.

What students find, to their consternation, is that the order of lines in the "authoritative" print versions do not correspond to the order of the text in the manuscripts that scholars generally consider closest to Chaucer's own working papers, as you can see in the facsimile of the *Hengwrt* manuscript (Ruggiers 936), where lines 73-74 appear immediately after lines 67-68. The *Hengwrt* ordering of lines appears in the *Ellesmere* manuscript as well (Woodward 206v).

Students are usually shocked, even incensed, to see that editors have "changed" Chaucer, and more so that the explanatory notes in the texts rarely if ever give a justification for the change. (In fact, if they have only the paperback edition of the *Canterbury Tales* in the Riverside edition, they have no textual notes at all; they are not included in the soft-cover version.) Most students agree that the change significantly alters the interpretation of the entrance into the *Parson's Tale*, since the print versions make it appear as if the last words of poetry in Chaucer's masterwork emphasize obedient listening rather than transcendent grace. Not only in medieval literature classes but in general literature survey classes as well, such exercises make students focus on the act of interpretation, and how the text they

see in the *Norton Anthology* or *Riverside Chaucer* or whatever text is a construction that mingles authorial and editorial choices and not some writ of Scripture.

The final textual manipulation exercise is called "What is my critical stance based on?" and is designed primarily for upper-division undergraduates and graduate students. In it, I ask students to look at a very important passage from the *Wife of Bath's Prologue* (lll 605-614), where she uses medieval science and astrology to explain the nature of her physical desires. In Hengwrt fol. 65v (Ruggiers 257), the passage reads as follows:

And trewely / as myne housbondes tolde me
I hadde the beste quonyam myghte be
Myn ascendent was Taur / and Mars ther Inne
Allas o Allas / that evere loue was synne
I folwed ay my Inclinacioun
By vertu of my constellacioun
That made me / I koude noght withdrawe
My chambre of Venus / from a good felawe

But in Ellesmere fols. 69 r-v and most print editions, we find

And trewely / as myn housbondes tolde me
I hadde the beste Quonyam myghte be [page break in
manuscript]
For certes I am al Venerien is
In feelynge / and myn herte ^ Marciē
Venus me yaf my lust / my likerousnesse
And Mars yaf me / my sturdy hardynesse
Myn Ascendent was Taur and Mars therinne
Allas / Allas / _at evere loue was synne
I folwed ay myn Inclinacioun
By vertu of my constellacioun
That made me / I koude noght withdrawe
My chambre of Venus / from a good felawe
(Woodward 69 r-v).

This is a conundrum indeed, since Hengwrt and Ellesmere were copied within a few years of each other, presumably by the same scribe and from similar exemplars (Parkes & Doyle; Adams; Duggan). No common paleographical mistake can account for the contraction or expansion. So what is the authority for the four additional lines in Ellesmere?

In this exercise, my students and I look at the facsimiles of the manuscripts, then discuss how editors represent the four inserted lines that may or may not be Chaucer's and consider what it means to claim that an author wrote particular lines. We talk about the ethical responsibilities of editors to represent a textual situation (one parallel case we often discuss is which ending of *Great Expectations* an editor might print), and then move on to a critic's responsibilities. Students are assigned to read contemporary articles, especially those using feminist and queer theory, to look at how these possibly inauthentic lines are used to interpret Chaucer's purposes. This exercise challenges students to think about the quality of evidence a critic uses, and the critic's responsibility for providing readers with enough evidence to judge the validity of a critical position.

None of these exercises, of course, solves all the problems our students struggle with in learning to interpret medieval texts. They are not a "fix" for the growing problem of lack of preparation in the tools of our trade, nor do they alone assure that young medievalists are adequately grounded in the complexities of editorial practice. But they are ways that we as teachers can get our students to understand that they need textual competence, and not only when looking at medieval works. They can help to develop a healthy skepticism about the authority of print editions. Perhaps the lessons learned will remain with them when they in turn become our younger colleagues looking at curricula and the needs of their own students. And perhaps then it will not become as necessary to reinvent the wheel and rediscover the traditions of textual scholarship that were so

painstakingly laid out over the last two centuries. To paraphrase Wordsworth's *Prelude*, "What we have learned, others will learn, and we will teach them how."

Winthrop University

WORKS CITED

- Adams, Robert. "Editing and the Limitations of the *Durior Lectio*." *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 5 (1991): 7-15.
- Duggan, Hoyt. "Scribal Self-Correction and Editorial Theory." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 91 (1990): 309-29.
- Doyle, A. I., and M. B. Parkes. "The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century." In *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, and Libraries*, ed. M. B. Parkes. (London: Scolar, 1978): 163-210.
- Hinton, Norman D. "Re: So where do you teach textual studies?" E-mail posting to Chaucer Discussion List, 15 Sept. 2000. Archived at <http://listserv.linguistlist.org/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0009&L=chaucer&P=R7014>.
- Koster, Josephine A. "An Edition of the Middle English Moral Verses in University of Pennsylvania MS English 6." M. A. Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1981.
- . "Gender, Text, Critic: The Case of Holkham Misc. 41." *Medieval Perspectives* 14 (1999): 229-241.
- Ladd, Roger A. "Re: So Where Do You Teach Textual Studies?" E-mail to Chaucer Discussion List, 15 Sept. 2000. Archived at <http://listserv.linguistlist.org/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0009&L=chaucer&F=&S=&P=14055>.
- Muir, Bernard. Ductus. Program for learning paleography. 31 May 2002 <<http://medieval.unimelb.edu.au./ductus/>>.
- Preston, Jean F., and Laetitia Yeandle, *English Handwriting 1400-1650*. (Asheville, NC: Pegasus/MRTS, 1992).
- Rigg, A.G., and Charlotte Brewer. *Piers Plowman: The Z-Version*. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1983).
- Ruggiers, Paul, ed. *The Canterbury Tales: A Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript With Variants from the Ellesmere Manuscript*. The Variorum Chaucer. (Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1979).
- Stock, Lorraine H. "Re: So Where Do You Teach Textual Studies?" E-mail message to Chaucer Discussion List. 15 Sept. 2000. Archived at <http://listserv.linguistlist.org/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0009&L=chaucer&F=&S=&P=13436>.

Woodward, Daniel, and Martin Stevens, ed. *Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales. The New Ellesmere Chaucer Monochromatic Facsimile* (of Huntington Library MS EL 26 C 9). (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1997).

Zacour, Norman P., and Rudolf Hirsch. *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the University of Pennsylvania Libraries to 1800*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania P, 1965).

LIST OF FIGURES

- 1 Jean F. Preston and Laetitia Yeandle, *English Handwriting 1400-1650* (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 1992): 9.
- 2 Edited page from Passus IV of *Piers Plowman* with pastiche signature of a scribe "Thorlac." Courtesy of Thorlac Turville-Petre.
- 3 University of Pennsylvania MS. Eng. 6, fol. 3r. used with the permission of the Board of Overseers, van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania

Gamaliel, Twelfth-Century Christian Scholars, and the Attribution of the Talmud

Frans van Liere

The knowledge of Hebrew among Christian authors before 1150 was almost nil. But in the twelfth century, scholars such as Abelard, Hugh of St Victor, and his pupil Andrew, began to stress the importance of knowing Hebrew for exegetical purposes. As their interest in Hebrew grew, so did their acquaintance with Jewish sources, although the contents of these were available to Christian scholars at first only by hearsay; Christian scholars had to rely on Jewish spokesmen for information about Jewish exegesis. One source that now regularly started to surface in Christian commentaries that quoted the Jewish exegesis of Scripture was the Talmud, even though it is not clear whether Christians had actually formed a notion of the form and content of this important rabbinical source. With one known exception, Christian authors until around 1200 never mentioned the Talmud by name.¹ What we often find instead, is the name "Gamaliel", whom Christians apparently took to be the author of the Talmud.

Who was this Gamaliel, and why was he credited with the authorship of the Talmud? The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* states that Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder (not to be confused with his more influential grandson, Gamaliel II, of Jabneh) lived in the first half of the first century, was president of the Sanhedrin, probably had ties with the royal family, and was respected for his decisions in Jewish law, which have been preserved in the Talmud.² He is mentioned in the New Testament; the book of Acts suggests that he was tolerant towards the early Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem, and that he was also the