Historiography in Modern Poetry:

Text, Imagination and Authority in the work of David Jones, Geoffrey Hill and Ian Duhig

And

King Harold

A long poem in three parts

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how modern poetry is shaped by its relationships with academic and historical texts. Occasioned by creative writers' increasing involvement in the academy, it considers the consequences of this relationship for contemporary poetry praxis. Through close readings of David Jones' *Anathemata,* Geoffrey Hill's *Mercian Hymns* and Ian Duhig's *The Speed of Dark*, it explores how imaginative conceptions of poems relate to and are affected by their material presentations as texts. In so doing, there is a particular focus on how paratexts translate academic models of authoritative writing into their poems.

　　　　This thesis addresses a number of key questions: how do modern poets express ideas about the past? How do their borrowings from academic and scholarly texts shape this expression? Do readers' past experiences have an impact? Taking the work of critics Jerome J. McGann and Linda Hutcheon as its starting point, it develops new approaches to these questions through a synthesis of their ideas and applying these issues to the particulars of poetry composition. It opens new avenues of relevance to modern poets, connecting contemporary poetry criticism with textual studies.

　　　　The creative component of this thesis makes a parallel treatment of these critical issues in *King Harold*, a long poem on the multiple literary lives of Harold Godwinson, the last Anglo-Saxon king. My poem dramatises the tensions explored in the critical component, creating an exciting and original bricolage of academic and historical paratexts. Both the critical component and the creative writing element of this thesis illustrate the impact of academic textual production on modern poetry.

Contents

Introduction

0.0 Outline

What versions of the past do poets attempt to convey in their poems? How do modern poets write about the past? What impact do readers have on such versions? Moreover, what does the process of transmission from poet to reader introduce into these versions of the past? Poets' ideas of the past are naturally shaped and delineated by the conventions of historical writing. Poems about the past exist within a nexus of scholarly and popular historical thought. However, modern developments in the relationship between academic writing and contemporary poetry have brought them into ever closer contact. How has this affected the transmission of historical ideas between poet and reader, and what critical perspectives might we need to understand that transmission better? Creative writers have become increasingly prevalent within academic institutions over the past two decades: even the existence of this critical-creative thesis points towards a developing interaction between academic writing and poetry. This is an opportune moment to re-examine that interaction, and ask how it manifests itself in the work of poets writing about the past.

In order to shed further light on these central questions, this thesis explores work by David Jones (1895-1974), Geoffrey Hill (b. 1932) and Ian Duhig (b. 1954). It focuses on the poets' creative processes of imagining the past through a literary analysis of the poems themselves. It also examines how their ideas come into tension with conceptions of authoritative historical writing, and how the published texts of their poetry enact these tensions.

This enactment of tensions makes studying the published texts of poetry central to this thesis. However, this centrality of published texts also demands a theoretical clarification: how do we understand the differences between 'text' and 'poem'? As a means of approaching this question, I explore how the term 'poem' (in common parlance) contains many of our uses of the critical term 'text'. Building upon this, I aim to address the tendency in contemporary poetry criticism to ascribe effects that specifically derive from a text of a poem to the 'poem' in general. In particular, I wish to emphasise the importance of the paratexts of poetry, such as Jones' preface and footnotes to the *Anathemata*, the 'acknowledgements' to Hill's *Mercian Hymns*, and Duhig's 'notes' on *The Speed of Dark*. These paratexts are an integral part of the processes of composition and genesis for individual

texts. Other critics have considered them in this light, particularly in the case of Jones. However, where previous critics have used paratexts to supplement their interpretations of particular poems, they have often failed to highlight the role of paratexts in shaping our imaginative responses as a whole. In order to redress this oversight, I aim to draw attention to these features as an integral part of how texts convey poems to their readers.

This approach centres on the following question: how do the texts of Jones, Hill and Duhig's work shape how we imagine the past when we read their poems? Each of these three poets expresses a distinct conception of imagining the past within their work. Moreover, these ideas take shape within the texts of their poetry in different ways, as the distinctive paratexts to Jones, Hill and Duhig's work show. In order to understand how their texts shape our imaginations, we must also understand how these texts express the poets' underlying conceptions of the past. Hence, I address questions of our ability to reconstruct the poets' views on imagining the past through tracing their borrowings from different historical and academic texts. As with my emphasis upon the significance of paratexts, my aim is to show that these connections between poems and historical or academic texts can have profound consequences for how we imagine the past through reading or writing poetry.

This focus on paratext also drives the creative portion of this thesis, my long poem *King Harold*. Indeed, the critical component is an important paratext to *King Harold*: it reflects upon the poem's influences, preoccupations, and connections with historical and academic texts. *King Harold* is a historical poem detailing the life of Harold Godwinson (c. 1022-1066). Its premise is that the poem is a composition by Harold Godwinson in his later mythical personification as a medieval ecclesiastic. Harold utilises historical sources, both mundane and fictional, to recall the details of his own life and the events surrounding the years 1022-1066. Intended to be readable as a history in itself, the poem follows Harold's life in a narrative, chronological fashion. However, the poem also addresses the same problems of the interplay between text, imagination, and authority in historical writing that the critical component considers.

This combination of creative and critical strands has particular relevance for an audience of poets: this thesis is an exploration of how poets view their own engagement with historical and academic texts. I aim to emphasise how wide and deep the chains of connections between texts can

be, and how the fine details of these connections can have profound impacts upon the shaping of entire volumes of poetry. Moreover, my focus on paratexts offers to heighten poets' awareness of the importance of these features for a reader's imaginative engagement with the past.

However, this thesis is not simply an attempt to begin a critical conversation with other poets. It engages with the work of the textual critic Jerome J. McGann, as a means of teasing out and refining what we understand by a text: separating out the 'text' from the 'poem' highlights the exciting mutability of poems across different media, whether through print or performance. Such a separation underlines the different effects a poem can have on different audiences across multiple texts and performances. This separation also suggests a significant development of Linda Hutcheon and Jerome de Groot's work on historical fiction. By exploring works of poetry rather than literary fiction, this thesis refines Hutcheon and de Groot's work in ways that point towards a more precise understanding of how we can imagine the past through poems.

This begs a further key question: why consider poetry in this thesis? A printed poem is a visual representation of a verbal utterance. Its lines and verses correspond closely with the shaping of that utterance into meaningful phrases. Hence, a poem's organisation into lines, verses, versets (and so on) requires precise representation in a printed text. This dependence heightens a reader's awareness of the text as a material object, making the effects of paratexts and other features of the material text more pronounced. Poetry's increased sensitivity to its media of representation emphasises aporias that critics, such as Hutcheon and de Groot, locate in the relationship between texts and imaginative representations of the past. The problems that Hutcheon and de Groot probe in their discussions of historical fiction are far closer to the surface in poetry. Thus, in replacing literary fiction with poetry as its focus, this thesis energizes a familiar debate with original readings. In addition, by creating a dialogue between the critical perspectives of McGann, Hutcheon and de Groot, I aim to open up new avenues of critical debate.

The interaction between these critics shapes my explorations of poems about the past. I investigate the roles of music, scholarship and performance in Duhig's *The Speed of Dark*, drawing out the interactions between historical and scholarly texts that have influenced Duhig's poems. This then prompts a more detailed examination of conceptions of authoritative writing expressed in Hill's

Mercian Hymns, where I discuss how our imagination of the past is coloured by Hill's representations of authoritative artefacts and texts. Finally, I consider how Jones' concept of *anamnesis* can offer crucial insights into how the apprehension of authority can sharpen an imagined past into something affecting and physical. In my readings of Jones, Hill and Duhig, I show how the theoretical standpoints of Hutcheon and McGann need to be refined, which offers new and revealing perspectives on the poets' work.

My main focus in the remainder of the thesis is on the three key texts listed above. However, a brief introduction to the three poets' work as a whole will provide a useful background to these texts for those unfamiliar with the styles and themes that characterise their oeuvres. Jones was both a writer and artist and was one of the first generation of British modernists. His main works of poetry include: *In Parenthesis,* which draws upon his experiences with the Royal Welch Fusiliers in the First World war; and *Anathemata,* which explores Jones' own identity as a Londoner within both British and Mediterranean contexts. Both of these works draw heavily upon a corpus of British myth, history and pseudo-history, which is itself the subject of serious historical study. [1]

Hill is now widely regarded as being among the foremost English poets of his generation. His extensive list of poetic works includes *For the Unfallen*, *King Log*, *Mercian Hymns, Tenebrae,* and *The Triumph of Love.*[2] Hill's work frequently aims to interrogate the present through the past, often adopting anachronistic modes of phrasing and rhetorical expression. Many of his works treat with historical subjects, from the re-creation of Offa's Mercia within the English Midlands of the 1930s in *Mercian Hymns* through to the extensive treatment of the Second World War in *The Triumph of Love*.

Finally, Duhig is a prominent contemporary poet, having produced six collections of short lyrics. His works include *Nominies,* which draws upon ballads and folk history from the Leeds area where Duhig was born. He is also the author of *The Speed of Dark,* which takes the fourteenth-century

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1 David Jones, *In Parenthesis* (London: Faber, 1937); David Jones, *Anathemata* (London: Faber, 1952). For a complete list of Jones' publications see the bibliography.

2 Geoffrey Hill, *For the Unfallen* (London: André Deutsch, 1959); Geoffrey Hill, *King Log* (London:André Deutsch, 1968); Geoffrey Hill, *Mercian Hymns* (London: André Deutsch, 1971); Geoffrey Hill, *Tenebrae* (London: André Deutsch, 1978); Geoffrey Hill, *The Triumph of Love* (London: Penguin, 1999). See the bibliography for complete references of Hill's publications.

French and Latin *Roman de Fauvel* as its model and adapts it by updating its concerns.[3] Many of Duhig's poems treat with local history and his own Irish family background, with an acknowledged debt to numerous and eclectic traditions of writing and thought.

The work of these three poets bears a crucial relationship to this thesis. These poets are not only prominent representatives of three distinctive generations of British poets; they have also influenced me in my creative work. Considering their work offers insight into the developing concerns of historiography in British poetry over the past sixty years, but also into the development of the creative portion of this thesis. Indeed, in relating their work to my own, I show the continuing relevance of this thesis' conclusions for the praxis of contemporary poetry.

0.1 The text within the poem

Our uses of the words 'poem' and 'text' often conflate complex concepts and categories that this thesis must explore in precise detail. In order to realise some of this detail, I wish to start by considering the criticism of Jerome J. McGann, who has explored concepts of text and textuality at length in his critical works. His examination of how 'texts' and 'works' might be different offers a crucial insight into how we can understand the wider impact of material texts upon a reader. We often use the word 'text' and the word 'work' interchangeably, to mean a work of literary art in its entirety. However, McGann has suggested that this very notion of entirety can be misleading: what about poems that exist in multiple versions or editions? McGann argues that distinguishing between texts and works sharpens and clarifies aspects of the word 'text' in ways that offer immediate benefits to literary critics:

> Even the simplest textual problem - establishing a work's *linguistic* correctness -
> can involve other problems that are, quite literally, insoluble. Keats, for example,
> wrote two distinct and finished versions of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci.' But
> even if we put such special problems aside and assume that we can establish 'the
> author's final intentions' toward the language or even the entire format of his

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3 Ian Duhig, *Nominies* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1998), Ian Duhig, *The Speed of Dark* (London: Picador, 2007) p. 67. See the bibliography for complete references of Duhig's publications.

work, we would still have, as readers, merely one text of the work, or - as

scholars - the means for producing a number of possible editions, or texts.[4]

(McGann's emphasis)

McGann points towards a difference between the linguistic properties of a poem and the way that these are given shape through a text. The reader, by McGann's account, does not have direct access to a poem but instead encounters the poem through a particular material text. Instead of simply representing a poem, a material text acts as a prompt for a reader's engagement with the poem. By contrast, McGann defines the term 'work' (a term he uses interchangeably with 'poem' when discussing poetry) as the remainder of that social and linguistic entity that we sometimes mean when we say 'text'. The 'work' thus covers some of the broader concepts that scholars have engaged with through their use of the term 'text'.

In this sense, McGann sharpens the idea of text to focus upon a material object that a reader encounters through their sensory perceptions. This idea of the text does not restrict itself to materiality, but instead exists in the reader's interactions with that material substance through touch, sight and so on. As such, the text is a vehicle for what we perceive as the literary form of a work: texts can incorporate poems, novels, novellas, short stories (and so on) within themselves. However, McGann's concept of the work seeks to move beyond the material basis for the literary form. His use of 'works' instead develops the concept of a richer plurality of literary forms that can inhabit multiple material texts. In this sense, he seeks to contradict the common critical usage of the term 'work' as an inaccessible ur-text that may or may not represent authorial intentions. Rather, for McGann, the work forms a locus of dynamic interaction between multiple interconnected texts and their readers. McGann's clarification of this idea bears repeating here:

In specifying these unique features and sets of relationships, it transcends the

concept of the-poem-as-verbal-object to reveal the poem as a special sort of

communication event. This new understanding of poems takes place precisely

because the critical act, occurring in a self-conscious present, can turn to look

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4   Jerome J. McGann, 'The Text, the Poem, and the Problem of Historical Method', in *New Literary History*
    Vol 12 No. 2 (1981) p. 275.

upon poems created in the past not as fixed objects but as the locus of certain

past human experiences. Some of these are dramatized in the poems, while

others are preserved through the poetical works, which embody various human

experiences with the poems, beginning with the author's own experiences. In

this way does a historical criticism define poetry not as a formal structure or

immediate event but as a continuing human process.[5]

By defining a poem as a 'continuing human process', McGann expands its scope in two directions. For McGann, the idea of a work or poem contains its continuing existence in interactions with new audiences, through new media and new versions. However, the idea of the poem also contains its own (potentially extremely lengthy) phases of production, including both early drafts and later revisions and adaptations. Under such a definition, it is unclear where any particular poem might begin, let alone end. For McGann, the poem is a potentially vast locus for continuing human processes: such loci could stretch to cover anything from single poems to entire literary traditions. The relationship between poem and text thus encompasses several key movements. In one sense, we can understand the dichotomy between the form and that which represents the form: for McGann, the poem is an abstract entity with a specific literary form and the text is a material object that conveys that form. In another sense, however, the potential vastness of what we could mean by a poem and the narrowness of what we could mean by a text (in McGann's terms) expresses a relationship between the immanent, material present and an implied literary past.

Crucially, McGann makes no true attempt to separate the text from the poem. Such a separation of medium from message would be wholly false. Rather, considering 'text' as something different from a 'work' or 'poem' is a means of highlighting a problematic aspect of the relationships between texts. McGann's example of the two versions of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* shows that his concern lies with the multiplicity of forms that different texts can suggest, even when connected by the same poem. The poem becomes an indicator that readers can use to locate texts, to find the relevance of material present to literary past and vice versa. Hence, McGann's 'loci' place the relationship between poem and text in a position that sharpens our view of the agency of the reader.

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5 *Ibid.* p. 285.

McGann places the key aspect of this relationship within the 'turning' of the reader's consciousness towards the human experiences that the text implies. His conceptions of texts and poems invites us to reconsider how every feature of a text might shape our responses to the poem it conveys. How we read a particular line or verse might be affected by everything from the quality of the paper it is printed on through to the volume's cover and typeface. These things can all be a vehicle for the form of the poem as much as the lines and verses themselves are.

Thus, McGann's criticism suggests that any understanding of how we respond to poems must take their texts' materiality and paratexts into account. In his construction of the terms text and poem, McGann differentiates between the experience of a reader engaged with a material text and the plurality of literary forms that reach out to the reader through that text. In doing so, McGann has created a critical framework that indicates the crucial relevance of the material text to our questions of writing about the past. However, this framework demands a more precise understanding of how these literary forms might interact with the material text and each other. The rich world of the work that McGann has so tantalisingly sketched for us, with its complexes of literary transmission and history, must now be explored. How can McGann's framework elucidate literary writing in a more general sense, and how might it inform our understanding of writing and imagining the past? In order to address these questions, I must turn in much more detail to the broader perspectives on postmodern historical fiction offered by critics such as Hutcheon and de Groot.

Chapter 1 – The Speed of Dark and BnFr. 146

0.0 History's text and *The Speed of Dark*

This chapter examines poetry's engagement with divergent ideas of the past. More specifically, it focuses on how our imaginative engagement with these divergent pasts is shaped by McGann's conception of text and poem. How past experiences prime a reader's response to a text is also considered. In turn, two distinct modes of understanding the past arise: the first is a collectively or socially mediated understanding; the second is an imaginative reconstruction of the past that is local to the act of reading. These modes of understanding are not mutually exclusive; readers combine and overlay these modes in their interpretations. However, by closely examining the ways in which Duhig's *The Speed of Dark* presents ideas of the past in this chapter I explore how these modes come into tension with one another. In exploring these tensions, this study of Duhig's work locates key approaches to the ways poetry engages with the past that the subsequent chapters develop.

This tension revolves around a key distinction in terms. Following the terminology suggested by McGann, I use the word 'text' to refer to the materiality of a book, pamphlet or page. It describes a substance that a reader perceives as a tangible object. In this respect, it is preferable to terms such as 'book' or 'volume'. Although more precise, such terms rely upon socially constructed ideas of form and function. By restricting the term 'text' to focus upon a concrete rather than an abstract object, my aim is to form a new approach to the complicated debates about 'text' and 'textuality'. In particular, I use the term 'text' as something prior to the grouping of separate texts to form versions, print runs, or types of publication. Perceiving this object, the text, causes a reader to infer the experience of reading a book, pamphlet, or individual printed page. I use the term here and elsewhere as a way of focusing closely in on a reader's experience of a material object when reading a poem.

The other key term that I use in opposition to 'text' is 'poem'. Again, following McGann's account of the work, I use this term to explore ideas of a linguistic entity instantiated among many texts, utterances and performances. Where a reader's perceptions of a text's materiality makes it fixed and immediate, a poem is always in transit between its performances, readings and interpretations. As such, a poem can be subject to the experiences of multiple different readers as they interact with the tangible and concrete nature of its texts.

This chapter introduces and explores the ways in which the co-incidence of poems and texts create problems for readers' understandings of the past.

Linda Hutcheon has explored this relationship between readers, texts and the past through discussing postmodern adaptations of the genre of historical fiction. In doing so, Hutcheon considers how writers from the second half of the twentieth century engage with pre-existing ways of writing about the past through fiction. She introduces the key term 'historiographic metafiction' to describe the postmodern engagement with historiography through the creation of fictional narratives about the past, applying it to novels such as E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*. Hutcheon frames this postmodern approach through its challenge to 'the implied assumptions of historical statements: objectivity, neutrality, impersonality, and transparency of representation.'[1] Significantly for Hutcheon, however, her exploration of the interaction between literary fiction and historical texts suggests a crucial disjunction between the different modes of historical knowledge. For Hutcheon, 'imaginative reconstruction' and 'intellectual systematizing' constitute different models of obtaining knowledge about the past that cannot operate together.[2] This disjunction has deep-seated implications for Hutcheon's understanding of the relationships between texts, poems, and readers.

How does this disjunction create problems? In probing Hutcheon's account more deeply, it becomes clear that she relies upon 'signification' as the key mechanism by which writers represent the past both to the individual reader and to society at large.[3] The problem with this characterisation is that it drastically limits the agency of the reader. Signs represent only by convention, a convention that only a collective or social engagement can establish. By restricting language to a system of signification, Hutcheon removes the logical and deductive aspects of understanding language that the more recent linguistic models suggest.[4] In doing so, Hutcheon does not only overstate the conventional nature of a reader's interpretation. She also understates the processes of reasoning and deduction that can draw readers into unique and unconventional interpretations. This restriction, in turn, implies an uncomfortable relationship with the boundaries of a text. As Hutcheon emphatically states, 'historiographical metafiction acknowledges the paradox of the *reality* of

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1 Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1988) p. 92.
2 *Ibid.*
3 *Ibid.* See for example p. 98.
4 See, for example, the linguistic model offered by Relevance Theory, which mixes implicature with signification to describe aspects of human language. This is outlined in Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

the past but its *textualized accessibility* to us today (Hutcheon's emphasis).'[5] Hutcheon implies that texts are inseparable from wider complexes of socially agreed signification: in doing so, she glosses over the actions of the reader in interpreting those texts.

It is possible to resolve the above paradox by exploring the details of the materiality of texts. Such an exploration helps to highlight the tension between imaginative and systematised modes of understanding the past. However, Hutcheon creates this paradox by emphasising the systematic aspects of a reader's engagement with a text over its imaginative aspects. In doing so, she closes off an important and fruitful area of debate. Most significantly, Hutcheon's lack of precision at this point conceals the ways in which narratives from a socially determined understanding of the past can encroach upon a work of fiction. Jerome de Groot has suggested that historiographical metafictions 'take their formal ability to interrogate realism and to highlight their own metafictionality from the mature, sceptical set of generic rules already in place for historical fiction.'[6] De Groot's implication is clear: even as writers exploit wider social conceptions of the past, these conceptions also intrude upon and become manifested in their writing. These unintended consequences suggest a dynamic and unstable relationship between imaginative writing and conceptions of the past. A detailed exploration of the interactions between texts and poems can give crucial insight into the nature of this relationship.

Expanding upon Hutcheon's argument also highlights the importance of poetry to this debate. Poetry appeals to the reader's imagination, and demands the imaginative re-creation of the objects it describes. However, the texts that convey poetry position themselves at the join between systematic and imaginative modes of understanding the past. As I show below, the tension between text and poetry in the work of Duhig, Hill and Jones is significant because it leads readers towards conflicting sets of historical narratives. In trying to communicate through their specific texts, the work of these poets becomes subject to a range of pressures. These pressures call the poets' imaginative and narrative interpretations of the past into question.

Hence, in this chapter I explore the connections between the *Roman de Fauvel* and Duhig's *The Speed of Dark*.[7] Fauvel's presence is the point where the text and the poems turn as they seek to negotiate between collective and individual imaginations. Fauvel is a character derived from a pre-existing historical text. His presence in Duhig's poem does not only prompt the reader to deduce their own imaginative

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5   Linda Hutcheon, 1988 p. 114.

6   Jerome de Groot, *The Historical Novel* (London: Routledge 2010) p. 119.

7   In this chapter, henceforward abbreviated *SpD*.

interpretation of the poem: it also invites the reader to consider how Fauvel might signify other, socially constructed interpretations. As a result, I begin with an examination of the way in which *SpD* introduces the character of Fauvel to the reader.

0.1 Fauvel's prologue

Fauvel's entrance into Duhig's work has something terrifying and brazen to it:

> Seigneurs et dames, you're welcome all!
> I'm just flown in from Charles de Gaulle,
> your man-stroke-horse-stroke-King Fauvel –
> your interlocutor as well
> with hopes my new verse may enhance
> this show from medieval France;
> like adaptations by Mel Brooks,
> this show's based on my earlier books
> with poems, music, illustrations
> made when France was first of nations.[8]

The introduction of the 'man-stroke-horse-stroke-king' introduces the reader to one of a series of hybridisations that the poem presents. Fauvel's prologue brings the reader into contact here not only with the character of Fauvel but also with the imaginative setting for the poem's narrative. However, both the poem and its text figure this setting. The text has already raised certain expectations for the reader by its shape, size and cover image. In particular, in order to reach Fauvel's prologue the reader has had to take in the book's cover, which offers a visual setting that parallels the imagery of Duhig's poem. This cover presents a detail from a medieval drawing, showing an array of grotesque musicians under the image of Fauvel himself. As in the poem, it depicts Fauvel as a creature who is half horse and half man, arms outstretched, his hooves showing below his rich robes.[9] Although the cover's reproduction of a manuscript image primes the reader to expect a medieval vision of some sort, Fauvel's prologue toys with these expectations.

The poem's opening lines challenge such expectations. Fauvel's terms of address ('Seigneurs et dames') suggest a duality between familiar formality and an archaic social order. Fauvel mimics the outward form of the phrase 'ladies and gentlemen' while still suggesting an address to literal feudal 'seigneurs'. The

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8   Duhig, 2007 p. 5 l. 1-10.
9   The cover image is a colour reproduction of a detail from BNfr. 146 f. 34r; for further details on the manuscript see below.

use of a French address is disorienting not simply because of the language barrier it suggests. The plural address also implies that the reader is part of a plural audience, even as the act of reading fixes their attention on an inanimate object, the text. The overall effect is that of strangeness. Duhig renders familiar terms unfamiliar by shifting them into different registers and languages. Even in its address, the poem asks the reader to take in a wild hybridisation of discourses. Fauvel's entrance into the prologue suggests a mixture not only of human and animal shapes but also of places, art forms and histories.

The poem challenges the reader's expectations of a medieval setting in both spatial and temporal terms as it develops. The image of Fauvel flying the book's setting out of Charles de Gaulle Airport entangles the modern with the medieval, but also suggests that this setting is mobile, even transient. In my own reading, the neighbouring reference to Mel Brooks further complicates the experience. Does Duhig expect his readers to hold *Blazing Saddles* at the back of their minds? Does he expect them to see the slightly smug monochrome face of France's famous premier? Certainly that is what my memory fetches for me in response to the second line. Whatever intentions Duhig may have for the reader, however, the octosyllabic lines of Fauvel's prologue are relentless in their forward motion. Their continuing pressure moves the reader from heroic couplet to heroic couplet leaving no space of quiet or reflection in which to settle on an interpretation. Rather, the character of Fauvel takes delight in the mischief that such flux can cause. Duhig shows Fauvel dismantling himself for the reader even as the poem dismantles expectations of a fixed temporal location for its setting. In pulling his hybrid nature apart with skits on chivalry and the poem's own language, Fauvel invites us to a topsy-turvydom where antipopes, Lewis Caroll and Freud jostle for space.

These continual transformations and frustrations of expectations are unsettling for the reader. Nonetheless, there are still points at which the poem looks to give its readers fixed terms of reference, which establish a background for Fauvel's transformations. For example, the passage on chivalry (lines 11-18) sets out a view of the past, which places poetry and power in close relation and recalls the political comment of the book's epigraph. Here, Thomas Arnold's equation of chivalry with 'evil' and 'antichrist' reminds the reader of the political and military power that the term 'chivalry' can represent.[10] Therefore, the 'disciplined and drillable' nature of the octosyllabic rhyming couplets invites a comparison, between Fauvel's voice and the military dominance of French armoured cavalry on the battlefields of medieval Europe.[11] Likewise,

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10 Duhig, 2007 p. v; the epigraph appears on an unnumbered page in the book's front matter.
11 *Ibid.* p. 5 l. 16.

although the poem claims that Fauvel's Rome is as free-floating and polymorphous as its king and equine

locator, the next few lines present a contradiction by easily settling the title of imperium upon America:

> Right now, America's our Rome,
>
> my rival stable-God's new home –
>
> you ruled the waves: she rules the air
>
> (and riding airs is work I share)[12]

What is it that creates problems for the reader in this transition from Rome to America? The implied

contradiction, that Rome is both free-floating and yet fixed for the present reader, is an uncomfortable

reminder of Fauvel's power in the narrative. Rome here is not the creation or historical re-creation of the

reader but of Fauvel. In locating Rome, Fauvel reminds us that his authority and his ability to determine the

centres of power hinges upon the text's ability to shape the reader's response.

However, the text prevents the individual readers from negotiating with Fauvel to locate this Rome.

Unlike a live performance of Fauvel's prologue, the text of *SpD* does not bring its audience into contact with

one another. Fauvel's narrative voice exploits the contrast between a collective address and the individual

reading practices implied by the text. Fauvel's address becomes the determining factor in establishing this

collective audience, whereas the disjunction between individual readers prevents them from shaping the

collective through interacting with one another. Significantly, Fauvel uses this disjunction between readers in

order to fix the centres of political power for his audience. This revelation of Fauvel's power to not only

present but also to re-present the objects of history to the reader is a marked transition in tone. The Rome

Duhig describes from line 60 onwards is immediately recognisable, to the general reader, as the subject of

histories. It is the subject of competing, collectively acknowledged imaginations of the past. In contrast,

where the poem describes Macrocosm in lines 28-59, it takes the form of a domain that roots itself in the

reader's own personal imaginations of it. The slip from Macrocosm to Rome is representative of a much

deeper set of problems for Duhig's Fauvel.

How does Macrocosm embody this sense of difference with Fauvel's Rome? The character of

Fauvel is unsettling enough, yet the portentous and unhinged worlds of Fortuna's domain are a world that

Duhig's verse invites the reader to inhabit individually. For example, when presented with the range of

abstracted descriptions of lines 28-59 my imagination freely jumbles images from my memory in an effort to

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12 *Ibid.* p. 7 l. 63-66.

give substance to Fauvel's world. In lines 32-38, with 'politicians, literati, / businessmen' I find myself

picturing a Steve Bell cartoon.[13] With 'a Wonderland where I was Alice', I see the broken, floating

fragments of wonderland from American McGee's *Alice*. These retrievals are the objects of memory,

assemblages of images that only my experiences allow me to make. Nevertheless, they form themselves into

something upon which I can build an understanding of the poem. These assemblages are an integral part of

my reading the freeform modulations of shape and type that Fauvel encourages in lines 28-59. They act as a

reassurance for my interpretation as it falls back on my memories in order to make sense of the abstracted

world of Macrocosm.

Something different is at work from line 60 onwards. Fauvel addresses us, not as a collection of

individuals, where we have been content to make sense of Macrocosm at our own pace, but as a political

entity. The collective relationship to a modern Rome that Fauvel wishes upon us is more than an assertion of

political fact; it is a substantiation of that relationship in the text itself. The plural here invokes the potential

for other readers to hear Fauvel's address and hence it prompts a reader to consider what others might

imagine. It forces me to consider the potential obscurities of the sorts of imagination that I described above.

These obscurities ask me to consider how I might be able to relate my imaginative response to these lines to

others. Fauvel's address invites the reader to consider the ways in which socially mediated ideas of the past

influence their imaginations.

As a result, Fauvel's plural address coerces readers to participate in post-imperial Britain. It demands

that they put personal aspects of their memories aside to consider what they know about a shared experience.

I am content to read lines 28-59 within the space of my own head, finding my own interpretation of the poem

as I go, but in order to interpret lines 60 onwards I have to negotiate with an obscure, plural 'we'. If I were

English, this might not be a problem, and there would be no difficulty here. Like it or not, *Rule, Brittania* is a

part of an English construction of identity. However, I am Welsh, with strong views on the appropriateness

of the word 'British' in describing Welsh people. Hence, I do not accept such a construction of my identity

lightly. Fauvel's address asks me to participate in a collective experience of the past that is at odds with my

own beliefs. I find myself halting in spite of the relentless forward motion of the poem's rhyming

octosyllables. In abnegating from a collective memory of a post-imperial Britain, I withdraw myself as the

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13 *Ibid.* p. 6 l. 35-36.

subject of Fauvel's address. Fauvel reveals that he is addressing a collective that I now know I cannot inhabit, and I read on only as a spectator to his entanglements of past and present.

The same invitation to participate in a collective understanding of the past is at work in the description of chivalry, albeit at a less confrontational level. The abstraction of terms such as 'Christendom' and the 'Dark Ages,' without specific or agreed objects of reference, places the poem's readers in negotiation with one another to discover what the poem means by them.[14] This suggests that this is the heart of the problem, opening the divide between the public and private natures of the poem's address. The terms at stake here are terms of history, words by which we agree upon a categorisation of the past. In speaking them, Fauvel invites not the past of personal experience but a collective experience of the past. We mediate such experiences through social channels, and they must recall society's political structures in their expression as well as their interpretation. Even Fauvel himself is a figure who represents this process of mediation as he steps from the pages of a medieval text. He is a fiction who establishes himself by his presence in a collectively acknowledged past. Fauvel embodies not only the multiplicity of 'breed distinctions' or the monstrous hybridisations that beget political turmoil, but also the very process by which the politics of language coerces memory into becoming history.[15]

Because of this embodiment, Fauvel's prologue is not simply an introduction to the medieval contexts that the front cover suggests. It is also an attempt to reach out from the medieval text into the present. Duhig's preferred term here is an 'updating', a term he has used both in interviews and *in SpD*.[16] However, the moments of crisis here suggest a more complex and problematic relationship. As I have detailed above, in lines 63-66 Fauvel reaches for an audience only to fall flat. Why did Fauvel's prologue need to reach for its audience in such a way?

1.0 'The text itself is pretty dire'[17]

The relationship between the cover image, Duhig's notes on page 67 of *SpD* and the poem itself point to a negotiation between medieval texts and the contemporary references in the prologue. As I have shown above, the text manifests this negotiation as well as the poem. As the prologue explains, the manuscript from

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14 *Ibid.* p. 5 l. 13.
15 *Ibid.* p. 6 l. 49.
16 *Ibid.* p. 67; see also Appendix A1.
17 Duhig, in Appendix A1.

which Duhig drew Fauvel contains not only verse but also illustration and music, yet *SpD* contains neither. If these portions of the medieval text are so important, what has become of them? In addition, what role has the transmission of these textual features played in opening up cracks in Fauvel's relationship with the reader? It is at the precise moment of 'updating' Fauvel's concerns that this gap opens, when Fauvel widens his address to include an explicitly shared past. In addition, *SpD* is not simply an experience derived from the page. In order to understand the root of Fauvel's problems, I will first need to explore the connections between the Fauvel of the medieval manuscript and the Fauvel that inhabits Duhig's work. Where did Fauvel spring from? What was Duhig's role in bringing him to the page?

1.1 Bringing Fauvel to *The Speed of Dark*

In late 2005, the Clerks Group, which is a choral group specialising in early music (c. 1100-1600), commissioned Duhig to produce the lyrics for a musical performance based on the French and Latin songs found in the manuscript BNfr. 146.[18] These lyrics eventually became the basis for the poetry in *SpD*.[19] Fauvel's prologue has thus passed from a medieval manuscript through the constrictions of a musical performance before reaching its final text and encountering modern literary consumption. Moreover, as appendix A3 shows, *SpD* represents an expansion on the poetry prepared for the Clerks Group performances but not a substantive re-working or a development of it.

This progression from text to performance and back to text highlights the complexities of the relationships between the poetry of *SpD* and its text. There are two quite distinct links in the chain here, the first being transmission from the manuscript to performance and the second being transmission from performance to published collection. These steps also imply two parallel changes of audience. Firstly, there is the shift from the manuscript's medieval audience through to the audience for the Clerks Group performance. Secondly, there is the shift from the audience for that performance to the general literary readership for *SpD*. Yet my emphasis here is on texts, and especially texts that Duhig himself prepared for public consumption. Why is this approach the most appropriate to developing an understanding of Fauvel's difficulties with his audience?

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18 Bibliotheque Nationale Francais, Collection Francais 146; henceforth abbreviated as BNfr. 146. Dated to the period 1316-1322 but see below for a more complete discussion and references.
19 Duhig, 2007 pp. 67-8 gives a comprehensive outline.

A more careful exploration of the chains of textual transmission provides an answer to this question. BNfr. 146 looms large in the pages of *SpD*. As I detail below, many poems in *SpD* have intimate connections either to the manuscript's music or to recent scholarship on the manuscript's text. The problems of negotiating between the medieval audiences of BNfr. 146 and Duhig's two markedly different modern audiences have shaped crucial aspects of its poetry. However, as my reading of the prologue also shows, an updating of BNfr. 146 that stems from a personal response to the text cannot be an interlocution between these disparate constituencies. Fauvel has no option but to address collective understandings of the terms he uses to describe the past due to his position as interlocutor. He must attempt to navigate the problems that the language of history bequeaths to him.

Hence, I focus on texts here. Fauvel's problem precisely mirrors Duhig's problem: there is a self-fashioning of the narrator by the author. Both author and narrator seek to find ways to articulate the rifts between one imagined audience and another through the printed page. However, Fauvel's prologue only encounters this difficulty in the text of *SpD*, where the normal social process of inhabiting the same space does not take place. As a result, the text offers no guarantee of the audience's cohesiveness. The nature of the text of *SpD* shapes this problem. In turn, a number of pressures have shaped the nature of *SpD*'s text. The text of *SpD* shows that a wide range of other texts influenced its production, from BNfr. 146 and its relatively limited body of English criticism through to the nature of textual production found in *SpD* itself.

I include a brief overview of some of the key texts in this relationship below in order to help chart some of these influences. As I show below, I have focused on texts that are either crucial intermediaries between Duhig and BNfr. 146 or whose production reflects aspects of Duhig's involvement. I have also concentrated on material that is unlikely to be directly available to an academic audience, and have included as much of this material as possible within the appendices to the thesis. The list of texts is as follows:

(1) A facsimile of the BNfr. 146 manuscript, titled 'The *Roman de Fauvel* in the edition of Mesire Chaillou de Pesstain'. It contains prefatory materials in English, including essays upon its production, likely provenance and textual and musical issues contained in the manuscript. Hardback, bound in board, 257 pp. measuring 21" x 16".[20]

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20 *Le Roman de Fauvel: In the Edition of Mesire Chaillou de Pesstain* ed. and introd. by Edward H. Roesner et al. (New York NY: Broude Bros., 1990).

(2) Text of poems from the performance. This includes a set-list for the performance itself, a variant text for an American version of the performance, and a score for one of the limited number of settings for Duhig's text.[21]

(3) Text of a lengthy interview with Duhig, plus Duhig's written answers to some of the questions submitted in preparation for the interview.[22] It offers crucial insights into Duhig's conception of his role in negotiating between BNfr. 146 and *SpD*, and expands on his use of the term 'updating' from the notes to *SpD*. It also highlights the overlapping nature of the productions for the Clerks Group performance and the manuscript for *SpD*.

(4) First edition of *SpD*. Paperback B format (7 ¾" x 5"), 80 pp.

Two key omissions here require explanation. The first is that there is no available recording of the Clerks Group performance, with much of my understanding of the content of the performance derived from my contact with Duhig and Edward Wickham. The second is the manuscript BNfr. 146 itself, which I have not listed for the simple reason that Duhig never had access to it, working instead with the facsimile edition.[23] Even so, the manuscript and the circumstances of its production lie at the heart of the matter. They are Fauvel's starting-point in his transmission into the problematic prologue. Hence, it is useful to consider what the manuscript BNfr. 146 is, and what the audience or who the audience was. Understanding the differences between BNfr. 146's audience and the audience for Duhig's updating requires an understanding of the needs it aimed to meet in that original audience.

The textual details of BNfr. 146 are thus significant in developing an understanding of the problems of Duhig's negotiation between collective and personal understandings of the past. To summarise, BNfr. 146 consists of 102 folios of high-quality vellum bound in full red morocco leather. It is the work of seven scribes (denoted in Roesner 1990 A-G).[24] As Roesner outlines, of these scribes, at least A was a professional, and in general, the standard of work is indicative of a professional production. The high quality of the manuscript's 77 illustrations and the numerous decorated initials in gold, blue and red indicates this. Indeed the manuscript's execution as a whole suggests that its producers intended it for a high-status

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21 Contained in Appendix A3.
22 The interview transcript is included as Appendix A1. Copies of the written answers provided form Appendix A2.
23 See Appendix A2.
24 Roesner ed., 1990, p. 5.

individual in the French court, presumably someone close to the royal household. A contemporary catalogue

reference indicates that the manuscript was in royal collections from the end of the sixteenth century.

However, its precise date of entry into the collection and its earlier history are unclear.[25]

The text of BNfr. 146 centres upon a long poem that substantially reworks Gervais de Bus' *Roman

de Fauvel*. It also contains new verses added to the poem's text, and there is a substantial amount of both

polyphonic and monophonic music included within and around the verses. These revisions and extensions

were the work of a 'Mesire Chaillou de Pesstain,' whose name appears in a rubric inserted into the poem's

text. He probably completed these additions in the period 1307-1316. Roesner estimates this date due to

references to the hanging of Philippe le Bel's chancellor Enguerrand de Marigny in 1315.[26] As I show

below, the richness of this multiple text of music, poetry and illustration has presented difficulties to modern

scholars and interpreters. However, the additions do retain the spirit of anxious moral comment, satire, and

political concern that animates Gervais de Bus' original tale, as Duhig has noted in his work.[27] The

obnoxious horse-prince Fauvel remains centre-stage throughout in his rise at the whim of Fortune and his

farcical collapse into vice, villainy, and sin.

1.2 Text, production and consumption: re-creating Fauvel

This story of Fauvel along with the concerns it sought to address for its medieval audience are the starting-

point for Duhig's work. It forms a basis for the textual negotiations between BNfr. 146 and *SpD*. So in

bringing Fauvel to a modern audience, what has Duhig retained, and what has Duhig omitted? As explained

above, the mediators between Duhig and the original text create a problematic connection between Duhig's

work and BNfr. 146. How can a manuscript in Old French and Latin find a meaningful updating in *SpD*, 690

years later? Moreover, how has the transition from one to the other left Fauvel needing to call upon his

audience's sense of history?

The manuscript facsimile described above is the key text in this relationship. It strikes an almost

perfect balance between these two seemingly distant texts. The 1990 production of the facsimile represents a

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25 *Ibid.* Margaret Bent sheds some further light in her introduction to Bent & Wathey eds., linking the MS to the
     household library of the Dukes of Savoy. See *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music and Image in Paris MS
     146* ed. by M. Bent and A. Wathey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
26 For the rubric see *Ibid.* p. 7. The issue of a precise dating for the BNfr. 146 manuscript is by no means closed;
     however, I follow the more conservative opinion offered in Roesner ed., 1990 p. 8.
27 See Appendix A2.

decisive link in the chain of events that ties BNfr. 146 and *SpD* together. Like the original manuscript, the facsimile was not for public consumption, but for the use of a clearly defined social grouping. Its price (some £450), size and content show its intended audience to be specialist, scholarly, and institutional. This audience, though exclusive, is still thoroughly modern. Unlike the original, the facsimile is not a unique text but forms part of a set of mechanically produced copies. Just as mesire Chaillou de Pesstain could not let Gervais de Bus' original Fauvel poem stand by itself and adapted it to fit its new audience better, so the facsimile text also represents a new phase of commentary and accumulation upon BNfr. 146. As I show below, these additions, in combination with other scholarly works on the original manuscript, are decisive in shaping Duhig's Fauvel.

To illustrate the relationship between Duhig's work and BNfr. 146 further, it is also worth briefly reviewing some of Duhig's comments on the materials he drew upon for his initial commission. As expected with such a prestigious and unique manuscript, neither Duhig nor the members of the Clerks Group (much like the present writer) had any form of access to BNfr. 146. Duhig's main point of contact with the original text was through the version presented in the facsimile.[28] Even more importantly, Duhig was only able to consult the facsimile with Edward Wickham present. At every point, Duhig's access to the 'historical' material upon which he based his work came through a scholarly and institutional setting.

The other notable feature in the relationship between the facsimile and *SpD* is the way in which it treats the objective, mechanical recording of the past. The entirety of the facsimile text provides information that subtly implies this objectivity. The monochrome appearance of the individual plates is reminiscent of photocopied text, and the text takes strenuous efforts to provide these plates with a historical context through its introduction. Even the omission of page numbers in the margins surrounding the facsimile plates seems part of a conscious effort to present BNfr. 146 in a manner that is closer to the presentational context of the original manuscript. Between them, these features seem to prompt the notes on the text in *SpD*. These notes directly paraphrase the introduction to a substantial volume of critical studies that Duhig used in preparing *SpD*.[29] The *Roman de Fauvel* in Duhig's updating owes a great deal to the traits exhibited by the texts produced for the modern academic audience associated with BNfr. 146.

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28 See Appendix A2.
29 'However, Fortuna palms him off with Vainglory, from whose marriage to Fauvel spring the numerous *Fauveaus nouveaux*, which overrun and defile the 'sweet Garden of France'.' Duhig, 2007 p. 68. CF 'he even seeks her hand

Duhig's comments on the interplay of hybridisations in both the manuscript and in his work on *SpD* show that this is a key inclusion. Duhig was acutely aware of the way in which his work engaged with the multiform nature of the original text. He has described BNfr. 146's 'nausea at leaky distinctions and dualisms,' which was 'paralleled by the Bush era's with-us-or-against-us insistent line, a simplistic binarism [sic] reflected in the debates concerning Anglosphere poetry'.[30] Yet Duhig's comment shows how closely his work ties in to the debates highlighted at the opening to this chapter. In his efforts to create a 'polyphonic collection,' more voices have entered into his piece than he appears to credit.[31] As I detail below, the voices that come across most strongly in the text itself (rather than the poems) are the scholarly texts Duhig used to gain an understanding of BNfr. 146. These are de Groot's 'generic rules' unconsciously creeping into Duhig's polyphony. They do not only underpin the need to establish a collective understanding of the past. They also set up the uses of historical terms ('Chivalry' and 'Dark Ages') that Fauvel brings to his audience.

The text, scores and programme for the commission's performance also show a parallel here to the prologue's problems. Although the performance represents a change of direction in the transmission of works from the manuscript to *SpD*, there is an underlying concern with maintaining contact with key aspects of BNfr. 146. The mixing of modern works (read by a narrator rather than by Duhig in person) and medieval music performed by a group specialising in such performance is telling. It shows that the aim was not simply to provide a performance derived from BNfr. 146 that would appeal to a modern audience. The performance also aimed to present specifically medieval music in a modern context, whilst retaining explicit links to the manuscript. The performance was even set against the backdrop of projected images and pages from the manuscript, somewhat altered to add further colours and smoothness to the manuscript's illustrations. The intention was to immerse the audience completely in the world of the manuscript. However, there is a striking contrast between the treatment of the music and the rest of the performance. The music, largely drawn from Leo Schrade's *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century,* passed through only the single step of Schrade's scholarly editing. By contrast, Duhig's text and the accompanying images were left to shoulder the weight of updating BNfr. 146's underlying historical concerns. [32]

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in marriage, but is fobbed off with Vaine Gloire in a union that populates and defiles the 'sweet garden of France' with 'new Fauvels' (Fauveaus nouveaux)' Bent & Wathey eds., 1998 p. 1.

30 See Appendix A2.

31 *Ibid.*

32 Leo Schrade, *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century (vol. 1)*: *The Roman de Fauvel, the Works of Philippe de Vitry, French Cycles of the Ordinarium Missae* (Monaco: Oiseau-Lyre, 1956).

This is not to say that either Edward Wickham or Duhig dedicated the performance as a whole to presenting the music of BNfr. 146 in a light of 'historical accuracy', a mechanically validated reproduction of the past. My aim here is to draw attention to some of the features of the performance that have clearly interacted with the updating that Duhig attempted between works from BNfr. 146 to *SpD*. As Duhig describes in Appendix A2, it is clear that Edward Wickham directed Duhig's efforts, repeatedly changing the brief for Duhig's compositional process.[33] This primacy attached to the music of BNfr. 146 by those commissioning Duhig's work drove the relationship between text and poetry. In addition, the apparently ephemeral textual features of Duhig's work, which do so much to alter an audience's perception of *SpD* in subtle ways, take on a new character in this light. As discussed below, Duhig's notes, references and epigraphs reflect a significant influence on his text's historical perspective.

As I have shown above, Duhig's work encounters problems in translating BNfr. 146's satire of Marigny's fourteenth-century abuses of power into modern terms. Duhig's indictment of the political involvement of Western states in the Middle East in the early twenty-first century does not always sit comfortably.[34] Careful consideration of the text of *SpD* and the Clerks Group performance shows there are a number of unstated aims shaping Fauvel's transit between BNfr. 146 and *SpD*. However, this does not yet adequately explain these problems. The primacy of the additions to BNfr. 146 in Duhig's text reflects Edward Wickham's bias as much as his own. Yet Duhig's repudiation of the poetry of the Fauvel manuscript in favour of the music, quoted in the title of this section, does not tell the whole story. The influence of Gervais de Bus' poem is largely limited to the two poems 'Fauvel's Prologue' and 'Dame Fortuna's Antilogue'.[35] Chaillou de Pesstain's additions barely feature at all. By comparison, the music provides the basis for some eight of the poems, with a ninth poem, 'What is the Speed of Dark?' apparently prompted by an article upon the Ballades found in BNfr. 146.[36] Moreover, this also reflects the general focus of scholarship in English upon the musical content of the original manuscript. It is clear that *SpD* negotiates

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33 See Appendix A2.

34 Duhig, 1997 p. 67; in Appendix A1 Duhig offers a similar phrasing of his aims in *SpD* regarding the Roman de Fauvel.

35 I would also suggest that another of the reasons for this repudiation might be somewhat more prosaic: Duhig's access to the poetry of Gervais de Bus and Chaillou de Pesstain was partly through a translation, completed by Frank Didisheim and loaned to him by Edward Wickham to assist him in writing the commission. This translation preserves little of the original beyond the literal sense and may contribute to the diminished role of the Fauvel verses in Duhig's work.

36 Christopher Page, 'Tradition and Innovation in BN fr. 146: The Background to the Ballades', in Bent & Wathey eds., 1998; CF the epigraph in Duhig, 2007 p. 27.

between the satire and moral admonitions of the manuscript and the complex undercurrents of a modern scholarly approach.[37]

Indeed, *SpD* embodies the collision of Fauvel's modern re-imaginings in a single text. As shown in section 0.1 above, this unquiet merging of scholarship and lyric becomes apparent whenever a collective understanding of the past is at stake. What has caused Duhig's text, lying somewhere on the faultline between an academic and a public audience, to take on its present shape? These processes of entanglement and division reflect not only the format of the text of *SpD* but also the conceptual framework that shapes the 'updating' that Duhig has prepared in *SpD*. Even beyond Fauvel's prologue, the tensions between scholarly and lyrical conceptions of the past are evident.

2.0 Updating the past: satire and scholarship in *The Speed of Dark*

These tensions are visible in the introductory poems of *SpD*. In contrast to its earlier performance *SpD* opens unconventionally, not with the lively 'Fauvel's Prologue', but with two poems that offer a preamble to Fauvel's assault upon the readers' sensibilities. The book takes on an unexpected shape. Neither poem directly connects with the content of the manuscript. Instead, they focus on the sculpture and carvings found in Beverley Minster. The first, 'Wallflowers at Beverley', ostensibly depicts a stone angel as part of an elegy for the poet Michael Donaghy. The second, 'Moshibboleth', treats with the misericord carvings of Beverly's choir stalls. Two distinctive carvings figure in this second poem, first a fox dressed as a friar preaching to a group of geese, and then a carving of a group of geese looking at a similarly dressed fox hanged. The inclusion of these poems was a means of introducing the main body of poetry that runs from 'Fauvel's Prologue' to the final poem (which Duhig also drew from the commissioned work).

How do these poems prefigure Fauvel's problems? It is 'Moshibboleth' that offers the clearest indication of what lies ahead:

René, your twelfth-century 'Le Roman de Renart'

was forerunner to the 'Roman de Fauvel': even now

you'll see foxes run for their lives before horses

in all the Ridings of Yorkshire, 'God's Own County.'[38]

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37 See, for example, Bent & Wathey (ed.s) 1998 p. 17.
38 Duhig, 2007 p. 4 l. 5-8.

Duhig has poised 'God's own County' against both the bestial images of foxes running before horses and the reference to the hunting ban (passed into law in England in 2004). The enjambment of 'even now' from the close of the preceding line sets up this comparison. However, the division between experience and political concern cuts deeper than the (literal) running on of line 6 into line 7. The poem concerns itself with disguise and shapeshifting in its interplay of human and animal forms whereas the comment on the godliness (or otherwise) of Yorkshire touches on a more obviously political realm.

The strange segue from Fauvel to Yorkshire issuing from the mouth of an equally unstable narrator is troubling. It unbalances the poem in many ways by breaking the verse unevenly. Positioning the phrase 'even now' on the end of its line isolates it. It also sets up the jarring interruption of the last line of the verse, an ironic lapse into the language of local government signage. The wording here counterpoints the activity of line 7. Compared to the invitation to picture foxes and horses enacting a pastiche of French manuscript history, there is something static and intractable in this final line. The transition from the 'folklore' of the previous verse into an entirely different sort of localised experience is uncomfortable. The sudden status of Yorkshire as being under divine protection points towards an uneasy negotiation with both temporal and spiritual powers.

There seems to be a similar undercurrent present in the book's first poem, 'Wallflowers at Beverly'. The theme here appears to be music of a rich, unrestrained kind:

> More instruments ring these walls than raised a roof
>
> for God throughout all medieval Christendom;
>
> stone arcades spring like dancers from the Minster floor,
>
> keyed to their lord's calling-on song, 'Da Mihi Manum'
>
>
> The Irish call the parchment drum this angel quiets
>
> a bodhrán, though she lacks the ordinary beater:
>
> Michael held his like a pen above the skin in wait,
>
> counting on his own heart to inspire each tattoo.[39]

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39 *Ibid,* p. 3 l. 1-8.

The disjunction between these two verses is in itself a telling one. The first part of the verse places us in a medieval frame of reference, setting a scholarly tone in its temporal and architectural descriptions ('arcades'; 'medieval Christendom'). Yet the verse finishes much in the same style as the second verse of 'Moshibboleth'. The Latin phrase here, 'Da Mihi Manum', would present obvious difficulties to the general reader.[40] However, the effect here is less distancing. The liveliness that animates the architecture in the poem creates a revelry in stone that invites the reader to participate in it. The arcades are not lying in wait, ready for us to catalogue, but 'spring like dancers' into life. The doubly meant 'instruments' raise the roof both literally and with their imagined sound, performing not only a present architecture but also a past revelry. Static in the first two lines of the verse, the instruments strike up music that utterly overwhelms the distancing dryness of 'medieval Christendom'.

The ensuing transition into the second verse offers a sudden change in perspective. Here, the elegy begins to take hold, recalling Michael Donaghy both literally and in the multiple musicality of the verse. The angel, which was earlier part of the sculpture, now quiets the revels by her presence. Again, the heaven the angel inhabits is double in nature. I readily imagine the carving itself positioned (since it is usual for such sculptures) above the arches of the nave, but the positioning of the angel 'above' Donaghy in the verse as tutelar or guardian again invites me to re-examine my perspective. The disjunction here between the exuberance of the first verse and the stateliness of the second is sufficient to upset my interpretation. The jumps in tone are unsettling, suggesting an uneasy hybridisation between registers.

Indeed, the movements between the personal and scholarly registers are themselves a dance. It encourages the reader to backtrack and to explore connections between verses in order to link the quieter revelry of the second verse to the more elaborate, sumptuous musics of the first. Those links centre on the doubled image of 'Michael held his like a pen above the skin in wait,' the tattoo upon a parchment drum being both sound and image. It is an invitation to rethink the poem's relationship with music and marks a significant point in the ways in which it sets the stage for Fauvel. In the following verse, the suggestion of a change in audience prompts a change of tune, just as the poem itself becomes more personal and engaging as it explores its memory of Donaghy. Historical detail is an important strain in the music here, but it must also compete with the strident notes of a deeply personal recollection. The idea that Beverly Minster and the

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40 'Give me your hand', a seventeenth century song by Irish poet Rúaidhrí Dall Ó Catháin, which is mentioned again, this time in English, in the 3rd verse (line 11).

memory of the dead poet must harmonise seems consonant with the other key theme of the Fauvel manuscript. Duhig here adopts BNfr. 146's device of a literal polyphony, which takes music as the vehicle for contradictory voices.

2.1 Polyphonic music and *The Speed of Dark*

As discussed in section 1.2 above, this connection with music is a significant part of the way in which Duhig produced *SpD*. As I show below, this relationship with music draws the different influences that shaped the text of *SpD* together. The polyphonic music of BNfr. 146 in particular plays a major role in the poems in *SpD*. Of the eight poems that associate themselves directly with polyphonic songs in BNfr. 146, only two associate themselves with monophonic songs. One of these, 'Douce Dame Débonaire', is monophonic, but splits its lines between the two opposing voices of Fauvel and Fortuna, whilst the other takes on the one-line parody of the paschal blessing of baptismal water, 'Hic Fons'. Significantly, the polyphonic music itself sets multiple simultaneous texts, with each vocal line taking different lyrics. However, the emphasis on polyphonic music also reflects the concerns of the scholarly works to which Duhig had access, and of course the preoccupations of the Clerks Group.

Direct references to music are nonetheless relatively sparse in *SpD* within the poems that treat directly with material from Fauvel. Only 'Eye Service' and 'What is the Speed of Dark?' touch briefly upon musical matters, the former with a single four-line verse:

No motets praise the Trinity,

our choirs just babble monologues,

each lyric 'Je' *sans frontiéres*,

in every town the only game.[41]

The latter poem simply refers to the 'deviant, false music' written on the walls of Fauvel's palace.[42] Even these passing references focus not on notions of harmony but on the potential for music to create or substantiate discord. The threat of Fauvel's version of history is present here in the gathered choir belying their own name with a cacophony of discordant monologues. Yet these are tantalisingly brief references. Much of the musical references in the book take place in poems that do not directly associate themselves

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41 Duhig, 2007, p. 42 l. 13-16.
42 *Ibid.* p. 27 l. 6.

with the material from BNfr. 146. Here, however, there are a number of references to music or musical performance, from the treatment of Wesley's hymn 'Ah lovely appearance of death' found in 'The Price of Fish' to the description of the Earsdon mumming-play in 'Mummers'.

Duhig's use of quatrains strikes a significant note here. The quatrain more or less dominates the book and recalls a distinctly lyrical mode of performance:

My father wore the wicker horse-head

on St. Stephen's days to drum the furze

from house to house with the Emly Wren Boys

to sing for milk, eggs, pence or bread.

On Christmas Day I turned the spit

and burned my finger, it hurts yet...

between his finger and his thumb

he tasted everything to come:[43]

The italicised lines (the italicisation is Duhig's) are a quotation from the Wren Boys' song, which Duhig has integrated into the fabric of his verse. The italicisation marks out the past in textual terms, forming a stark opposition to the way in which the verse itself blends historic lyric with modern verse. The modification of the rhyme scheme from ABbA to AaBB is untroubled; the presence of both full and half-rhymes in the first verse and the unrestricted rhythmic modulation between its lines prefigures them.[44] Duhig's verse in quatrains is easily able to incorporate pre-existing song and lyric. This is not simply a feature of Duhig's relationship with folk and popular song, which is an abiding concern in his work. Although it points at a fluid style where poetry and song are able to transpose and stand in for one another, it also suggests exactly the harmony across multiple texts that the choir in 'Eye Service' is unable to achieve. As in the elegy for Michael Donaghy, Duhig's use of a personal relationship with the past is the key here. Duhig's use of textual and poetic features allows his verse to avoid the problematic historical terminology of Fauvel's prologue. Instead, Duhig uses a personal, imaginative response to reflect upon the musical intrusions into his poem.

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43 *Ibid*. p. 35 l. 1-8.
44 It should be noted that spit/yet is a full rhyme in the English of South Tipperary.

Both text and poetic effect combine to enact the process of harmonisation between the poem and the material on which it draws.

In light of this, the Programme for the commission's performance is even more revealing. It shows that the context of Duhig's work in the original performance was to occupy spaces between songs. The performance suspended Duhig's poetry in negotiation between different competing musical performances and different sung lyrics in an effort to join them together. Only in two instances were the poems intended to make fluid transitions into music. The first was in the repeated refrain of 'Ci Chans' ('this song wants a drink'), which members of the Clerks Group sang as well as recited. The second was in the 'Charivari', which Duhig omitted from *SpD* but which he has now published in a subsequent collection of poetry.[45] Some of the limited number of lyrics by Duhig that the Clerks Group set to music appear in the 'Charivari'. The text of the charivari shows how music and poetry intentionally intermingle in performance, prompting and vying for prominence with one another. For example, the unpublished lyrics dismiss the short song 'I will lay you down, love' as 'oafish schmaltz'. The lyrics show that, in performance, the spoken verses and the music attempted to outdo one another in mockery of Fauvel's wedding-night and of each other. [46]

It is therefore crucial that the cover of *SpD* portrays precisely this moment. Fauvel approaches the bed where Vainglory waits for him whilst below the masked, grotesque musicians of the charivari play rough music. Why is this illustration present when the charivari is itself missing? Despite being accidental according to Duhig's account, this textual feature reveals an underlying structure to *SpD*'s relationship with BNfr. 146.[47] The poems that seem to have their closest ties to the polyphonic music of BNfr. 146 are, in fact, setting themselves apart. As in the performance, Duhig intended these poems to be surrounded by the music from which they remain distinct. They enact the same tension and contention between music, image and poetry that appears in the space of the manuscript's pages. This jostling between the Fauvel material and the wider subjects of Duhig's poems offers its own mimicry of the polyphonic music of the ars nova style. *SpD* presents us with multiple (nominally independent) poems facing one another across pages, vying for a reader's attention, themselves riding above the *tenor* of Fauvel's rise and fall.

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45 Ian Duhig, *Pandorama* (London: Picador, 2010). See also the version reproduced in appendix A2.
46 Appendix A2.
47 See Appendix A1.

2.2 Inversions, reversals and hybrids

Earlier in this chapter, I characterised this *tenor* as itself modulated by academic perspectives upon the Fauvel manuscript. In performance, the poetry provided a performative counterpoint to the choral pieces by underlining the relation of the music to its historical context. Likewise, the pervasive influence of BNfr. 146 intrudes on the poems of *SpD*.

Where a modern audience might expect a comical lampoon of the Iraq war, Duhig introduces *SpD*'s political dimension through the blunt octosyllabic couplets of 'Fauvel's Prologue'. Now, however, in returning to Fauvel's 'deviant, false music' we can see it for what it is:

> If 'cheval' bore our chivalry,
>
> our heirs the US cavalry
>
> ride helicopters to a fight
>
> to show their Saracens what's right[48]

Fauvel's meteoric rise apes its own assumed context, mocking not only the *translatio imperii* that provided a staple for national literatures of medieval Europe, but also the language we associate with the history of the crusades. Fauvel deploys the word 'Saracens' here, with its pejorative overtones of 'heathen' and 'barbarian', to scandalise his real, present audience.[49] The presence and immediacy of the audience is clear from the version of the prologue prepared for an American audience. In fact, Duhig substantially reworked this section of the poem, with the rather heavy-handed lines on 'Saracens' and 'locusts' replaced by a commentary on Anglo-American political collaboration and the arrival of Antichrist.[50]

Nevertheless, it is here that the legacy of the manuscript's Fauvel and Duhig's updated figure arrive at a crisis. It shows both the need for an audience and the need for collusion to establish a perspective on historical events. The production of scholarly texts on BNfr. 146 and medieval history have created a kind of consensus that Duhig was able to use in his poetry. However, no such consensus on the Iraq War or even on post-imperial Britain is available to a British audience. Fauvel's satire implicitly reinforces the idea of a scholarly consensus even as it acknowledges the problems of establishing a political consensus.

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48 Duhig, 2007 p. 7 l. 71-74.

49 See, for example, Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991) pp. 86-99 for a brief overview of the problems of medieval historiography relating to the secular *translatio imperii*, the *Gestes de Troy*, and ecclesiastical history. See also below in chapters 3 and 5.

50 Appendix A2.

This section of *SpD* is thus a crucial mixture of satire and scholarship. In BNfr. 146 itself, the poetry was largely able to proceed by allegory, with the 'additions' to the text locating the allegorical settings. Its drawings depicted well-known buildings in Paris and its music only occasionally attempted to address the intended recipients of its moral admonitions.[51] The central theme of BNfr. 146 may be one of monstrosity, 'hybridity, distinction dissolved, things becoming what they should not.'[52] However, a range of textual factors shaped the direction and the locus of address for this surfeit of frightening and comical shapeshifting. It was shaped not only by the additions of music and image to the text, but also by the relationships those images and music fostered with its intended audience. The unique nature of the text would have limited its audience to a close circle centring on the court-group bound by ties of patronage, kinship and peerage to Charles de Valois.[53] By contrast, the demands of a public audience prompt the kinds of open explanation of allegory that dominate the close of 'Fauvel's Prologue'. The mismatch between textual form and intended audience force the prominence of the openly satirical registers of *SpD*'s poetry.

In BNfr. 146, this satire is far more of an open secret. The clues are in plain sight, and the manuscript's intended audience would have easily inferred the text's message. In spite of this, crucially the realms of ungodly transformation and divinely ordered, 'ordinary' human existence touch but do not overlap.[54] In the collective, social reading of a court group, the manuscript acts as prompt for a group of readers to mediate their responses to its images, text and music collectively. The demands of textual production constrain the multiple forms of Fauvel to the world of allegory and seeming. There, the ability of a true ruler will distinguish these multiple forms from the true nature of things.[55] The same demands of textual production also constrain Fauvel's satire. *SpD* lacks the exclusive audience and the mediated textual access on which the producers of the Fauvel manuscript could rely. Instead, *SpD* must take decisive action to make its satirical message felt. Where the poetry of Duhig's work seeks to hybridise and shift its form

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51 The situation of these more direct addresses is usually complex: see, for example, the analysis of the intentions behind the textual placement of the motet *O Philippe* in Elizabeth A. R. Brown's 'Rex ioians, ionnes, iolis', in Bent & Wathey eds., 1998 pp. 58-61. For the depiction of Paris in the Fauvel MS, see for example Roesner ed., 1990 pp. 9-11.

52 Duhig, 2007 p. 68. See also Michael Camille, 'Hybridity, Monstrosity and Bestiality in the *Roman de Fauvel*': 'It is not at the edge but at the centre, within the framed spaces of the pen-drawn miniatures themselves, that beast and human intermingle, and where promiscuous and perverse shape-changing is the norm.' in Bent & Wathey eds., 1998 p. 160.

53 See, for example, Bent & Wathey eds., 1998, pp. 9-15.

54 Again, see Elizabeth A. R. Brown's 'Rex ioians, ionnes, iolis', in Bent & Wathey eds., 1998, pp. 58-61, and also Michael Camille, 'Hybridity, Monstrosity and Bestiality in the *Roman de Fauvel*' in Bent and Wathey eds., 1998 p. 163.

55 'Judicium causam determinat, iustitia falsum eliminat', from the motet *O Phillipe*. In Schrade, 1956 p.30; see also Roesner, ed., 1990 p.88.

between different individuals' readings, the physical form of its text reasserts the political distinctions between the real and imaginary forms of Fauvel.

SpD's recourse to historical scholarship both exacerbates and moderates this dilemma. Duhig's text had its genesis in providing context to a performance of medieval music, wherein the parallels between BNfr. 146 and events in France contemporary to its production are a necessary part of introducing an audience to the MS's concerns and themes. However, without the 'updating' this intermediary step requires, the inclusion of direct satire would hardly seem necessary. The overriding theme of 'reversal and inversion' in some aspects of Fauvel scholarship has been criticised for allowing 'a view to develop in which it would seem perverse to assume that any aspect of *Fauvel* could have been arrived at by chance.'[56] In a similar manner, the influence of scholarly writing on BNfr. 146 divides *SpD*'s concerns between the need to satisfy both an academic and an unspecialised audience.

This relationship with the writing of history offers crucial clues as to the ways in which its history and its poetry are able to coincide. *SpD* is not only caught between two audiences but also seeks to weather their differences. Its structure produces a hybrid text of the Fauvel narrative, one that spans the gap between the private, unique world of the medieval manuscript and the endlessly reproducible, intrinsically public world of the paperback edition of poetry. The failure of *SpD*'s text to locate an audience for its political concerns points towards a problematic relationship with the ways in which poets write, read and re-appropriate history.

3.0 Locating histories: Fauvel in and out of poetry

There is a peculiar sense of history at work here. What does the character of Fauvel dramatise in his prologue so well as the difficulties of negotiating between public and private spheres of literary consumption? It is not as though there is any monadic, 'theological' meaning for a reader to take from Fauvel's mouth.[57] Nor is *SpD* a seamless mouthpiece for scholarly consensus on either the state of medieval France or the manuscript BNfr. 146. Rather, where Fauvel finds difficulties it is in transferring his locution between its two extremes. At one extreme, Fauvel must address the intensely private, irreproducible worlds of the reader's imagination; at the other, he must address the public space created by the poem's mass-

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56 Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, Review, *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* Vol 53 No. 1 p. 154.
57 As in Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977) p. 146.

produced text. Fauvel opens the gap between these two contradicting points in his prologue's location of Rome. The very existence of *SpD*'s text confounds the aims that Fauvel's voice would accomplish easily in speaking to a real and present audience.

Is this where the postmodern updating of Fauvel ceases to function? Fauvel's address in lines 60-80 when delivered to an audience would be almost a pastiche, a music-hall history. However, viewed through the distancing lens of the page it is uncomfortable. The text itself reaches for a larger narrative of political upheaval and redress in its glossy production. This is a sinister turn. Duhig has tied Fauvel to a narrative that the fragmentary nature of the other poems in the book works to dislocate and atomise, yet the problem remains. For all the nuances and incongruities of the past that Duhig's poems raise for the reader, the lure of Fauvel's overriding narrative is irresistible. In updating BNfr. 146, Duhig causes Fauvel to become entangled. Fauvel is neither able to escape the weight of political comment nor fully able to pursue the problematic 'chivalry' that underpins his historical beginnings.

This uneasy relationship with a re-imagining of the past in Duhig's work is striking. Poetry enacts itself, calling its subjects into the presence of its readers. As I discuss in the following chapters, what is at stake for Duhig, Hill and Jones is not simply a personal view of history, or even an imaginative re-creation of a personal history. The readership for the modern texts of poems is disparate since these texts address their readers publicly, but the readership nonetheless tends to consume the texts privately. As I have shown with reference to Duhig's work, there are problems inherent in representing a collectively imagined past to a disparate readership. The interactions between modern texts and the poems they instantiate create tensions that set the stage for a problematisation of historical poetry. Fauvel's problem is precisely that stated by Hayden White. The reader is pulled in two directions in attempting to imagine a collectively understood past:

> We must say of histories what Frye seems to think is true only of poetry or philosophies of history, namely that, considered as a system of signs, the historical narrative points in two directions simultaneously: *toward* the events described in the narrative and *toward* the story type or mythos which the historian has chosen to serve as the icon of the structure of the events.[58] (White's emphasis)

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58 Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) p. 88.

A poem's representations of history point the reader towards an overarching structure of a 'story type or mythos,' even as they seek to ground them in the locality of the reader's own imaginative readings. Understanding a poetry of history becomes a problem of negotiating between two contradictory impulses: the localising force of a reader's imagination and the wider spaces of historical narrative with their entrenched relationships with authority and the political basis of language.

3.1 An audience for multiple texts: Fauvel's unstable history

What can we conclude from *SpD*'s attempts to position itself between its different audiences? Moreover, what is their impact on the problems of writing history in poetry? We cannot wish away the political problems of Duhig's work as an appeal to microhistory, historical metafiction or history-in-miniature. There is as much tacit acceptance of pre-existing historical narratives here as there are disruptions of them. The only choice is between which collectively acknowledged versions of the past Duhig and his audience will require Fauvel to negotiate. As Jerome de Groot suggests,

> The ways in which postmodern historiography has troubled our understanding of how 'History' is written and constructed point towards a crisis of representation that postmodern historical novelists have manipulated. Postmodern novelists of the past have developed and evolved this indeterminacy.[59]

What has happened to poetry, when the postmodern historical novel and its successors have attempted to break contact with the 'grand narrative' as a part of this 'crisis of representation'? Poetry re-creates the past vividly for its reader, yet that re-creation is difficult to prise away from the larger mythos. *SpD* skips from poem to poem and text to text in its investigation of Fauvel's medieval world. These elisions are a part of its structure, subjecting it to the prevailing political forces that shape and undermine its concerns.

Are the problems that *SpD* experiences in the unstable nature of its satire ones that we might encounter in almost any poetry that consciously treats with 'historical' subjects? In working on the creative portion of this thesis, I have inclined towards the view that the difficulties that the poems of *SpD* seem to have negotiated in the course of their transmission are indicative of a wider class of problems. The dissemination of history to the kinds of educated but unspecialised audiences that contemporary British poetry in English enjoys exists in tension between multiple different conceptions of a historical text.

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59 de Groot, 2010 p. 112.

Although *SpD*'s production takes great pains to imply that it is a single text, it is not. Its textual form may suggest its unity, yet it is also multiple, the cohesion of a number of poems with substantially different textual histories. Just as its poetry negotiates between externally authorised history and lyrical re-imaginings of the past, the potentially monolithic nature of the text also contains a layered composition of textual accumulations. There is a tacit expectation that its audience will give varying weights to its polyphonies of text to suit their preferences.

My creation of a biographic poem for Harold Godwinson was beset by similar problems. Harold is simultaneously the focus for Old English chronicle, Latin historians and quasi-hagiographers, Victorian antiquarian romanticism, twentieth-century popular and comic history, and an abiding subject for modern medieval scholars. Such a wide range of writing configures an audience in increasingly complex ways, to the point where any effort to establish a single poem that treats with Harold will inevitably be read from rapidly diverging perspectives. Like Fauvel's audience, there is a danger that in solitary reading Harold's audience will fragment, disappearing beyond the possibility of communication even as the implied co-presence of the text attempts to deny it. Like Fauvel, Harold is not an example of an abiding authority in British poetry. He instead exemplifies its opposite, an authority that exists only in its ability to foment such personae in its gleanings from other texts.

Chapter 2 – Paratext: Geoffrey Hill's Mercian Hymns and the Waltham Traditions

0.0 Locating texts

This chapter explores the same complex tensions outlined in chapter 1 but in a different way. The emphasis this time is on how modes of textual transmission create connections between texts that shape a reader's understanding. In turn, the scope of the relations between modern and medieval texts that we saw in the study of Duhig's *The Speed of Dark* expands. In this chapter, I trace the associations between Hill's *Mercian Hymns* and the texts that he refers to as his 'authorities'. I also examine the implications for the scholarly institutional context of Hill's access to these texts, in order to highlight how imaginative and systematised re-creations of the past interact and shape Hill's work. As a result, this examination develops the argument of chapter 1 through focusing upon the ways that transmission between texts can both shape and give shape to ideas of power and authority.

This exploration of the relationships between texts offers wider opportunities for understanding how representations of authority affect the relationship between text and poem. Critical studies of *Mercian Hymns* have often focused upon the relationship between Hill's poetry and the found or archaeological object, due to the primacy of this theme and image in his work.[1] However, this chapter aims to expand upon these approaches by exploring how portrayals of artefacts represent forms of authority in Hill's work. In particular, this chapter considers how these artefacts come to gain authoritative meanings in *Mercian Hymns* through their connections with other texts. Moreover, I examine how these connections can suggest forms of authority that balance and counteract the authoritative meanings that Hill emphasises in his poems.

I add a further level of detail to the connections between Hill's *Mercian Hymns*[2] and other texts, by considering their relationships to medieval texts. Hill's work explicitly invites such a comparison. Specifically, I explore the relevance of the fourteenth-century manuscript, British Library MS Harley 3776,

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1 See, for example, Andrew Michael Roberts, *Geoffrey Hill* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2004) pp. 20-25, or Michael North, 'The word as bond: money and performative language in Hill's Mercian Hymns,' *English Literary History* No. 54 vol. 2 (1987).

2 Henceforth in this chapter abbreviated *MH*.

to Hill's use of medieval models of authority.[3] I examine the contents of this Harleian manuscript in more detail below, but a short introduction to this key text is useful here. MS Harley 3776 bears a double relation to the contents of this thesis: the first is that it is closely tied to the abbey of Waltham Holy Cross (founded in c. 1030), which counted Harold II as one of its great founding patrons.[4] The second relationship is that the language used to legitimise the manuscript's appropriation of Harold's political and spiritual authority also forms crucial parallels to that of *MH*. Hence, I round out the discussion of Hill's work by exploring the significance of this double relationship for the creative component of this thesis.

0.1 Text and the medium of exchange

In order to understand how Hill's connections between texts influence a reader, my first aim in this chapter is to examine in detail how Hill's work establishes its relationships with texts. The terms upon which Hill engages with the past in *MH* bear a close examination in this regard. Hill superimposes the West Midlands of his childhood upon the medieval world that Hill examines through the character of Offa, a character substantiated by Hill's readings of historical texts. The process of exchanges between the medieval and the modern is at the heart of *MH*. Both Offa and the poem's narrator co-exist within the space of the poems, the anachronistic landscape of Mercia. However, for exchanges to take place there must be a medium of exchange.

This simple observation begs two further questions. What is the medium of exchange here? How does it serve to bind Offa and the narrator together? These exchanges must involve the reader in some way, whether as a witness signing their approval of the transaction or as someone participating in the transaction. Moreover, the text of *MH* must also play a part in this medium of exchange in some way. The physical object through which the reader exchanges with the writer is a crucial medium in their transactions.

As I discuss below, many aspects of these exchanges hinge upon a collectively mediated understanding of the past. Offa's medieval gift giving sets Offa and his narrator as an investor and a

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3 For the complete manuscript description, see British Museum Dept. of Manuscripts, *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Library,* Vol. 3 (London: British Museum Dept. of Manuscripts, 1808) p. 59. See also footnote 4 below.

4 For a more complete description of the manuscript's provenance and its dating, see the introduction to *The Waltham Chronicle: An Account of the Discovery of our Holy Cross at Montacute and its Conveyance to Waltham* ed. and trans. by L. Watkiss and M. Chibnall (Oxford Medieval Texts series) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) pp. i-lv.

withdrawer respectively. Together, they figuratively express Hill's 'archaeological' or 'chthonic' engagement with the past.[5] These transactions require both the mediation of the poem's figurative ground of Mercia and its physical grounding in its text. Take, for example, poem III, 'The Crowning of Offa':

> On the morning of the crowning we chorused our re-
> mission from school. It was like Easter: hankies
> and gift-mugs approved by his foreign gaze, the
> village-lintels curlered with paper flags.
>
> We gaped at the car-park of 'The Stag's Head' where a
> bonfire of beer-crates and holly-boughs whistled
> above the tar. And the chef stood there, a king in
> his new-risen hat, sealing his brisk largesse with
> 'any mustard?'[6]

Here, each verse focuses on two different media of exchange, first mass-produced coronation souvenirs and then the chef's 'largesse'. The king (presumably Offa) guarantees each exchange in a different way: first in his 'foreign gaze' and then in his act of sealing. However, the reader's ability to imagine these acts of exchange between the king and the narrator guarantees the acts. If the reader constitutes a witness to these exchanges, the reader's witness depends upon their ability to place Hill's narrator in his medium of exchange, Mercia. Hence, if Hill has set the 'crowning' among the ephemera of a modern coronation celebration, it makes sense to ask the question: which coronation? Hill has lived through two, first George VI in 1937 and then Elizabeth II in 1952. If this poem draws upon Hill's memory of his childhood, 1952 is clearly too late (he was at university by that date), and 1937 is precariously early as Hill would have been below the (usual) age for beginning primary education. The relationship between Hill's own life and the experience formed by the narrator's description tests the bond between real writer and fictional narrator.

This demands a more detailed examination. What is Hill's poem actually asking his reader to recall here? The key point of this coronation scene is not that it is the locus for Offa's two-sided celebratory giving but that it avoids locating itself in a personal memory of the narrator. Unlike so many of the other poems in *MH*, poem III does not simply rely on a sharpness and specificity of remembered detail. It also relies upon a

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5 Andrew Michael Roberts, 2004 p. 22.
6 Hill, 1971 p. 5.

wider recollection of a national event. Indeed, the nature of Offa's gifts move the poem beyond the specificities of imaginative reconstruction. These gifts recall objects that were part of the (real) coronation celebrations the poem amalgamates, but also recall objects intended to ensure the commemoration of the same events. As objects, the 'hankies' and 'gift-mugs' of poem III are plural, representing the new political settlement in their very consumption. Like Duhig's 'chivalry', they function as terms, points of reference that seek to orient the reader towards a predetermined view of the past.

As a result, the note that this strikes with the remainder of the poem is intentionally discordant. The opposition of the verses dramatises the contrast between mass-produced merchandise and the singular 'largesse' of food. Here, Hill emphasises the difference between the gift that the King has personally sealed and that which the king's gaze merely approves. However, this does not simply serve to highlight the differences and continuities between a medieval and modern monarchy. In emphasising the difference between the transitory and unique 'largesse' and coronation memorabilia, the poem also attacks the difference between the imaginative recollections of experience and approaches to the past mediated through texts or artefacts. What is the relationship between text and artefact here? Roberts and others have noted the prevalence of 'images and descriptions which work reflexively as metaphors for the process of writing' in *MH*.[7] However, the problems of a relationship, not just with language, but also with text introduce complications for this view of Hill's writing.

What does the 'chef' Offa seal? Affixing a seal is only possible on a physical document. The literal root of the image shows us a tantalising link to a medieval textual world. Offa attaches a seal to a text that Hill's poetry by itself will not reveal. Hill's poem displays the artefact, but the poem fails to display the text from which the artefact derives its meaning. This has a close parallel in the way that Hill reveals the texts that he connects with his work in *MH*.

0.2 Artefact, text and authorities

Hill frames these connections in a manner that offers crucial insights into the negotiations between texts in *MH*. In the first edition of *MH* Hill included a substantial 'Acknowledgements' section, which contains a list of texts linked to the poems of *MH*. He introduces this list with the following disclaimer:

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7 Andrew Michael Roberts, 2004 p. 21.

I have a duty to acknowledge that the authorities cited in these notes might properly object to

their names being used in so unscholarly and fantastic a context. I have no wish to compromise

the accurate scholarship of others. Having taken over certain statements and references from my

reading and having made them a part of the idiom of this sequence, I believe that I should

acknowledge the sources. I have specified those debts of which I am aware. Possibly there are

others of which I am unaware. If that is so I regret the oversight.[8]

Hill then gives a substantial list (some three pages in length) of the texts from which he consciously adapted

material in producing *MH*.[9] Although I examine these texts and their relation to *MH* in more detail below,

some general observations on Hill's relationships with these texts will introduce the key aspects of my

argument.

Hill lists fifteen scholarly texts among his 'authorities', giving titles, authors and page numbers. He

also includes one citation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Boethius' *Consolatio Philisophiae* and Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

Hill does not cite specific texts or editions for these references.[10] Consequently, I set these three more

general literary references aside due to the lack of specific textual detail they offer. However, a far more

revealing relationship is visible in the other texts specifically posited as authorities presiding over *MH*. Most

are relatively closely contemporaneous to *MH*: the larger part of the texts cited have publication dates in the

two decades preceding the publication of *MH*. A small group of texts published in the years 1950-53 are

almost certainly texts studied by Hill at university. These include two widely available texts in Old English

with copious modern glosses, *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader* and *The Parker Chronicle*.[11] A further, more

substantial grouping, published in the years 1960-1970, are equally likely to be linked with his work at the

University of Leeds. This group covers a more diverse range of topics, aimed at a slightly more general

readership, but it includes a significant number of specialist texts.[12] There are also a few notable outliers,

chief among them being *English Medieval Embroidery*.[13] This is a substantial book, considerably larger in

size than the other cited texts, and clearly aimed at a specialist, academic audience. This, in turn, contrasts

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8   Hill, 1971 p. 36 (pp. 36-40).
9   These texts are described in a table contained in Appendix B1.
10 Hill, 1971 pp. 37-9.
11 C. T. Onions, *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950); A. H. Smith, *The Parker Chronicle* (London: Methuen & co., 1951).
12 See Appendix B1.
13 A. G. I. Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938).

with the limited number of texts in Hill's list intended for private, rather than public or institutional ownership. Hill almost certainly gained access to his copy of this text from the library of the University of Leeds.[14]

This pattern of use demands further comment. Unlike the books of Jones in chapter 3, Hill's personal copies of these texts are not available for study at present. Nonetheless, the nature of these texts and their dates of publication point towards the fact that Hill encountered and read them in an institutional context. The incidental detail of the *ex libris* in Christie (1938) confirms this.[15] Not all of Hill's 'authorities' can be securely placed within this environment of institutional reading. However, it is possible to place many of the key scholarly books that informed Hill's understanding of the history of medieval England (detailed below) within this context.

Beyond this institutional aspect to Hill's reading, other aspects of Hill's 'authorities' initially appear unremarkable. Asides from books like Christie (1938), most of these texts are not immediately striking. Hill's references aim to illuminate particular usages and turns of phrase more than to locate the texts from which the artefacts of *MH* derive. Certainly some of these correspondences between individual texts and the poems of *MH* are highly revealing, as I show below in my discussion of Zarnecki (1953) and poem XXIV of *MH*. However, there is no parallel here between Hill's authorities and his final published text in the way that BNfr. 146 paralleled *The Speed of Dark*. Direct connections between poems of *MH* and the individual texts Hill cites do exist, but their implications for the relationship of text and artefact in Hill's work are different to those explored in chapter 1. In the absence of detailed records (such as those that exist regarding the work of Jones and Duhig), they offer a crucial insight into Hill's approaches to the medieval artefacts he describes. Most significantly, they provide evidence for how modern scholarly texts influenced those approaches.

0.3 Authoritative texts

Returning to Hill's 'acknowledgements', Hill's use of the term 'authorities' bears further consideration. The term itself suggests a historiographic perspective that recalls medieval approaches to works of history. The treatment of historical texts as authoritative in themselves has a clear and demonstrable link to medieval

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14 See Appendix B1.
15 *Ibid.*

understandings of the past. It links to the treatment of Classical historians as '*auctors*' and, by extension, links to a distinctively medieval theory of writing history.

What might Hill mean by his use of this word 'authorities'? 'Authority', as with its linked cognate 'author', derives from the Latin *auctor*, a word that had various uses throughout the medieval period.[16] The term *auctor* applied to high-status or otherwise exemplary original writers, a meaning that it retains: for example, William of Malmesbury uses it of Bede in his *Gesta Pontificum.*[17] It also held a variety of sacred meanings concerned with the creation of the world, as evidenced by uses of its Middle English derivative in Chaucer and elsewhere.[18] It also held a more general connotation of inspiration and originality.

The term '*auctor'* also contrasted with the other roles individuals could assume in textual production. It could apply to commentators, compilers, scribes, translators, glossators, illuminators, binders and even patrons. Indeed, almost anyone could be termed an author if their work contributed to the creation of new texts, whether for the private possession of a wealthy individual or for the use of a literate community. The conception of a specifically vernacular authority is particularly relevant to medieval conceptions of authorship. A number of scholars have developed this conception of authority in relation to the translation of works from Latin into the vernacular.[19] This is not to say that authors and scribes, for example, envisioned their work entirely differently. 'Authorial' works were prone to adjustment, editing and rewriting by successive groups of scribes. Moreover, medieval textual cultures were often too fluid to allow a work, particularly a vernacular work, to find a fixed form in its various texts.[20] The 'additions' to the Fauvel poem in BNfr. 146, mentioned in the previous chapter, were not unique in this respect, and a

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16 See for example the *OED Online*'s account: *OED Online*, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/13329, retrieved 12th February 2012. See also the *MED*, which gives a comparable range for the Middle English senses of the word: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED2985, retrieved 12th February 2012.

17 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English bishops, edited and translated by M. Winterbottom with the assistance of R. M. Thompson* ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007) pp. 228-9.

18 See for example *Troilus and Criseyde*, III 1016, in *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edn ed. by Larry Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 'But O, thow Jove, O auctor of nature, / Is this an honour to thi deyte,' For a more complete discussion of Chaucer's appeals to authority in his work, see Ardis Butterfield, '*Mise-en-page* in the Troilus Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', in *Reading from the Margins: Textual studies, Chaucer, and Medieval Literature* ed. by Seth Lerer (San Marino CA: Huntington Library, 1996).

19 A thorough and concise account of the historical development of the medieval English 'author' can be found in Anthony Bale, 'From Translator to Laureate: Imagining the Medieval Author', *Literature Compass* No. 5 (2008) pp. 918-934. But see also Alastair Minnis, *Translations of Authority in Medieval English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 1-16 for a complementary account of the problems inherent in attempting to define 'authority' and 'vernacularity' in medieval writing.

20 See for example Bella Millet, 'Mouvance and the Medieval Author' p. 13, in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission* ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994).

vernacular writer could expect to find a degree of literary play in notions of authorship and authority.[21] However, this play betrays the underlying conception of authorship as something either implicitly or explicitly received under divine providence, often from the distant past. Writing with authorial status covered both biblical matter and the works of writers from Roman and Greek traditions, a status realised in the concessions of vernacular writers and textual production.[22]

In short, inasmuch as the term may be extended to cover the full range of its usage, medieval authority was not just a textual model. Much in the way in which modern critical editions have attempted to reach an 'authorial text', it also worked as a guiding light for the process of textual production. Whether presenting the word of God for the spiritual instruction of a close-knit institutional audience or reworking a vernacular poem for the demands of a new patron or popular consumption, authority was a principle that led a text's production forwards. This sense is crucial here as it has immediate implications for the relationships between texts and artefacts in Hill's work. Understood in this way, Hill's list of 'authorities' reveals the means by which his poem has absorbed matter from his listed texts in the production of *MH*.

0.4 The authorities of Hill's Mercia

Hill frequently explores his relationship with concepts of authority in *MH*. Lest there be in any doubt as to what authority presides over the creation of *MH*, Hill spells it out in his acknowledgements. In so doing, Hill points towards the ways in which this authority encompasses relationships between past and present:

> The Offa who figures in this sequence might perhaps most usefully be regarded as the presiding genius of the West Midlands, his dominion enduring from the middle of the eighth century until the middle of the twentieth (and possibly beyond). The indication of such a timespan will, I trust, explain and to some extent justify a number of anachronisms.[23]

This statement is a somewhat overlooked counterpoise to poem I, which simultaneously lays out the bounds of Hill's Mercia and establishes the 'dominions' of Offa. There, Offa's existence encompasses the positions of king, overlord, architect, guardian, contractor, saltmaster, money-changer, commissioner and

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21 See Butterfield, 1996, pp. 77-80.
22 See both *Ibid.* and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) pp. 112-3.
23 Hill 1971 p. 36.

martyrologist, a list that neatly seems to outline the roles that authority and authorship could confer.[24] As overlord and king, Offa manifests a divinely appointed authority. As guardian, saltmaster and money-changer he becomes part of 'the authorities', as in the colloquial usage suggested by this section's heading. Lastly, as martyrologist he is quite literally an author in his own person.

The trappings of Offa's authority never fall too far from view. In Hill's 'List of Hymns', three of the thirty poems of *MH* treat with Offa's coins and three with his laws, while his 'crowning' and 'kingdom' also receive similar amounts of attention. Moreover, if the poems themselves approach these subjects from a wide range of angles, their vocabulary is often telling. Poem XI (the first of the three on 'Offa's coins') begins:

> Coins handsome as Nero's; of good substance and
>   weight. *Offa Rex* resonant in silver, and the
>   names of his moneyers. They struck with account-
>   able tact. They could alter the king's face.[25]

The comparison with Roman imperial coinage is not in any way far-fetched. In Hill's authority on Offa's coins, *English Hammered Coinage*, the first coin listed from the reign of Offa is a gold coin struck in imitation of an Arabic dinar. However, the word 'dinar' derives from the Latin *denarius* and in particular *denarius auri*, a Byzantine coin.[26] Hill's source makes a connection here with a classical world that appears to have prompted the leap to Nero. However, the connection to Offa's medieval kingship is less easily articulated. Exerting his power in ways that typify medieval kingship, Offa is not king in this poem but *rex*. Just as with 'chivalry' in *The Speed of Dark*, *rex* is a term intended to encapsulate the foundation of the authority of medieval monarchs in an authoritative language. Hill's setting of his poems as hymns or panegyrics gesture towards this foundation, but this gesture does not encapsulate the relationship between artefact and inscription. The inscription on Offa's coin recalls the styles of medieval European monarchs. Nonetheless, it is only a fragment of a much wider system of justification and documentation of temporal power.

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24 *Ibid.* p. 6.
25 *Ibid.* p. 16.
26 J. J. North, *English Hammered Coinage,* Vol. 1 (London: Spink & Son, 1963); for the derivation of *dinar* See *OED Online*, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/52974?redirectedFrom=dinar#eid retrieved 14th July 2012.

Instead, Hill has juxtaposed *rex* with the Anglo-Saxon name that follows it, providing a key note in the interplay between words of Latin and English origin that underpins so much of the vocabulary of *MH*.[27] Hill avoids an exploration of the textual world that existed to describe and authorise this Latin vocabulary. Instead, he returns the poem's focus to the malleable, physical symbols of Offa's power in the vocabularies of craft and making. Here, the artefact links to Hill's source-text, which in turn points towards a textual culture that substantiates and gives meaning to the found object. Hill's poem relates the Latin form of Offa's authority to classical modes of authority, but the medieval, textual complications of the style itself are absent. Hill's poem qualifies the artefact by relating the artefact to its makers. However, Hill allows the artefact to become a text whose making depends upon a far more involved relationship with Nero's world than Hill's poem suggests. As Hill's reference to North (1963) indicates, the exchange here depends primarily on a modern text rather than a medieval one.

This is also apparent from comparison with poem XIII. Here, Hill gives an even more complete style for Offa, '*Rex Totius Anglorum Patriae*'. Hill substantiates this style in his acknowledgements with a reference to Christopher Brooke (1967). Hill's grasp of Anglo-Saxon numismatics does not stem from the coins themselves: it stems from his reading of North's text. Likewise, Hill condenses the textual culture abbreviated in *Offa Rex* into direct association with the Roman world. The style that Offa has developed in his coins is not simply a 'found' chthonic text; it is shorthand for an entire vocabulary of the legitimisation of medieval authority. Here, as with Offa's seal, Offa's coinage implies uses of texts Hill's perspective has drastically foreshortened.

These manifestations of Offa's authority are telling. There are close connections between Hill's appropriation of his authorities for *MH* and the legitimisation of Offa's authority that he portrays. Offa's authority does not simply manifest itself by harnessing a quasi-imperial legitimacy. It also manifests itself in his tenure of the land itself, which also follows medieval modes of expression. Consider the final section of poem XI:

> Heathland, new-made watermeadow. Charlock, marsh-
>   marigold. Crepitant oak forest where the boar

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27 Heaney makes a similar point with respect to the interplay of words of Latin and English origin in *MH*: see 'Englands of the mind' in Seamus Heaney, *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001* (London: Faber, 2002) pp. 86-7.

furrowed black mould, his snout intimate with

worms and leaves.[28]

This passage seems to stand in direct opposition to the above quoted section. The preponderance of words of

Anglo-Saxon origin almost overpowers the reader with their exuberance by creating a polysyllabic richness

invoking the natural world. The natural scene links the English vocabulary with primordial or ancient ideas

of nature. However, this may not be all it seems. In describing 'forest' and 'meadow', Hill does not put us in

the bounds of a wild idyll. Instead, he places us within a specific language of medieval land usage. The word

'forest' did not imply woodland: its modern use stems from the creation of areas of 'forest law' under the

early Norman kings. The presence of the boar, an animal managed in medieval times for the purpose of the

chase, underlines this. Likewise, medieval meadows were managed for hay and as pasture for animals;

heathland, where it could be found, was continually under pressure from clearance and grazing. Hill has

shifted not from the civilised world to the wild but from one part of the medieval world to another.[29] The

description of landscape implies a grasp of Offa's world that derives from specific uses of texts. It recalls the

legal language of tenure and land usage that formed the basis for the medieval construction of Offa's

authority.

Hill's authorities suggest this relationship, but do not substantiate it. They often substantiate

individual usages, as in Hill's note to poem V. This note points the reader in the direction of an explanation

of the term 'wergild' that appears to have no further bearing on the poem itself. However, when considered

in a way that moves beyond Hill's own text, these authorities reveal the connections between texts which

MH attempts to negotiate. Consider, for example, the relationship with W. F. Bolton's *A History of Anglo-*

Latin Literature 597-1066 (vol. 1), from which Hill derives the obscure quotation 'but Offa is a common

name'.[30] This quotation forms part of a discussion of the poetry of Aethilwald (fl. 675-705), who was a pupil

of Aldhelm and whose work survives only as part of a letter to him.[31] The discussion is in turn part of a

discussion on the identity of Aethilwold. Prior to the middle of the twentieth century, scholars confused this

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28 Hill, 1971 p. 16.
29 See for example *A New Historical Geography of England Before 1600* ed. by H. C. Darby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) pp. 85-6 and 103-4.
30 Bolton, 1967 p. 191 and Hill, 1971 p. 37.
31 Bolton, 1967 p. 188.

Aethilwold with a later king of Mercia, Aethelbald, attested to in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*.[32] The suggestion that a Mercian king might also be a Latin author is significant to Hill's work. For example, in poem XVIII Hill mentions Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*. The Old English translation of Boethius was attributed to King Alfred of Wessex. Likewise, poem X places Offa at a desk among 'assorted prize pens', exchanging 'gifts with the Muse of History'.[33] Here, Hill constructs Offa as an author. Offa becomes a figure like Alfred or Aethelbald, whose writing spans the gap between artefact and action. This modern account of a Latin text prompts Hill's exploration of the relationship between his poems and the artefacts they describe.

How do Offa's literary associations shape this relationship? This question is a key point in investigating the workings of historical writing in *MH*. As I argue below, the comparisons with Alfred are telling. *MH* comes to resemble the Medieval Latin lives of English monarchs and their associated materials in its portrayal of Offa and his domain. Hill has prepared for this relationship in his allusions to panegyric. Nonetheless, there is a deeper level of connection and influence working upon his poem through his use of texts. As in poem XVIII, Hill suggests an international or national dimension to the texts he credits with substantiating Offa's power. However, this deeper connection counterbalances Hill's use of Virgil (itself reflecting on Enoch Powell's use of the same passage). As I show below, localising impulses also form a foundation for Offa's connections to Latin writings. There are medieval texts substantiating claims to local estates, rights and privilege among the classical authorities Hill suggests to the reader.

As a result, the contents of manuscripts like Harley MS 3776 are crucially relevant here. Two of the works it contains, the *Vita Haroldi* and *De Inventione Sancte Crucis Walthamensis*, form part of the medieval textual culture suggested but not explored in Hill's poetry. In exploring their relationship to Hill's work, my aim is to highlight the relationships between texts that shape Hill's engagement with the medieval world. Hence, in the next section I develop the case for *MH* as a *Vita Offa*, and its relationship with British ecclesiastical writing of the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond.

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32 See for example the account in J. E. Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003) ch. 3.

33 Hill, 1971 p. 20 & p. 37.

1.0 *Habendum et Tenendum*: Offa's holdings and Offa's gifts

How does *MH* portray Offa's authority, and how does this portrayal shape the relationship between Hill's poems and the text? As I have shown above, Offa does not only exercise his authority through exchanges of artefacts, through gift giving or minting coinage. Rather, Offa forms his relationship with the artefacts of history through an engagement with text, as the tantalising references to sealing and writing suggest. Offa's styles depend upon a textual culture of documentation and administration for their authority. Likewise, Hill's exploration of artefacts depends upon scholarly texts that describe them. It is not just the status of words as symbols or artefacts that shapes the personification of Offa in Hill's work. The status of written words as the representation of meaning that is authoritatively guaranteed also shapes this personification.

This guarantee of meaning is a parallel to the guarantees of exchange discussed at the opening of section 0.1. The power of Offa to determine meaning gives authority to both his artefacts and his words. However, Offa's expresses his words through Hill's poem and, in turn, the text of *MH* shapes our interpretations of Hill's poem. As with the character of Fauvel in chapter 1, the character of Offa is a key factor in the interplay between text and poem in *MH*. As I have shown above, the range of texts that Hill brings to bear upon *MH* shapes Offa. These texts find their expression through the ways that Offa determines and shapes the meanings of texts and artefacts for the reader. Hence, a more detailed examination of how Hill's 'authorities' give shape to the character of Offa will provide key insights into the interaction between text and the poem in *MH*. As a result, my focus in this section will turn to how Offa's character takes his shape from the wide range of texts employed by Hill. This then opens the way to an exploration of the relationships between the portrayal of Offa and other medieval texts such as Harley MS 3776.

1.1 Offa's patronage: 'The Herefordshire School' and Mercia

Poem XXIV further develops the connection between *MH* and the medieval world through an exploration of eleventh-century sculpture. As part of the short sequence of poems listed as concerning the 'Opus Anglicanum', Hill envisages a mason and his work, which I reproduce here in full:

> Itinerant through numerous domains, of his lord's retinue, to
>   Compostela. Then home for a lifetime amid West
>   Mercia this master-mason as I envisage him, intent to
>   pester upon tympanum and chancel-arch his moody

> testament, confusing warrior with lion, dragon-coils,
> tendrils of the stony vine.
>
> Where best to stand? Easter sunrays catch the ob-
> lique face of Adam scrumping through leaves; pale
> spree of evangelists and, there, a cross Christ mumming
> child Adam out of Hell
>
> ('Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum' dust in the eyes,
> on clawing wings, and lips)[34]

Hill's acknowledgements direct the reader to G. Zarnecki, *Later English Romanesque Sculpture* (1953) pp. 9-15. The relevant passage is a discussion of the sculpture of what Zarnecki terms the Herefordshire School, and the influence upon it of the sculpture of Santiago de Compostela.[35] The relevant passage in Zarnecki provided a significant portion of the material for the poem: the sculptural elements Hill describes are also in Zarnecki's description of Kilpeck church.[36] Even in terms of the texts themselves, there is a good deal of similarity between the presentation of *MH* and Zarnecki's work. As with *The Speed of Dark* in the previous chapter, *MH* positions itself in close contact with works of historical scholarship through its text. Like many of the texts it cites, the first edition of *MH* seems designed to appeal to a similar audience, albeit in different ways. Without its dust-jacket (which is rather less muted in its design than one might expect from that of a contemporary scholarly text) *MH*'s text could pass for a slim scholarly monograph. Even its overall structure is similar to the structure of some of the works that it cites as authorities, with the poems standing between a substantial epigraph and a set of notes that echo the form of scholarly works. Such an arrangement is within the bounds of normal textual production for volumes of poetry from the period. Nonetheless, it appears to represent an attempt, whether conscious or unconscious, to stand in close proximity to 'authoritative' scholarly writing.[37]

Returning to poem XXIV, consider Zarnecki's description of Kilpeck church by way of comparison:

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34 Hill, 1971 p. 26.
35 George Zarnecki, *Later English Romanesque Sculpture, 1140-1210* (London: Alec Tiranti, 1953) p. 12.
36 *Ibid.* p. 11.
37 I use 'authoritative' here in the sense that, as texts produced for an academic or scholarly audience (whose authority is dependent upon the validity of the arguments and the use of the evidence demonstrated therein) tend to assume similar forms, so we associate this authority with the form of the text before we have even considered the contents.

The jambs of the doorway are covered with thick bodies of twisting snakes, and one of the

shafts with figures of warriors intertwining with foliage, while the other is carved with foliage

and a pair of doves at the base. The capitals are decorated with animals and a grotesque head.

On the tympanum a vine-scroll forms a symmetrical design.[38]

Other sculptural elements found in Hill's poem are also nearby, including dragons and Samson struggling

with a lion. Similarly, the final two pages of Zarnecki's chapter on 'The Herefordshire School' describe fonts

carved with 'the *Harrowing of Hell*', 'symbols of the Evangelists' and 'the *Baptism of Christ*'.[39] The first

traces of Hill's 'master-mason' appear in Zarnecki, in the description of a mason who accompanied a certain

Oliver de Merlimond on a pilgrimage to Compostela. Zarnecki suggests that this unknown sculptor sketched

a number of the decorative schemes of the churches *en route*, copies of which the sculptor distributed to

other Herefordshire sculptors in 'pattern books'.

What distinguishes Hill's poem from Zarnecki's work? Hill concerns himself with the sculptor as

agent. In so doing, he transforms the way in which the sculpture presents itself to the reader. What in

Zarnecki's work is a rather approving catalogue becomes a 'moody testament' in *MH*. Hill's poem packs the

sculptures together in an almost overwhelming jumble, their profusion rendering them cryptic to a reader.

The densely packed, vivid images both invite the reader to visualise them but simultaneously prevent them

from doing so in any easy way. It is only at the opening of the second section that the scenes begin to take on

a recognisable shape.

Here, Hill places his narrator more directly into the poem. The narrative voice intrudes as someone

considering the best place from which to take in this obscure lapidary exegesis. Under the revelatory 'Easter

sunrays', the sculpture takes shape as a kind of ecclesiastical history: first there is Adam in an Eden, which is

made suddenly English by his 'scrumping' through leaves; then the Evangelists appear, standing with their

implied gospel; finally, there is the apocryphal Harrowing of Hell where a figure of Christ redeems Adam.

The poem closes with the narrator awaiting the resurrection of the dead. The sculpture returns in this last

verset almost to the stasis it held in the opening section in a series of indistinct forms that are now covered

with dust.

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38 *Ibid.*
39 *Ibid.* p. 14

Zarnecki's writing is closer to a catalogue or chronology. However, in Hill's treatment there is a narrative at work. The poem takes the reader from a broad, almost pageant-like description of a feudal journey into a dark, claustrophobic world of religious art that is only briefly illuminated. The sculpture here parallels the spiritual truth it attempts to expound. Nonetheless, again there are suggestions of texts crucial in Zarnecki that have disappeared in Hill's reworking. The texts, the pattern-books, that guarantee the exchange of forms between Compostela and Mercia have gone missing. In Zarnecki, the sculpture of Kilpeck locates itself in the texts that underpin the transfer of sculptural ideas, and in the legal and administrative processes that tie the unnamed mason and Oliver de Merlimond together. In *MH*, these texts have disappeared. Hill's work does not read the sculpture as decoration upon an institution propped up as much by the substantiating power of text as physical substance. Rather, Hill's poem shows the sculpture becoming an artefact in its concatenating of scriptural scenes. Hill's poem locks the work of the unnamed mason into comparison with the tangled, translated scriptures that they depict.

In doing so, Hill makes the sculpture of Kilpeck into a part of the wider Mercia that *MH* describes. Hill's master-mason works under only the vaguest of secular authorities: his 'lord' could be anyone, the 'domains' anywhere. This elision is a crucial step for Hill. It allows the reader who is ignorant of the existence of Oliver de Merlimond and without access to Zarnecki's work to make a far simpler attribution. By clearing the complexities of the underlying political and textual culture away, Hill invites the reader to place Kilpeck's sculpture under the (here unspoken) authority of *MH*, Offa. What in Zarnecki is simply the accurate 'Herefordshire' becomes the rather more fanciful 'West Mercia' for Hill. The sculpture of the Herefordshire School becomes a part of Offa's patronage when dislocated from its supporting texts.

1.2 The archaeology of Offa

Not only coins and seals, as mentioned above, but also swords, embroideries and ships all form part of the paraphernalia of Offa's rule.[40] Two of Hill's authorities, Dolley (1961) and North (1963), are scholarly

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40 I do not mean paraphernalia here in the sense of 'ephemera' or indeed 'impedimenta'; physical objects were viewed in different terms by medieval observers. For a more complete discussion of ways of theorising the premodern object see for example Kellie Robertson, 'Medieval Things: Materiality, Historicism, and the Premodern Object' in *Literature Compass* 5/6 (2008) pp.1060-1080.

works on numismatics, which link closely to the archaeological record.[41] Whitelock (1965) also mentions archaeological evidence that corroborates or expands upon textual sources, and Christie (1938) is almost entirely devoted to cataloguing surviving examples of medieval English embroidery.[42] The studies collected in Dolley (1962) provide particularly relevant cues for Hill's usages in their frequent reference to coin-hoards and 'hoard-material'. It is telling that the three references to archaeological processes in *MH* are all associated with coinage in some way: poem XII, which begins 'Their spades grafted through variably-resistant / soil. They clove to the hoard'; poem VI, which begins 'The princes of Mercia were badger and raven. Thrall / to their freedom, I dug and hoarded.'; and poem IV, where the transition between its first and second sections runs 'where the mole / shouldered the clogged wheel, his gold solidus; where / dry-dust badgers thronged the Roman flues'.[43] The mediation of artefacts through texts here again points to the complex relationship with scholarly material in Hill's work.

How does this connection manifest itself? On the use of language as embodying the joinings and separations described in Hill's poems, Michael North points out:

> Language, in this view, becomes a kind of hoard, wrested from and reinvested in the soil, accumulating as part of a historical process. But this treasure is not easily available for use. Since human beings are themselves part of the treasure, difference and change will always coexist with simple accrual. Any investigation of the hoard will thus discover both continuity and separation.[44]

North's comment here neatly underlines the relationship between authority and archaeology in *MH*. Inasmuch as Hill sets out language under Offa's auspices, it too forms part of Offa's bequeathal to those participating in Hill's Mercia. The accumulation of physical artefacts consistently parallels the accumulation of their verbal counterparts. Hill places Offa's dominion on a firm literary footing just as the 'investment' in coinage secures its political foundations.

Initially there appears to be a clear dichotomy of possession in the archaeological processes of *MH*. Hoarding is an act that seeks to restrict access to objects of value. However, in the works on numismatics

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41 *Anglo-Saxon Coins: Studies Presented to F. M. Stenton on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday* ed. by R. M. Dolley (London: Methuen, 1961); North, 1963.
42 Dorothy Whitelock, *The Beginnings of English Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965).
43 Hill, 1971 pp. 6-14.
44 Michael North, 1987 p. 468 .

Hill cites, hoards are the essence of their particular strand of history: the artefacts and evidence hoards provide enrich the work of numismatists. Offa's agency in guaranteeing this process of investment and withdrawal is crucial. When the labourers in poem XII '[cleave] to the hoard,' what they uncover is of far wider importance than mere coinage and the numismatic history it provides. 'Epiphanies, vertebrae of the chimera, armour of wild bees' larvae,' spring to light and are ransacked, as is the 'fire-dragon's faceted skin'.[45] The sudden broadening in descriptive range clearly underlines the fabulous nature of the find. The 'wild bees' larvae are distinctive here in that they lend a reality to the situation, linking the find to the natural world described in poem VI. 'Bees' larvae' connects to 'honeycombs of chill sandstone' and in turn to 'the riven sandstone' that is Offa's special province, but also to beekeeping, another aspect of medieval industry. Fabulous as the hoard may be, it is still inextricably bound to Mercia. As is still the case with hoard finds today, medieval kings exercised special power over such treasure. This find is far from simple fortunate chance. It is a gift from Offa.[46]

Coins are not the only artefacts to acquire the status of gifts in *MH*. Poem XVI mentions 'the / Frankish gift, two-edged, regaled with slaughter,' that is, a sword. Frankish swords of the period were prized for their quality. However, Hill does not leave the sword to stand as an unqualified 'gift', as the poem continues:

> The sword is in the king's hands; the crux a crafts-
> man's triumph. Metal effusing its own fragrance,
> a variety of balm. And other miracles, other
> exchanges.[47]

Here, again, artefacts take on a precise political status in *MH*. The sword comes clearly into focus, from the somewhat euphemistic 'Frankish gift', just as it passes into the hands of the king. As mentioned in Whitelock (1965), weapons were important, status-conferring gifts in Anglo-Saxon society. In receiving, holding, and even (through the poem itself) displaying a sword, Offa exercises his authority as a king whose tenure of

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45 Hill, 1971 p.12.
46 See for example the definition of 'treasure-trove' in the *OED*, which outlines its legal status from medieval times and the term's derivation from the Latin legal term *inventi thesauri*: *OED online*, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205375; retrieved 3rd November 2011.
47 Hill, 1971 p. 18.

artefacts is politically significant.[48] The sword, in its cruciform shape, is a symbol of Offa's very being. However, its location at the centre of a complex of exchanges in the poem shows that its existence as a symbol is the subject of intense negotiation. The poem dramatises not only the relationship between Offa and his kingship but between Hill's text and Whitelock's.

1.3 The *Vita Offa*: acts, miracles and elegy

In this light, the pairing of 'miracles' and 'exchanges' quoted above is revealing. The transit from 'sword' to 'miracles' takes in the reference to the cross itself and the 'fragrance' of the metal from which it was forged. This link takes in a trope of medieval Latin writing: hagiographers employ the effusion of a (holy) fragrance in order to denote the presence or cessation of a sanctified or otherwise miraculous life. Although this trope occurs in British hagiography more frequently from the eleventh century onwards, hagiographers retrospectively applied it to Edward the Martyr and other saints from the Anglo-Saxon period.[49] Such a connection complicates Offa's role as a territorial overlord. However, it is not a complete departure from the medieval conception of kingship. The secular nobility, and particularly kings, were often prime subjects for canonisation.

What does the conflux of mirabilia and 'exchanges' tell us of the role of Offa in *MH*? Reading 'exchanges' in the sense of 'clash of salutation' implies that miracles are simply their spiritual counterpart in that they represent conversation with the divine. A miracle presented to Offa would constitute an embassy in the sense of a message from a divine monarch to an earthly one. However, the conflation of secular and religious authority in the hands of Offa recalls the work of medieval Latin writers, for whom the boundaries between secular biography and hagiography were either fluid or non-existent.[50] When Offa holds the crux of a sword in his hands, Hill suggests that he embodies both secular and religious authority. Offa imparts this power to the artefacts that lie in his gift. This motivates the somewhat obscure final section of poem XVI.

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48 As in, for example, Whitelock, 1965 p. 35.

49 See for example Philip Grierson, 'Grimbald of St. Bertin's' p. 531, *English Historical Review* vol. 55 no. 220 (1940) pp. 529-561. For Edward the Martyr's 'odour of sanctity' see for example the account in *Supplementary Lives in some Manuscripts of the Gilte Legende* ed. by Hamer & Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 160-1. This account is particularly interesting because the 'odour' is released upon the translation of the saint, whereas his death is marked by a fiery celestial beacon (*Ibid.*).

50 See for example Claire M. Waters, 'Power and Authority' in Salih, ed., 2006 pp. 70-79 for the lack of distinction between secular and spiritual status in Middle English Hagiography; but see also Katherine J. Lewis, 'History, Historiography and Re-Writing the Past', *Ibid.* for a very full treatment of the lack of distinction between historical and hagiographical aims in medieval English writing.

The question of 'what is borne amongst them' develops the dual sense of the sword as a weapon and, when displayed by Offa, as processional cross. The 'indulgences of bartered acclaim' form a similar composite. Indulgences provide remission from sin, but when composed of 'bartered acclaim' they remit not through the mediation of divine grace but by negotiation with temporal power.

This instance of Offa's existence acquiring a spiritual dimension occurs elsewhere in *MH*. Poem XXIII, on the '*Opus Anglicanum'*, offers a similar transition between the spiritual and the mundane:

> In tapestries, in dreams, they gathered, as it was en-
> acted, the return, the re-entry of transcendence
> into this sublunary world. *Opus Anglicanum,* their
> stringent mystery riddled by needles: the silver
> veining, the gold leaf, voluted grape-vine, master-
> works of treacherous thread.

> They trudged out of the dark, scraping their boots
> free from lime-splodges and phlegm. They munched
> cold bacon. The lamps grew plump with oily re-
> liable light.[51]

The two sets of plural entities call into contrast West-midlands (apparently male) labourers of the middle twentieth century and (presumably female) medieval English needle workers.[52] The 're-entry of transcendence' itself has a duality to it. Like the sword held by Offa in poem XVI, it denotes both a spiritual event (the second coming of Christ) and the embroidery itself. However, Hill connects this embroidery to the mundane 'opus' of the second section. If labourers pioneer the physical territory of Mercia, then its artists enrich its spiritual territory.

What is the role of Offa here? Poems XXIII-XXV are the only three from *MH* that Hill does not directly associate with Offa in the 'list of hymns' appended to the sequence. Hill simply entitles them 'Opus Anglicanum', a term he derives from Christie (1938). As with poem XIV, Offa stands as a patron to the works described in these three poems. Offa has not directly fabricated these varying commissions: Hill portrays the agency of their execution in each poem. Even the indistinct 'they' of poem XXIII stands in

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51 Hill, 1971 p. 25.
52 See for example Christie, 1938 pp. 3-8.

direct contrast to earlier poems, where Offa is more nearly approximated by the pronoun 'he'. Rather,

consider the more elegiac poem XXV, which begins:

> Brooding on the eightieth letter of *Fors Clavigera*,
> I speak this in memory of my grandmother, whose
> childhood and prime womanhood were spent in the
> nailer's darg.[53]

Here Hill refers to the *Fors Clavigera*, a series of pamphlets in the form of letters addressed to the British

working class by nineteenth-century art critic and artist John Ruskin (1819-1900).[54] Ruskin entitled letter 80

of the *Fors Clavigera* 'The Two Clavigeræ', that is, the two (female) nailers. The most salient part of this

letter is Ruskin's description of his visit to the female nail-makers of Bewdley:

> My host asked me if I would like to see 'nailing.' 'Yes, truly.' So he took me into a little
> cottage where were two women at work, one about seventeen or eighteen, the other perhaps
> four or five and thirty.[55]

Ruskin's host here is the Mayor of Birmingham. Ruskin places the responsibility for the poverty of the

nailers upon 'beautiful girls' who 'have it in their power to do whatever they like with men and things, and

yet do so little with either.' However, it is not a great leap of reasoning to assign that responsibility more

appropriately, to authority figures such as the mayor himself.[56] As with the sculpture of Kilpeck, by

neglecting to name a direct agent Hill brings this aspect of the Opus Anglicanum into Offa's remit.

Even more crucially, Ruskin's text does not only stand between Hill and Offa's medieval world. It

stands between Hill and his own imaginative recollection of the past. Ruskin's text is an intermediary

between Hill and his own narrator, a text that gives meaning to a process of creating artefacts. Hill recalls

this process of making, but it is subject to Offa's power.[57] This negotiation between Hill's imagination and

Ruskin's historical text sits at the heart of Hill's problems with Offa's power. Offa's agency in the maiming

of Hill's grandmother exists entirely in the dynamics of Ruskin's casual dismissal of his host's culpability.

Hence, Hill's comments on the brutality of Offa both anticipate and frustrate his own engagement with

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53 Hill 1971 p. 28.
54 Collected in John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, Vol. 7 ed. by E. I. Cook & A. Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1906).
55 *Ibid.* p. 172.
56 *Ibid.* p. 176.
57 See for example John Haffenden, Interview with Geoffrey Hill, *Quarto* 15 (March 1981) pp 19-22.

Offa's world in the form of hymns and panegyrics.[58] Hill is acutely aware of the power of texts in evoking the authority of the absent king, but he is unable to dismantle the textual basis of that power, to bridge the gap between his own imaginative recollection and Offa's medieval texts.

It is now possible to return to the questions that opened this section. The interactions between Hill's poem and the texts from which Hill re-constructs Offa's rule highlight the ways in which connections between texts shape the poem for the reader. This suggests crucial disjunctions in the way that Hill figures Offa and *MH* as a whole. Hill suggests that he intended the 'hymns' to praise Offa in the same way that the Latin hymns of late antiquity praise the Trinity. However, the indirectness of address refutes the simplicity of this connection. *MH* uses pronouns and other tenuous implications of Offa's presence, whereas the late antique hymns Hill indicates have no difficulty in recalling a divine presence by name.[59] Offa's presence in *MH* is far more pervasive but also less directly realised. Placing the 'list of hymns' at the back of the book obscures the most obvious connections between Offa and the individual poems of the sequence. This frustrates the connection between the life of Offa and the contents of the poems that would have arisen from attaching titles to the individual poems. Hence, the narrative sequencing of the poem, like Hill's connection to Offa's substantiating artefacts and texts, takes place at a remove. The wider mechanisms through which Offa exercises authority are obscured. The shape of Hill's text displaces the narratives to which Hill implicitly reacts in his re-creation of Offa's brutalities and triumphs.

These narrative sequences imply a wider shape formed from the individual poems of *MH*. The list of hymns clearly describes the life of Offa, with poems describing birth and childhood at the start of the sequence and poems more clearly setting out mature acts towards the end. Their sequence culminates in the finality of poems XXVII-XXX. Where the poems themselves merely suggest a progression roughly equal to that of a human life, the list of hymns makes this progression evident. However, Offa attaches himself to much of the sequence in only the most tenuous ways. By using Offa as a cipher for 'the presiding genius of the West Midlands', Hill stretches and manipulates Offa's biography into congruence with his own. In doing so, he also shifts Offa's life into congruence with an implied history of Mercia. However, these textual distortions create the central problem for Hill's engagement with the textual basis of Offa's power. This

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58 *Ibid.*

59 The best example, and perhaps the most relevant due to its referencing by Hill, is the *Te Deum,* found in *The Penguin Book of Latin Verse* ed. by F. Brittain (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) p. 86.

distortion blurs our view of the localised texts that would give specific and temporally limited substance to the relation between artefact and authority. As with the sculpture of Kilpeck, Offa's appropriation of these texts has abbreviated the intimate relationships between their statuses as artefacts and conveyances for literary meaning.

This appropriation sharpens the reader's view of Offa at the expense of the texts that form the basis for his power. Though not always made explicit, Offa's role within the poem remains that of a medieval king. Where there are works of art to be made, he stands patron; where there is land to be worked, the land lies in his demesne; where there is authority to be exercised, Offa exercises it. As Hill suggests with the punning of poem II, Offa's name conjures (and is a conjuration of) the history of the West Midlands. How can Offa be disentangled from his kingdom? Examining Offa's relationship to precisely those specifying and localising texts, and considering the wider objectives of *MH*'s text, offers a route towards this disentanglement. Hence, I compare Hill's work the manuscript BL Harley 3776, which contains the traditions of Waltham Holy Cross relating to the life of Harold Godwinson. It shows how a medieval, institutional text was able to employ specific, local documents (such as charters and lists of relics) to substantiate claims to spiritual, literary, and temporal authority.

2.0 Institutional histories: BL Harley 3776 and the *Mercian Hymns*

British Library Harley MS No. 3776 is the first section of a large compendium of materials relating to the abbey of Waltham Holy Cross. The manuscript is a fourteenth-century production, probably from after 1345. The details of the text, as determined by the British Museum Department of Manuscripts survey (1808), bear repeating. The physical form of the manuscript shows the scale, quality and expense of its production, demonstrating the value placed upon its contents by the community that produced it and held it. MS 3776 is a large text, with pages measuring approximately 260 x 200 mm. The manuscript's execution is fine, with numerous coloured initials in red and blue, and flourished and ornamented initial capitals and margins. Produced in the scriptorium of the re-founded Waltham Abbey, its contents focus upon the institutional history of Waltham Holy Cross. Its original binding also contained Harley MS 3766: a medieval numeration shows that MS 3776 contains articles 1-8 and MS 3766 contains articles 9-16 from the original manuscript. In its present condition, MS 3776 contains 11 articles, including a brief chronicle of the years 1066-1128, a

calendar, a martyrology, and a number of Latin verses.[60] However, its most important contents for this

discussion are the first two articles, clearly the first articles of the original Waltham collection. These are the

two Latin prose works from the twelfth century known as the Waltham Chronicle and the *Vita Haroldi*, of

which BL Harley 3776 contains the only surviving copy.

2.1 Harold Godwinson and Offa of Mercia

Harold Godwinson looms as large in the works contained in BL Harley 3776 as Offa does within *MH*.

Setting aside, for the time being, the somewhat less factual *Vita Haroldi*, where Harold is the principal

subject, even in the relatively cautious Chronicle it is clear that Harold's involvement with the Abbey was

both deeply rooted and well regarded. The first fourteen capita of the Chronicle concern themselves with the

discovery of the holy cross itself and with the first great patron of the abbey, Tovi the Proud (d. 1043).

However, from the end of capitum fourteen through to capitum twenty-one (each of which are substantially

longer than those of cap. one to fourteen) the chronicle largely deals with Harold and his involvement with

Waltham. There are lists of the lands and relics that Harold gave to the canons there, as well as a narration of

how the canons were able to repay Harold's generosity by giving him a Christian burial in the abbey

church.[61]

How does this compare to *MH*? The personification of a historical Harold by the Waltham chronicler

serves similar objectives to that of *MH* in creating the persona of Offa. For the Waltham Chronicler, the

person of Harold substantiates Waltham Abbey's claim to its relics and its lands and the foundations of its

spiritual mission. As with Offa, Harold provides items that are both fine things in themselves, but also

spiritual necessities: he provides vessels for altar service, crosses, vestments and even books.[62] Moreover,

Harold could not have made these items. Instead, Harold caused them to be made and provided them to the

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60 See British Museum Dept. of Manuscripts, 1808 p. 59 and 61. See also Watkiss & Chibnall eds., 1994 p. l-lii.
61 Watkiss & Chibnall eds., 1994, pp. 2-61.
62 *Ibid,* p. 32-3: 'Ministerio etiam altaris uasa necessaria, diebus precipuis aurea, profestis argentea, sufficienti
    copiositate inuenit. Quatuor etiam capsas aureas, .ix. argentas, candelabra aurea et argentea, turribula, urceos et
    pelues, cruces tres aureas, .vi. argenteas; textus aureos tres magnos, .v. argenteos deauratos. Hec omnia miro
    fabrorum artificio exculta predictis adiecit. Vestimentorum etiam habundantiam' - 'He provided in sufficient
    quantity the vessels necessary for service of the altar, golden for special days, silver for ordinary days. In addition
    there were four golden, and nine silver, reliquaries, candlesticks of gold and silver, censers, ewers and basins, three
    golden, and six silver crosses; there were three large golden gospel books, and five of silver-gilt. All these things, the
    work of wonderfully skilled craftsmen, he added to the items already mentioned. In addition he provided the church
    with a large quantity of vestments' (Watkiss & Chibnall's translation).

church, just as Offa presides over the Opus Anglicanum in its positive and negative senses. Offa bestows these works as a legacy in the same way that both Harold and Tovi gave to Waltham.

The institutional context of Harley MS 3776 is crucial here. The chronicler drew upon a body of cartulary evidence in his work, repeating sections from a draft version of the foundation charter of Waltham given by Edward the Confessor.[63] These connections between literary texts and texts produced by a proximate 'authority' recall the institutional situation of Hill's reading. Hill's interpretation of his 'authorities' shows the same negotiation over the substantiating details of scholarly texts that inform the chronicler's borrowings from charters and relic lists. These appropriations mirror Hill's appropriation of acts of making and patronage to a central figure that represents an institution of Mercia. Just as Offa's patronage secures the Opus Anglicanum for Mercia, so too does Harold's patronage secure the gifts of Edward the Confessor.

There are further ties with the texts that Hill used to create *MH*. Hill's reference to Dolley (1961) points us not to the essay on the coinage of Offa that occurs early on in that volume but to a specific usage. The usage, when a king 'was alive and dead', appears in a study on an issue of coinage in the reign of Edward the Confessor.[64] The connection is slight but significant. It shows that both Hill and the Waltham chronicler both drew upon a reservoir of official phraseology in order to substantiate tenure. However, this does not simply parallel *MH* but acts as part of a continuing chain of transmission between texts. The mediation of Hill's own authorities shape Hill's relationship to this language, but the location of Edward the Confessor suggests a common source.

The chronicler's repetition of sections from charters invokes the same specific, formal language that underpins Offa's authority over Mercia. Hill engages with the texts that authorised the transfer of lands and goods in medieval England through his own 'authorities'. However, in *MH* Hill creates Offa's authority by eliding or abbreviating these texts. Offa endures as genius loci by subjecting the language of tenure and obligation to his own processes of making texts and artefacts. This process is as crucial to the substantiation of the claim of Hill's narrator upon Mercia as it is to the chronicler's claims upon Waltham's possessions.

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63 *Ibid.* pp. xxxviii-xxxix.
64 Dolley ed., 1961 p. 220.

Hill gains a great deal from this relationship. The canons of Waltham were able to secure the burial of Harold as a spiritual return for his gifts. Likewise, poem XXX of *MH* contains a similar suggestion that Offa leaves 'coins, for his lodging, and traces of / red mud.' The double sense of lodging, both habitation and persistence, points to the multiple senses in which Offa persists in Hill's text. Offa's gifts, the artefacts and texts he has imparted to Mercia, are due payment for his abiding presence and memory manifested in Hill's work.

The *Vita Haroldi* sheds further light upon this relationship. It is a very different work to the Waltham Chronicle, and its inclusion within the Harleian manuscript has puzzled commentators upon the text.[65] As Matthews points out, it is a work of secular hagiography. It deals with what the Waltham Chronicle considered misguided fables about the survival of Harold after the battle of Hastings. However, the *Vita Haroldi* sets out to transform these into a spiritually edifying life of one of Waltham's most important patrons. It aimed to make these fables suitable, at least in some respects, to readers from the community: it is unlikely that the producers of Harley MS 3776 would have included it without ascribing some merit to it.[66] The community at Waltham would have viewed the *Vita Haroldi* as an acceptable version of the legends surrounding the survival of Harold. As I show below, given the responses of the chronicler in the late twelfth century, creating such a text would have played an important part in substantiating the community's ongoing spiritual relationship with its patron.

Likewise, in *MH* Offa survives his physical demise. His mysterious disappearance in poem XXX gives the reader good grounds to presume a spiritual continuation, though there are no legends surrounding the death of Offa like those of the death of Harold Godwinson. The compilers of Harley MS 3776 sought to appropriate those legends in a way that they felt to be beneficial to the Waltham community. The parallel with *MH* is clear. There is only one possible candidate, the only entity of quasi-legendary status in *MH*, Mercia itself. As an independent political entity, Mercia had largely ceased to exist within even a hundred years of Offa's death. The final demise of the earldom of the same name took place shortly after the Norman Conquest. However, like Hardy's Wessex, the name itself holds connotations of 'original' Englishness. As

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65 See for example Stephen Matthews, 'The Content and Construction of the *Vita Haroldi*' pp. 72-73, in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry* ed. by G. R. Owen-Crocker (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005).

66 Watkiss & Chibnall eds., 1994 pp. 54-6: 'quicquid fabulentur homine quod in rupe manserit Dorobernie et nuper defunctus sepultus sit Cestrie'.

one of the earliest political divisions of Britain, it bears an almost legendary apprehension. Where Offa persists, as he does throughout *MH*, Mercia must inevitably follow.

Hill's appropriation of this history causes the multiple objectives of *MH* to converge on his establishment of Mercia as a distinctive entity. Hill has attempted to bring a wide range of historical materials to bear upon a single entity, which makes texts and artefacts, memory and history, co-substantial through the mediation of his authorities. *MH* strikes up a double relationship in its very text. Its small number of copies printed in a format designed to appeal to a relatively specialised audience does not simply recall the scholarly texts on which it draws. It also points to the relationship between text and artefact, unique seal and reproducible deed, that lies at the heart of its meditations on the power of Offa. Here, textual production and textual politics align to set out a region of history and make its tenure a restricted matter.

It is possible to go further. The Waltham Chronicle was composed in an atmosphere of change and uncertainty, written shortly after the re-foundation of Waltham Abbey as a community of Augustinian canons. It shows a concern that the traditions of Waltham should not neglected by the new, regularised religious.[67] Like *MH*, its tone occasionally adopts an elegiac expression. Just as Hill wishfully names new 1950s suburban dwellings after great battles of the Viking and Heroic ages in Britain, the chronicler looks to use names from the past, Tovi and Harold, as talismans for a form of continuation. By making the reader aware of a particular sort of past, the chronicler, like Hill, seeks to secure a connection with a contested present.

2.2 The chronicler's postscript

Directly after the end of the Waltham Chronicle in Harley MS 3776, there appear three verses in the same hand, which are tentatively attributable to the chronicler. The first of these, '*Versus Circa Tumbam Haroldi Regis,*' is reproduced here, together with the translation given by Watkiss & Chibnall (eds.):

> Macte pater patrie, meritis insignis Harolde,
> parma, pugil, gladius: te tegit hic tumulus.
> Qui cum rege truci mundi subducere luci;
> classica non trepidas que uehit huc Boreas.
> Omen at infaustum tua signa retorsit ad austrum,
> nam tua fata scies in noua bella ruens.

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67 Watkiss & Chibnall eds., 1994 pp. l-li.

[In] hoc mausoleo fortis requiescit Haroldus
qui fuit Anglorum gentis rex inclitus olim,
cui fauor imperium species natura potestas
contulit et regnum, dans cum dyademate sceptrum.
Dum pugil insignis proprias defendere gentes
nititur, occubuit Francorum gente peremptus.
Huius nobilibus successibus inuida fata
quem nequeunt saluare necant fraudemque sequuntur.

[Blessed father of our country, Harold marked out by your merits,
you, our shield, fist, and sword; now a mound covers you,
who, taken now from this world's light with that fierce king,
do not fear the trumpet's blasts issuing from the north.
An omen, but a bad one, turned your standards towards the south
that you might learn your fate when hastening into unknown wars.

In this tomb brave Harold rests
who once famed king of England was
on whom renown, mien, character and authority
conferred power and a kingdom, a sceptre and a crown as well.
Until he strove, famed warrior, to defend his very own
people, but died, slain by the men of France.
The Fates, so envious of his noble conquests,
kill him they cannot save, and pursue deceit.][68]

Allowing for differences in language and literary convention, it is clear that Harold, like Offa, is an enduring presence for the writer of these verses. The chronicler has not forgotten his tomb, which forms an important part of the Waltham foundation. It is the prompt for serious meditation on the transient nature of worldly glory, specifically the Anglo-Saxon world that Harold represents. It is telling that, in the last resort, the Waltham Chronicler felt that not prose but verse was the appropriate medium for his elegiac writing. Like Hill's, his verse takes a notable individual as an emblem for a society so long departed that even the first-hand witnesses to its demise were almost beyond living memory.[69] Even more crucially, it is largely the same kind of society that Offa shaped and ruled in its laws, organisation and institutions. If nothing else, it would appear that negotiating between memory and history in Harley MS 3776 and in *MH* prompted a similar response in their authors.

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68 Watkiss & Chibnall eds., 1994 Appendix II.
69 *Ibid.* pp. 44-8; the chronicler takes as his eyewitness to the events of 1066 a sacristan Turkill, who had been a very old man when the chronicler was still a boy at Waltham.

3.0 Conclusion: text, vocabulary, and the *Mercian Hymns*

The act of marshalling evidence to support the parallels between Harley MS 3776 and *MH* is as much an excursive process as it is discursive. Nonetheless, it shows a key point in the processes of transmission from historical texts into texts that contain poetry. Hill's text does not position itself between Offa's texts and a modern reader. Instead, it interposes itself between the reader and the scholarly texts from which Hill draws the details of Offa's reign. This inevitably ties the reflection of Hill's childhood in Offa's brutalities to a scholarly understanding of how the past can be re-created. The texts that transformed Offa's artefacts from an imaginative experience into a collective understanding of the world are very distant in Hill's narration. Moreover, *MH*'s leaning upon a scholarly apparatus does not solve the problems of negotiating between the remembered past and the past that Offa's texts seek to substantiate. Instead, this dependency exacerbates these problems.

However, this excursiveness also emphasises the relationship between this thesis and its creative component. This writing is also an attempt to negotiate with scholarly understandings of the relationships between text and experience. As a writer, I feel that Hill's work has strongly influenced my own, particularly his work from the period surrounding the publication of *MH*. Nonetheless, Hill's text sits at odds with the ways in which I understand my own work's relationship to medieval texts. In *MH*'s almost confessional recognition of its narrator's complicity in Offa's tyranny, there is a sensation that Offa's destructive and creative powers were somehow inevitable. I cannot accept this. The texts that create Offa's authority are somehow too stable in Hill's dramatisation of them. They are too much like artefacts and too little like the chimerical tissues of adaptation and addition that made them vital instruments of a temporal power.

However, Hill's creation of what Heaney terms an 'English Romanesque' continues to attract me. I have attempted to emulate these musical qualities of his verse in a less stable, less measured way. For Heaney, the 'romanesque' manifests itself almost as much in the physical sensation of the words themselves as it does in the interplay of Latinate and English vocabularies. As a writer, it seems to me that this is the greatest attraction of Hill's work.[70] The collision of languages that I have experienced growing up in Wales, caught between a vernacular and an authoritative language (with Welsh and English alternating in these roles), is an abiding influence upon me. Hence, the musicality of Hill's synthesis of Latin, Anglo-Saxon and

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70 See Heaney, 2002 pp. 86-7.

modern English draws me towards his work, but its capacity to consume entire vocabularies and transform living languages into rumps of loanwords can prove frightening.

Nonetheless, it is significant that, in this chapter, I have aimed at gaining a clearer insight into the motivations of this particular writing strategy. Its employment has a political motivation as much as it has an aesthetic one. That this political motivation is so delicate, almost to the point of being far-fetched, seems to me to be the outstanding accomplishment of Hill's work. It also appears to be an important lesson for the creative project: the employment of history and historical texts necessarily shapes the communicative force of the work. Poetry's negotiation with the form of its text is as crucial to the processes of writing as it is to those of reading.

I have approached these relationships through Hill's expression of 'authority' and 'authorship' in *MH*. The rationale behind these relationships rests upon medieval interpretations of these two words at several of key points. As with Ruskin's interpolation between Hill and his own grandmother, these interpretations precede Hill's engagements with artefacts and even with his own imaginative recollection of his experiences. The primacy of text in determining the shape of Hill's poetry points towards an engagement with the imagination that we see through the lens of scholarly interpretations of the past. Hence, in the following chapter I make a final case study, considering the ways in which Jones created a network of personal readings from the scholarly books in his possession. In doing so, I explore the relationship between personal and imaginative reading and the scholarly influences in his creation of the *Anathemata*. I explore how interactions with texts frame and shape this interaction between imaginative and collective understandings of the past and how, as with Hill, it has introduced new and unexpected elements into Jones' work.

Chapter 3 – David Jones' *Anathemata*, the Mabinogi and the anamnesis of identity

0.0 Introduction

This chapter expands the focus on connections between texts, seen in the last chapter, through a case study of Jones' *Anathemata*.[1] My aim is to explore how Jones' poetry shapes readers' interpretations through his use of networks. There are two main forms of networks under consideration here, one of texts and the other of readings. To what extent do these networks operate independently or do they converge? In particular, I scrutinise Jones' inclusion of footnotes to *AN* as evidence for the establishment of these networks, and I examine how they shape appeals to authority and imaginative re-construction. I develop a simple conceptualisation of a network and show its utility in describing the connections that Jones made between texts. I apply these ideas to a study of the relationship between Jones, *AN* and books from his personal library (now collected in the National Library of Wales).

When discussing relationships between Jones' poems and his personal library collection, it would be natural to expect the following discussion to focus on intertextual connections between Jones and other key modernist poets such as Pound, Joyce and Eliot. However, my focus is different. My focus is on the connections between texts, rather than between poems. I focus on Jones' efforts to draw his readership into a community rooted in British history in the penultimate section of *AN*, 'Mabinog's liturgy,' which deals with the history of Wales and the Celts as a part and parallel of the nativity of Christ. I explore how the connections that Jones established between the texts in his possession influence the confluence of imaginative and systematised understandings of these events.

In order to understand how these connections between texts gave shape to *AN*, I also examine Jones' development of a parallel, religious, conception of imaginative re-construction of the past in *anamnesis*.[2] In particular, I consider how Jones' experiences on and off the page made unique contributions to this development. Unfortunately, I will not be able to follow this development through Jones' handwritten manuscripts and drafts (collected in the National Library of Wales) as any treatment of those papers beyond the most superficial would expand this brief study beyond the present scope of this thesis. Rather, I retain an

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1 Jones, 1952; henceforth (in this chapter only) I will abbreviate *Anathemata* to *AN*.
2 For a discussion of the meanings of the term, and how Jones constructs his own conception of *anamnesis* see below.

emphasis on drawing parallels between Jones' *AN* and aspects of his reading in the years preceding its publication. Hence, before I can discuss how *AN* forms networks, I must first examine the situation that Jones creates in *AN*'s engagement with the past. I begin by examining how Jones figures the interactions and negotiations between imaginative and systematised understandings of the past through his poem.

0.1 Personal histories

Jones explores a confluence of historical and legendary arrivals in *AN*. In the opening of the 'Angle-Land' section of the poem, for example, he introduces the voyage of Brutus from Troy:

> Did he strike soundings off Vecta Insula?
> > or was it already gavelkind *ígland*?
> Did he lie by
> > in the East Road?
> was it a kindly *numen* of the Sleeve that headed him clear of
> South Sand Head?
> Did he shelter in the Small Downs?
> Keeping close in, did he feel his way
> between the Flats and the Brake?
> But, what was her draught, and, what was the ocean doing?
> > Did he stand on toward the Gull?
> did his second mate sound
> > with more than care?
> was it perforce Fortuna's rudder, circumstance or superb
> pilotage or clean oblation
> > that sheered him from smother
> (the unseen necropolis banking to starboard of her).[3]

The geographical references here show Brutus' approach to London, his 'Troy Novant', with its references to *Vecta Insula* (the Isle of Wight), the Downs and other landmarks of the southeast English coast.[4] However, Jones attempts to locate the Galfridian tradition of the founding of London against both a legendary and a historical backdrop. The opening question of whether the Isle of White was Roman or Saxon at the time of Brutus' journey questions historical interpretation as much as it does historical fact. It does not simply question the existence of Brutus, but also questions his positioning against a changing backdrop of landmarks that are both literal and literary.

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3   Jones 1952 p. 110 l. 1-17.
4   As in, for example, Jeremy Hooker, *David Jones: An Exploratory Study of the Writings* (London: Enitharmon Press, 1975) pp. 42-3.

Here, the switching between languages for the names of places frames a precise concern over the confluence of nationalities that Brutus' arrival embodies. The changes of register between *ígland* and *Vecta Insula*, as well as between 'the Sleeve' (*La Manche*, the French name for the English Channel) and South Sand Head, highlight concerns of nationality and invasion. As with Hill's shifts in register, these alternations of place and naming dramatise the centrality of navigation and exchanges between continental Europe and Britain. Brutus' own mythos is at stake here. Jones questions Brutus' status as the agent of *translatio imperii* in his approach to Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century Latin translation of British legend. Jones does not simply question the organising schemes of historians, as with the shifts between languages. However, in lines 14-15 above Jones develops a new and deeper line of questioning. Here, Jones questions the nature of the providence that brought Brutus to London.

Jones sets up two divisions here that he seeks to reconcile. The first is between 'perforce' and 'Fortuna's rudder'. Although this questions whether the reader should view Brutus' landing as being through force or chance, here 'Fortuna's rudder' suggests not only chance but also an object blessed by the classical gods. Moreover, it links to references to Tiberius and his minister Sejanus (a worshipper of Fortuna) in 'Mabinog's Liturgy' later in *AN*.[5] Jones' choice of wording points to the machinations of an imperial power. It recalls the landings of Julius Caesar and Ambrosius, which the Galfridian tradition has also made legendary. However, set against these imperial interpretations of the reasons for Brutus' landing are 'circumstance', 'superb pilotage' and 'clean oblation'. Here, Jones offers a sense of Eucharistic offering through 'oblation'. He combines in Brutus a representative of imperial power and a redemptive Christian interpretation of the world. These interpretations do not exclude each other but are instead mutually present in Jones' questioning. They represent equal possibilities in a range of histories that Jones seeks to reconcile.

As I show below, this effort to find a harmonious counterpoint between competing Christian and imperial historiographies is a key feature of the ways in which Jones engages with the past in *AN*. However, the features of Jones' text complicate this reading. For example, the passage quoted above appears on a page with four footnotes. The first two of these relate to '*ígland*' and 'necropolis' respectively. The footnote to 'necropolis' is particularly revealing:

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5   Jones 1952 p. 187.

It so happens that it was at Deal, c. 1903, that 'I first beheld the ocean' and I particularly remember that sometimes, in certain conditions of weather and tide, a number of hulks were visible on the Goodwins which then seemed like a graveyard of ships.[6]

The text here offsets the competing historiographies of the poem with what is quite explicitly Jones' own voice intruding upon the space of the page. Elsewhere Jones uses the footnotes to the poem to clarify points of context and historical reference. However, here and at other crucial points he discusses details of personal experiences instead of supplying historical details.

This unexpected activity in Jones' footnotes draws them into new and revealing relationships with his poem. Here and elsewhere, Jones' use of footnotes point towards a further layer of negotiation with the historical and providential schemes Jones discusses in his poem. This leads to the question: what effect do Jones' footnotes have on the opposing roles of Brutus? Jones' first footnote on page 110 discusses his association of the gavelkind system with the Isle of Wight, pointing to the notion of evidence for this system of land tenure in districts of Hampshire. Jones indicates that he draws this association from a personal reading of a historical text.[7] However, Jones' personal connection between 'necropolis' and the Goodwin Sands shows that both imaginative experience and 'evidence' gathered from particular texts qualify the conceptions of Brutus' power. The landmarks by which Brutus navigates towards his New Troy reflect different conceptions of his power, but Jones shows that these conceptions exist at an interface between textual and imaginative reconstructions of Brutus' voyage. Understanding how Jones combines these modes of reconstruction requires a more detailed examination of Jones' interaction with the texts used in producing *AN*.

0.2 The composition of the *Anathemata*

Some elaboration on the circumstances surrounding Jones' work on *AN* will help to contextualise my account of Jones' reading. Jones began work on *AN* possibly as early as 1940, when he moved to London, and by July 1945, sections of it were sufficiently complete for him to venture to read them to others.[8] In

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6 *Ibid.* p. 110.
7 *Ibid.*
8 *Dai Greatcoat:A Self-Portrait of David Jones in his Letters* ed. by René Hague (London: Faber & Faber, 1980) p.131; *Ibid.* p. 129.

1946, Jones experienced a period of mental illness that lasted until late 1947, but thereafter devoted more and more time to his various artistic projects. This phase of work found natural high-points in two events: the 1948 exhibition and sale of Jones' picture *Vexilla Regis* and his submission of the manuscript for *AN* to T.S. Eliot in October 1951.[9]

As the footnotes to Brutus' landing show, Jones' books and reading interact with other details of his personal experience to create *AN*. Hence, this turbulent genesis is significant for understanding how its disruptions have left their stamp on Jones' books and his reading. Jones' library contains a small number of books that are replacements for lost copies read and (presumably) annotated at an earlier date. For example, Jones' copy of Sir John Edward Lloyd's *A History of Wales*, the source for much of Jones' knowledge of medieval Welsh history, contains a note in the front cover 'David Jones Sept. 1953 (copy also at Pigotts bought c. 1938)'.[10] Clearly the annotations in the two volumes of this text postdate the composition of *AN*. However, there is a consonance with the footnotes to *AN*, which suggests that some of these notes partly recreate that earlier framework of critical appreciation of Lloyd's history.[11] This, in turn, implies that these notes can act as a guide to the material in Lloyd's history that Jones found most relevant to the composition of *AN*. However, they must be interpreted more guardedly than the notes in some of the other texts.

The conceptual framework within which Jones composed *AN* is also significant in this respect. In order to understand how Jones joins personal recollection with readings from scholarly texts, we need to explore how Jones' own understanding unified his aggregation of historical material. In particular, *anamnesis* is a key term used by Jones in order to describe his poetry's negotiation between imagination and text.[12] I explore this term in detail below, but at this point it is helpful to consider how Jones introduces his reader to the term. Moreover, in the process of this introduction Jones makes a number of statements that offer important evidence for his admixture of personal reflections and material derived from his reading in his footnotes. Crucially, *anamnesis* and its linked terms figure the 'material' that Jones drew from his reading, both as the material presence of objects and as the ideas and narratives they represent.

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9 *Ibid.* pp. 145-152.
10 John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales: From the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest* (London: Longmans, 1948) David Jones 276.
11 See, for example, the note on the derivation of the place-name 'Anglesey', Jones, 1952 p. 154, compared with the note in John Edward Lloyd, 1948 David Jones 276 p. 185.
12 For an outline of the meanings of *anamnesis* as it appears in English usage, see for example its entry in the *OED Online*, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/7055 retrieved 19th November 2011.

Jones introduces the reader to his own conceptions of the act of creating *AN* through the preface to his book. He begins with reference to the medieval British historian, Nennius:

> 'I have made a heap of all that I could find.' So wrote Nennius, or whoever composed the introductory matter to the *Historia Brittonum*. He speaks of an 'inward wound' which was caused by the fear that certain things dear to him 'should be like smoke dissipated'.[13]

Jones avers that there is in Nennius' apology 'something which, in however oblique a fashion, might serve for my apology also.'[14] This is a basic guide to the composition of *AN*. In composing *AN*, Jones combined direct quotations from historical sources with unattributed or less obvious borrowings from scholarly and popular works of history to which he had access. This process of selection and combination make the 'heap' to which he refers. Jones expands on this in relation to such accumulations: 'it is clear that if such-like motifs are one's material, then one is trying to make a shape out of the very things of which one is one-self made.'[15] The making of the heap constitutes Jones' act of creating the poem, for he continues in the next paragraph:

> So that to the question: What is this writing about? I answer that it is about one's own 'thing', which *res* is unavoidably part and parcel of the Western Christian *res*, as inherited by a person whose perceptions are totally conditioned and limited by and dependent upon his being indigenous to this island.[16]

Along with *poiesis, signum, gens* and *anamnesis*, Jones used the term *res* in his efforts to define the artistic process.[17] Jones gives the sense of his writing engaging in the localised, personal accumulation of detail in the above passage. The terms listed above all contain some version of an interaction between physical substance and imaginative or systematised re-creations of the past. However, their location in a personal 'thing' does not fully explore the processes of 'conditioning' and 'limiting' that Jones describes. In fact, this 'limiting' and 'conditioning' relate to the two modes of historical understanding described in chapter 1. Personal experience limits the reader even as it provides the basis for an imaginative reconstruction of the

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13 Jones, 1952 p. 9.
14 *Ibid.*
15 *Ibid.* p. 10.
16 *Ibid.* p. 11.
17 Hague, 1980 p. 59; but for an outline of what is meant by these terms, see also the entries in the Oxford English Dictionary (online version), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/146580 (*poiesis*), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/179610 (*signum*) and http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77631 (*gens* – but see especially the etymological section of the entry, as Jones intends the word more in its Greek sense of birth or generation). Retrieved 19th November 2011.

past. However, this experience also conditions readers, wherein wider social pressures influence their use of experience to re-create and understand the past. Jones places an emphasis on the ways in which interpretations of the past become local to individuals, societies and cultures through emphasising the forces that limit a reader.

This localisation also raises a crucial contradiction. Jones included the extensive footnotes that accompany the poem as a means of mitigating the inherently personal nature of his accumulations. As my reading from section 0.1 shows, their presence points towards an interaction between imaginative and systematised understandings of the past. Jones' uses of the term *anamnesis* to describe his writing inevitably reflect upon this interaction. Nonetheless, Jones attempted to reduce the status of these notes in relation to his poem by concluding his preface as follows:

> The notes, because they so often concern the sounds of the words used in the text, and are thus immediately relevant to its *form*, are printed along with it, rather than at the back of the book. But this easy availability would be a disadvantage if it distracted attention from the work itself. So I ask the reader, *when actually engaged upon the text*, to consult these glosses mainly or only on points of pronunciation.[18] (Jones' emphasis)

The annotations that encroach upon the poem of *AN* are overwhelmingly influential in a reader's perception of *AN* as a text. However, Jones conceives of them as part of a communicative strategy existing almost in parallel to the poem. As I argue below, this statement belies the true impact of Jones' scheme of annotation. The construction of the poem instantiated in *AN* ties in closely with its impact upon a reader's engagement with the text.

0.3 Jones' networks of reading

Jones' footnotes suggest that the way in which he used textual material in the creation of his poem relied upon a particular understanding of the connections between texts. In this section, I explore how a clearer appreciation of Jones' work can be obtained through describing and applying this understanding to reading *AN*. I develop the notion of a 'network of reading' as the basis upon which Jones was able to build a system of relations between texts that combined imaginative and critical interpretations. This term builds upon the

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18 Jones, 1952 p.43.

sketch of these relations outlined above. However, I also expand this idea of a network by taking Jones'

practices of reading, annotation and imaginative interpretation into account. This then allows a more detailed

examination of the interaction between Jones' imaginative and systematised understandings of the past to

develop through the remainder of the chapter.

What do I mean by a 'network of reading'? I do not aim to define this concept rigidly, but a sketch

of what I mean here will benefit the rest of the discussion. In its most general form, a network of reading is a

conceptual model of the connections between texts formed through the act of reading and producing texts.

Texts themselves form nodes (or points) in the network. Vertices (that is, lines) join these nodes to other

nodes, representing a connection between the two texts.[19] For example, a simple form of a network of

reading would be the set of references for an academic text, **T**, say. Both **T** and the texts to which it contains

references would form nodes and each vertex would represent one or more citations from **T.** This would

produce a simple network of one central node representing **T**, connected to many other (mutually disjoint)

nodes. That is, for any pair of nodes, the nodes only connect with one another if one of them is **T**. This

creates a network with a 'star' shape, wherein the text **T** is at the centre, with multiple convergent 'rays' (that

is, vertices) extending from the other nodes. A further, distinct, example is the stemmatic model of textual

antecedents. This model creates networks representing the derivation of individual texts from one another,

using nodes to represent texts and the vertices between them to represent the relation 'is the ancestor of'.

This basic model provides a useful basis for understanding some of the connections between the

different texts in Jones' reading. However, such a model can become too complex for the extraction of useful

information. The first example above, the network of texts cited in **T**, could easily be expanded by allowing

vertexes to represent citation between texts other than **T**. This would turn the simple 'star' shape of the initial

example into a complex web. The relationships that we allow vertices to represent, and the nodes that we

permit, determine the size and complexity of a model.

The problem with such models is that beyond specifically organised bodies of texts the relationships

between the nodes of such networks threaten to become vague and unmanageable. The binary relationships

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19 A similar approach, which is argued from the perspective of traversing such a network, has been discussed by The
    Imagining History Project; see Stephen Kelly, 'Mapping the Brut Online' in *The Imagining History Project*, 2005
    http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/methods/geography.htm (retrieved November 19th 2011) and
    http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/methods/webkit.htm (retrieved November 19th 2011) for a highly developed
    example of using the 'network' concept to relate readers and texts to one another.

suggested by vertices (either nodes are linked, or they are mutually disjoint) do not easily reflect readers'

varying conceptions of the connections between texts. For example, in the previous chapter it became

impossible to speculate upon the influence of Hill's wider reading upon the composition of the *Mercian*

Hymns. It can be difficult to characterise evidence of the relationships between texts using such binary

relations. Hence, I also build upon the utility of the idea of a 'network of reading' through a further

refinement. In subsequent sections, I examine further layers of detail beyond the binary connections between

texts from Jones' personal library. This clarifies the interactions between texts and imaginative responses to

them that Jones' work displays.

Nonetheless, this simple notion of a network of reading forms a useful starting point. It highlights

the connections of reference and appropriation that Jones then enriched with imaginative interpretations. As

a result, it provides a crucial approach to the more detailed aspects of Jones' reading and its influence on AN.

To this end, Appendix C1 provides a survey of a portion of the network of reading that Jones developed in

creating *AN*. Due to the potential problems I outlined above, I have restricted my survey to books relating

specifically to Welsh and British history in Jones' possession before 1952.[20] Nonetheless, Jones' network of

reading and how he interacted with texts in producing *AN* is clearly illustrated by this survey.

Firstly, what is the underlying structure of Jones' network of reading? Jones attempts to list some of

his sources for *AN*, again with reference to accumulations and depositions, in a way that superficially

resembles Hill's 'acknowledgements'.[21] Jones begins with a handful of prominent influences, but abandons

the attempt when he exceeds his stated limit of fifty names. The numerous references to reading in Jones'

letters reflect this superfluity of connections to other texts. Indeed, the fact that Jones' personal library

contained over 1500 books (not including periodicals) at the time of his death indicates the wide range of

Jones' reading.[22] Moreover, Jones' reading both within and beyond his personal collection of books

compounds this superfluity, as Jones' copy of John Edward Lloyd's history attests. He also obtained

information from personal contact with people who were knowledgeable about specialist subjects. Jones

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20 See Appendix C1 for this comprehensive survey of the patterns of use found in the books of Jones' library that may
     have provided the sources for the Welsh and Celtic material from *AN*. I have also included a brief typology of Jones'
     annotations, and a more detailed explanation of the criteria for the selection process as a part of the appendix.
21 *Ibid.* p. 36.
22 See Huw Ceiriog Jones, *The Library of David Jones: A Catalogue* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1995).
     For Jones' letters the primary printed source is Hague, 1980.

mentions, for example, benefiting from conversations with Christopher Dawson (author of *The Age of the Gods*, which I will discuss later in this chapter) as well as from his writings.[23] The abiding picture of Jones' intellectual life is of learning and reading as an integral part of a wider social existence, as in René Hague's portrait of Jones through his letters. Hence, I must first address the problems that this creates for models of Jones' reading.

To what extent do the books from Jones' personal library attest to his reading, retention, and re-use of their contents? This can vary from one individual text to another. Some texts received little attention: for example, Jones' copy of Ifor Williams' edition of the four branches of the Mabinogi, *Pedeir Keinc Y Mabinogi*,[24] shows almost no signs of detailed reading. The pencil annotations it contains are of a very functional, studious nature in a hand other than Jones'.[25] Other books, such as Jones' copy of Thomas Charles Lethbridge's *Merlin's Island*, bear both minor annotations and page references. Moreover, Jones also used marginal lines to highlight numerous paragraphs throughout this text (and others). These passages frequently correspond with material mentioned in *AN*.[26] In his notes and preface to *AN*, Jones refers to material that is not present in the collections of the National Library of Wales. Such material is difficult to trace, but nonetheless the sources available make it possible to outline Jones' reading habits.

As Jones himself states, there are a number of key texts that strongly influenced not only the process of writing *AN* but also the conception of its purpose that underlies the work.[27] Many of these texts remain available for study, attracting the attention of other critics. In particular, Jonathan Miles' work *Backgrounds to David Jones: A Study in Sources and Drafts* contains valuable surveys of a number of key areas of Jones' reading and writing. His study of the influence of Oswald Spengler upon Jones' work is particularly relevant

23 Christopher Dawson, *The Age of the Gods:A Study in the Origins of Culture in Prehistoric Europe and the Ancient East* (London: John Murray, 1928) David Jones 844; Jones, 1952 p. 36.
24 *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi Allan o Lyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* ed. by Ifor Williams (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1930) David Jones 284.
25 My reasoning for ascribing the notes to another hand runs as follows: the title page and inner front cover bear the name, in ink 'H. Ballard Thomas,' making this clearly a second-hand copy. Jones' name appears nowhere on the book, his autograph and a date being one of the more regular features of well-used books in his possession. The notes are in a handwriting of similar cursive type to Jones, but smaller, using looped descenders on the letter 'y' (or where terminating a word, straight) where Jones uses a straight descender, or, in terminating, adds a small ascending serif. Likewise, Jones' distinctive lowercase 'p', which has both an ascender and descender, here loses its ascender. *Ibid.*
26 Thomas Charles Lethbridge, *Merlin's Island: Essays on Britain in the Dark Ages* (London: Methuen, 1948) David Jones 894; See *Ibid.* p. 144 where Jones has clearly marked a passage about the archaeological discovery of lace-tags for high, laced women's shoes; CF Jones, 1952 p. 199.
27 Jones, 1952 pp. 36-7; the nature of this influence is varied and often difficult to precisely quantify, but see the discussion in section 0.4 below.

to this present section.[28] For example, it is clear that Spengler's work occupied much of Jones' thought in the period preceding the publication of *AN*. Likewise, developing a reaction to Spengler that complemented his own personal convictions influenced Jones' artistic work, and Spengler's concept of 'Faustian culture' figures to a degree in *AN*.[29]

However, a significant, if simple, consideration arises from the attempt to interrogate Jones' networks of reading. As suggested by his intellectual struggles with Spengler's views on history and art, Jones continually adjusted and developed responses to the printed texts in his possession. His personal books are full of additions, annotations and corrections in his own hand. Therefore, I give an overview of Jones' reading habits and their impact upon his approach to the production of *AN* before returning to discuss their significance for the poetry of *AN*.

0.4 Annotation, indices and the community of texts

Jones' letters, drafts, and his published writings show that his reading connects with the material in *AN* in a number of key ways. *AN* itself contains numerous indications of its sources at points where Jones has borrowed heavily. Indeed, Jones attempted to be as open as possible regarding the textual basis for his work in *AN*. However, as I have shown above, these are not always complete sources of evidence on Jones' use of his material. They do not provide a great deal of insight into how Jones assembled the information, extracted from a wide range of texts, into what became *AN*.

The most striking features of Jones' textual engagements with his own books are the extent to which he annotated them. As mentioned above, some books that bear the signs of more regular use are more heavily marked. In the case of Lethbridge's *Merlin's Island*, the text bears a mixture of pencil annotations in the margins: these usually indicate a correlation between the content of the text and Jones' prior knowledge. The far more ubiquitous linear markings in the margins appear to indicate passages that Jones found to be of wider significance.[30] Jones appears to have directed this process of annotation towards sections of the texts in question that were of immediate interest. For example, the sorts of annotation shown on pages 168-169 of

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28 Jonathan Miles, *Backgrounds to David Jones: A Study in Sources and Drafts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990).
29 See, for example, Hague, 1980 pp. 115-117; Jones, 1952 pp. 92-3; see also Jonathan Miles 1990 pp. 48-50.
30 Lethbridge, 1948 David Jones 894.

Miles (1990) are exceptional: Jones almost entirely covered the contents pages of his copy of Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the '*Mabinogion*' with notes in ink.[31]

These annotations do, on occasion, correlate to material from *AN*. Retaining my earlier example, it is clear that the passage on page 202 of *AN* takes as its source the annotated passages from pages 144-6 of *Merlin's Island*.[32] This in itself is not overly remarkable, but it is worth noting that the relation between the two passages is nowhere near as clear as, for example, the correspondence between the writings of Zarnecki and Hill that I considered in the previous chapter. Hill's poem was sufficiently close to Zarnecki's prose to function almost as an adaptation, whereas Jones' use of material from Lethbridge (1948) merely furnishes small details in a larger tableau. Jones' use of such fragments in relative isolation from one another in a work that is in some way intended as an integral whole implies a wider set of criteria for selection, which are not immediately obvious. The process of transmission between the passages annotated by Jones and the text of *AN* must involve other factors.

In contrast, other books show a far lighter scheme of use. A copy of Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*, sent to Jones by the poet Lynette Roberts, contains a handful of marginal marks and a very limited number of marginal notes. The longest of these links to the following short paragraph concerning Celtic Christianity in the early medieval period:[33]

> But the presence in England of these barbarians at least protected the Welsh and Irish churches
> from any effective intervention in their religious affairs by continental Catholicism, (x) and the
> Archiepiscopal See of St. David's remained wholly independent until the twelfth century, when
> the Normans pressed the right of the Archbishop of Canterbury to control it; which was the
> <u>occasion</u> (x) of the Anglo-Welsh wars.[34] (Jones' emphasis)

The (x) marks represent places where Jones has marked the text with a cross, which appears to be his general sign of disagreement. It also indicates a link to the marginal notes to pages 132-3, which again are in Jones' hand:

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31 Miles, 1990 pp. 168-9. See also Lady Charlotte Guest trans., *The Mabinogion* (London: J. M Dent & sons, 1937) David Jones 283 pp. vi-vii .
32 Jones, 1952 p. 202; Lethbridge, 1948 pp.144-6. Jones spells out this relationship in a footnote to the page, to render its association beyond doubt.
33 Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948) David Jones 545. For Lynette Roberts' inscription in the text, see Appendix C1.
34 *Ibid.* p. 132.

X how 'occasion'? The 'Anglo-Welsh wars' were continuous & not connected with religion.

X The nature & status of St Davids in early times is very problematical. Certainly it was not

'archiepiscopal' when the first Norman bishops were introduced. It must be remembered the

Welsh system was groups of churches under Abbott-Bishops – not territorial. The strictly defined

<u>dioceses</u> of St David's, St Asaph, Bangor, & Llandaff belong to later ideas   it is

altogether unhistorical to think of St David's as an archiepiscopal see.[35] (Jones' emphasis)

Jones' corrections to Graves' book (which modern specialists would probably not regard as a wellspring of

verity) are apt. These corrections also give a useful insight into how Jones assembled a mental encyclopaedia

from his collection of books. Corrections regularly appear in Jones' hand, especially in the pages a books

that make a general assertion on subjects that other parts of Jones' reading cover in greater detail,

establishing a conclusion that contradicts the passage at hand. For example, several assertions regarding the

presence of Picts in Galloway in the sixth and seventh centuries bear remarkably similar annotations across

several different books.[36]

However, corrections and annotations are only a part of Jones' engagements with the texts in his

possession. Even more significant are the additions to the inner covers and front-matter of Jones' books. In

more well used volumes, Jones essentially created indices of important pages to enable him to return to them

at leisure. In many cases, these constitute no more than a handful of references, but in books that show signs

of greater use the indices grow correspondingly more comprehensive. Perhaps the most compendious is that

assembled by Jones on the inside front cover and flyleaf of his copy of Dawson's *The Age of the Gods.* This

index covers several pages and gives references to pages comprising some tenth of the length of the work

itself.[37]

The picture that emerges of Jones' reading and annotations is of the drawing together of material in

ways that both help to shape, and to establish, Jones' knowledge and ideas. Jones links texts together through

annotations. The indexing of the annotations' page numbers provides a further layer of utility to Jones'

referencing system. However, Jones' annotations are more than simply an attempt to adapt the texts in his

possession into a single, easily referenced whole. Rather, Jones' interactions with his books form a reflection

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35 *Ibid.*
36 See, for example, the pages reproduced in Miles, 1990 pp. 68-9 .
37 Dawson, 1928 inside cover.

of the intellectual community that Jones engaged with in his daily life. For example, Jones' accounts of his conversations with Christopher Dawson form a highly suggestive parallel with Jones' annotations of Dawson's *The Age of the Gods*. Jones' indices are not simply an addition to the texts for ease of use. As their correspondence with details later used in *AN* shows, they also form the raw material for a process of selection and appropriation. This process was integral to Jones' use of his texts, and it was also integral to his composition of *AN*.[38] Moreover, just as Jones' notes are indicative of the degree of selection and adaptation that this use entails, his engagement with the texts in his possession provided a means for refining and developing that selection process.

Jones' use and adaptation of texts points towards a community of text. Jones' interests and preoccupations shaped this community from within, but negotiations and interactions on and off the page shaped the community from the outside. A simple node-and-vertex structure that merely connects reference to referent is not sufficient to describe this process. Jones adapted his texts to meet both inward psychological needs and outward social expectations, as we would expect in a human community. This community of texts is still a network, but its interest lies in its complexes of interaction and negotiation, not in the binary nature of its connection or disconnection of nodes. This network changes and adapts to internal needs and external pressures, but nonetheless forms a tightly knit structure, rooted upon Jones himself. The evidence of his letters and annotations indicates that Jones reshaped and adapted the texts in his possession. This adaptation connected them, via his own knowledge and understanding, into a reflection of the work Jones looked to create in *AN*. As in the annotated journeys of Brutus that Jones portrays in 'Angle-Land', these texts interrogate and moderate one another under Jones' intellectual supervision. An outline of key intellectual influences upon *AN* reveals how Jones' work reflects this supervision.

1.0 The synthesis of myth: David Jones and *The Age of the Gods*

Jones' library contained 12 books by Dawson at the time of his death.[39] Of these, eight were published before 1952, and many bear the signs of some careful consideration by Jones. However, by far the most substantial

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38 See for example Hague, 1980 pp. 119-20 for an account of one of Jones' conversations with Dawson from Jones' own letters; see also *Ibid.* pp. 129-30 for a comparable account of his meeting with Jackson Knight, and Jones' reading to him of sections from *AN*.

39 See Huw Ceiriog Jones, 1995 pp. 82-4.

of these books is the aforementioned *The Age of the Gods*, which clearly provided a great deal of the

information on myth and prehistory that Jones was to use later in *AN*. Precise anatomy of this more direct

correlation is beyond the scope of this thesis, for the influence of Dawson's work upon Jones is both more

abiding and indeed deeper than the simple transplantation of fact. As with Jones' borrowings from

Lethbridge (1948), the principle of these transplantations underpins the nature of these intertextual

connections. As a step towards explaining this scheme, in this section I make a brief survey of Jones' use of

Dawson's ideas on religion in prehistory and the classical world. These ideas have significant implications

both for Jones' use of the term *anamnesis* and his interpretation of the material from the Mabinogion.

1.1 *The Age of the Gods*

Critical study of religious practices that predated the arrival of Christianity in northern and western Europe

was not uncommon in the first half of the twentieth century. It was at this time that the first notable works in

the academic discipline of social anthropology began to appear in print.[40] Jones' library reflects this growing

scholarly trend, in that it contains copies of popular works produced in this field, including Sir James

Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*, as mentioned above.[41] *The Age of the

Gods* (subtitled 'a study in the origins of culture in prehistoric Europe and the ancient east') is in some ways

an outlier from this discipline. It sets out its aim as the study of 'culture', defined by Dawson as 'a common

way of life – a particular adjustment of man to his natural surroundings and his economic needs.'[42] The

progress of 'culture' forms the primary concern of Dawson's work. Dawson follows this progression from

the 'lower' or 'passive' cultures that do little to shape, interact with or impact upon their immediate

environments, through to 'higher' cultures that express themselves through sophisticated material artefacts

and environments.

However, it is misleading to think of Dawson's work in terms of an analysis of purely material

culture. Dawson engages in an archaeological survey but also analyses the interactions between the religions

of prehistoric Europe and the Middle East through the evidence supplied by their material cultures. The

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40 See for example: Robert Ackerman, 'Frazer, Sir James George (1854–1941)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33258, accessed 24 Aug 2011]

41 Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1923) David Jones 1335. For other works in Jones' possession by Frazer, see Huw Ceiriog Jones, 1995 pp. 106-8.

42 Dawson, 1928 p. xiii.

quality of Dawson's work distinguishes itself from other contemporary efforts to find links between Classical, pre-Classical and Neolithic religious practices and deities. In particular, Dawson's work is as knowledgeable as could be expected for the time of its publication; this distinguishes it from the tradition exemplified by *The White* Goddess.

This is borne out by Jones' usage of the copy in his possession. Dawson's work was a key influence on the underlying intellectual map of the distant past that Jones pieces together in *AN*. This influence appears in features such as Jones' note to the phrase 'rudimentary bowl': 'Rather oddly, the first beginnings of anything like pottery are found among the depressed peoples who lived after the decline of the Palaeolithic cultures and before the rise of the Neolithic.'[43] This corresponds to a small marginal mark on page 49 of Dawson's work, next to the passage: 'There is no trace of artistic development, but a rude kind of pottery makes its appearance for the first time in Europe.'[44] Correspondences of this kind are particularly prevalent in the 'Rite and fore-time' section of AN.[45] They serve to underline the ways in which Dawson's work forms a backdrop for key elements of Jones' construction of his work.

Jones either read or re-read his copy of *The Age of the Gods* in the years preceding the publication of *AN*. For example, a correction to page 13 contains a reference to the discovery of the Lascaux cave paintings, which securely dates the note to 1940 or later.[46] However, Jones' emphasis on material cultures in *AN* does not limit the lasting impressions Dawson's work has left upon the poem. For example, Miles has described Jones' response to history as a 'definition of mankind by its artefacture'. Indeed, the meaning of the word *anathemata* that Jones describes in his preface, 'the things set up', points towards an embodiment and a substantiation that has its root in the concrete, tangible domain of material objects.[47]

1.2 Plastic gods: David Jones' representation and myth

However, *AN* does not concern itself entirely with artefacts and physical substance. The idea that an artist 'deals wholly in signs' is one that Jones embraced as a means of comprehending the relationship between his

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43 Jones, 1952 p. 78.
44 Dawson, 1928 p. 49 David Jones 844.
45 See also Miles, 1990 p. 110-19 for further examples of this correspondence.
46 Dawson, 1928 p. 13 David Jones 844.
47 Miles, 1990 p. 118; for the intended use of *anathemata* see Jones, 1952 pp. 27-9 but also chapter 4 below.

religious and artistic sensibilities.[48] In an essay first published in 1955, Jones connects the terms 'sign' and 'sacrament' as follows:

> A sign then must be significant of something, hence of some 'reality', so of something 'good', so of something that is 'sacred'. That is why I think that the notion of sign implies the sacred. Unless this reasoning fails to make necessary distinctions and so is faulty, it would appear that the activity called art is, at bottom, and inescapably, a 'religious' activity, for it deals with realities and the real is sacred and religious.[49]

The relationship of artefact-making to human history is not merely a concern with the material cultures of the past for Jones. Jones identifies this manufacture with a development of human thought and human responses to the divine. The presence of the artefacts of a material culture renders co-present the thoughts and ideas that, as 'effective signs', they must represent. As Miles puts it, 'it was never the past for its own sake but rather the pertinence of the past which Jones sought to reveal.'[50]

However, the precise nature of this pertinence and the manner of its revelation is obscure. On the surface, the construction of *AN* is identifiable with that of the Mass. It begins with quotations from the prayer of consecration, which apparently takes place both before the beginning of human history and at its end (that is, contemporaneous with the composition of *AN*).[51] Jones' description of the altar, where 'dead symbols litter to the base of the cult-stone' is thus representative of Jones' thought, wherein signs or symbols are innately religious. It also suggests the paradigms of Dawson's writing on the early religions of the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia and the Middle East. The Mass, operating over all time, works to bring all the efforts of human history to create an 'effective sign' into a single location. Nonetheless, this process is dependent in turn upon a means of drawing those signs together and being able to find a category into which they will fit. As I go on to argue, Dawson's work provides the intellectual framework for this syncretistic effort.

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48 *Ibid.* p. 15. It would be unwise to attempt to connect Jones' views with contemporaneous semiotic theory. Jones' use of the terms 'sign' and 'signification' for the representative qualities of art derive rather from the philosophy of Maritain, and have particularly religious connotations: see Miles, 1990 pp. 13-21.

49 David Jones, 'Art and Sacrament', in *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings by David Jones* (London: Faber & Faber 1959) pp. 157-8. The essay's publication, though post-dating that of *AN*, is sufficiently close for its content to remain highly relevant to the backgrounds to *AN*.

50 Miles, 1990 p. 71.

51 Jones, 1952 pp. 49-50; see also Miles, 1990 pp.70-71.

'The religion of the mother goddess' is among the key themes of Dawson's *The Age of the Gods*. Dawson's work associates it with the effects of the discovery of agriculture and the subsequent development of an agrarian 'peasant culture'. Such goddesses were the primary focus of religious activity for these cultures according to Dawson. His work traces this 'vegetation cult' and its deity through their various forms, as the cults of Cybele, Demeter, Ishtar and so forth. Dawson makes a concerted effort to demonstrate common roots and continuity among the goddesses of antiquity, which he opposes to the male 'sky-gods' attributed to the religions of the early Indo-Europeans.[52] This theme does not entirely dominate Dawson's thinking in *The Age of the Gods*, but Jones' notes imply that this idea of the interaction and fusion of religious beliefs made an impression upon him. The cover and flyleaves of Jones' copy of *The Age of the Gods* contain several references to this reading. Jones notes ''European civilisation' fusion of Indo-European 'tribal' thing & Asiatic 'city' thing' and, next to a reference to page 306 writes 'Amazons from Hittite Mother Goddess.'[53]

However, this idea of syncretism does not merely inform Jones' treatment of the religions of antiquity. A significant character in the 'Mabinog's Liturgy' section of *AN* is the syncretised Virgin Mary-Rhiannon-Guenevere figure. Scholars such as W. J. Gruffydd identified Rhiannon, a character from the first and third branches of the Mabinogi, as the medieval form of a matriarchal Celtic deity. Her name derives from the Celtic **Rigantona*, or 'great queen'.[54] A similar identification appears between Christ and Apollo in Jones' poem. Although this identification is not particular to Jones' work, Dawson's work suggests the terms upon which Jones identifies biblical figures with their pre-Christian counterparts.[55] In accordance with the multiply present temporal viewpoint of *AN*, Jones allows the personifications of deities to draw disparate cultures and their artefacts together by identifying them. Jones' reading in Dawson's work prefigures the revelation of Incarnation that concludes Mabinog's Liturgy. Moreover, it also fulfils Jones' wider objectives

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52 See for example Dawson, 1928 chapter 5, 'Neolithic culture and the religion of the peasant', pp. 89-107. For the sky gods and their interaction with the 'peasant religions' see *Ibid.* pp. 279-86 .
53 Dawson, 1928 inside cover David Jones 844.
54 See for example William John Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1928) p. 145. Jones' copy, LLGC David Jones 246, is dated to 1958 but it seems very likely that Jones would have encountered this book at an earlier date in another collection, possibly at Piggotts or Capel-y-ffin.
55 Jones, 1952 p. 219.

for his work by causing Christ's birth to possess significance throughout the course of history: 'from / before all time Minerva is sprung from the head of Jove.'[56]

The demands of this synthesis are visible within the text itself. Jones' copious use of footnotes does not simply mitigate the demands that *AN* places upon its readers' knowledge. *AN* also utilises the footnotes as a crucial tool in its synthesis of divine forms. If Jones' text is concerned with drawing all history into 'the time of the Mass', then his efforts to give his reader an opportunity to participate in his celebration of this *res* form an important part of his work.[57] These efforts to both present and re-present the deposits that form the subject of *AN* bridge the divide between the text and the poem. The co-presence of the footnotes and the main body of the poem, within an act of engagement with the sacred, forms the key component of their relationship. Hence, Jones' conscious but guarded decision to place footnotes within the same textual location as the poem itself hinges upon more than simple matters of pronunciation. The footnotes, which dominate the printed text of *AN*, point at a deeper relationship between text and audience that calls into question Jones' aims in producing *AN*. Therefore, with this in mind, I can finally address the key issues of Jones' historical representation by developing an understanding of his use of the term *anamnesis*.

2.0 The community of history: *anamnesis*, annotation, and the Mabinogion

It is significant that Jones' most lengthy discussion of the term *anamnesis* occurs, not in the poem or its copious preface, but in a footnote to a section of 'Mabinog's liturgy' on page 205:

Anamnesis. I take leave to remind the reader that this is a key-word in our deposits. The dictionary defines its general meaning as 'the recalling of things past'. But what is the nature of this particular recalling? I append the following quotation as being clear and to the point: 'It (anamnesis) is not quite easy to represent accurately in English, words like 'remembrance' or 'memorial' having for us a connotation of something *absent* which is only mentally recollected. But in the scriptures of both the Old and New Testament *anamnesis* and the cognate verb have a sense of 'recalling' or 're-presenting' before God an event in the past so that it becomes *here*

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56 *Ibid.* p. 221.
57 *Ibid.* p. 31.

and now operative by its effects.' Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 161.[58] (Jones'

emphasis)

Since it forms an indispensable part of my discussion of this footnote, it is also worth reproducing the section

of the poem to which the note links:

> even before the Magian handling and the Apollonian word   [page break]
> that shall make of the waiting creatures, in the vessels on the
> board-cloths over the Stone, his body who said, DO THIS
> > for my Anamnesis.
> > By whom also this column was.
> He whose fore-type said, in the Two Lands
> > I AM BARLEY.[59]

Footnotes take up roughly half of page 205 and the above quotation accounts for half of this. In material

terms, Jones' annotation is at its most copious in the section 'Mabinog's Liturgy'. In this section, the ratio of

the space devoted to notes (and other supplementary matter) to the space given for the poem itself

approaches 1:1. This is significant for Jones' work since this section of the poem offers crucial developments

of the work as a whole. As René Hague notes in his commentary on *AN*, 'all that is most dear to him is

here'.[60] The substantial presence of footnotes can be read as a side effect of Jones' efforts to enrich his poem

with detailed scenes set in specific chronological locations. However, as I have argued above, the footnotes

and images of *AN* are more than merely supplementary or supportive to the poetry. They are a key part of the

text's efforts to impress the importance of the historical matter of Jones' poem upon its audience.

2.1 Anamnesis, representation and history in *AN*

As I demonstrated above, the act of writing or making in any manner beyond the most absolutely functional

was a sacred experience for Jones. In a section of the preface to *AN* related to the footnote quoted above,

Jones even goes so far as to say as that, since the manufacture of bread and wine require mechanisms of

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58 Jones, 1952 p. 205.

59 *Ibid.* I have omitted two other footnotes of a more explanatory character, to the phrases 'Apollonian word' and 'I am barley'. Although I have done my best to reproduce the quoted passage as closely as possible, the typeface (*AN* was printed in a Roman, serifed font, sized at 2mm in body and 1.1mm in the footnotes) and line-spacing are only an approximation to those of *AN*. The spacing and arrangement of the lines of the poem of *AN* are significant in that they form an important part of the way in which the poem's text presents itself to us – hence my attempts, here and elsewhere, to provide a working approximation to their appearance.

60 René Hague, *A Commentary on the Anathemata of David Jones* (Wellingborough: Christopher Skelton, 1977) p. 205.

human devising, 'no artefacture no Christian Religion.'[61] As shown with reference to *The Age of the Gods*, for Jones the link between religion and physical substance runs to the heart of his conception of the role of the poet or artist. Hence it informs the core of his arrangement of the material for *AN*. In this *anamnesis* is the key term, since *anamnesis* constitutes and gives meaning to the 'effective signs' of the writer. In particular, for Jones *anamnesis* is a representation before God that renders the work of a writer 'here and now operative by its effects,' rendering the things represented by poetry co-present with their representations.

This act of making the objects of imagination co-present with their representations cuts to the heart of the problems of Jones' negotiation between modes of understanding the past. *Anamnesis* does not simply mentally re-create the past. Rather, it appeals to a divine agency in its efforts to bring the past into a co-substantial relationship with the present, as in the transubstantiation of the host in the Mass. This difference is crucial for understanding Jones' work, but it also indicates a means of more productively re-stating the competing models of historical understanding discussed at the opening to chapter 1. Jones' *anamnesis* is dependent upon a belief in the power of God to bring the past and present into a literally meant contemporaneity. In Jones' negotiation of imaginative and systematic understandings of the past, the divine authority accomplishes in a literal sense what temporal authorities can only accomplish in a figurative sense. Without Jones' Christian framework, this conclusion is weaker but nonetheless significant. As both chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis indicate, manifestations of authority determine the balance between a localised, imaginative response to a text and a more systematic, socially engaged response.

Thus, although *anamnesis* presents an alternative theological conception of the same phenomenon that I described at the opening of this thesis, its key difference is in its foundation of hermeneutics. Where Jones uses divine presence that stands as a guarantor of understanding, it is just as legitimate to say that a reader's negotiation with the authorities that texts recall or instantiate guarantees that they can understand a work. There is a clear comparison here with the determination of the difference between truth and seeming in BNfr. 146, but also with Hill's use of the apparatus of the medieval legal system. For Jones, the type or mythos of the Christian *res* connects his text to its reader just as it connects his footnotes to his poem. The

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61 Jones 1952 p. 31.

fact that Jones takes as his model for this process an aspect of the Mass only serves to underline this. Jones centres his poem upon the ritual that unites the community of the faithful, past and present.

As a result, it is now possible to assemble a more complete picture of Jones' understanding of the past in his poetry. This account combines the evidence of his annotated reading, accounts of his life and letters, and the influential syncretistic work of Christopher Dawson. Jones directs his reading towards the same ultimate end as his writing, the rationalisation of verbal artefacts into a sacred whole. Jones seeks to make his texts truly communal with his own identity as a reader and writer. In *AN*, the *anamnesis* which Jones employs secures its wide-ranging episodes within the past that Jones implicitly shares with his readers. Where Spengler would oppose the Magian and Apollonian aspects of the 'handling' and the 'word' in the above quotation from 'Mabinog's Liturgy', Jones aims to demonstrate that the Mass unites the two. The opposition of 'waiting creatures' and 'his body', which is an opposition of the animalistic and the humane, likewise shows that this process forms a complete identity for rational, Christian beings. As with the chronological sequence that opens 'Mabinog's Liturgy', Jones brings disparate episodes from the past into contact with one another through their relationships with the processes of sacrament exemplified by the Mass.[62]

Jones' position in relation to his own work thus becomes something akin to that of a celebrant, effecting this *anamnesis* for the benefit of his readership. By reading *AN* we take something of the art-sacrament and, in doing so, we become witnesses to the effective signs that Jones has presented to us. Moreover, we become part of a community of readership in taking this sacrament from the same source. This underlines the importance of the footnotes to *AN*. In these footnotes, we can see something of the aims of Jones in the formation of such a community. If Jones had written *AN* for a homogeneous audience, his annotations would have been unnecessary, even to clarify points of pronunciation. However, the length and detail of Jones' notes suggest something more than an awareness of the difficulty of his poem. Jones also took great pains to make his work accessible and to make the sources for his work into common knowledge.

The subjects of Mabinog's Liturgy suggest that there is a great deal at stake in this widespread reception of Jones' historical matter. Its footnotes trace the origins of the Celts and the 'Teutones', just as the

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62 *Ibid.* p. 185.

quotation from the start of this section suggests the precursors to the transubstantiation of the mass.[63] The connection of poem and annotation brings together much that is important to Jones' understanding of his own 'western Christian' identity. Jones invites us to share in this identity, through his efforts to effect an *anamnesis*. The relationships between key sources for 'Mabinog's Liturgy' and the final printed version of this section of *AN* thus provide a crucial insight into Jones' work.

2.2 Re-enacting the medieval: David Jones' *Mabinogion*

The relationships between the medieval manuscripts that contain the Welsh prose-tales now called the *Mabinogion* (or *Mabinogi*) and Jones' poetry are indirect. The tales survive in two manuscripts, known as *Llyfr Coch Hergest* and *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*. However, Jones almost certainly never encountered these. The manuscripts themselves are thus of a limited use in tracing their influence upon Jones' work.[64] Jones' limited facility with Welsh probably prevented him from understanding the original language in which the tales were written. Indeed, the sparse annotation in Jones' Welsh-language texts of the tales suggests that his main experiences of these works were in translation.[65]

The definitive translation of these tales is that of Lady Charlotte Guest, produced in the nineteenth century but still reprinted regularly into the twentieth. Although now superseded by more scholarly and accurate translations that reflect modern advances in Celtic studies, it played a key role in the reception of the tales. Lady Guest's translation contains occasional errors and bowdlerisations: the best known of these is the term *Mabinogion* itself. However, its selection of material from the manuscripts has retained its currency in spite of the tenuous connections between the tales of later date. Since the tales and their content have considerable import for Jones' work in *AN*, it is worth reproducing a list of the eleven tales that now comprise the *Mabinogi*:

1. Pwyll Prince of Dyfed
2. Branwen Daughter of Llyr
3. Manawydan Son of Llyr
4. Math Son of Mathonwy

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63 See Jones, 1952 p. 184.
64 Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, Peniarth MS 4 and Jesus College, MS 111 respectively; a more complete description of the dating, contents and significance of the manuscripts can be found in *The Arthur of the Welsh: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature* ed. by Rachel Bromwich, A. O. H. Jarman & Brynley F. Roberts (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991).
65 See for example Hague, 1980 p. 24.

5. The Dream of Macsen Wledig
6. Lludd and Llefelys
7. Culhwch and Olwen
8. The Dream of Rhonabwy
9. The Lady of the Fountain
10. Peredur Son of Efrawc
11. Geraint Son of Erbin

The first four are closely related and are commonly known as 'the four branches of the *mabinogi*' (*Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*). The term *mabinogi* properly applies to these tales. The last three are Arthurian romances, similar to those of Chrétien de Troyes. The intermediate four are generally unrelated, except that 'Culhwch' and 'The Dream of Rhonabwy' are also Arthurian tales. Culhwch is of very early date and 'The Dream of Rhonabwy' is comparatively much later.[66] Jones' library contained two copies of Lady Guest's translation: the first is a 1937 'Everyman' edition, which shows signs of detailed reading and annotation; the second is a similar edition from 1913 and shows more limited signs of use. Jones also possessed a copy of a more literal and exact translation by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, as well as J. Gwenogvryn Evans' edition of the Mabinogion from the Peniarth manuscripts and Ifor Williams' 1930 edition of the four branches in Welsh discussed earlier in the chapter.[67]

Jones' treatment of material from the tales in *AN* reflects the scholarship to which he had access. Although Jones' library contains copies of a number of significant scholarly works on the *Mabinogi,* most achieved publication after *AN* went to press. Of the remaining works, probably the most influential was W. J. Gruffydd's 1928 work, *Math vab Mathonwy.*[68] Gruffydd's inquiry into the nature of some of the early tales from which *Math* and the Four Branches were constructed shares a great deal with the approaches I discussed above in the work of Dawson. Gruffydd's concerted attempts to reveal the pre-Christian sources of the tales in the Four Branches were consonant with Jones' own historical aims. In particular, his discussion of the appearance in the tales of Mabon and his mother, Modron, appeared to resonate with Jones' desire to

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66 This list derives largely from the index of Jones' 1937 edition, of which a facsimile can be found in Miles, 1991 pp. 168-9 but see also LLGC David Jones 283; a twelfth tale, the birth of Taliesin, was included by Lady Guest but does not derive from the manuscripts and is consequently no longer included in modern texts of the *mabinogi* grouping. For the dating of the individual tales, see also Bromwich ed., 1991.

67 *The Mabinogion* trans. by Gwyn Jones & Thomas Jones (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1949) David Jones 285.

68 W. J. Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy: An Inquiry into the Origins and Development of the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1928) David Jones 247. Jones' copy is dated to 1953 but he almost certainly had access to a copy at an earlier date. There is also a reference in Jones' notes on the contents page of his Lady Guest translation to a paper by Gruffydd in the 1913 'Transactions of the Cymmrodorion Society'. However, this seems to be an error since the Transactions for that year contain no such article and I have been unable to locate anything of a similar title by Gruffydd.

merge pre-Christian deities with Christian forms. The comparison between Rhiannon and Modron made by Gruffydd is also in *AN*. Jones follows Gruffydd's perspective on their appearance being a 'dislocated' version of an earlier tale rather than an adaptation to suit a contemporary audience.[69]

Jones' annotation to the index of his Lady Guest translation clarifies the sense in which Jones understood the term '*mabinogi*'. His handwritten note illustrates how Jones perceived the relationships between the aims of his work and that of the *mabinogi*:

The term 'Mabinogion' was introduced in the 19th Cent. to provide a plural for the medieval Welsh singular <u>mabinogi</u>. <u>mabinogi</u> = the material used by a <u>mabinog</u>, & the meaning of <u>mabinog</u> is given in Welsh dictionaries as: 'an apprentice bard'. The word in any case derives from n. <u>mab</u> = son & adj. <u>mabin</u> = juvenile, whether related to the story-teller or to the matter of the story as e.g. in <u>Mabinogi Jesu Grist</u> dealing with the infancy of Our Lord.[70] (Jones' emphasis)

This note shows the development of Jones' construction of the 'Mabinog's Liturgy' section of *AN*. Here he takes from the notion of *mabinog* as a story of youthful deeds from W. J. Gruffydd, specifically the youthful deeds of Pryderi from the four branches. Pryderi here is the son of Rhiannon, whom Gruffydd equates with Gweir/Mabon. Hence, the subject matter of the *Mabinogi* becomes the youthful deeds and nativity of a divine child of a 'great mother' goddess. Jones' work equates this tale with the nativity of Christ. This equation underlies such constructions as 'the second official / wearing his best orphrey'd jacket' singing 'the *mabinogi* of the Maban the Pantocrator, the true and / eternal Maponos.'[71] Jones also reveals a second meaning of *mabinog* here, as this 'second official' is none other than the deacon who assumes a role in the liturgy equivalent to that of an 'apprentice bard'.

The setting for this mass is in itself revealing. As Hague notes, Jones sets this Christmas Mass scene in the Arthurian Britain of the late fifth century. Jones segues rapidly between Helen of Troy, the Virgin Mary, and Guenevere on page 195 and his focus rests upon the Britain of the fifth century in the next 10

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69 Jones, 1952 p. 217.
70 *The Mabinogion, Translated by Lady Charlotte Guest* trans. by Lady Charlotte Guest (London: J. M. Dent, 1937) David Jones 283 title page verso and contents page.
71 Jones, 1952 pp. 216-7.

pages of *AN*.[72] Indeed this setting colours the remainder of Mabinog's Liturgy. Even where Jones describes Christ's return to Gethsemane he includes portions of Welsh translations of the Bible, in order to emphasise its connection with Gwenhwyfar's midnight Mass. Gwenhwyfar's status as 'wife / of the Bear of the Island' and 'consort of a *regulus*' combine with the Roman Catholic setting of the Mass itself. With his Arthurian setting for this portion of 'Mabinog's Liturgy', Jones shows that he aims to emphasise the connections between British national myth and its Roman antecedents.[73] The imperial and sacred combine and portray the very real *translatio imperii* that marked the beginning of the medieval period. However, Jones also recalls the fictitious *translation imperii* of later medieval literature, taking his cues from tales such as *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledic* and even *Culhwch ac Olwen*. Jones consciously evokes the telling of the Paschal story in the Welsh language, bringing attention to the fusion of Roman and British elements in his imaginative reconstruction of an early medieval Mass.

However, other than the presence of the deified Rhiannon, Modron and Mabon, there are few direct references to the tales of the *Mabinogi* themselves. Although the character of Manawydan features earlier in *AN* and the obscure Ider Fitz Nut also features in the notes to page 213, outwardly there is little to suggest that Jones' work in *AN* engages directly with the tales of the Four Branches.[74] As Miles suggests, Jones preferred to use a 'cast of quasi-mythological, euhemerized deities' that owe as much to the scholarship he had readily available as they do to the tales themselves.'[75] Nonetheless, there is also a deeper relationship between *AN* and the texts of the *Mabinogion* that depends upon Jones' collection of materials into a Christian whole. For example, Sioned Davies has made a study of the Four Branches in precisely this light, emphasising the moral dimensions of both characters and narrative episodes to draw attention to the unity of the tales. Davies makes the case for their composition as a Christian redaction of a pre-existing mythological corpus, a form of adaptation in which Jones' work also engages.[76]

The manuscripts of the tales themselves point in a similar direction. Although they possess convoluted provenances, it is likely that these texts acted as literary compendia for domestic (rather than,

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72 Hague, 1977 pp. 185-6.
73 Jones, 1952 pp. 195-6.
74 Jones, 1952 p. 212.
75 Miles, 1990 p. 167.
76 Sioned Davies, *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1993).

say, institutional) use.[77] *Llyfr Coch Hergest* is a prime example in spite of its atypical status as one of the largest medieval manuscripts in Welsh. It contains court poetry, works on the calendar, good behaviour, history and agriculture as well as the prose tales that have made it one of the best-known Welsh manuscripts. These contents clearly target a wealthy but domestic lay audience.[78] There are clear parallels between the unfinished manuscript of *AN* that Jones read to friends and the sorts of social reading that *Llyfr Coch Hergest* suggests. Jones' composition of *AN* was dependent upon the kinds of textual use described in his letter to Harman Grisewood of the 4th of July 1945, where Jones' manuscript drafts appear as the focus of social interaction. Even here, Jones' textual production aimed to meet a social objective of creating and stabilising a community around the text.[79]

It is not difficult to see the similarities between Jones' syncretisation of characters from the *Mabinogi* and the Christian narrative that the Four Branches impose upon earlier mythological tales. The structure of the published *AN* fulfils a social role mirrored by the *AN* manuscripts. Jones' emphasis upon the fusion of British (or Welsh) and Classical elements within an Arthurian setting in 'Mabinog's Liturgy' reflects the preoccupations of Jones' communal history. Jones shows his need to establish the British, Christian antecedents of his audience here. With the text of *AN*, Jones attempts to weld his audience together with a sense of the shared history in which he participates. The composer of the Four Branches retained tales of semi-mythological dynasties because their exploits formed a bond between myth and history. This bond was as important in the tales' composition as the context of a contemporary Christian society. Likewise, Jones' makes the social aims of his wide-ranging *anamnesis* in his unification of the ideal of a matriarchal, rural, Celtic existence with the forms and observances of universal authority (here represented by both ecclesiastical practices and imperial titles). This is Jones' response to what Miles terms 'an impoverishing technocracy.'[80] Jones mentions a break with the community of the past in the preface to *AN*. Jones perceived this break as a fundamental part of the transition into the modern world. His response was to re-construct a

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77 See for example Rachel Bromwich, Introduction in Rachel Bromwich ed., 1991 pp. 10-12, which provides a concise overview of the most important studies relating to the production and provenance of Jesus College MS 111.
78 *Ibid.* but see also *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language,* Vol. 2 ed. by J. Gwenogvryn Evans (London: Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1898-1910) pp. 1-29.
79 In Hague, 1980 pp. 129-130.
80 Miles, 1990 p. 177.

communal history through imaginative *anamnesis*. In doing so, Jones hoped to give coherence to an audience whose understanding of their shared history he could not take for granted.[81]

3.0 Conclusion: He Frees the Waters

There is one further testament to how Jones' wider intellectual efforts to form connections with society intersect with the personal nature of those bonds. Facing page 213 of *AN*, there is a picture entitled 'He Frees the Waters'. It depicts a unicorn beside an inscribed stone dipping its horn in a fast-flowing stream, symbolising the redemptive power of Christ in restoring the waste land of the Perceval/*Peredur* story.[82] In a footnote to page 238, attached to the lines 'VNVS HOMO NOBIS / (PER AQVAM) / RESTITVIS REM,' Jones explains the personal significance that both the image and its title hold:

> 'One man, by water, restores to us our state.' As a certain amount of 'unshared background' directed me here, I shall relate as follows: Some thirty-five years ago, in Wales, the water-supply of the house in which I was staying, was, on Christmas Eve, diverted at the source, which made it necessary for my friend, Mr. René Hague, and myself to go by night where the mountain-stream was deliberately blocked and to free the water. On our return journey Mr Hague remarked '*Duo homines per aquam nobis restituerunt rem.*'[83]

This footnote highlights the way in which Jones' experiences interact with the wider objectives of *AN* to produce the text that Jones presents to his audience. The footnote describes a moment that Jones clearly found to be both moving and intimate. It provided the stimulus for a great deal of Jones' writing as well as the engraving that faces page 238. However, the footnote gains its meaning from the main text of the poem, not vice versa. Although this footnote aims to reveal the personal basis for the sense of communion that underpins the co-present histories of *AN*, it also provokes a reversal of that process. The history that *AN* works to endow with significance instead comes to bear upon a personal, matter-of-fact account of an incident from Jones' life.

The comparison with the programmes of annotation that I have attempted in parts of the creative project that accompanies this thesis bears consideration in this light. It is not always clear whether Jones

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81 Jones, 1952 p. 15-16 but see also Hague, 1980 p. 192.
82 Reproduced below as Appendix C2, but see also Miles, 1990 p. 171-2.
83 Jones, 1952 p. 238.

understood *AN*'s footnotes in the way he refers to them in his preface. It is significant that as *AN* approaches its conclusion the footnotes become more and more prominent in the text and take on an increasingly personal dimension. The negotiation between modes of historical understanding echoes the attempt to locate 'one's own thing' from Jones' preface, even as the act of *anamnesis* fuses them together. However, even as *anamnesis* draws Jones' footnotes towards personal and imaginative constructions of the past they still retain their status of authoritative comment on the poem. Although the poem's imaginative reconstructions of the past pull the footnotes towards the singular *anamnesis* of Christ's birth, the text enforces their separation from that whole.

This tension is most apparent in the climactic portions of the poem. Jones' additions to his poem never quite dissolve the boundaries that the text sets for them. Conventional uses of the footnote determine these boundaries, which exist to establish the footnotes' authority independently of the work in which they participate. As in this thesis and other academic writing, footnotes suggest networks of reading that constitute organised, disciplined bodies of knowledge. This problem occupied Jones. His desire to remove the notes to the end of the book reflects his concern over the competing authorities of the poem and its notes.

This problem underpins the writing of the creative component of this thesis as much as it occupies space in the critical. In composing the first sections of the creative project, I became acutely aware of the discrepancies between my own knowledge and the knowledge that would actually define the audience I wanted to reach with the poem. I needed to refer to the historical circumstances of Harold's early life in my poem, but could not depend upon my audience knowing anything about them. The scenario in which the marginal annotation comes to dominate the main column of the text is, I feel, a dramatic re-enactment of these tensions between two historiographic trends. The scholarly voice embodied by the margin speaks to one audience, the narrative voice of the main page reaches for another.

Miles, again with reference to Jones' copy of the *Mabinogi*, refers to the 'scholarly way in which Jones sought to situate key texts.'[84] I feel that this statement obscures the true complexities of the problems of reconciling modes of historical understanding that Jones negotiates in *AN*. Jones' annotations, in his personal collection of books and his poetic works, are not scholarly in themselves. They attempt to connect the objects of Jones' mental environment with the very *res* that Jones seeks to explore in *AN*. The

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84 Miles, 1990 pp. 168-9.

organisational principle that underlies them is not an attempt to establish an objective field of knowledge that is open to the intellectual participation of others. Instead, they indicate pathways that Jones can follow beyond the bounds of a perceived text. This seemingly unconscious subversion of the 'scholarly' principles of annotation lies at the heart of Jones' efforts to communicate with his audience. Jones felt that this audience was wider in scope than audiences for scholarly or historical works. As with the creative component of this thesis, and as I will discuss in its conclusion, the demands of writing history for a wider audience produces these same flexible and shifting locutory strategies.

Conclusion

0.1 The basis for re-construction: imagination, *anamnesis* and the past

What connects Jones, Hill and Duhig's poems about the past? In the previous chapters I highlighted the expression of authoritative writing in their work, and I have shown the material text's crucial role in shaping those expressions. The intrusion of scholarly modes of thought and expression through the texts of their work is a key point: it indicates a refinement of the questions that began this thesis. Are these expressions of scholarly authority disruptive, or do they complement the poets' work in unforeseen ways? Moreover, does their work suggest any means of reconciling Hutcheon's two competing modes of understanding the past?

In light of these questions, I wish to return to Jones' notion of *anamnesis* in greater detail. Jones' work is distinctive in its incorporation of scholarly historical writing within its own text. Jones' use of footnotes sets up a crucial aporia for critics of his work, blurring the boundaries between expressions of scholarly and artistic authority. This central difficulty of his *Anathemata* precisely mirrors the difficulties that have preoccupied this thesis. However, Jones' explorations of the idea of *anamnesis* suggest a new perspective upon these difficulties, forming an illuminating parallel to the central questions of this conclusion. Hence, in this opening section, I engage with Jones' conception of *anamnesis*, developing and refining it to offer new and revealing approaches to these questions.

As discussed above, Jones reconciles text and poem through the process of *anamnesis*. In the previous chapter, I portrayed this reconciliation as a crucial development in understanding the interaction between the imaginative and systematised modes of understanding the past. In his preface to *Anathemata*, where he reflects on his choice of title, Jones provides a useful restatement of the perspective from which I began this thesis. Rather than specifically discussing textual production and its role in shaping poetry, Jones instead considers the general case: he considers how all man-made objects, from books through to spoons to nuclear weapons, can become vehicles for an artistic process through what he terms 'donation'. The title of his work reconciles the duality of all human forms of manufacture, from the most mundane to the most creative, in producing both objects and representations. In doing so, he highlights key considerations that reflect upon the role of the text in shaping poetry. Indeed, Jones describes this dual process in a way that parallels my opening discussion of the roles of text and poem. He explains:

> I mean by my title as much as it can be made to mean, or can evoke or suggest, however
> obliquely: the blessed things that have taken on what is cursed and the profane things that
> somehow are redeemed: the delights and also the 'ornaments', both in the primary sense of
> gear and paraphernalia and in the sense of what simply adorns; the donated and votive things,
> the things dedicated after whatever fashion, the things in some sense made separate, being
> 'laid up from other things'; things, or some aspect of them, that partake of the extra-utile and
> of the gratuitous; things that are the signs of something other, together with those signs that
> not only have the nature of a sign, but are themselves, under some mode, what they signify.
> Things set up, or lifted up, or in whatever manner made over to the gods.[1]

Here, Jones attempts to untangle the competing natures of the objects of his art. *Anathemata*, 'the things set
up', encompass a special range of objects. They constitute a new class of materiality by their engagement
with something more than function or utility. Both 'blessed material' and 'profane things' hold new
significance in their association with conceptions of their opposites. These objects, these things, negotiate
between material being and representation.

In this statement of negotiation, Jones approaches the interaction between the text and the poem in a
new light. His use of the term *anathemata* locates two crucial components in creating a text that truly
embodies a poem. The first is a central act in Jones' work: the donation of the object he describes. Like
Offa's hoards, the material object that Jones invests with his art embodies that art by partaking in the
gratuitous nature of gift giving. The same process of exchange between materiality and representation
informs Hill's work. Hill's conscious parallels between his narrator, Offa and himself create a framework of
donations and objects invested for the benefit of posterity. However, Jones considers more than his own act
of donation in the above passage. Jones' definition implicitly takes in multiple acts of donation: these acts
overlay each other and combine to involve Jones' work within a history of artistic acts. By forming the class
of donated objects, Jones emphasises their role within that history.

However, Jones also poses a counterpoint to this history. Jones draws the class of donated objects
into temporal proximity in *Anathemata*, re-envisaging them as objects made co-present 'in the time of the
Mass'. For Jones, the Eucharist is an instance of the topos of donation. Hence, Jones takes the universality of

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1   Jones, 1952 pp. 28-9.

the Mass to imply a similar universality for acts of donation. This universality of the act of donation is a

crucial step in allowing the material object to transcend its immanent materiality. Jones' recognition of this is

thus a reflection upon the acts of donation inherent in any single object: these multiple donations reflect its

history, but within the universal history of the Eucharist.

This offers a key insight into the nature of the material object, the text that Jones donates through

making it a vehicle for his poem. Jones articulates the importance of his own artistic acts, and the other acts

that impinge upon his work through its texts. However, his Eucharistic model also recognises the capacity of

his art to overcome the potential conflicts inherent in the history of any text. His artistic act of donation

encapsulates the text's history of both sacred and profane meanings. The universality of donation makes the

profane and sacred co-present in the material object, rendering the donated object the true subject of a

redeeming Christian art. Hence, the 'votive' and 'dedicated' objects blur to create the tissue of inversion and

redemption Jones has already revealed. Through his artistic act, Jones shows that the material text is a

vehicle for every sense of becoming *anathemata*. In doing so, he has made a crucial connection between the

authority that guarantees the universality of the Eucharist and a text's transcendence of its own materiality.

Against this, Jones poses objects as signs. The object that represents or stands for something other

than itself is a key formulation in Jones' writing, for it encapsulates the nature of painting, sculpture and

writing in one. However, Jones qualifies the nature of representation through his use of the terms *prudentia*

and *ars*.[2] Jones' understanding of *prudentia* partially derives from the philosophy of Maritain, but he

develops and refines this usage in order to shed light upon art and sign-making.[3] For Jones, *prudentia*

personifies 'the tutelary genius who presides over the whole realm of faith, moral, religion, ethic; she is

thought of as Holy Wisdom.'[4] Moreover, *prudentia* acts upon all individuals, whether religious or not.[5] The

capacity of human beings to act with free will makes their acts capable of expressing good or evil intent.

Hence, all human actions express the faith, morals, religion and ethics that Jones places under *prudentia*'s

tutelage. This specific connection between action and intent is the core of Jones' understanding of *prudentia*.

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2   *Ibid.* p. 29; Jones further illuminates his use of the terms in Jones, 1959 pp. 145-154.
3   Jones does not specifically refer to any particular depiction or personification of *Prudentia*. However, his use of the
     term almost exactly recalls Maritain's use. See David Blamires, *David Jones* (Manchester: Manchester University
     Press, 1978) p. 26.
4   Jones, 1959 p. 145.
5   *Ibid.* p. 146.

Jones' understanding of 'donations' and 'signs' creates a crucial contrast between the act of making and the finished object. His distinction between *prudentia* and *ars* further underlines this separation. As Jones puts it, 'the one is concerned only with our intentions and dispositions, and the other only for the formal dispositions that comprise an artefact.'[6] For Jones, *prudentia* acts through intentions, whereas the act of signification is implicitly restricted to *ars*. The object of Jones' art is thus a formal object in the deepest sense. Through being a 'sign', the object of Jones' art possesses a form. Revealing this form creates what Jones terms an 'effective sign'. Creating this type of sign is the true end of Jones' art. By extension, the text is a formal object that reconciles *prudentia* with *ars*. Although the completed form of the text is solely the domain of *ars*, the text must undergo the processes of both making and donation in order to achieve that completed form. Moreover, according to Jones, the text achieves its status as a donated object through the realisation of its formal properties. Transforming an object from something merely practical into something that is 'ornamental' (in the sense Jones uses in the passage quoted above) requires a transition between pragmatic and artistic making. The act of donation points to a tension between the making of a text and its instantiation of a formal object or sign. As I have shown above, Jones attempts to resolve this tension through recourse to a divine authority. However, the multiple overlapping expressions of authority that I have shown in the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig indicate the need for a more nuanced attempt to resolve this tension.

Nonetheless, Jones' recourse to a divine authority points towards crucial aspects of such a resolution. His terminology parallels the distinction between sign and implication I suggested at the opening of chapter 1. As in the distinction between *prudentia* and *ars*, Jones recognises but separates the formal and pragmatic dimensions of his making. My aim throughout this thesis has been to complicate this separation, showing its points of fusion and conflict. I have demonstrated how the minutiae of creating material texts affect broader, formal aspects of the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig. Where Jones separates *ars* and *prudentia*, I have shown that aspects of his texts complicate the expression of the completed form. My focus on the details of texts has traced key aspects of their production through to their impact upon the final form of the work. As a result, I am now in a position to expand upon Jones' rephrasing of the relationships between text and poem, between

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6   Jones, 1952 p. 29.

object and art. Where Jones looks to the re-creating and substantiating power of *anamnesis*, I must suggest a considerably more fragile and negotiable re-construction of the past.

However, the relevance of Jones' exploration of this debate is precisely this: his use of *anamnesis* highlights how imaginative and systematised re-constructions of the past interact. Jones' intervention of a divine authority to transform a mental state into a physical state locates the operation of that authority in the transition between material object and representation. The presence of divine authority thus crucially shapes the transition between a text and the poem it conveys. The previous chapters also suggest this development: the determining power of authorities beyond the divine has manifested itself at key points throughout my case studies. Moreover, my case studies have shown that different forms of authority converge from multiple directions upon the boundary between text and poem. In particular, I have focused on how texts convey beliefs and presumptions of authority from one to another in ways that can intervene in the conceptual and formal manifestations of authority in poetry. In one sense, *anamnesis* is merely an aspect of the continuing interactions between these different manifestations of spiritual, textual and political authority. However, in a deeper sense, it also points towards a more abiding and productive understanding of the divisions between the physical object and the conceptual sign.

In this sense, *anamnesis* is a term that has relevance beyond Jones' specific terminology: its core lies in the substantiation of the conceptual. Where Jones uses *anamnesis* as part of the Christian mythos of transubstantiation, we can read it in another way. It describes a negotiation of the boundary between what is 'true' or 'material', and what is thought, believed, or imagined. It asserts the potential for the realisation of that which is imaginary through 're-presenting' and through 'recalling'.[7] The hyphenation that Jones uses is telling; as is his choice of the word 'recalling'. Both 're-presenting' and 'recalling' emphasise the prefix 're', highlighting a connection with the past in this realisation. However, they also locate that past within a mental process. Recollection and presentation describe acts located in an individual's cognition. *Anamnesis* encompasses the means by which we reconcile thought's individual location with a wider sense of its positioning among real and socially constructed signs.

This understanding of *anamnesis* also highlights the crucial relevance of authority to this debate. It touches upon the power of academic, spiritual and political authorities to distinguish between what is real

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7   Jones, 1952 p. 205.

and what is not. However, the relative 'reality' of real and imagined objects recalls more narrowly psychological debates on vivacity and affect. As a means of developing Jones' account, I wish to offer two further accounts that connect the vivacity of imagination with mundane forms of authority. They offer a means of relating imagination to perceptions of authority through *anamnesis*, widening the term's relevance to these debates beyond its narrowly religious sense. The first is from a 2009 lecture given by the neurologist Oliver Sacks, on the difference between Charles Bonnet hallucinations and psychotic hallucinations:

> The notion is that if you see things or hear things, you're going mad, but the psychotic hallucinations are quite different. Psychotic hallucinations, whether they are visual or vocal, they address you. They accuse you. They seduce you. They humiliate you. They jeer at you. You interact with them. There is none of this quality of being addressed with these Charles Bonnet hallucinations. There is a film. You're seeing a film which has nothing to do with you, or that's how people think about it.[8]

The second is by Elaine Scarry, in the early stages of her effort to account for the vivacity of the literary imagination when compared with daydreaming:

> [W]hen we are asked to perform the concrete experiment of comparing an imagined object with a perceptual one – that is, of actually stopping, closing our eyes, concentrating on the imagined face or the imagined room, then opening our eyes and comparing its attributes to whatever greets us when we return to the sensory world – we at once reach the opposite conclusion the imagined object lacks the vitality and the vivacity of the perceived one.[9]

Here, Scarry attempts to qualify a literary imagining as distinct from the 'thin', 'dry', 'two-dimensional' and 'inert' imaginings of the unprompted or daydreaming mind.[10] Scarry's suggestion and Sacks' account coincide to offer a further perspective on the means by which imaginations become real. The inward prompting of a voice that has the authority to accuse, seduce or humiliate, gives psychotic hallucinations the vitality that daydreams lack. Without this authority, the imaginative worlds they create are inert.

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8 Oliver Sacks, *What Hallucination Reveals About Our Minds*, http://www.ted.com/talks/oliver_sacks_what_hallucination_reveals_about_our_minds.html retrieved 17th July 2012.

9 See Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001) p. 3. See also Elaine Scarry, 'On Vivacity: The Difference Between Daydreaming and Imagining-Under-Authorial-Instruction', *Representations* No. 52 (Autumn 1995) pp. 1-26.

10 Here Scarry is in turn quoting Sartre; Elaine Scarry, 2001 p. 3.

These two accounts do not simply indicate the crucial role that a reader's perceptions of a work's authority play in giving substance or affect to their imaginations. They also indicate a more subtle, psychological, interpretation of *anamnesis*, which connects imaginative and systematised modes of understanding the past. The blurring between these two modes is precisely what transforms Jones' signs into what they represent. The multivalent pressures of authority may act on the reader from within (as in psychotic hallucinations) or from without (as in the fine details of interconnected texts). Irrespective of the precise forms of authority that generate them, these pressures condense and transform a reader's experience into an affecting whole. A reader's perceptions of the material text and their imaginative interpretations of the past both affect their experience of the poem. As Jones suggests, a reader's perception of a poem's authority underpins how these two effects combine.

Hence, before I return to a final exploration of the interaction of authority, text and imagination in the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig, I wish to highlight the relevance of one further area of critical debate. As I have indicated in my reading of the work of all three poets, the notion of reading practice and the politics of reading is a crucial backdrop to this thesis. These three poets engage with and react to these ideas: their texts shape and are shaped by the political dimensions of the act of reading. All three poets define their complex interconnections of authoritative text against a reader's capacity to authorise his or her own interpretations.

The politics of readership, in these terms, adds a level of nuance to Michel de Certeau's outline of a modern reader:

> Far from being writers – founders of their own place, heirs of the peasants of earlier ages now working on the soil of language, diggers of wells and builders of houses – readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves. Writing accumulates, stocks up, resists time by the establishment of a place and multiplies its production through the expansionism of reproduction. Reading takes no measures against the erosion of time (one forgets oneself and also forgets), it does not keep what it acquires, or it does so poorly, and each of the places through which it passes is a repetition of the lost paradise.[11]

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11 Michel de Certeau, 'Reading as Poaching', in *The History of Reading* ed. by Shafquat Towheed, Rosalind Crone, and Katie Halsey (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2011) p.136.

Certeau's evocative picture of the politics of reading positions itself on the boundary between place and history. It suggests two extremes: the hoarded wealth of writing and the impoverished vagrancy of reading. Certeau has the reader in a consumer culture as a poacher eking out a cultural subsistence among the ruins of canon, crippled by the inadequacy of memory and longing for some distant and beautiful world. In opposition to them, writers exist as the founders of place, whose manufacture of an elsewhere transports them. I wish to offer an alternative, which Certeau extends to us in the same writing but fails to develop. The process of *anamnesis* places the writer and reader in (a sometimes literal) communion. *Anamnesis* is the recollection of that which Certeau's writer has stored up into the presence of the reader. As I have outlined above, this recollection is subject to political, spiritual and academic authorities transmitted by the writer through the text, but it is also subject to the reader's perception of their own authority to perform that act of recollection. The interaction between these authorities sharpens recollection into a 'true' imagining. As Certeau suggests, it is an imagining that creates a new place, a locality, for the reader.

What implications do my readings of Jones, Hill and Duhig have for Certeau's formulation of locality? The localisation of interpretation is the precise force that shapes the interaction between text, poetry and history that I have explored in the preceding chapters. My readings of the three poets have forced me to consider the uniqueness of my own imaginative responses. The introspective assessment of my own responses to texts has hinted at the existence of a localised hermeneutic force, capable of forming interpretations not authorised by the text. Our reading practices shape this hermeneutic force: the text as a whole must negotiate with them. In order to achieve presence in the reader's mind, the process of representing a poem in a text must take into account the forms of authority that will make that poem present. However, Certeau's 'despoiling' of the wealth of Egypt points towards a negotiation with these forms of authority in which the reader is always paramount. Certeau recognises the potential for misunderstanding to create something less than the true recollection of *anamnesis* in the 'lost paradise' that every modern reader occupies. In my own introspective assessment of my responses to poetry, have I unwittingly engaged in the sorts of activity that Certeau sees as disruptive to the process of *anamnesis*?

Certainly, Jones, Hill and Duhig prepared themselves for this eventuality. The potential for the failure of *anamnesis* is a crucial component in understanding the relationships between text and manifestations of authority in the three poets' work. The anxiety that a reader's recollection may mar or

disrupt the textual form is central to the shaping of the texts considered in this thesis. The footnotes, notes and prefaces included in the texts of *The Speed of Dark*, *Mercian Hymns* and *Anathemata* aim to negotiate with the politics of reading described by Certeau. As such, these textual features attempt to bring new forms of authoritative writing to bear upon the reader, in order to reinforce the *anamnesis* that the poems seek to create. Moreover, as Certeau's account suggests, this attempt has two consequences. As I have outlined above, the expansion of the forms of authority that each text conveys places further pressure upon the interaction between real and the imagined, urging them into co-presence. However, it also creates a distortion in the form of the text itself, displacing the alignment of *ars* and *prudentia* that Jones recognises as key to the process of reading poetry. As noted in the preceding chapter, Jones expressed his anxiety that this compromise in the form of the text posed risks for the form of his work. It is precisely this anxiety and an awareness of the double nature of authoritative writing that shapes the texts of Jones, Hill and Duhig's work. Their sophisticated strategies of mixing and connecting texts draw upon historical and academic forms of textual production in order to solve this perceived problem. Hence, their subtle mixture of textual forms underlines an anxiety that has serious consequences for contemporary poetry.

1.0 Shaping the imagination: authority and resistance

What might be the cause of this anxiety, and how might it have shaped Jones, Hill and Duhig's writing about the past? I suggest that we can trace this anxiety to an awareness of the texts of their work's need to negotiate between competing authorities. The creation of locality in the act of reading that Certeau suggests is a problem for each of the three poets. Although their texts have sought to negotiate with this locality in different ways, these negotiations display common concerns. What precisely is the perceived challenge of Certeau's place of the reader? As Ellen Spolsky has suggested, this locality is 'the grounds for resisting power': it challenges our conceptions of the integral nature of a modern audience.[12] For the modern reader, writer and audience communicate in a multiplicity of one-to-one communicative acts that stand independently in the locality of their hermeneutic contexts. Where Duhig wrote Fauvel's prologue for a single reciter to deliver to an entire and present audience, *The Speed of Dark* addressed each member of its

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12 Ellen Spolsky, 'Toward a Theory of Embodiment for Literature', *Poetics Today* Vol. 24 No. 1, March 2003, p. 129.

audience in isolation. Fauvel's problems of address and Jones' difficulties in the sharing of his West-Christian *res* are complementary facets of this anxiety over the audience for printed books of poetry.

How does this reflect upon the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig? Their texts and poems articulate their efforts to enter into the reader's locality and engage in a true *anamnesis*. The distinction between collective address and individual reading experience motivates how the three poets have given their texts shape. All of these intellectual endeavours share a concern with the ability of authority to enter into the place of interpretation: the fear of spiritual isolation and disconnection from the past that underscores *Anathemata*; the search for a genius loci in the form of an Anglo-Saxon king in Hill; and the bestial fracturing of the horse-king, Fauvel. Their concern with an authority located within poetry underscores the potential for our understandings to be isolated from each other.

In this context, it is not difficult to see the attraction of writing about history in attempting to balance these concerns. The negotiation between the imaginative and systematised modes of understanding the past brings the social, signifying domain of language into contact with the imagination. De Groot's 'generic rules' intrude upon Hutcheon's historiographic metafictions, because they are an integral part of the authority needed to crystallise the reader's imagination into presence. The importance of a shared, socially understood past underpins our ability to understand one another within that presence. An awareness of the historiographic techniques used in poetry is an awareness of the foundations upon which a reader builds their *anamnesis*.

None of the poetry texts considered above embodies a self-sufficient authoritative text. Each of them acknowledges the problematic nature of an authority entirely contained within a verse-text, by their appropriations of and connections to other textual forms. The texts considered here utilise comparable techniques. In whole or in part, they locate the authorities that make a text the subject of *anamnesis* outside the text itself. Their recourse to scholarly authority that situates itself in texts does not merely substantiate and inform the writer's concerns. They form a model of the authority that the text relies upon in realising and making present the reader's imagination.

I can now expand upon the appeal to extra-poetic authority I touched upon in Chapter 2. Later medieval debates about the nature of authority in vernacular writing often focused upon translation and hermeneutics. They have a particular consonance with the problems of authority conveyed by the texts

considered in this thesis. These debates form a link between the problems of a historiography of poetry identified by this thesis and current debates on medieval textual scholarship. However, they also offer a fresh set of approaches to debates on authoritative writing and its role in contemporary poetry.

1.1 Translation, appeals to authority and the form of text

How do Jones, Hill and Duhig bring scholarly authority into the fabric of their texts? Translation is a key concept in understanding their exploration of ideas of authority. Indeed, each of the three poets has considered historical translations of authority in their work through aspects of *translatio imperii*. However, translation is also a central concept within medieval debates on authoritative writing. Where I previously focused upon conceptions of kingship and tenure in discussing medieval conceptions of authority, I am now in a position to broaden the scope of my engagement with these debates.

The parallel concerns of medieval authorship and translation inform both literary and political transitions between the society of late antiquity and that of early modern Europe. This political change brought about a change from classical literature into a multiplicity of vernacular literatures. The inherently local nature of the vernaculars themselves defined these literatures, and each possessed correspondingly localised hermeneutics. As in the works of Jones, Hill and Duhig, this transformation involved an adaptation of old textual strategies and the re-incorporation of commentary and gloss into the fabric of a poetic work. Rita Copeland discusses the relationships between Middle English verse and the classical traditions of commentary and translation. In doing so, she describes the same sort of blurring of boundaries that appear in the works of the three poets:

> The *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women* appropriates academic theory, not just to claim that discursive field for vernacular writing (as, for example, in Notker of St. Gall or some of the French translations of Boethius), but to claim the powerful role of *auctor* for the vernacular translator.[13]

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13 Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp. 194-5.

Staking such a claim upon an academic authority preoccupies Duhig, Hill and Jones' additions to their texts. They explicitly connect the texts of their poetry with an academic discourse by making formal references to academic and scholarly works, and by observing the textual forms such references take.

Gabriel Josipovici elaborates upon what he sees as the 'modern' nature of this transfer of authority in his exploration of modernism and its contemporary influence. His reflections on the influence of the modernist novel offer a compelling parallel to Copeland's account:

> [W]e have today confused a genius and an apostle, a 'very great man' or 'a very great writer', and one who speaks with authority. If St. Paul were to say to someone: 'Go, and do this', we could analyse his words till we were blue in the face and they would in the end turn out to be no different from the injunction you or I might give to someone 'Go, and do this.' The difference lies in who we are, not in what we say. The difference lies in the fact that St. Paul has authority and you and I have none. But, Kierekergaard feels, our age has not only lost access to authority, *it no longer even recognises the crucial distinction between one who has authority and one who only has genius*.[14] (Josipovici's emphasis.)

Josipovici agrees with Kierkergaard, inasmuch as he recognises a source of authority, which is clearly of divine origin, but believes that modern writers cannot access it. It would be inaccurate to suggest that Josipovici wholeheartedly embraces such a position. However, there is a parallel with the searches for authority found in the work of Jones, and, to a lesser extent, Hill and Duhig. Indeed, for Jones this search for an authority that compliments and enhances the divine authority is remarkably close to the surface. His realisation of an alternative authority in the text of *Anathemata* is one of the most thoroughly developed examples of such a response.

However, an important problem with Josipovici's account is its failure to recognise that neither the problem nor the response confine themselves to a modern context. Chaucer makes use of the medieval traditions of commentary and gloss to give his work authority.[15] In doing so, he pursues exactly the same strategy as Jones does in writing out the annotations to his own poem. Hill does likewise when he justifies and substantiates his choice of words with a set of references; whilst Duhig also does so in attaching an

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14 Gabriel Josipovici, *Whatever Happened to Modernism?* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2010) p. 85.
15 See, for example, Rita Copeland, 1993 pp.192-8.

explanation of his interpretation of the *Roman de Fauvel*. For Jones, Hill and Duhig, the use of academic authority is a key component in negotiating with the reader. However, it also shifts their work towards an academic reader. This shift underpins the decisions made in establishing their works as texts.

This also sheds further light upon these concerns with an authority invested in history and historical writing. Josipovici, following Kierkergaard, posits St. Paul as an example of an authority figure. Why does he hold this to be credible? If we truly believe that the power of the divine can create apostles and grant ordinary human beings the authority to speak, we have no reason to believe that God would be any less willing to do so now than two thousand years ago. However, Kierkergaard is very happy to accept that St. Paul heard the voice of God on the road to Damascus. Probably he would take a sceptical approach to such an occurrence happening in the present, before his very eyes. This is not simply because Paul's conversion and apostolic role are far enough in the past for him to be able to suspend disbelief. It is also because he is willing to accept the authority of those in the present who have told him so, or at least he accepted it when they did tell him. What Kierkergaard seeks to place in the hands of the divine is more readily attributable to social interaction. St. Paul does not have authority because he is St. Paul. He has authority because people in the present who exercise real and present authority treat him as an authority.

This provides a useful reflection on the entanglement of perceptions of authority and the past in *anamnesis*. We can use history to circumvent the social situations in which we find ourselves and claim authority directly, over the heads of those who possess authority in the present. *Anamnesis,* as Jones has formulated it, puts the reader directly into contact with the past. Jones locates its substantive recollection outside normal social contexts, even as these contexts shape and pressure it into existence. In this manner, history becomes the subject of key negotiations as writers contest and employ its power to shape and realise the imagination of a reader. It is inevitable that, in such circumstances, the political dimensions of historical poetry should become apparent as narratives of authority and power. These narratives shape Hill's personification of authority in Offa of Mercia and Duhig's narrative of the mis-morphing horse-prince Fauvel. They stem from a critique of how power is held, used and misused. Under these terms, writing history is a place to contest beliefs about the exercise of authority.

Contesting these beliefs transforms the poems of Jones, Hill and Duhig. As I have noted above, engaging with historical writing has caused them to re-shape the texts that convey their poetry. Their efforts

to push the imaginative and systematised modes of understanding the past together have transplanted features of academic texts into their own. This is not a simple borrowing but a re-use, just as *anamnesis* does not borrow the past but re-uses it in the present. Rather, considering these processes of exchange as translations between texts is a better option. Indeed, the translation of authoritative forms of text is a crucial part of the connection between medieval conceptions of authoritative writing and the relationship between poem and text in the work of these three poets.

1.2 Translation and authoring the past

How can we relate the translations of authority in the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig to these medieval conceptions of authority? The medieval theory of translation was largely concerned with the problems of rendering Latin into vernacular languages. Jerome's translation of Greek and Hebrew religious texts into Latin, to produce the Vulgate Bible, strongly influenced these theories. This translation is part of a re-centring of apostolic tradition upon the Latin society of late antiquity.[16] As such, it forms an early model for a succession of translatory enterprises that established the vernacular languages of Europe with their own academic and literary cultures. Such enterprises were by no means uniform, but most of the major courts of Europe embarked upon programmes of translation in the Later Middle Ages. They aimed to establish the native languages of their principal members in a more equal relationship with the language of their counterparts in the church.[17]

The parallels with modern problems of reading inform the very works to which we might turn for clarification. For example, Alistair Minnis begins the preface to his account of the (specifically Middle English) problems of vernacular translations by quoting an interview with the modern Guyanan British poet, David Dabydeen.[18] This situation threatens to become reflexive. We consult past writings in untangling modern problems, but in doing so, we utilise findings that have taken those same modern problems as illustrative of the past. There is a potential for a false reduction in this interpretation of the use of history. It is impossible to use history as a means of solving their problems of authority in the past and then simply translating the solution into the present.

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16 See for example Rita Copeland, 1993 pp. 46-55.
17 See Alistair Minnis, 2009 pp. 17-25.
18 *Ibid.* pp. ix-x.

Hence, the use of historical material in the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig must have some other function. By translating a modern problem into an imagined past, their work implicitly recognises the need for alternative points of view. They bring the past into contact with the present through *anamnesis*. However, the re-construction that *anamnesis* provides is more than a simple imaginative engagement with the past on its own terms. Making the past 'here and now present by its effects' emphasises new meaning, a rediscovery of the presence of the past.[19] The authorised imagination that prompts *anamnesis* allows us to reassemble our understandings and beliefs into new and more useful ways. Moreover, the authorisation required by *anamnesis* prompts these wider engagements with academic and historical forms of authority.

This demonstrates the underlying reasoning behind the methods used in this thesis. Studying the translation of a present problem into the past requires a new focus upon the methods of translation. In this context, Duhig's engagement with music and performance, Hill's institutional reading and Jones' networks of reading and annotation all show individual adaptations of a wider practice of translation. Surveys of such texts and reading practices underpin this thesis. They are a necessary response to the challenges of locating the multiple authorities that (consciously or unconsciously) the three poets have employed to bring imagination and intellectual systematisation together in *anamnesis*.

1.3 Engaging the academy

These strategies of translation suggest a shift of emphasis towards a style of poetry that seeks to engage with academic texts. The translations between academic texts and the texts of poems ground and substantiate the demands that poetry places upon the reader. This process of engagement is what underlies the copious footnoting activities of Jones, which derive from a personal but, nonetheless, entirely serious reading of the academic history of his day. It also underlies Hill and Duhig's emphasis in referencing the scholarly historical works they have consulted. It is present even in the performance history of Duhig's *The Speed of Dark*, which began as part of a historical music project commissioned by the Director of Music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

This thesis is likewise a product of such an engagement. Its double form compromises between a traditionally extra-academic form of textual production (poetry) and a form that is entirely the product of an

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19 Jones, 1952 p. 205.

academic tradition (a doctoral thesis). As my case studies have shown, the effort to explore processes of

textual production within the forms of academic writing is not novel. However, this thesis represents a new

stage of development in the appeal to academic authority in modern poetry. It looks to academic and critical

responses as much as it looks to a popular response. This is a longstanding issue in contemporary poetry,

where the academy represents an important source of patronage and critical recognition. Hence, the poem

that forms the creative portion of this thesis can act as useful evidence for how the appeal to academic

writing takes shape in historical poetry.

Describing the creative perspective, from which I began this thesis, is a useful starting point in

understanding this appeal. I have worked on two substantial and (largely) historical projects over the past

four years. The first project deals with Arthurian literature, British history and the Welsh medieval prose-

tales of the *Mabinogi*. This developed into a book entitled *Regeneration,* published in early 2012.[20] The

second is *King Harold*, the poem submitted as part of this thesis. In both works, I have drawn heavily on the

work of literary critics and historians: the academic works I read became a great influence on me. In both

works, I have made use of unusual forms of text.

What do I mean by unusual? I briefly mentioned the most common form of book used in publishing

contemporary poetry in describing Duhig's *The Speed of Dark*, but it is worth recapitulating here. There is a

single common publication format for collections of new poetry in the UK (that is, excluding magazines,

anthologies and new editions of previously published poems).[21] That format is a book of roughly 64 pages in

'paperback B' format: that is, with pages and covers measuring 5 inches by 7 inches.[22] The majority of such

books consist of short lyric poems, with one poem to a page, running from the front cover through to the

back cover. They contain a contents page and copyright information at the beginning and an

acknowledgements section occupying its own page at either the beginning or the end of the book. With the

notable exception of some Faber & Faber publications, front covers usually feature a colour image, and back

covers will show a blurb and often a photograph of the author. These features are standardized largely due to

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20 Meirion Jordan, *Regeneration* (Cardiff: Seren Books, 2012).
21 I exclude these publication formats for the simple reason that poetry magazines, anthologies and editions of
     previously published poetry are produced under an 'editor-first' dynamic: the formats are intended to fulfil the aims
     of editors first and writers only secondarily, making them less pertinent to a study of texts which give a primacy to
     the producers of new poetry.
22 There is some variation between publishers here, but (pending an exhaustive survey) these variations rarely exceed
     the addition or subtraction of half an inch to either the height or breadth of the page measurements.

the economics of printing. Nonetheless, I wrote *Regeneration* and *King Harold* in opposition to what I felt these features represented.

I will briefly explain the format for *Regeneration*. It was the first project in which I experimented with ideas of using the form of text as part of the work, and it provides a useful background to the ideas used in *King Harold*. The published version of *Regeneration* varies from a standard publication format in a number of ways. It has no back cover: instead the book has two halves, titled 'Red Book' and 'White book', printed back-to-back, reading from each cover into the centre.[23] The blurb (which my publishers persuaded me to include for promotional reasons) is printed on flaps inside the covers, and I included a preface at the beginning of each half. These prefaces explain some of the historical background to the poems and the reasoning behind some of my decisions in putting the format for the text together. The 'Red Book' side is comparatively straightforward: it is simply a sequence of lyric poems. In contrast, the 'White Book' side is a long Arthurian poem in sections, with footnotes that draw upon anecdotes and recollections of the three or four generations of my family before my own. I had to do a great deal of persuasion and explanation before these features could be realised. Why would I feel the need to make such demands upon publishers and printers?

I made these changes due to my perception of the political dimensions of the poems. *Regeneration* was a book written about Welsh materials and history, a book that emphasised the potential for locality and individuality within an ongoing British history and literature. I wanted a format that allowed for variations in reading and interpretation. I had originally planned the book to work in three sections printed sequentially, but I became worried that this implied primacy of one part over another. Thus, I combined and intermixed the poems from the planned first two sections to create one section, then placed that as a mirror image of the section that dealt with the Arthurian materials.

The development of the Arthurian poetry in the 'White Book' portion of *Regeneration* is particularly pertinent to this thesis. Its annotations form a response to the format of the *Anathemata,* with the scholarly content of the footnotes used by Jones replaced with entirely anecdotal interpolations from my family history. I included copious explanatory notes in an earlier draft at least partly for the benefit of my editor. However, I soon came to regard them as an encumbrance that did little to convey what I found meaningful

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23 That is, the 'tête-bêche' format.

within the corpus of Arthurian literature. My underlying difficulty with this programme of annotation was that it made the text too self-contained. The aim of my work was (at least in part) to bring aspects of Welsh and British medieval literature to an Anglophone audience. I felt that by explaining the context of my work too thoroughly, I would give readers no reason to discover the literature for themselves, or to encounter it upon their own terms. Equally, I felt that by including apparatus such as bibliographies or references, I would be giving primacy to scholarly approaches that put other veins of interpretation at risk. By using an academic framework to attempt to explain my writing, I was concerned that I would be implicitly attempting to limit it through reference to that scholarship.

I did not arrive at this course of action in isolation. I did not finalise the form of *Regeneration* until the process of writing and researching this thesis was well under way. However, inasmuch as the central decisions regarding the nature of the work predate the commencement of work on this thesis, I believe that *Regeneration* represents an intermediate stage between my earlier writing (which is considerably less experimental) and *King Harold*. In creating a text whose apparatus is an integral part of the poem, I have attempted to redress a perceived imbalance in the way poetry engages with academic and scholarly works. The poem of the 'White Book' side is in many respects similar to the work of Jones: it draws upon a multitude of sources and it uses quotation and anachronistic vocabulary in the same texture of bricolage that characterises Jones' modernist tendencies. Nonetheless, I cannot take the attempt to shore up the interpretation of the poem with an appeal to an academic apparatus as seriously as Jones does. There is an irony in my subversion of Jones' use of footnotes that I think is more readily visible in my work on *King Harold*, and which is more fluently articulated in the later poem. Hence, through discussing that poem and its text I can explain how I have negotiated the appeal to an academic authority in which Jones, Hill and Duhig precede me.

2.0 A balance of concerns

The poem *King Harold* grew out of similar underlying concerns to those of *Regeneration.* Like *Regeneration,* it draws on the problematic nature of my own identity as a Welsh Anglophone in a climate of regional devolution and the focus of Welsh identity upon the Welsh language. The same sense of the problematisation of British identity also gave rise to my sense of uncertainty regarding popular conceptions

of an English history. I first became interested in writing about the events that gave shape to the Norman conquest of England as part of an unrealised project to use poetry to teach history to schoolchildren. This germ of an idea transformed into a project with broader aims as I read about the history of the period and worked on the drafts for *Regeneration*. In reading about his background, the un-Englishness of Harold Godwinson seemed to be a remarkable feature of his life and times. By developing this sense of Harold's strangeness, I began to see the project as a commentary on an English foundational myth.

I initially hoped to make the poem more macaronic than it eventually became. Harold's multilingual background seemed particularly appealing to me, and I wished to reflect some of this in the language used in the poem. However, I never had the opportunity to learn two of the languages relevant to contemporary records of the period, Old Norse and Norman French. Hence, to make a macaronic poem, I had Latin, Old English and Welsh as my choices of language. The use of Welsh never quite seemed to fit, with Wales remaining peripheral to the important events that shaped much of Harold's early life. In the end, the language in which I had both greater proficiency and the benefit of greater tuition became the most prominent non-English language in the poem. Indeed, the use of Latin seemed to make for an interesting reflection upon the status of a learned or literary record of history, and this became the driving force behind the decisions I made regarding the form of the poem and its choice of language.

In its final form, the poem falls into three sections, with a prologue added to the beginning. I modelled each of the sections upon a different form of medieval historiography. The opening part of the poem, 'Harold's Chronicle', is in sections, each of which deals with a particular year in Harold's early life. A marginal commentary supplements the main poem, beginning as a functional gloss upon the main body of the verse, but which eventually comes to dominate and supplant the poem that it pretends to explain. I partly intended the 'chronicle' section to recall the shape of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. In particular, I aimed to take the edition produced by Michael Swanton as my model, which places translations of the different chronicle manuscripts side-by-side with copious footnotes.[24] This somewhat fragmentary format places the viewpoints of the chroniclers of Peterborough, Abingdon, Canterbury and elsewhere side-by-side: through mimicking it, I tried to make the main text of 'Harold's Chronicle' show multiple perspectives. The marginal

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24 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ed. & trans. by Michael Swanton (London: J. M. Dent 1996). I refer here to the edition I used in my reading, not to the most current edition.

apparatus makes efforts to demonstrate the coherence of these perspectives, but ultimately it fails in the attempt.

The failure of this commentating voice was an important point in the development of this thesis as a whole. Reflecting on the writing process, I can see that it represents a transitional stage in my efforts to balance the competing claims of authority within the work. I rejected the commentary as offering too neat a solution, in spite of its useful role in explaining the historical content of the main poem. The coherence it seeks to impose seems too artificial and insufficiently representative of a multilingual, polyphonic past. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which I feel the commentary voice is justified: it is a dramatic conceit. The voice that begins as a detached an impersonal commentary reveals itself as a personification of Harold himself. If this is Harold's chronicle he is not its author, but perhaps he is its editor. Where the attempt to gloss a polysemous past fails, Harold instead reveals himself, both attempting to continue where he left off and make a fresh start.

This then leads into the central section of the poem, 'Harold's History'. It forms a kind of 'open' *terza rima*, with the middle lines of the tercets remaining unrhymed. Although I arrived at this form largely unprompted, I came to view it as an Englishing of Dante's verse-forms. Likewise, I came to write the Latin within the poem to be read in a highly anglicised manner that blended more neatly with my own internal diction. Harold's persona attempts to take a more central role in these proceedings, to take a more authoritative standpoint by defining his own work as a history. Again, I have borrowed the text's form from another source, this time the *Encomium Emmae Regina*. It uses the same structure that I have attempted to impose upon Harold's attempts to authorise himself: it consists of a Prologue and Argumenta followed by a division of the remaining narrative into separate books. I have also presented this attempt as unsuccessful but in a manner that appears more complex and more nuanced to me than that employed for the first section. For 'Harold's History' I originally planned to have the structure of the verse unravel on the page until it more nearly resembled some of the verse from the 'White Book' in *Regeneration.* Although I partially realised this, the technique that I employed to achieve this came to enjoy a far wider application than originally intended. I used spacing to open up the lines of verse, spreading them across the page and creating variance and opposition within the lines. This resulted in the displacement of entire sections of verse from their 'regular' positions against the left-hand page margins. This displacement came to dramatise a fracture within

Harold's efforts to establish an authorial position within the text itself: it came to encompass shifts in register, self-contradiction and even the development of multiple voices within Harold's own narration.

This transition from an editorial Harold to an authoritative Harold is a response to my concerns with authority's role in joining imaginative and systematised re-constructions. Both of the models for *King Harold*'s parts that I have discussed above gain their authority in two ways: by their status as texts that transmit knowledge and by their forms. This use of form allows them to assume a standpoint outside of the material they seek to elucidate. The authority of Emma's encomiast may stem from his closeness to a royal patron and his position as a religious. However, his ability to create a viewpoint that is external to the events he describes exercises that authority. Likewise, Swanton demonstrates his authority in his ability to interpret the text of the chronicle through translation and annotation. He places the texts of the Chronicle within a framework that represents his editorial position. In *King Harold,* I have tried to colour this relatively simple relationship with the inclusion of Harold himself. In attempting to stand outside his own history, Harold encounters a serious dilemma: the more he attempts to assert his own authority over the events of the past, the greater his distance from his past self becomes. The idea of history entwines with the idea of rescue, as the drama of the poem forces a compromise between a present authority and a vital and lived-in past.

2.1 Resolving authorities: poetry and history

If my own poetry is a response to the problems of authority in the works of Jones, Hill and Duhig, what development of their concerns does it offer? I feel that my use of poetry to dramatise these concerns is not entirely adequate as a philosophical argument. The final section of the poem, *Harold's Tapestry*, does not really resolve upon a single solution. However, would such a solution be true to the nature of the project? The poem rejects the scholarly accretions, commentaries and glosses that would make it a substitute for a comparable scholarly work. As a philosophical poem, it lacks the clarity and resolution that it would need to stand alone in this regard. It does not quite admit the narrative fiction of a work that will allow a conclusion.

This is precisely the point. It exists as a philosophical poem only in relation to the body of work contained in this thesis, alongside this enquiry into the historiography of poetry in the work of Jones, Hill and Duhig. The final sections of the poem refuse to offer a resolution to the crises of Harold's authorisation of his own history, because the poem as a whole concerns itself with dramatising or re-constructing the past.

It does not require the prefaces or notes that Hill and Duhig have used to characterise the relationships between their work and academic and scholarly texts. Instead, this thesis reflects those concerns, and it subsumes its connections between texts into the bibliography. Were *King Harold* produced for a wider audience through a commercial publisher, there would be no possibility of the thesis' inclusion as part of the text. However, the existence of a parallel academic text would probably not go unmentioned. This would imply the existence of an authority, a joining between the imaginative and systematised modes of understanding the past.

I have tried to enact that joining using an approach that is distinct from the approaches of Jones, Hill and Duhig. My poetry aspires to the same *anamnesis*, and it requires the same pressures of authority to push its representations of the past into co-presence with its reader. However, I have tried to figure academic, literary and historical texts within my own text. Indeed, I have tried to leave no part of the text of *King Harold* unshaped in this respect: every physical feature of the pages on which the poem appears takes its form from some other text. This is not to say that I have excised the complicating engagement with an academic authority from my work. Such a statement would be utterly false. I have positioned this thesis against my poem, just as Hill, Jones and Duhig have positioned their respective 'acknowledgements', preface and footnotes, and 'notes' sections against their poems. It is no less a commitment to the process of connecting texts to one another than Jones' habits of annotation in his personal books. Moreover, the awareness of connections between texts that I have invested in the text of *King Harold* has its counterbalance here. This thesis represents my own process of establishing connections with the texts I engage in the form and shape of my poem. Its bid to connect the text of a poem with other authoritative texts creates a further, radical development of the same process of shaping texts that it explores.

Appendix A1 - Transcript of an interview with Ian Duhig, 28th June 2009

This is a transcript of an audio file, recorded on a pocket dictaphone at The Driver pub, Wharfdale Road, London during an interview with Ian Duhig. I have only edited the transcript inasmuch that I have removed habitual and repetitious utterances where they do not affect the sense of what is said; otherwise I have attempted to retain the natural features of both participants' speech. Due to background noise or occasional unclear speech, at times I have not been able to ascertain exactly what was said and although frequently the sense remains clear, in these cases I have inserted my best guess in square brackets, followed by a question mark [like this?]. In one or two cases, particularly where words of Irish origin are used, I have added Irish spellings in round brackets. Personal names in Irish I have spelled out in the standard modern Irish orthography. I retain the original sound file in my personal archive of work, whence (with appropriate permissions from the participants) it can be obtained on request.

Transcript

MJ: Well first of all I should probably say thank you ever so much for taking the time to meet me.

ID: That's quite alright. Excuse me while I make myself even more comfortable than I was already.

MJ: Well anyway you've seen my sort of outline questions

ID: Yes, yes

MJ The first thing I was sort of noting was that you mentioned your collaboration with the Clarks' Group a few times. I was wondering if you could give a little bit of a description on how your working with the Clarks' Group shaped-up the work that went on to become *The Speed of Dark*. You say that he (Edward Wickham) actually suggested the manuscript. Did he give you the facsimile?

ID We looked at it. Even though it's a black and white facsimile it still costs like 600 pounds or something like that, which he thought was very reasonable. We got it in a sale and I think the exchange rate was good or something like that. So I could only look at the facsimile when I was with him. The facsimile is, like, about this big

MJ I think the title is something like – er – it has front matter in English and so on – it's actually called 'The Roman de Fauvel in the edition of mesire Chaillou de Pesstain' that was the book I was looking at earlier in the week.

ID Ah right

MJ We actually have a copy of that in the University Library so that's actually very helpful

ID Right. So the particular manuscript we used, and I think there's something like four, there is some difference over the content of them, and it's BNfr (146) and the corpus, it's all, there's a lot there, there's lots of different composers, lots of different people who contributed, different songs and things like this, so it wasn't really clear from the beginning which ones they were wanting to use at all. In terms of the mechanics though, it would be something roughly the same size which would fit in that gap. And the main thing I did which was a departure was – because the themes and ideas are pretty strange, frankly, particularly to a modern sort of audience – was to have this kind of prologue which would explain more or less the context in which the different pieces would be heard. It's unlikely, Edward says, that the whole thing was ever performed. I mean it was actually

quite, er, extremely controversial. Anything which criticised the king – how the king behaved and things like that – was obviously something which was kind of, er, very very dodgy. The actual manuscript itself, though, is probably musically much more interesting than the words. I mean I think I do say that for me one of the great advantages was that the text itself is pretty dire, frankly. It's kind of – there was this long – one of the things which didn't get into either of the books was, there's a tournament between the virtues and the vices, and these were the days when if something was long, that was good. Nowadays we're used to sort of reducing things, cutting out the irrelevant things, and then it was like if something was good it got chucked in to fatten it out. And the virtues included stuff like Punctuality, and Cleanliness, and stuff like that, anything to sort of make up the weight and the numbers. So that was terribly boring really. So occasionally it would call for something new but the quality of the writing itself was just very very dull narrative introducing symbolic characters and then the music takes off. The music itself is interesting, at least as much as I understand it. It was on the overlap, on the cusp itself between Ars Nova and Ars Antiqua, using different musical times. During the course of it they began to develop some notion of actually how you can write down music - which certainly wasn't there for part of it, so in part of the manuscript they used gaps that indicated length and things like this. There's a huge variety of music likely very interesting, but more or less it was: some texts tell the story and occasionally bits of text to go with particular songs of about the same length. So it was as crude as that really.

MJ This commission – did you get a lot of the impetus – I'm talking about knowledge of the actual manuscript – did you actually get that from Dr. Wickham?

ID Yes yes. He had all of the material, and he would be the person I'd go and see about what it was he wanted. As I say I didn't know in advance what bits of it we'd actually be dealing with, which is why for example the charivari is not actually in my last book, it's gone in the next book (*Pandorama*) because that came along for, not the one that we did on the South Bank but when we went to America. Which made it very difficult in terms of giving it an overall shape. So in the book I felt I could wander off and put in other things, in the same way I suppose all sorts of odd things are included in the manuscript. But it was not like I had a text of what the final thing would be at the beginning which I was to work with, it was we'd go along and there's a bit of this, and a bit of that, and I don't think that we'll be using this, and can we make that longer. It was – it was pretty chaotic to be perfectly honest, and it was interesting but I don't think I will do it again, really, in that way, I would want to know more about the end – when it was. It also took a lot longer than I thought it would do. The idea was that the whole thing originally would have been finished and then out of that I would select things which fitted in with the manuscript of the book, but it didn't happen like that, the musical thing was still going on when I had to submit the manuscript.

MJ You started off with something that was intended purely for performance. How did that turn into a book? You talk about it a little bit here – how did you go about picking up the thread? There's a lot of fair-seeming, things being black and white is a particular sort of play that you make in the book – did you have that thread when even you were working to produce words for the musical performance, or was that something that you sort of unwound through making the book?

ID It was sort of as we went along really. Because it was updated, I was thinking what might be the sort of contemporary resonances of the sort of things which were in the original text, what resonance does it have for us now – also for me personally – so there was the sense of... It would be ludicrous to say that the society was in flux, or that it was really in great danger at the time. A small number of people were upset at the prominence a particular courtier had got, and the general situation. And the whole thing about Fauvel as being in some way the harbinger of the Antichrist, which they constantly refer to. Now in America, even now, the references to the Antichrist make a lot more sense because I do think it's a lot more current in America, the idea that we're in the end of days and all the rest of it, and things are moving towards a closure – that was more or less, as far as

I can make out, the constant frame of mind for people in the fourteenth century and indeed in large parts of America now. One of the numerous sorts of texts I read around it, to sort of locate it in those terms, was a book about Christianity in America - and one of the things it points out was that when America was discovered, although it was this great new world and there was religious freedom, it was also the last place that was going to be discovered really. Then, they knew they'd circumnavigated the globe, they knew more or less where everything was, so it was almost the beginning of the end of history too. You had to convert the people who lived there, and the Jews of course, but by and large, you know, discovery of America meant that we were moving into the end of days. So although the Antichrist idea really has dropped out of ordinary conversation and thought in England and Europe, it's very alive in America and was very alive at the time. I mean looking back on it it seems like a ludicrous overreaction in France at the time, to fairly small indications that the world was going to come to an end. As the century went on of course, with the terrible outbreak of plague and things which happened in the fourteenth century, then if it had been written at the end of the fourteenth century it wouldn't have been as thin as it reads at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Aspects of, say, Fauvel's wedding, it was like, er, some of the wedding celebrations were based on wedding celebrations of the English king – it was in Paris in 1315 or something. It was not a great scandal, or anything like that, and as a result, more had to be injected into it to make it more dramatic – and we're not terribly upset about the sorts of things that worried them so much. Also the idea of finding a horse as a threatening creature, we just don't any more, and a talking horse - I mean it is to me, I know Ed Dorn the poet has his talking horse and things like this, but they're not like you want to characterise in the way that they could be seen then. A couple of the images we looked at for the cover of the books were actually going back to the idea of the horse as possibly some sort of divine creature, but I think it was just the world turned upside down, what you sit on, sitting on you, as it were.

MJ Well a lot of medieval works in general have this interplay between what is really the bestial and the human, in a sense -

ID Yeah, hybridity

MJ Absolutely, I mean even your cover shows up quite clearly, you've got the, it's quite a common feature of manuscript illumination, particularly to have musicians with either animal heads or animal masks, depending on the period.

ID On the cover of the book, although he's got a horse's head in that, in other parts of the manuscript he has a human head on a horse's body. So it's not completely consistent in the original, it's a mixture, it's the hybridity of it is the problem.

MJ Yes. I mean, returning to the idea of the Antichrist, you bring in Dajjal – what led you to introduce him as another element in your re-making of Fauvel?

ID Well, it was like, one of the things we took on that were cast as the Antichrist was Islam, and I came across the Dajjal figure when I was researching it, and it was like, what would the Antichrist's antichrist be like? And Dajjal is associated with among other things music. It's a pretty strange figure; he's not in the Koran but he's in the Hadith, and the descriptions of him are like, he's got one eye, Jews and women will be particularly susceptible to his eloquence and his music-making. He's also got this strange donkey called Qarih(?) Dajjal, there's supposed to be a league between its ears, it's supposed to travel faster than a train, and all the rest of it. So it was to get a further reflection, like, if you're the Antichrist, and something is your antichrist, then what might that antichrist be like? But then Dajjal is also used as a term of abuse for say, George Bush, as it was at the time, Balir, and in the pictures - I would have brought it if I'd thought – in the pictures of the riots that

accompanied the Danish cartoon controversy, one of the people had a placard with Dajjal and a picture of the cartoonist and the Danish Prime Minister, and something like that. I don't think that, even in the Bible, the Antichrist is anything other than a sort of a creature that's called into existence by the Christ, there's like two references, and he does seem to refer to, rather than anything else in the Bible, to Gnostic theories, who didn't believe that Christ died on the cross, they thought that he disappeared, maybe substituted someone at the last minute, and that the Christ couldn't possibly have been the one described, so they're the Antichrist in that. So it's an opposite called out from within yourself. Saint Augustine has something about, instead of running around looking for the Antichrist outside yourself, look for the Antichrist within your own heart. And it is really our own shadow, that we're all like people shadow-boxing at the time. But essentially because Christ is so elusive, it was sort of to give more purchase to that idea.

MJ A lot of your afterword, your notes on the Fauvel, there's a lot of this idea of Fauvel being more of a reflection of our time than it was of their time, of the time when the manuscript was put together. Did that feeling sort of grow on you, or was that something that was obvious almost from the start.

ID Well it was my job to a certain extent. The commission was to update it, and I was actively pursuing contemporary references and resonances, and from time to time things would come up that made that link. So if you go back to the Dajjal thing, one of the key things they wanted to use, was they have a sort of take-off of the fountain of life, which is sort of an auger, you've probably seen it, they're all in there in shit, and currying Fauvel is cleaning his coat, you know, he's got a filthy coat and they're all in there cleaning his coat. Ans the Dajjal figure, the word actually comes from when you're staining the fur of a camel to make it look healthier than it really is, covering up wounds, and you'd use tar or pitch to do that, sort of blacking over the damaged areas on its coat, covering bruises as well, and wounds, and things like that. So that idea of deception was there. But then that filthy black material that they all bathed in, and in the nature of the disputes that were going on, those links to oil, which obviously wouldn't have been there in the beginning, came out later on. Actually the links to oil and pitch were there in the Islamic Antichrist stories.

MJ Just a couple more things, then, before we move on from Fauvel – although I'm really interested in that relationship, there's other stuff I'd like to get on to. You say that your commission was to actually update Fauvel. Do you think that actually, the way *The Speed of Dark* panned out in the end – one of the things that's quite interesting to me, if you look at medieval perceptions of authorship, somebody who made a text wasn't necessarily an author, there were also compilators and commentators – do you feel that the way that you've sort of lumped everything together around the thread of the Fauvel text, that you've almost created a new edition of the BNfr. 146 manuscript?

ID I've created a new response to it rather than - I don't think that it's anything more than bitty and fragmentary, I think that the original is a collection of sometimes contradictory pieces. From my point of view I suppose I was so impressed with the music, and I thought, if people are going to hear this, and they're going to hear some kind of performance, if I step outside and compromise some elements of how the medieval notion of the author was very different – there's a very good discussion of that in Emma Dillon's book, if you get it out of the library. Those books are very expensive as I mention later on. But Emma Dillon's book, she has a very interesting discussion of how a notion of the author and relating to the word authority and so on. I think it's sort of a response to it, but not in any way I suppose authoritative, I don't think I could do that, I don't know if anyone could really. But I wanted to give something, it was to make some sense of how the original people enjoyed the music at the time and also be useful in looking it up, you know.

MJ I think that pretty much finishes up Fauvel. So shifting a little, then, one of the other collections that really interested me you've written, and I know that this is rewinding quite a way now - I know

I often lose track of things when people ask me things about the book that I wrote in 2008 or whatever, so I'm sure this must be much much worse – things like *Nominies I mean*, you have a lot of things that are about things that are a little bit off-the-record, I mean I've written it down in my question sheet as folk history, but that's obviously a very broad term. How would you characterise the way that you - I mean you use music, and popular song, not necessarily of the contemporary period – do you think that has some real resonances with the way in which you actually work?

ID Well it does for me. When I was doing the notes you see, one of the things that suddenly occurred to me when I was going through it was I don't want to give in any way the impression that I feel that looking at things which are outside the normal searchlight is in any way rescuing things from the darkness. I mean the thing is, in the obscurity that I find myself, and much of contemporary poetry finds itself, is the salute from one form of obscurity to another form of obscurity. But I do think there is a powerful link between music, storytelling, and stories that get lost otherwise. One of the things I was looking at just before I came down, I read the [inaudible], was the narcocorridos, which are ballads about -

MJ yes!

ID You know that -

MJ Yes, it was mentioned -

ID It was about Shaka -

MJ On the Guardian very recently, but ah, I don't know any -

ID Right. Well, was it about Shaka being assassinated, El Shaka. Because I think this happened over the weekend, because he's one of the singers, and he announced that 'I'm not dead', he put stories out that 'I'm not dead' and within hours he'd been killed. And I think that's the most current story in it. And narco obviously comes from the word for drugs, corrido, ballad. What it says with the, it was like ballads about the drug lords, but it's not quite as restrictive as that, it's ballads about episodes in the drugs war, people involved with it at particular times and things like that. That is a fairly obvious and dramatic contemporary example of where popular music is mixed with unofficial counter-history, criminal history, in ways that cash in on the memorability of it. I am [inaudible] on what's-her-name's book, Loretta Todd, and she talks about how a large amount of history in Ireland is traditionally carried in the form of [inaudible], and usually through the medium of song. which in one way I suppose leads to a distinctively Irish thing. Partly to do with the fact that the Irish language was banned, the penal laws and all the rest of it. And I kind of think that it is unique to Ireland, a lot of sort of common histories between common people will be carried through those mediums where simple, memorable devices will be used. And they may get lost, you know. I mean I haven't seen the new Robin Hood film, but they talk about going back to 'the truth', that some of the things they talk about is obviously not the truth, but it is some of the ballads, which is quite embarrassing - like when he slashes somebody's face so even his mother wouldn't recognise him. Now that's actually a joke in the original context, the humour there is very brutal as you know in the middle ages, it'll make your hair stand on end that would at one stage have people rolling in the aisles. But I am interested in that side of it, I am interested in how many things just drop off the radar screen. And the other side of it is: what does history look like, if you're not involved? It looks madder, it looks like – you can't perceive a sensible thread running through your experiences, you're inclined to believe in magic and weird behaviour because in a way that's one of the few things that makes any sense of the sorts of things that happen to you. So from that point of view it allows, you know, there's devices to allow you to gloss over the irrationality of the story that your telling or the peculiarity of the characters that you're dealing with. But all the rest of this stuff, it's

one of these things where I feel there's so many areas which are so full. There's just so many people dealing with it that I felt that, well, that's not really an area that's in any danger of starvation intellectually, and there are other areas that I was more interested in. I suppose when I grew up, one of the characters who was very popular at the time, who seemed important to me – and then not – was the whole business of groups like the Pogues, Shane MacGowan and people like that, and the notion that the Irish transplanted to London, what sort of stories did they tell, it's a bit different, you're not one and you're not the other. And I suppose that goes through to Fauvel. I grew up with people talking how you had to make a choice between being Irish or English, sometimes with fatal consequences. Like the pub that we used to drink in, Biddy Mulligan's – well, one of the pubs we used to drink in when I was younger – was bombed, and that was in Kilburn, never mind in Northern Ireland. And the minute differences, when I worked in Northern Ireland, like Catholics say 'haitch' [h] and Protestants say 'aitch'. So even before you get into words, the shibboleth is in the letter. Catholicism and Protestantism are not that far apart really – this is the sort of thing that will get you hung in a lot of places – but there the schism -

MJ It's about the width of a *filioque* -

ID Yes, it's, when it is life and death, when you take a broader view of the religions that come from the Abrahamitic traditions, you know, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, so many of the phrases – and some of them go back a bit further than all of them – but nevertheless they seem really close. But particularly when I grew up the big thing was Ireland and England. It's interesting what's just come out about the Bloody Sunday enquiry, I remember going up Kilburn High road after Bloody Sunday, and outside pubs like The Rifle Volunteer there was this long sheet of paper with people signing their name in support of a campaign by the Provisional IRA, and it was signed, and the signatures went down onto the ground, and across the ground, so many people signed it, you know. People were saying everywhere, 'fuck it', you know, 'after something like that you support the Provisionals, I don't care about like, the details of morality in this situation, you've got to get them one back' and I didn't really think that was – and I know this sounds utterly wussy – but I didn't feel that was adequate. It's a complicated situation, it's complicated when you live over there, it's complicated when you live in London. But this whole notion of London Irish, which just disappeared really, I just haven't heard the expression used for a long time, London Irish, I don't know if people care about that any more. But coming through that was important to me - and the stories. Some of the stories, some of the songs that Shane MacGowan wrote I thought were remarkable, but then he turned into a terrible parody of himself almost immediately. And that's the sort of fear and danger of all of this, you know, you try and do something to recognise your complicated allegiances and then you sound like a kind of stereotype, in no time at all. And he became a collection of stereotypes. I feel I wandered away from your question a little bit there -

MJ That's quite alright. The further you wander, the further I will have to travel to catch up -

ID Provided you enjoyed the journey. But bring me back to the subject.

MJ I don't think it's very far from Shane MacGowan. Shane MacGowan is interesting – one of the things that really interested me, in one of the interviews that you did, was that you talked a little about Sean Nós, and for me Sean Nós has a real interest not just in looking at your work, as a scholar, but also in the sense that Sean Nós is essentially a means of transforming verse into performance. And that seems to be a really fascinating thing that modern poetry in general seems maybe to be a little less certain about. I've had a quick little read over what you've talked about in your short answers to my questions but, how do you feel that particular kind of Irish singing has made your work into what it is?

ID Well it was a shock to me, I mean the quality of it is fantastic singing, that I can't deny; but it

was not just like poetry that it moved away from, it was other kinds of music, even the music of say the Dubliners and all the rest of it, where you have a good laugh, you sit there and you drink, where they perform and you listen. But Sean Nós, very often when Darach [Darach Ó Catháin] was doing it, it would be one-to one, and he'd look in your eyes and he'd take your hand and hold it against his forehead; and he was worried about the fact that his daughter had a disabled child and was pregnant again, and you know, I found out that all these things wove into it. But it was the fact that it could become as immediate as a one-to one experience. The fact also that, when I was talking to someone else about features of it that are considered ugly in European art music, like the glottal stop, which is very important in Sean Nós singing, and if you look up Darach Ó Catháin on Youtube you can hear him singing Óró Sé do Bheatha Abhaile where you can hear his technique, although the glottal stop sounds like an ugly thing, you get a sense that the music stops, all the music stops. It's like he catches his breath. And although it's not there in European art music, he was there on Chapeltown Road with all the different communities, like it's a feature of Indian music, where you could demonstrate Irish traditional singing by pointing to traditions from the Indian subcontinent, people who lived across the road from where you were would listen to Darach. And of course Sean Ó Riada lectured on the connections between Irish culture and Irish music and Indian music. And I think really it was the sense of the intimacy of it: it was an intimacy more even than you get from reading, it was more like being in a one-to-one poetry reading where it was calling something - I mean obviously he didn't know me, well, he saw me 'cause we'd met in the pub a couple of times – he didn't know me but he was singing about himself to himself and using me as a kind of resonating device for that process. But the subtlety and the range, and the way he would change a song from one performance to another, you had that – and the sense that it was all lost, everybody knows him as Darach Ó Cathain but obviously that's not his real name, I mean it was Dudley Kane in the real world, and Darach Ó Cathain was a stage name that Sean Ó Riada gave him when he performed with Sean Ó Riada. But then his children had no idea about this, and there's a radio program about him in Leeds, where one of his daughters said that the first time she heard him singing was when she was in Boston, when she heard a recording of him – she had no idea that he had any kind of fame in any area whatsoever, he was just a kind of old Irish bloke out of his depth in England, where morality... in fact there's a real sad thing, when his daughter gets pregnant again, after the first disabled child, they kneel down together and say the decade of the rosary, which is the sort of thing people did in Ireland, but in Leeds, you know - and she's working in a factory, so he was like from a different world, a slightly ridiculous figure, it was so extraordinarily tragic in many ways. It's like this thing, you know the poet David Wheatley who's at Hull, he was talking about what attracted him [?], figures who go almost completely under the radar of the host society, rich cultural traditions that are just completely ignored because they're irrelevant, either to its history or where they are now. But that actually applied within Darach's own family. And how many wonderful things disappear in a single generation? It's not the same now, because there are so many recording devices, but a generation before singers' voices would be lost forever. When I was in Wales, when I was down in Swansea a while ago we went to see - I mean, you probably know the bloke – the last coracle maker. We went to see him, he was doing some event, this was about 20 or 30 years ago. And he was doing this fantastic thing with the hide, talking about curing the hide, is it the same as curing when you make a barrel, and all the rest of it. And I asked him, are you worried about whether your techniques would be lost to future generations, and he said, oh no, I've made a video, and then in that single instant I realised how things were different in a few years. Because you can't describe in words very easily what he's doing, but if it's videoed you can see exactly how he manipulates the wood and the thin laths and the leather – and now it's more true than it used to be that things aren't really lost. But of course lots of things are lost, all the Darachs who never got recorded or were never regarded as important enough to sing.

MJ Well there's also this - if we're talking about these cultural losses, these things that spill out of the top of the English reservoir – there is a sense in which, you know, languages die, even though you can learn Latin, Latin is not a vanished language in the same sense as, say, Linear B is, but

nonetheless customs can die out. It may well be that the video of somebody's coracle-making will stay on as a video, but will anybody make coracles? There's perhaps a distinction there. Do you feel that, going back to the idea of some things like Sean Nós being particular performances, or ways of bringing things that would be, on paper, quite ordinary perhaps, or something that you could easily read over, turning them into things that are quite clearly personal, motivated by real people. Do you think that your poetry is intended to work in that way almost?

ID What is it to draw an analogy? As I say, I don't want to give the impression that I think I'm rescuing things from obscurity, just reflecting it in another form of obscurity, and I suppose it's ways of me asking, how did poetry come to be in the situation that it's is. When I first came to Leeds and I started getting involved with traditional musicians, people were so kind, and this is obviously because they were keen, and this was in many ways because their audience was virtually disappeared, in a lot of ways, and although poetry has picked up a lot, poetry really wasn't an awful lot better - I mean it's still very very thin on the ground in certain areas. There's very active scenes in particular places, but most of the poets I know in Leeds aren't even at all Irish, they come from say West Indian backgrounds if they've moved into the area, or Asian, so it was a bit like - I mean of course Tony Harrison like lots of Leeds writers leave as soon as they could – so it's in a pretty desperate situation around there geographically. In other areas it's much healthier. But the analogy between one kind of dying art and the apparently dying art of poetry was immediate. And individuals, like for example I've got a poem in the book about Martin Bell, who came to Leeds to die – took him a long time – but he knew everybody in the group, celebrated by everyone, most extraordinary publishing history. As Peter Porter said, his one book was like his last book, collected poems, he had the individual translations and things like this, and he was come and gone, almost like giving birth astride the grave, that thing, where he gleamed for an instant and was gone. But his own life unravelled around that, and people had no idea really what he was doing, and the only reason he was stuck in Leeds was because he had no option, had nowhere else to go. So the sense of an art form in dire straits was clearer to me then than it probably is now in other places where it's obviously undergone quite a lot of a revival.

MJ Again, I've asked a little bit about localities here in my question sheet – has Leeds been a kind of springboard for almost all the things that you think you've accomplished, or tried to accomplish, even, with writing poetry?

40:39

ID I have to admit that Leeds, it's not really necessity for me. I mean my job is one that really pays but it has to be in Leeds. When I came down to London I met a [her?] in London, although she was a Yorkshirewoman she was keen to go back. And when I went back to Leeds I worked with homeless people. I worked in a few jobs, but unless we moved out of the area – for a long time we considered going to Ireland but in the end it wouldn't have worked out, we wouldn't have both got jobs there – so I have to be honest and say that although I like things around Leeds it could have been somewhere else very easily. I think that's been the experience of a lot of people, general social mobility, immigration, people come to places for accidental reasons. One of the projects that I've been working on recently, I mean we didn't get the money for it, but it would have been with the Ilkley festival, and it's like inventing stories and inventing traditions in an area that you happen to find yourself in. And outside Leeds, if you go on the bus, you eventually come near, not that far from where Tristram Shandy – you know, Stearne's Coxcomb, that kind of area – and a sort of forgotten thing near there is this very small maze called The City of Troy. No kind of a maze at all because it's just flat in the ground, you can't possibly get lost, but the story is that you can lose the Devil because he can only move in straight lines, which I hadn't heard before. But it seems to be something about the modern world and industrialisation, that it's a comment on how moving in a direction directly is sinful, somehow. It's like the opposite of the straight and narrow road which

leads to heaven, where in the local version the straight and narrow road leads to hell. But you make up stories about these things, people have no real stories to explain the maze, which is relatively recent. And I wanted to work with groups of people who were near in the area about owning it, who told stories. And in Ireland you get that between the Catholic and Protestant communities, the whole thing about [Din Sianniches?], you know, long stories to do with names, and there's another one which instantly contradicts the one you've just heard, and then another one again. Or like, where I used to stay there's a place called the Bla Hole, and although it's in a Protestant area now, and there were all these stories about why it was called the Bla Hole, but of course realistically it's because Bla [bladh, bladhm] is the Irish word for flowers, and you could see the flowers through the gap in the rocks. So new stories. And to a certain extent - I think I mentioned the fact that I was impressed and slightly horrified by the fact that the person who made the road from where I live in the town was blind. I mean most – a lot of the roads in that area were made by John Metcalfe, who was blind. I mean there's something slightly terrifying about the idea of a road-maker who was blind. Admirable, but then you look into it. But it's the sort of thing that gives you lots of room for manoeuvre. And in Leeds, there's like, Tony Harrison, who I feel you sort of have to acknowledge, but I don't actually feel that he limits me in anything I might want to write. Hopefully - I mean there was a sense of sort of sourcing my inspiration locally, but sort of for economic reasons. But it's one of those areas which is so terminally unfashionable that it's hardly ever written about. I mean Alan Bennett writes a bit more about it but it doesn't in any way cramp your style. And then on top of that you have all of these stories of people who have moved in who are often quite rich culturally. And the BNP term of abuse for immigrants when we were putting on the play about David Oluwale was 'cultural enricher', and to a certain extent I felt that [inaudible – it?] was on me and the others to demonstrate that it was a culturally enriching process, that they could enrich us. Sorry. I think you said there was only a certain amount of time on your tape?

MJ Oh no, it will run longer. I just don't want to take up too much of your time.

ID No it's alright. So Leeds is a convenient place sat in the middle of the country, large scale Jewish immigration, particularly at the end of the 19th century because of the [rag?] trades, and they established themselves. Now that shrinks, so I was reading an article recently saying that the effect of that say on the Jewish community is that it's not big enough now to sustain an Orthodox community. You need a certain number of people to make the various things you have to do worthwhile. So crude things like the size of the community at that time has unexpected cultural dimensions and impacts, so it's affected, you know, the ways the Jewish community responds to things, which I find endlessly fascinating. Like there was a Greek Orthodox community doing their best, which is really small, a really small community. And you get that when you look at the history of Christianity when it goes into other areas as well. I was reading this book about the Jesuits a while ago, and when they went to Japan. I mean some of it you get in obviously famous novelists like Shusaku Endo, you know, he wrote *Silence* about the fact that [his brother?] was tortured to death, and part of the psychological torture, it's a bit like Winston Smith and O'Brien in 1984. And his torture was like, 'you're dying for people, they don't understand what you mean by Christianity, they don't understand what you mean by the Son of God,' which was true, and he's trying to break him down. But in a more humorous dimension to that I discovered that in the Japanese Catholic tradition that Noah has a canoe rather than an ark. There's something rather delightful about Noah's Canoe, and what you might actually get to survive of the world into a canoe. An ark is this wonderful spacious thing with these magnificent dimensions. Of course you could get two of every animal, but if Noah was really put on the spot and God said, 'ok Noah, you've got a canoe, what goes into the canoe with you?' - you know, thinking along those lines. And these things get thrown up by accidents of geography as much as anything else, and you get the same things locally too. So I couldn't honestly say that I am a great lover of, or that it was really the attraction of Leeds that brought me there. And I certainly couldn't say that I'm accepted as a local. But I do talk a lot about things to do with local history which local people don't know or don't want to know. You can get a

very hostile reaction. When I was reading for Oluwale, his death in Leeds and his sort of experience, you get people sort of shouting abuse at you when you're doing the reading, which you don't normally do. There's a policeman who pops up everywhere – there's two policemen who were involved in his death, although they weren't actually – they were done for assault and a prolonged campaign of humiliation and torture, but not – they chased him to the river and he drowned. And nevertheless they weren't done for his death. And so this policeman would jump up every time I was going to say something he'd say 'allegedly'. He was like the lawyer in a newspaper, who says 'no, you have to say allegedly, no, you can't say that,' you know. And he was doing that locally. So that gives me, if anything, an advantage. I don't have local loyalty to inhibit me in thinking or even saying embarrassing things about aspects of it's history.

MJ Well it sort of comes back to what you were saying earlier, about trying to explore your complex allegiances, and almost being somewhere else gives you a little bit more room to work those things out sometimes. My little sort of cryptic comment about Procopius' anecdota. You mentioned him briefly, you sort of did the Nika Riots in Hull, in one of your poems.

ID I have to confess I was using him for some of his Babylonian references, but I was also thinking of the sense of how Procopius' anecdota is usually translated for us as 'secret history', and it really does go along with what we've been talking about. So anecdotalism is condemned very much in the modern environment. But there is that sense that something's happened within poetry where people feel that at last within poetry there is a story within poetry that will be told that hasn't before. And this is not just in England obviously. And just when they get there – I'm terribly sorry, but this whole idea of telling stories in poetry is just wrong, it's a mistake, it's the worst thing you can do - I mean there's a Native American poet called Sherman Alexie, I don't know if you've come across him, but there are Native American formalist poets, but the whole anecdotalism, there is an aspect of it, there are things that are kept outside almost until it's too late. Well I mean that's happening. But I mean with Procopius, it's a load of Bollocks anyway, and a lot of these things which are alternate histories aren't really histories at all, they're much more created, imagined, made up, than actual history, But nevertheless there are strands of doing things which I've found valuable, to me anyway.

MJ I mean I have rather pushed this idea – largely because it's my thesis topic – of poetry as forming a kind of history. Would you not be terribly comfortable with that, would you feel that certainly your poetry has a sort of broader reach than what you would normally describe as history?

ID Yes. There was a quote that I wanted to look up, but I couldn't find it, I was a bit pressed for time. Again it goes back a bit, I think it's Trevelyan, who was talking about the fact that, and this was really when I was writing *The Lammas Hireling*. I liked the fact that the area up near the border is called 'the debatable land', I just loved that phrase, you know, it was debatable whether it was England or Scotland, whether it was Graham or Charleton land, whether it was a day when you'd be doing – everything was debatable. And this quote about poetry struck me because he - if it was Trevelyan, I think it was – he used the phrase 'the debatable land' for poetry, that it was the debatable land between history and philosophy, which I found interesting. And I do feel that poetry is very often occupying something like that debatable land. But there was a thing in the Times Higher Education Supplement recently when they were talking about the fact that they analysed the authors most quoted in literary studies, and none of them are literature specialists. They're all philosophers, or writers about politics, or to a certain extent historians and all the rest of it, so it did seem to me that poetry is inherently impure, and occupying debatable areas. That's one of the things I've always liked about it. And for that reason - I like the fact that poetry is various, that you get so many different kinds of it, that seems to me healthy. I know some people are upset about the fact that there's all sorts of poetry going on, which they think shouldn't be, but that seems to me quite wrong. The more you spread your eggs into different baskets, the more at some future point I think

interesting birds will come out, you know. I talked to Christopher Fox, who's a composer, and I asked him the question I suppose everybody asks, why was Germany so extraordinarily rich with music, why has it got this extravagantly generous musical tradition, when say England doesn't, really? You know, England, somebody called it the land without music, obviously that's not true. And he said all around the time of Bach, and all the rest of it, you would have your choir, and your orchestra for each parish, and great pride went into it, and people performed at a high level, because although it was only for a very small area, nevertheless it was something where people gave of themselves a lot, and I think something like that is happening in poetry at the moment. Great variety, spread all over the place, and although you can't say where the next Bach is going to come from, or even if there will be another Bach, nevertheless I like the fact that you can have that much variety in an area. It seems You can give everybody elbow room, if they choose to find elbow room. Does that make sense? It does relate to history, and particular kinds of histories, and I was also interested by micro-histories, like wotsisname, you know, the Italian historian, you know -

MJ You mean Menocchio?

ID Yes, but not him though. What's the name of the historian, who wrote the book about him?

MJ The book is called *The Cheese and the Worms*, but I'm afraid I don't remember the author.

ID And I thought that was fascinating, I liked the idea that he made sense out of his own experience, of the creation of the world, although it ended up as more like poetry than anything else. And then he just couldn't shut up about it. It was like even the inquisition was embarrassed by him. It was like if he could just go away and shut up then he wouldn't get in trouble again. But he couldn't stop thinking about it and talking about it, and it made sense to him in that way, and in the end that's what he got in trouble for. It's not Bede, something beginning with B; yes, those sort of things. And it was a micro-history of [Figereri?] where there were witches and things. I was looking at a book about the inquisition, and they were saying that the whole notion of, you know, the whole notion of the inquisition, Catholics and particularly Spanish Catholics tend to talk about the Black Legend, where all sorts of things were ascribed to the inquisition, including devices for torture which simply wouldn't work. But there was something in there – one of the groups it was particularly addressed to was its own people, because the understanding of Christianity was pretty fucking basic in somewhere like parts of Spain, and they quoted someone saying 'what do you understand by God? Having enough to drink, enough to eat, and getting up at 10 o'clock in the morning' you know, now that's a pretty generous concept of theology. But nevertheless charming, and it makes sense of his life. So the inquisition was directed at people like that, it isn't quite gonna cut it when you get to heaven[ly?] power, you need to have a handle on the trinity, the resurrection, things like this, sin.

MJ Yes, I mean another label that's always - I mean I think it is a label, I don't think it's always a very good description – this idea of social history, I think a lot of people will tend to say that things are social history when often social history is just so terribly vague. But do you think there is a core of truth in the very vagueness of talking about social history that poetry has, perhaps more fingers in that pie than people might think?

ID Yes. One of these things, I mean there used to be a thing called the history workshop where they would look at areas and as you say social history is this very broad, vague area. And one of the things, it was only when I went out to the City of Troy that I quite realised what it was that I was not understanding. And one of the things I was not understanding was how crowded the countryside used to be. It was much more densely populated than it is now. The debate that we throw up is that England is overcrowded and all the rest of it, there are no areas left, but the areas that we go to that we don't realise are actually wastelands, you know, they used to be densely populated. And all of the villages around where the City of Troy is, commuter villages now for people who work in York,

or they may go to Leeds, but the populations are actually much reduced from what they were in the 19th century. So that's already lost. We live side by side with those ghosts, you know. And one of the things the history horkshops looked at was the notion of crafts like straw platting that children used to do, and they used to get them to sing particular songs, and all the rest of it, so they're kind of grim because they're songs of child labour really, in their own way they're as horrific as narcocorridos, glorifying drug barons. Glorifying the exploitation of children in song, which for all sorts of reasons people don't really want to remember. But it was the fact that the countryside used to be a thriving, busy place, in whole areas of the country - I mean there were parts of Yorkshire that were never densely populated, just too bleak – but there were other places that were just completely gone, and the roads don't make sense. That was a thing that got me about the City of Troy was that it was a maze that you couldn't get lost in, but it was a maze that was almost impossible to find because the road system has gone awry, it goes in directions that roads now don't want to go in, it connects nothing with nothing, it's like Eliot, but it really does connect nothing with nothing because they aren't there any more to be connected. So it's really difficult, it took ages just to get there. There was a railway line that used to be there, that's not there any more, and all the things that you'd use to find your way around, they're gone. And then you do find it, and then you find this thing about how going in straight lines is a feature about how the Devil travels, it makes a kind of poetic, imaginative sense because of the history of that area. And it's like my objection to social history would be that it's like, in some areas you get the impression that it's like an unregarded history, but it's utterly forgotten, utterly gone. Relics, in a turn of phrase, and relics in a kind of meaningless sites for games that people don't understand any more. So it's more interesting than - I think some people get the idea that social history, you just go around and talk to old people, and it's far too late for that in lots of it. And that also will happen – it's particularly noted in immigrant communities, when very often – a dramatic example was when we went to America, we spent some time in a community of the Navajo, the Diné as they call themselves. A big issue is this thing about cannibalism, the evidence of cannibalism locally. Now they deny it, point blank, because they say that this is just a way that white people dehumanise us, they're saying that cannibals are the lowest of the low, and that when they say we are cannibals, they're just [inaudible]. Obviously cannibalism, they find bones with marks from the pot and all the rest of it, and the Celts were cannibals, it's not something that bothers me very much. But they react to the host society by hiding aspects of their own culture. The saddest was the fact that the witchcraft thing, which I found really interesting, you know, skinwalkers, like Native American witches, they never wanted to talk about that, they were embarrassed about it, and they didn't want their children – the children that I spoke to knew less about it than I did, because they never knew it existed, and I got a kind of embarrassed reaction from their parents, it was something you don't talk about. So it's even more brutally the case. And not just in out-of-the-way cultures like that, when they talk about Protestants going to America, they assimilate really really quickly, they talk about, the phrase is cultural fade – ethnic fade, that's it – where they're almost in, a couple of generations down the line. The Irish-Americans never stop going on about it, you know, dye the river green, drink green Guinness, everyone has to come out and march on Patrick's day. It's not like that for the Protestants, despite the fact that's there's more Scotch-Irish presidents than Irish presidents, and in a local way you get some of that. People feel shame very easily, and shame suffocates aspects of culture that they don't want to know about.

MJ Yes, I mean you talk about – one of the poems that really struck me, I think, in the Pandorama thing, was the Jericho Shanty, and I did mention that. One of the things that I would quite like to know is where you got the term 'Jericho Shanty' from.

ID Oh, it was the name of the place. Well the whole thing, I must admit, I didn't dig it up myself, there's a woman who is an artist, Philippa Troutman, and she'd done this series called 'Shanties of Ribblehead,' etchings, and I used to know her. And so I got in touch with her, and one of them was the Jericho Shanty. I mean obviously there's no trace of it, but she dug them up from records of the

parish church. And the actual Ribblehead viaduct is famous, but the local stories about it, they say that a navvy died for every brick in it. Now it wasn't as bad as that, but there were quite a lot, there were something like 600 deaths related in the time that it took to build it. Extraordinarily, when Catholic and Protestant riots were the norm on other sites, Catholics and Protestants worked together there because the weather there was so fucking awful that you had to do it, you were forced by the circumstances. It's called Bleamore, it's like it was Bleak Moor but the 'k' got blown away by the wind over the centuries, you know. So Philippa did a lot of the research for it, to a certain extent I was responding to her etchings as much as to what was going on when I went there. There's physically nothing there now when you go, there's obviously Ribblehead and obviously there's a few buildings near the train station, but it is in the essence of shanty towns, that they come and they go. One of the things that we wanted to do, and it never came off, all of these things fail, so many of them fail, nearly all of them, I can't think of one that was successful off the top of my head, but the railway museum in York were interested in this inasmuch as they said themselves that they have all aspects of the history represented but they have nothing about the people who built the railways. And the idea was that I would produce text and there would be an exhibition with [Niles?] about the navvies in the area, including the great viaduct that is used on the back of the local news and all the rest of it. And that never happened, so maybe at some stage the railway museum will maybe come back about mounting the exhibition. But she'd done a lot of the work already for it. And then I read general histories of the navvies, there are a few, you know, in the 19th century. So I have to admit, someone had done a lot of the work for me and it was [inaudible] then.

MJ Actually, what were the histories that you read, because that would actually help me a great deal.

ID What I will do is I'll email them to you. Sullivan is the name of one of the authors, I've got two big books, both of which are good, and although I think they're out of print they're relatively easy to get second hand through Amazon. But there are two books that I found very interesting. And I'll email you – email Meirion books.

MJ Thank you. Since we've just run over an hour, I wanted to get a little bit on how you get from reading about things to an actual poem. Do you find that you are actually involved in reading about things a lot?

ID I think I kind of read compulsively in a way that most people like us do, frankly. There's all sorts of things which are interesting, I read, because I'm outside an institution, more shapelessly, with less of an agenda, whatever comes across that interests me. And what might be thrown up accidentally by people like – like say Philippa's exhibition. Although I knew her, I had no idea she was going to do this exhibition, and then read as a result of that. Reading books that I'd never thought of reading. Although nothing came of it, that woman did that book about tea-reading, all sorts of things that strangely humanise things – and in a way that was also a kind of history, I mean on the one hand, people got very nervous about it, the last woman who was done for witchcraft was, you know in the war, she was doing seances and the government got anxious because she was talking about sailors being drowned in campaigns that you were not supposed to know about. But the great age of tea-leaf reading I think was the Second World War, when people were so desperate to understand what was happening, this is where we came in really, when people were so desperate to understand what was happening that they would take a narrative from anywhere, from the bottom of a cup. You know like there's divination by looking at the holes in cheese, it's back to Menocchio almost. People so desperate to read something into what's around them that can help make sense of their lives, they go into absurd places. And I suppose it's not that different from what I'm doing, I read absurd books, to make sense of the general absurdity of the situation I find myself in. And very often things will knock together with other things, and then that will move me down the road towards it. Sometimes I get asked things specifically, I mean the Fauvel thing didn't come out of

nothing, it came with the job description what they wanted to see, and sometimes I do get very specific commissions. But I suppose it's partly in opposition to commissions that I do the complete get lost thing, to just see where ideas take me.

MJ Is that where you feel where you books – your books are where you can kind of run riot a little bit more, make your own - I mean obviously, make your own text. Is that what you generally feel when you're working towards a final draft of a book?

ID Well certainly the control you have as a poet, people often think they work under all sorts of limitations, but say for example this thing, this theatre thing about Darach – if I want to write a poem about something I just write it, and if I can make it interesting, and other people will find it interesting, that's it. If you want to make a play, it's an enormous performance, literally, or very often not, not even a performance. There were so many compromises, so many other people get involved before it gets anywhere near anyone else seeing it. That really does my head in. That might not be able to go forward as a project, but I'm able to write about Darach very easily. And I think it's easy for poets to moan about the constraints of what they do, and that not many people are interested in – well, not many people are ever that interested, and the freedom that you have to write about anything that you'd like, and wherever that takes you - and a book of poetry, you can have all sorts of, you move in any direction and call it vaguely as thematically. And then even when it's not thematic you can argue that it's a break from the theme, it's expanding it, looking at alternative directions. It's exploiting the freedom that we have, that we don't appreciate very often.

MJ Well I think that I should probably stop the tape there.

Appendix A2 – Written answers to interview questions for 28th June 2010

The following 5 pages are copies of typed answers to interview questions I provided in advance of the interview with Ian Duhig of June 28th 2010. The material is reproduced with the kind permission of Ian Duhig.

Ian Duhig Interview 28.06.10

Question Sheet

1.   Fauvel and The Speed of Dark

How did you first come across the Roman de Fauvel? What first attracted you to it? What was it about the text that made you think that it might be a good point of departure for a book?

Edward Wickham the Director of the Clerks commissioned me to write an "updated" version of parts of the Fauvel cycle, which he would decide on later according to what suited his singers best in performance. It is a large corpus, with many voices present as beyond that of Gervais du Bus, which I found attractive as it seemed an invitation to write a polyphonic collection myself. A disadvantage was that I couldn't be sure which sections of the original text I would end up writing to, which is why 'Charivari' appears in 'Pandorama', as it wasn't required until late in the day, long after my own manuscript for 'The Speed of Dark' had to be agreed with Picador.

Paradoxically, what it was about the original text that made it seem like a good departure for my book was its banality. The music was the star, the words simple narrative or programmes of symbolism; I didn't therefore have the problems of losing poetry in the translation as it wasn't really there to begin with. Edward's "updating" meant that he wanted pieces comprehensible to a modern audience, relating to the original but not particularly closely, so I had a great deal of room for manoeuvre.

How did you approach the text? Did you start from one of the manuscripts, or a facsimile? Did you use one of the critical editions of the text? How did you go about making yourself familiar with it, and what sort of literature did you find most useful in obtaining the sorts of deeper understanding of the text that you talk about in your afterword to the book?

We specifically used the fr.146 manuscript in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, which Edward had in a black and white facsimile. We also looked at individual colour plates to get some sense of the illustrators' styles. My main departure from the original text was to introduce Fauvel as a speaker with a Prologue, matched by Dame Fortuna's Antilogue, to give an overall account of the plot and themes for the audiences who wouldn't be able to pick up context from the Clerks' songs on their own.

I read generally, enjoying Barbara Tuchman's 'A Distant Mirror' primarily among histories, but the most use to me on the music side were Emma Dillon's 'Medieval Music-Making and the Roman de Fauvel', along with the essays in 'Fauvel Studies', edited by Bent and Wathey. I listened to the Boston Camerata performances of Fauvel on CD before the Clerks were ready for me to hear them.

How do you think that the poems in The Speed of Dark parallel the original text? How do they play off one another, and how do you think their approaches to satirising their contemporary politics?

Some are closer than others, but the original's almost Sartrean nausea at leaky distinctions and dualisms seemed to me paralleled by the Bush era's with-us-or-against-us insistent line, a simplistic binarism reflected in the debates concerning Anglosphere poetry very often at the moment. I know we've had the American Hybrid anthology and are supposed to live in the Post-Division Era, but it hardly feels like that sometimes.

I have to say, the satirising of contemporary politics in the original text, when it wasn't too specific

2

(i.e., attacking de Marigny), could be directly opposed to modern perceptions. For example, the Templars now tend to be seen as victims of a cynical and greedy king, but in Fauvel they're guilty as he charged them. However, there seemed to me a clear link between the original's outrage at society's rulers' neglect of their people and the way now people were being cheated of their money, or even lives if they were soldiers, by our political masters in the West on the basis of what often proves to be lies. There's I think a Yoruba proverb whch states that a liar is more dangerous than a witch because a liar destroys the commonwealth.

What about the music that accompanies the text? The book has a few poems that seem to work from them (Fauvel Love Song; Fauvel's Fountain; Last Round); how did they come to take their place in the book itself? You also mention that they were part of a commission on the Roman: did you originally write more, and then decide that some of them didn't belong, and if so, how did you discriminate between the two?

Chaotically, to be honest, as choice of Fauvel texts to be used wasn't my own. It was very piecemeal in production, as I only found out what texts would be used over long period, so long in fact that the book manuscipt had to be wrapped up before the performance programme that I would work to was fixed. Some pieces were cut, others added too late to make a coherent joint project. I wouldn't have done it this way by choice, though overall I learned a lot from the process, even if I wouldn't want to repeat it.

Speaking of discrimination, you mention as one of the underlying themes that links your book to the Roman the idea of 'things becoming what they should not', and some of the incidents you mention as parallels to historical episodes seem to have some hint of that to them. Given that it has quite powerful links to the Fauvel manuscripts, and to a medieval understanding of morality in general, how do you think this idea developed in - and contributed to - your putting together of The Speed of Dark?

Apart from what I said in the previous answer about politics, the moral dimensions I tried to keep was the medieval disapproval of corruption, usury and gambling. The world financial crisis hadn't yet broken, nor our MPs expenses scandal but there were straws in the wind as well as a sense of moral bankruptcy. It seems to me extraordinary that medieval ideas of the sinfulness of usury have been so modified, while those governing, say, homosexuality are often considered sacrosanct in certain Christian quarters.

2.   Leeds, the Irish in England, folk history

You've mentioned that you tend to write about the sorts of people who don't make it into the history books; do you feel that poetry has any particular qualities that lend it to this particular sort of history? And what sort of role do you think poetry has to play in the creation of histories?

There's the famous Standish O'Grady quote, "the history of one generation becomes the poetry of the next" which I think has a lot of truth in it; counter-quotations immediately suggest themselves, of course, such as Auden's on History being made by the criminal in us and so on. However, I do think a very simple conception of poetry which includes narrative continues to be important, particularly to a poet quarrying an Irish heritage. I'm reminded of something Loreto Todd wrote in her 'The Language of Irish Literature', that "A considerable proportion of storytelling in Ireland is in the medium of verse, the majority of which is sung". I think this storytelling overlaps substantially with history when it deals with unimportant people, the nonentity parade that most of us are.

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I'm particularly interested in the way Nominies uses ballads and folk music to this end, and you've written quite a number of poems that seem as though they would work remarkably well set to traditional tunes, or are openly marked as such. How do you think traditional music, Irish and English, has given shape to the way you write? In particular, I can remember you mentioning in an interview seeing Sean Nos singers perform in Leeds; is there something particular about the Style that connects with the way your verse takes shape?

I was tremendously impressed by Darach O Cathain in Leeds, a sean-nos singer considered the best by people like Sean O Riada to Ciaran Carson. He is an example also of a forgotten history, almost; living in Dublin in 2003, I couldn't get his Gael-Linn record anywhere for a talk I was going to give. Shops said it was no longer available, worst was how few people had heard of him. People like Darach directly connect with my verse inasmuch as I have a poem about him in 'Pandorama', and am collaborating with the Irish poet David Wheatley and Kester Aspden on a theatre project dealing with his life at the moment. Darach worked on the M62 and I was strangely moved to discover that pulped books are used to bed tarmac. In all this talk of history and those ignored by it, I wouldn't want to give the impression that I think I am rescuing them with my timeless verse. My verse is very likely even more ephemeral.

At a more general level, I like the cinematic quality of traditional narrative in, say, ballads, where Charles Causley said each verse should be like a film frame. Also, I like the fact that the border ballad is a distinct regional poetic form. Blended with what someone called the wavering and unemphatic progress of a traditional Irish song, a hybrid approach allows for directness and detour. Well, it might not to anybody else except me, but there you are.

What about localities? There is a very intense vein of quite intimate local connections running through your books, from Louis de Prince in Leeds to Rowntree's at York. How do you feel your poems tap into that vein of local history (if you'd even call it that), and would you say your work is trying to form a continuity with it or give it some change in outlook or direction?

The Irish tradition is very rich on local lore to do with names and topographical features, all born out of the richness of belonging in a sophisticated verbal culture, but I'm also interested in people who find themselves living where they do by accident. This is a feature of economic necessity for large numbers of people, but that doesn't mean they will be indifferent to their new surroundings. We live in Leeds largely because of my wife Jane's job with the NHS. However, my recent poems in particular are locally-sourced. I was fascinated to discover that the road my bus takes to town was made by a blind man, Jack Metcalfe, always knowing where he is going like in the song, while even sighted I hardly ever do. Sometimes the local issues are of national urgency, like the 7/7 bombers or our BNP MEP and the rise of a new right wing; at other times they are wholly parochial like a meeting of the National Fancy Rat Society or Metcalfe's roads, but I would like to achieve something like Auden's cheese image of a local product which might still be valued elsewhere. I think there is a real ecological dimension to this; we can't be jetting off to conferences and festivals in the carefree way we used to, so to that extent this is a conscious development, or change, in my work, such as it is.

Your new book is titled Pandorama, from the parody of a panorama machine in The Ragged Trousered Philathropists, whose performance also features popular songs as a backdrop to a trip

4

through what I can only describe as the evils of early 20th-century capitalism. Poems like 'Jericho Shanty' seem to have a keen eye for that connection between popular music and a particular kind of history – do you feel that's the case, and how would you describe the link?

I liked the rough-and-readiness of Bert White's contraption, which is reflected in the Earnshaw box image on the cover called 'The Blind Engine Driver', which obviously relates to the viaduct-building navvies of 'Jericho Shanty', but also to the stalled train in its companion-poem 'Jericho Shandy'. Between the two of them is the history from the rather naive socialism you describe to the sidelined irrelevance of similar ideas possessed by the hedonistic, panic-stricken speaker of the second poem. I turn often to music as an alternative to white space, but really an implied music; Emma Dillon talks of "how, in the framework of the book, song operates differently from its sonic realization" and in fr.146 even the white spaces have a musical purpose. I suppose crudely it's a way of thickening the mix without being too confusing. The link between music and history here would again be the one Loreto Todd describes, mnemonics of the forgettable

Where does Procopius' Anecdota fit into all this?

In the sense it's translated as 'The Secret History'. A certain kind of narrative poetry is routinely dismissed as 'anecdotal', but I think it often carries that idea of being a secret history. Plus Procopius fitted into a poem I was writing in Homage to Peter Didsbury called 'A Summer's Fancy' playing off his 'A Winter's Fancy'.

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3.   Writing, praxis, and history

Would you be able to give some outline of how you work – how you might go, in effect, from the things that give you the ideas for a poem up to the point of publication? What part do you think your reading plays in your writing?

Do you think poetry and history simply overlap in your work; are they somehow posed against one another or is their relationship, for you, something more tightly woven together? What role do you thinks poets should take in the creation of history?

How do you feel your poetry relates to history as a whole? Would you describe your work as being primarily concerned with history and if so, in what sense? From what traditions of historical writing do you think your work springs?

I think I've probably answered the history questions earlier, but how my poems come into being now is probably as much governed by economics. Like most poets, I suspect, most of what I write starts from what I've read – sometimes what I've heard or seen but mainly what I've read. And books aren't cheap: the two Fauvel books I mentioned earlier cost about a hundred and seventy quid together, which is OK when I had a regular income as I did then but now without that would be out of the question. I read omnivorously so trawl charity shops, which tell you something about history in what is donated to them. Zizek writes "thrillers like 'The Da Vinci Code' are one of the key indicators of contemporary ideological shifts" ('In Defence of Lost Causes') and charity shops are full of copies. Dan Brown books in them might even outnumber the ghostwritten autobiographies of sportspeople.

What this means is that a kind of Arte Povera takes over my approach to writing, intellectual waste recycled to see how or if it can be used again in new ways. It doesn't always work: a vet's book about rat care did produce a poem for 'Pandorama' but one on tea-leaf reading went nowhere, despite its advice to use a large-leafed tea for short-sighted fortune tellers, who presumably could see the future if not the bottom of their teacups. The disadvantage of this is working without the academic or social constructions of thinking that people in institutions share, often unquestioningly.

More often now I leave poems semi-finished, to see how they might work against later poems or with them in service of a collection. I also try now to have a long gap between "finishing" them and putting them into situations where they will be seen by other people. Don Paterson at Picador is a good editor and he lets me know about my lapses of taste or absorption in things which I find absolutely fascinating but nobody else will care about. He's certainly a better judge of poetry than me, being a better poet, but he's probably a better judge of history as well.

Appendix A3 – Materials from the performances of Fauvel

Below I have reproduced, through the kind permission of Ian Duhig, text from a variant version of Fauvel's Prologue used in the performances of the material that became *The Speed of Dark* for an American audience. The lines reproduced below represent an alternative to the final 24 lines of the version of Fauvel's Prologue found in the printed version of *The Speed of Dark*.

The remaining four pages of this appendix are scanned copies of documents given to me by Dr. Edward Wickham, director of The Clerks' Group. They comprise a draft copy of the programme for the performance of the Fauvel concert, together with a sample from the musical score for the performance.

Fauvel's Prologue (excerpt from the 'American' version)

Right now, some say, you're our time's Rome,
my rival stable-God's new home
since French and British empires sunk -
they're history, which you know is bunk;
Brits ruled the waves: you waived their rules,
but their brood on the make aren't fools!
Britannia's culture is a joke -
your borrowed mirrors plus some smoke;
her world role's as your Trojan horse,
a fig-leaf for your naked force
and when she protests, it's a sham:
this monkey's nuts for Uncle Sam.
So, Fauvel wondered, should I mind her
when I can find her organ grinder?
America: now you know why
no Spice Girl loves you more than I;
you are the beat my fond heart skips -
our date is the Apocalypse!
In Europe, Antichrist's forgotten
outside songs by Johnny Rotten;
here, as his herald, I'll have power
where faithful millions wait his hour,
and so, in hope your hearts we'll capture,
our programme's theme will be your Rapture!

South Bank Fauvel Programme

PART ONE

<u>Prologue: The Vice of Fauvel</u>

Music: Favellandi vicium
Text: Fauvel's Prologue
Music: Mundus a mundicia
Music: Quare fremuerunt

<u>Scene One: "Woe to those who fail the flock"</u>

Text: Eye Service
Music: Floret fex favellea
Music: Quasi/Trahunt/Ve!/DISPLICEBAT

Text: Unto Caesar
Music: Clavus pungens acumine
Music Desolata/Que/FILIOS

<u>Scene Two: "I'd rather be a pig farmer than curry Fauvel"</u>

Text: Swineherd
Music: Porchier mieux estre

<u>Scene Three: The Wise King</u>

Text: Chanson de Charlemagne
Music: Alleluia, Veni Sancte Spiritus

Music: Servant/O Philippe/REX

PART TWO

<u>Prologue/Antilogue</u>

Music: Carnalitas luxuria
Text: Dame Fortuna's Antilogue

<u>Scene One: Fauvel in Love</u>

Music: Douce dame debonaire
Text: Fauvel's Love Song
Music: La mesnie/J'ai fait/GRANT DESPIT

<u>Scene Two: The Wedding Party</u>

Music: Buccinate in neomenia
Text: The Wedding-Masque of Antichrist

Music: Filiae Jerusalem &
Text: The House of War

Text & Music: Charivari
Music: Virgines egregie
Text: Bestournement

Text: Barded and Trapped
Music: Porchier mieux ester & Celi/Maria/PORCHIER

<u>Scene Three: Pauvel's Legacy</u>

Music: Garrit gallus/In nova fert/NEUMA

Music: Hic fons, hic devius
Text: Fauvel's fountain
Music: Tribum/Quoniam/MERITO

Epilogue: "This song needs a drink"

Text: Last Round
Music: Quant je le voi/Bons vins/Cis chans

The Clerks' Group

Lucy Ballard, Ruth Massey, Kathryn Oswald	*Mezzo-sopranos*
Chris Watson, Tom Raskin	*Tenors*
Edward Wickham, Jonathan Arnold	*Baritones*

Edward Wickham	*Director*
Anthony Shuster	*Reader*
Colin Tan	*PowerPoint design*

Anthony Shuster studied at RADA and has since worked with a number of stage companies including Kneehigh (*Tristan and Yseult*), Battersea Arts Theatre (*Jason and the Argonauts* and *The World Cup Final 1966*) and Floodtide (*The Cure at Troy* and *Fair*). His television credits include appearances in *Casualty @ Holby City* (BBC), *The Brief* (Granada) and *Broken Morning* (LWT).

Programme Notes

"If I were called upon to name what spirit of evil predominantly deserved the name of Anti-Christ, I should name the spirit of chivalry." Thomas Arnold
"But thou read'st black where I read white" William Blake

The *Roman de Fauvel* is an early fourteenth century satirical poem which survives in two main versions, the longer of which – transmitted in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris – is accompanied by a vast array of illustrations and music which serve to complement and comment on the poem. Fauvel is a horse, his name an acrostic of vice: Flaterie, Avarice, Vilanie, Varieté, Envie, Lascheté. At the opening of the poem we find him elevated from stable to throne, his vanity flattered by fawning courtiers, his mane combed by corrupt clergy. Part One presents a picture of universal decadence and moral degeneracy, and ends with an appeal by the poet for divine redemption and a return to moral kingship. Part Two of the poem tells the story of Fauvel's attempt to woo Dame Fortune (in order to prevent her wheel turning to his disadvantage) and his subsequent marriage to Fortune's maid, Vain-Glory. The wedding is attended by a host of vices incarnate, and gate-crashed by the Virtues whose nightly devotions contrast sharply with the revelling of the street Charivari. At the next day's jousting, the Virtues are victorious but the poet leaves the reader with a pessimistic image of Fauvel's offspring rejuvenated in a diabolic Fountain of Youth, and overrunning the fair Garden of France.

The Clerks' Group's programme presents scenes from this lengthy work, employing images and music from the manuscript and specially commissioned poetry by Ian Duhig. The 'Roman de Fauvel' is of considerable interest for musicians since it includes examples of almost every type of (notated) music current in the early 14th century, a period of revolutionary transition from what scholars refer to as the 'ars antiqua' to the 'ars nova'. Old-fashioned monophonic Latin songs stand alongside modern rondeaux and ballades in the vernacular French; two-part motets in the style of the early 13th century rub shoulders with three and four voice motets in the 'ars nova' style pioneered by Philippe de Vitry. Street songs and liturgical chant – often with words changed so as to reflect the notion of a sacred world turned upside down – all provide an ironic commentary on the antics of Fauvel.

Ian Duhig writes ...
Updating the text's concerns proved eerily straightforward, for as Eco has written "all the problems of the Western world emerged in the Middle Ages." Tuchman's history of this century is titled *A Distant Mirror* and if it did not seem that distant, I often felt I was entering a looking-glass world in researching this Age of Chivalry. For example, one of its founding works of literature, the *Chanson de Roland*, recasts Charlemagne's rearguard ambushers at the end of his Spanish expedition from Basques to Arabs, while immediately after the Madrid bombings the Spanish government attempted the

reverse; Bush sought Muslim allies for a "crusade" that much Christian sentiment opposed, and the West's original desire to preserve access to the Holy Land's wellsprings of God's grace has been exchanged from that to oil.

The central image of the corruption of the rich in the Roman is their constant stroking and currycombing of Fauvel's filthy coat, which is ultimately the source of the English phrase "to curry favour". Fauvel's reign marks the Age of Melancholy, the humour of black bile. For a work and time obsessed with the Antichrist, I borrowed from Arab tradition the figure of Islam's one-eyed Antichrist Dajjal who will ultimately be slain by Jesus in the region of Iraq. A trawl of the internet will reveal perceived connections between Dajjal, Templars and George Bush (though these sites change quickly and are subject to security monitoring). The etymology of Dajjal's name recalls Fauvel's coat and like Fauvel, Dajjal sought (according to Smith and Glasse) "to stop the cosmic wheel from turning," as well as being the source of beautiful music, a feature of the End of Days.

The overriding assault of the *Roman de Fauvel* is on hybridity, distinctions dissolved, things becoming what they should not. This is reflected in its visual art, where in a subtly coloured manuscript, there are thick, *portrait d'ancre*-style outlines which evoke "more moralizing and serious didactic works. Rather as we today enjoy certain genres of film in black and white such as film noir" (Camille). However, the manuscript is itself multiply hybrid: between words and images; words and music; in music, between Ars Antiqua and Ars Nova, as well as systems of notation, some of which include the patterning of blank spaces; the shifting and unstable forms and rhythms of its songs; as samizdat/high culture and so on. Dillon describes how in it "song operates differently from its sonic realization" and how in handling its pages "as flesh meets flesh, skin mingles with skin … readers also, literally, become part of the object". It was my experience and I hope will be yours too, that like the cursed videotape in Nakata's *Ring*, even copies and other versions can restart the cycle.

I will lay you down, love

Fauvel Charivari/Ian Duhig

TR

I will lay you down, love, and I'll treat you de - cent; I will lay you

down, love, and I'll treat you well. I will lay you down, love, my

dear Queen Vain - glo - ry for I am your lov - - - ing King Fau - vel.

I'm an ug - ly thing, love, though that's news not re - cent; I'll not long be

King, love, as your Mam will tell; but for you I sing, love, my

dear Queen Vain - glo - ry: to - night I'm your lov - - ing - King Fau - vel.
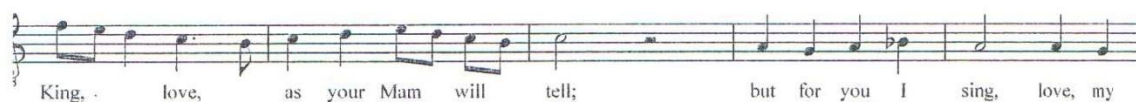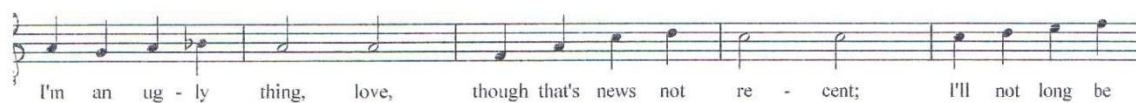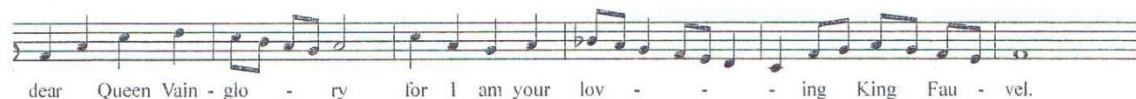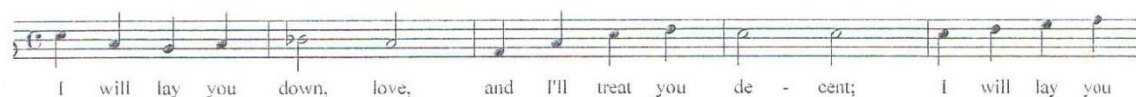
Appendix B1 – Outline of the texts cited by Hill in his acknowledgements section

The table below is an attempt to make a reasonably complete survey of the texts that Hill cites in the acknowledgements that appear as a postscript to the Mercian Hymns. There is unfortunately no way of knowing precisely how Hill encountered these texts; some are clearly too large or specialised to be privately owned and thus were probably found in the library of Leeds University where Hill worked from 1954-80. Others, however, Hill may have encountered somewhat earlier, and the dates and form of publication of some of the cited editions of Old English texts would suggest that they were volumes in his personal possession, possibly from his time as an undergraduate at Keble College, Oxford. I have listed the texts in order of publication date. I have appended notes on the nature of the works and Hill's references to them where it is not discussed in the thesis itself, which were too lengthy to include within the format of the table. The notes are given in the same order as the works to which they refer appear in the table.

Author	Title	Publisher, Place & Date of Publication	Description
John Ruskin (E. I. Cook & A. Wedderburn eds.)	The Works of John Ruskin	George Allen, London, 1907	Volume XXIX of a 25 volume series. 10" x 6.5", hard bound in red; bindings are hand-glued and pages untrimmed. 678 pp, plus front matter i-xxx. Ruskin's arms are stamped in gold on the cover.
A. G. I Christie	English Medieval Embroidery	Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1938	15.5" x 11.5" (pages measure 15" x 11.3"), Hard bound in umber. 206 pp. with front matter paginated i-xviii and 159 pages of monochrome plates, numbered I to CLIX. Numerous illustrations accompany the text. A scholarly work, printed on good quality linen paper with substantial index and lists of plates.
A. H. Smith (ed.)	The Parker Chronicle (832-900)	Methuen & co. Ltd, London, 1950	7.5" x 4.75", hardback, bound in fawn. 72 pp. with a further 8 pages of prefatory matter numbered i-viii. Part of the Methuen Old English Library series.
G. Zarnecki	Later English Romanesque Sculpture 1140-1210	Tiranti, London, 1953	7.5" x 4.75", Hardback bound in black. 68 pp. (which includes an index and contents pages) plus 94 pages of plates at the rear.
Robert Graves	The Larousse Encyclopaedia	Paul Hamlyn,	11.3" x 8.3", paperback. 500

(ed. and introd.)	of Mythology	London, 1960	pp. plus front matter i-xii. Numerous monochrome photographs in the text, printed cheaply for a mass audience.
R. H. M. Dolley (ed.)	Anglo-Saxon Coins: studies presented to F. M. Stenton on the occasion of his 80th birthday	Methuen, London, 1961	9.6" x 6.5", hard bound in dark blue. 296 pp. plus front matter i-xvi and plates I-XVI in monochrome at the rear. Index and notes immediately follow each essay. A high quality printing for an academic readership.
F. Brittain (ed.)	The Penguin Book of Latin Verse	Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1962	7.1" x 4.25", Hardback bound in red. 381 pp. plus front matter i-lxv. Contains works of authors from the classical period through to Latin verses composed in the early twentieth century.
J. J. North	English Hammered Coinage (vol. I)	Spink & Son, London, 1963	10" x 7.5", hardback, bound in blue with leather-effect. 200 pp. with a further 32 pages given to 16 Plates with legends, numbered I through XVI.
D. Whitelock	The Beginnings of English Society	Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1965	7" x 4.25", Hardback. 256 pp. with preface and index included in this pagination. Covers are of standard Penguin format for the period with teal spine, front and back boards black with white border. Cover image is of the Sutton Hoo helmet.
W. F. Bolton	A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 597-1066 (vol. 1, 597-740)	Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1967	8.7" x 5.5", hardback, in dark blue. 305 pp. with a further 14 pages of prefatory matter numbered i-xiv. The first volume of the series, covering the earliest known Latin writing in Britain through to Bede and his immediate successors. Contains a substantial bibliography and index.
Richard Hamer (ed. &	A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse	Faber and Faber, London, 1970	7.8" x 4.87", paperback, cover in orange covered

trans.)

with black interlocking 'ff's. Titles &c. in white rectangles on front, back & spine, as with many contemporary Faber paperbacks. 208 pp.

Additional Notes

John Ruskin – Hill's reference is to letter 80 of the Fors Clavigera, pp. 170-80, which contains Ruskin's account of being taken to visit female nail-makers at Bewdley.

A. G. I. Christie – This book is such a substantial volume that it seems unlikely to have been widely available to the general public and probably did not have a very large print run as a list of subscribers (indicating publication by subscription) appears in the front matter. The copy used for this survey contains an *ex libris* from the University of Leeds, where Hill worked from 1954 until 1980. It is therefore possible that this was the same copy that Hill used for reference. Hill's reference is to a passage in the introduction to the work that explains the term '*opus anglicanum*'.

A. H. Smith – Hill's reference is to the chronicle entry for the year 878.

G. Zarnecki – Hill's reference is to a section very near the front of the book which describes the works of 'the Herefordshire School'.

Robert Graves – The encyclopaedia is very comprehensive but unfortunately suffers from a lack of contact with, for example, contemporary Celtic studies, as witnessed by the unfortunate references to characters in Celtic literature and mythology. Numerous photographs of images of Cernunnos appear, and Hill's reference covers such subsections of the entry on 'Celtic Mythology' as feature Cernunnos prominently.

R. H. M Dolley – Hill's reference is to a usage in an essay on coins from the reign of Edward the Confessor, but the text also features a study on the coins of Offa of Mercia, which can hardly have escaped Hill's attention.

F. Brittain – Also printed in paperback; Hill's reference is to discussions of Latin prose-hymns, exemplified by the 'Te Deum'. The mention of the 'parallelism which is the basis of ancient Hebrew poetry' may well reflect upon the similar traits visible in Hill's *Mercian Hymns.*

J. J. North – Printed on gloss paper; it appears to be a survey/reference book for collectors rather than a complete numismatic history of the first coins struck in Britain c. 550 – 1250. Hill's reference is to the chapter headed 'Kings of Mercia', which outlines all known examples of Offa's coinage, and to the plate containing photographs of the same.

D. Whitelock – Also printed in paperback. Hill's reference is to the entire chapter ' The Classes of Society,' where a definition of *wergild* and its significance in defining social status in the Anglo-Saxon period begins the chapter.

W. F. Bolton – Hill's reference is to the section discussing the known works of the poet Aethilwald, one of which appears to address an 'Offa' (clearly distinct from the Mercian king of the same name). The quoted phrase appears in the context of a discussion of the attribution of the poem to a Mercian king, Aethilbald, which Bolton argues against.

Richard Hamer – A standardised and widely available Faber paperback from the early 70s. Hill's reference is to the entirety of the poem, 'The Battle of Maldon', which is given in parallel text format.

Appendix C1 – David Jones' annotations and his sources for the Celtic material in the *Anathemata*

0. Introduction

This appendix is intended to fulfil two purposes: firstly, to supply a brief account of the ways in which Jones annotated the texts in his possession, and secondly to provide a supplement to the catalogue of Jones' personal library compiled by Huw Ceiriog Jones[243] regarding Jones' annotation of the books in his possession, covering the books on Celtic studies and related topics that Jones had access to in preparing the *Anathemata*. The first section provides an overview of the types of annotation Jones made with reference to two texts which display the full range of annotation styles that Jones uses. The second section gives a table of the books in Jones' library directly relating to Celtic studies and the medieval literature of Wales that could reasonably be expected to have been used in the preparation of the *Anathemata*, along with a brief explanation of the rationale behind this selection process.

1. David Jones' annotation: a brief survey of his habits, with examples

David Jones' annotation can be categorised into three simple types, as outlined in chapter 4 above. Jones most commonly used an ordinary pencil for annotations but rarely used blue and red pencils and even pen. The first type can be loosely termed an index or a set of page references, comprised of page numbers written in the front matter of a text, usually on the inside front cover but sometimes extending to the title page or other pages that precede the main body of the text. Sometimes these will take the forms of simple lists of page numbers, but often include some indication of the matter which made particular parts of the text noteworthy for Jones. In Fig. 1 below, taken from Dawson's *The Age of the Gods*, the inside front cover and its facing page have been covered with page references. The more complete annotations of this type can offer telling insights into the sources for some of Jones' material: by way of an example, it seems clear that the references to pages 183 and 214 in Fig. 1 invite comparisons with the notes to pages 56 and 64 of the *Anathemata.*

The second type is made up of Jones' notes handwritten in the text. These notes will often take the form of relating the contents of the text to wider bodies of knowledge, as demonstrated by the example in Fig. 2. Although this type of annotation is relatively sparse by comparison to the other two types, it often sheds a great deal of light on Jones' critical approaches to the texts in his possession. For a further example of this type of annotation at its fullest extent, see Miles 1990 pp.168-9.

The third type of annotation can be loosely termed marginal marks. The most common forms are a single line in the outer margins of the text, and a cross or x placed in the outer margins, as shown in Fig. 3. In the table below I denote them either (|) or (x). Variations on these forms can be found – the marginal lines may be doubled or trebled to indicate the importance of a passage, and the cross marking may be used to indicate a note written elsewhere in the margins of the same page. Underlining and strike-throughs are comparatively rare but can be found, particularly in texts that appear to have been in Jones' possession at an earlier date. Words in the main text are very occasionally struck out and corrected. The use of this type of annotation seems to have been more contingent than the other two types, possibly indicating that the marks were made whilst reading. However, this type of annotation is so common that it would be unwise to fix upon any such general conclusion without a most extensive survey.

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243   Huw Ceiriog Jones, 1995.

Fig. 1: Inside front cover of Christopher Dawson's *the Age of the Gods*; NLW David Jones 844

153
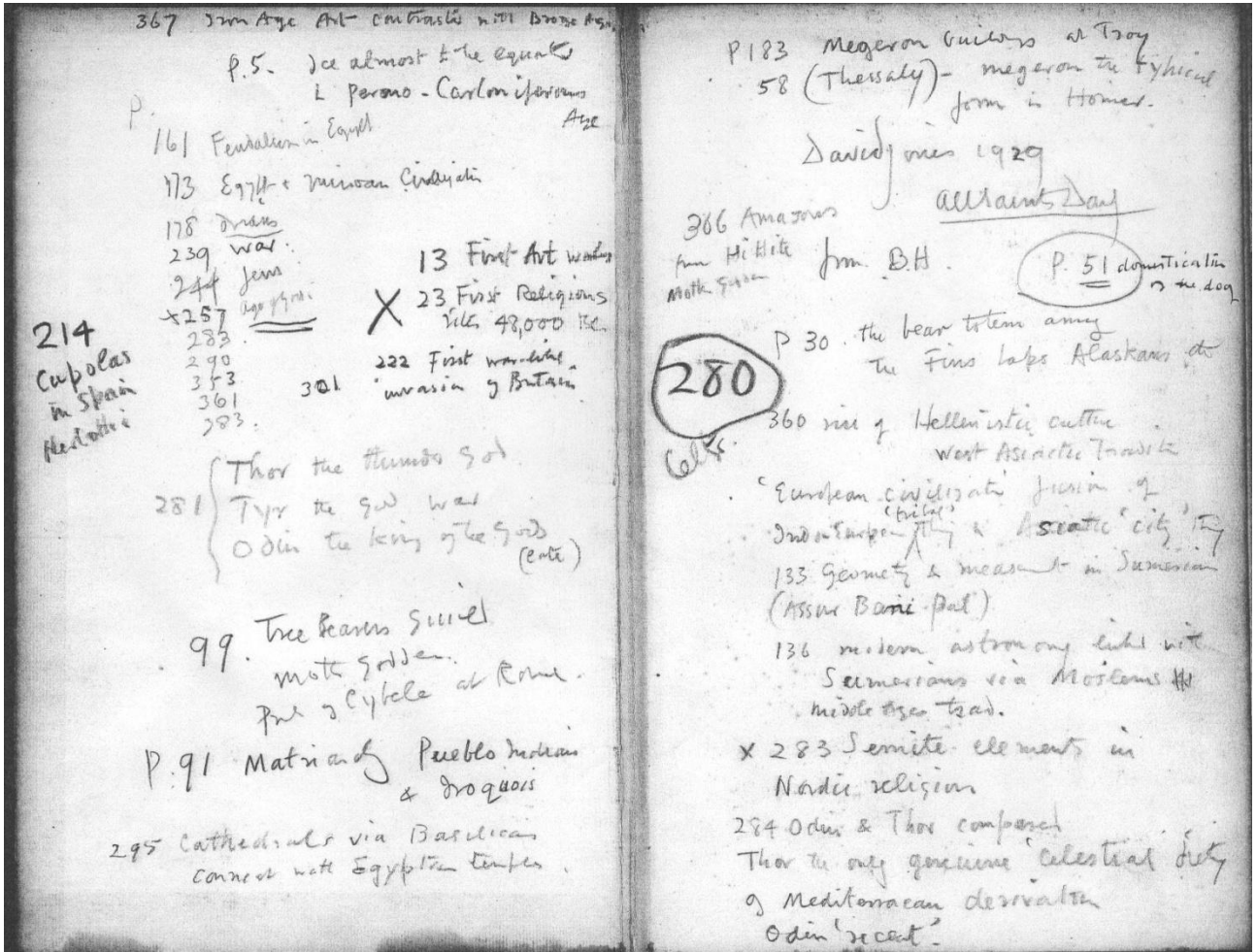
Fig 2. Pages 160-1 from Henri Hubert's *The Greatness and Decline of the Celts*; NLW David Jones 368
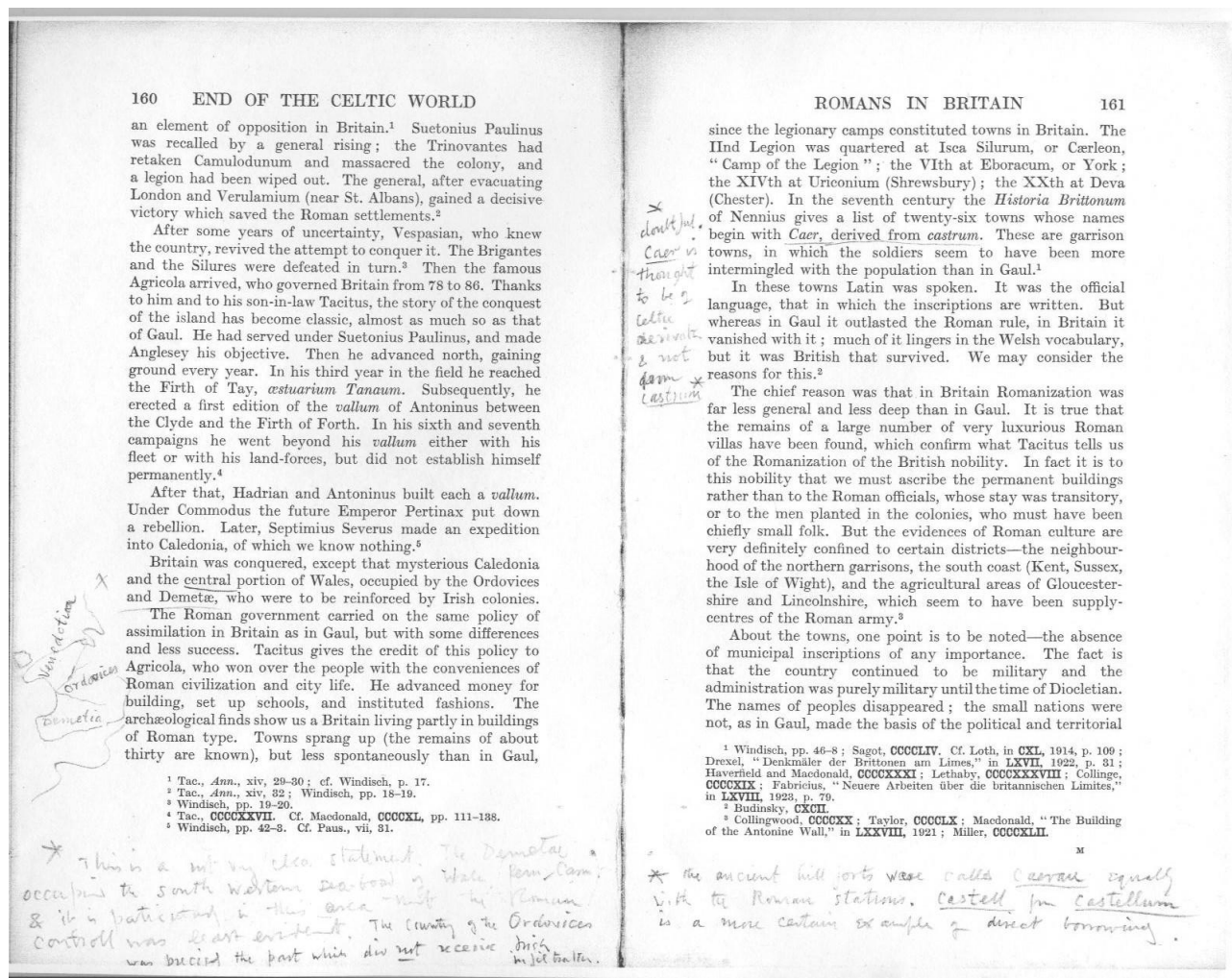
160 END OF THE CELTIC WORLD

an element of opposition in Britain.[1] Suetonius Paulinus was recalled by a general rising; the Trinovantes had retaken Camulodunum and massacred the colony, and a legion had been wiped out. The general, after evacuating London and Verulamium (near St. Albans), gained a decisive victory which saved the Roman settlements.[2]

After some years of uncertainty, Vespasian, who knew the country, revived the attempt to conquer it. The Brigantes and the Silures were defeated in turn.[3] Then the famous Agricola arrived, who governed Britain from 78 to 86. Thanks to him and to his son-in-law Tacitus, the story of the conquest of the island has become classic, almost as much so as that of Gaul. He had served under Suetonius Paulinus, and made Anglesey his objective. Then he advanced north, gaining ground every year. In his third year in the field he reached the Firth of Tay, *æstuarium Tanaum*. Subsequently, he erected a first edition of the *vallum* of Antoninus between the Clyde and the Firth of Forth. In his sixth and seventh campaigns he went beyond his *vallum* either with his fleet or with his land-forces, but did not establish himself permanently.[4]

After that, Hadrian and Antoninus built each a *vallum*. Under Commodus the future Emperor Pertinax put down a rebellion. Later, Septimius Severus made an expedition into Caledonia, of which we know nothing.[5]

Britain was conquered, except that mysterious Caledonia and the central portion of Wales, occupied by the Ordovices and Demetæ, who were to be reinforced by Irish colonies.

The Roman government carried on the same policy of assimilation in Britain as in Gaul, but with some differences and less success. Tacitus gives the credit of this policy to Agricola, who won over the people with the conveniences of Roman civilization and city life. He advanced money for building, set up schools, and instituted fashions. The archæological finds show us a Britain living partly in buildings of Roman type. Towns sprang up (the remains of about thirty are known), but less spontaneously than in Gaul,

[1] Tac., *Ann.*, xiv, 29–30; cf. Windisch, p. 17.
[2] Tac., *Ann.*, xiv, 32; Windisch, pp. 18–19.
[3] Windisch, pp. 19–20.
[4] Tac., CCCCXXVII. Cf. Macdonald, CCCCXL, pp. 111–138.
[5] Windisch, pp. 42–3. Cf. Paus., vii, 31.

ROMANS IN BRITAIN 161

since the legionary camps constituted towns in Britain. The IInd Legion was quartered at Isca Silurum, or Cærleon, "Camp of the Legion"; the VIth at Eboracum, or York; the XIVth at Uriconium (Shrewsbury); the XXth at Deva (Chester). In the seventh century the *Historia Brittonum* of Nennius gives a list of twenty-six towns whose names begin with *Caer*, derived from *castrum*. These are garrison towns, in which the soldiers seem to have been more intermingled with the population than in Gaul.[1]

In these towns Latin was spoken. It was the official language, that in which the inscriptions are written. But whereas in Gaul it outlasted the Roman rule, in Britain it vanished with it; much of it lingers in the Welsh vocabulary, but it was British that survived. We may consider the reasons for this.[2]

The chief reason was that in Britain Romanization was far less general and less deep than in Gaul. It is true that the remains of a large number of very luxurious Roman villas have been found, which confirm what Tacitus tells us of the Romanization of the British nobility. In fact it is to this nobility that we must ascribe the permanent buildings rather than to the Roman officials, whose stay was transitory, or to the men planted in the colonies, who must have been chiefly small folk. But the evidences of Roman culture are very definitely confined to certain districts—the neighbourhood of the northern garrisons, the south coast (Kent, Sussex, the Isle of Wight), and the agricultural areas of Gloucestershire and Lincolnshire, which seem to have been supply-centres of the Roman army.[3]

About the towns, one point is to be noted—the absence of municipal inscriptions of any importance. The fact is that the country continued to be military and the administration was purely military until the time of Diocletian. The names of peoples disappeared; the small nations were not, as in Gaul, made the basis of the political and territorial

[1] Windisch, pp. 46–8; Sagot, CCCCLIV. Cf. Loth, in CXL, 1914, p. 109; Drexel, "Denkmäler der Brittonen am Limes," in LXVII, 1922, p. 31; Haverfield and Macdonald, CCCCXXXI; Lethaby, CCCCXXXVIII; Collinge, CCCCXIX; Fabricius, "Neuere Arbeiten über die britannischen Limites," in LXVIII, 1923, p. 79.
[2] Budinsky, CXCII.
[3] Collingwood, CCCCXX; Taylor, CCCCLX; Macdonald, "The Building of the Antonine Wall," in LXXVIII, 1921; Miller, CCCCXLII.

M

Fig 3. Pages 176-7 of Henri Hubert's *The Greatness and Decline of the Celts*; NLW David Jones 368

Secondly, St. Patrick seems to have made a special fight against slavery, and particularly against the enslavement of prisoners of war and against war itself. He preached, for example, in favour of Christian brotherhood. He had been a slave in Ireland, and had been summoned back to the country by voices. The success of his preaching is attested by the stoppage of the slave-trade. There were no more expeditions, and, therefore, no more standing armies, and the institution of the Fianna became obsolete. Two hundred years later, the Venerable Bede, in telling of a raid made in Ireland by the Northumbrians in 684, describes them as falling on an inoffensive people.[1]

Lastly, the superabundant energy of which I have spoken found a new outlet—the preaching of the Gospel. St. Columba and the monks of Iona went to the Continent, where they founded monasteries—Luxeuil and St. Gall—in which valuable Irish MSS. are preserved.[2]

From the sixth century onwards Ireland became a centre of Christian culture, a school of theology and morals. The substance of the earliest Penitentials is Irish. Bede tells us that a crowd of young Englishmen followed the teaching of St. Colman. Later, Alcuin corresponded with the monastery of Clonmacnoise.[3]

But the Christian culture of Ireland was now as it were the flower of the national civilization. St. Patrick had attracted one of the intellectual classes to his side—the poets. Christianity gave them a better script than the oghams. In St. Patrick's time they already began to make written collections of the ancient epics. We shall see later that the honour of ordering these collections to be made is ascribed to Loegaire, King of Ireland in St. Patrick's time. It is a fact in the history of the Celts to be compared to the putting of the Homeric poems into writing in the history of the Greeks. In the seventh century, too, the Irish grammarians began to extol and cultivate their language. All this movement likewise was originally started by St. Patrick.[4]

[1] Ibid., p. 159.
[2] See Gougaud, CCCCXXVIII ; Lloyd, op. cit., p. 109.
[3] MacNeill, op. cit., p. 242.
[4] Ibid., p. 167.

VI

CHRISTIAN IRELAND TO THE SCANDINAVIAN INVASIONS

It was truly the Golden Age of Ireland that commenced with Christianity and lasted about three hundred years; three hundred years of continuity, peace, prosperity, and unity, things which no other Celtic people had ever had. The result was that Ireland had time to complete herself and to-day there is an Irish nationality, or rather an Irish nation, which, alone of the Celtic nationalities, has survived persecutions and disasters.

Not that all was golden in that Age of Gold. Ireland suffered by the disappearance of the mercenary militia which gave her a kind of army for defence and attack. She suffered also by her laws of succession. She suffered, lastly, by the rivalry of the ecclesiastical power and the state. There were internal wars, competitions between Leinstermen and men of Connacht and between the families descended from the Kings of Connacht, for the High Kingship. But these conflicts were not more than small incidents. Moreover, there is no history for this period but mere anecdotes.

One anecdote tells of the abandonment of Tara, the seat of the High Kingship, in the reign of Diarmait mac Cearbhail, a great-grandson of Niall, in circumstances which seem to be quite legendary, the city being cursed and abandoned in 545. In reality Tara was not destroyed at all, and probably not cursed, for a council was held there in 780. But it was really a gathering-place for festivals and a military camp rather than a city, and times were changed. Cruachain in Connacht and Ailinn in Leinster, which were likewise great camps, were likewise abandoned. The military organization was disappearing. Besides, although Irish Christianity was of such a national character, it could not do otherwise than change the old system of festivals and secularize the places in which they were held, unless it consecrated them. Now, St. Patrick had not established himself at Tara, but at Armagh. It seems, too, that the High Kingship was no longer absolutely bound up with the possession of Tara.[1]

[1] Ibid.

N

2. Jones' sources for the *Anathemata's* Celtic subjects

The following table is intended to be read as a supplement to the catalogue of Jones' personal library compiled by Huw Ceiriog Jones,[244] for readers who are interested in Jones' sources for the Welsh and Celtic history that appears in his work before 1952. The bulk of the bibliographical information derives from the catalogue, but in providing this table I have aimed at making two useful additions: firstly, the table is directed towards texts that Jones may have encountered in some form whilst working on the drafts of the *Anathemata.* The process of selection I have employed here bears some explanation: the restriction by subject-matter is one that naturally aligns itself with the content of the thesis, but this was at times problematic. Although I have attempted to include texts on more general subjects that might be expected to contain some relevant passages, the sheer size of Jones' personal library has forced me to err on the side of restrictiveness to ensure that this survey retains its focus. Hence the survey covers primarily the books that Jones possessed on Welsh history and medieval Welsh literature that Jones may have used as sources for *Anathemata.*

However, determining whether Jones had access to the texts in question constituted the other main problem in compiling this survey. Jones wrote autographs with dates in many of his books, but the situation is complicated by the presence in his library of books with autographs postdating 1952 which nonetheless contain clear indications that Jones had access to them, or copies of them, at an earlier date; his copy of J. E Lloyd's *A History of Wales* is a prime example of this difficulty. I have therefore used the date of publication, rather than the autograph date (where it exists) to determine inclusion in any cases where I felt uncertain, to allow the interested reader to more readily gain access to the texts and make their own final assessment.

Secondly, with this table I have attempted to rectify the omissions and inaccuracies of Huw Ceiriog Jones' catalogue in the matter of Jones' annotations. It would have been an enterprise beyond the scope of this present work to make an exhaustive catalogue of Jones' annotations to the texts, the simple documenting of which would have demanded far more space than this appendix could provide. Rather, I have attempted to give an outline of the quantity (relative to the size of the text in question) and the nature (according to the typology given in section 1) of Jones' annotations to each text.

I have structured the table so that the first column contains entries for the texts as they appear in Huw Ceiriog Jones' catalogue, and in the same order (alphabetically ordered, except that items that appear in the appendix to the catalogue appear at the end of the table), so that if desired the two can be compared and the selection process that I have used in compiling the table shown in a clearer light. The central column gives the catalogue number under which the volumes can be found in the National Library of Wales (so a number of 172 in the centre column refers to National Library of Wales, David Jones Collection 172). The final column contains my own description of the additions made by David Jones to each text.

Catalogue Data	Catalogue Number	Annotations
Aneurin Gwawdrydd The Gododdin of Aneirin Gwawdrydd: ... London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1888 xii, 440p; 22cm Autographed David Jones Jan. 1934	172	1 page ref. inside front cover. A few marginal marks. A few notes, and a card containing translated lines from stanza 1A loosely enclosed.
The Ancient Laws of Cambria... translated from the Welsh, by William Probert. London: sold by E. Williams [etc.], 1823	170	Many page refs. inside front cover. A few marginal marks, and a few annotations.

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244   *Ibid.*

49, 414p; 24cm.
Autograph & notes, dated 1939

Anwyl, Edward The book of Aneurin London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion (Transactions, 1909-10) pp. 95-136; 2 plates; facsimiles. 23Cm	171	A few page refs. on frontispiece and above title. Some marginal marks and a few notes.
Barnes, William Notes on ancient Britain and the Britons. London: John Russell Smith, 1858. viii, 168p; 18cm Autograph of David Jones (195-?)	810	No notes.
British Broadcasting Corporation The lost centuries: five broadcasts on the transition from Roman Britain to Saxon England... [Introductory pamphlet] London, 19--? 16p; illus, maps. 22cm	825 (1+2)	1 note, referring to time of broadcast.
Brut y tywysogion. [English] Brut y tywysogion, or The chronicle of the princes, edited by John Williams, Ab Ithel. London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860. lx, 492 p, 3 plates; facsimiles. 26cm. Autograph of David Jones, dated June 6th 1939	184	A few page references inside front cover. A few marginal notes.
Charles, Bertie George Old Norse relations with Wales. Cardiff: the University of Wales Press Board, 1934 xx, 172p; 20cm. Autograph of David Jones, dated March 11th 1950.	200	1 page ref. inside cover. A few marginal marks and 1 marginal note.
Charlesworth, Martin Percival The lost province, or the worth of Britain. Cardiff: UWP, 1949. viii, 90p, plate, maps. 23cm. (Gregynog Lectures 1948)	201	A few marginal marks (x, |).
Dawson, Christopher The age of the gods: a study in the origins of culture in prehistoric Europe and the ancient East. London: John Murray, 1928. xx, 446p, 4 plates; illus, maps. 23cm. Autograph and notes. Dated All Saints Day 1929. 'from B. H.'	844	Copious page refs. on inside front cover; many marginal marks and notes.
Edwards, Owen Morgan Wales, with a chapter on modern Wales by Prof. Edward Edwards. 2nd ed.	225	1 page ref. in front matter. A few marginal marks at the rear of the book; a few notes to

London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd. 1925
xxiv, 432 p; illus, maps. 20cm.
Autograph of David Jones, dated Sept. 1933

pages 192-3.

Funck-Brentano, Fr.   858
The Middle Ages, translated from the French by
Elizabeth O'Neill.
London: William Heinemann, 1922.
viii, 556p; 23cm. (The national history of
France)

No notes.

Geoffrey of Monmouth   235
[Historia Regum Brittaniae. English]
The British history, translated into English from
the Latin of Jeffrey of Monmouth... by Aaron
Thompson.
London: printed for J. Bowyer (etc.) 1718
[2], cxii, [16], 402, [54]p; 24cm.
Bookplates of Frederic Hardwicke Knight, and
Howard, Earl of Effingham.
Autograph of David Jones, dated 1948.

2 page refs. inside front cover. 1
more in front matter. A very
small number of marginal
marks and annotations legible
here, clearly Jones'. However,
the book is in such poor
condition (binding broken;
many pages loose) that accurate
cataloguing was not possible.

Geoffrey of Monmouth   236
[Historia Regum Brittaniae. English]
Geoffrey of Monmouth, translated by Sebastian
Evans.
London: J. M. Dent & co. 1904
[4], 370p, plate; 16cm.
Autograph dedication to David Jones from 'T.
P.' (Tristam Powell?) dated Nov. 1 1911.

A few marginal notes.

Gildas   238
The works of Gildas and Nennius, translated
from the Latin... by J. A. Giles.
London: James Bohn, 1841.
viii, 104, xliv, 44p, plate; facsimile. 23cm
Autograph and notes. dated 1937

1 page ref. inside front cover.
Many marginal marks and some
marginal annotations (cf. Miles,
1990). Contents page verso
contains a list of the MSS of
Gildas and other editions of his
work.

Giraldus Cambrensis   240
The autobiography of Giraldus Cambrensis,
edited and translated by H. E Butler...
London: Jonathan Cape, 1937.
368p, 3 plates; map. 23cm.
Autograph of David Jones dated 1943

1 page ref. inside front cover. A
few marginal marks, a few
notes on p. 46.

Giraldus Cambrensis   1532
The itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin through
Wales, AD MCLXXXVIII, by Giraldus de
Barri, translated into English, and illustrated
with views, annotations, and a life of Giraldus,
by Sir Richard Colt Hoare.
London: pr. for William Miller, 1806.
2v. illus. 31cm
Autographs of David Jones dated Sept 1951 and

1 page ref. in front matter. 2
marginal notes in a hand not
easily identifiable as Jones' due
to brevity.

Sept. 8th 1951

Gougaud, Louis Christianity in Celtic Lands: a history of the churches of the Celts, their origin, influence, and mutual relations, translated from the author's MS by Maud Joynt. London: Sheed and Ward, 1932. lxii, 458p, plate, map. 23cm. Autograph and notes by David Jones dated Nov. 1934	1167	1 page ref. in front matter. Many marginal marks, | and x types. Some notes.
Graves, Robert The White Goddess: a historical grammar of poetic myth. London: Faber & Faber Ltd. 1948 430p; 23cm. Autograph & notes of David Jones; also autograph dedication to David Jones by Lynette Roberts. Holograph card from EVC Plumptre enclosed loosely. dated June 1st 1948.	545	1 page ref. in front matter. Some minor marginal marks. Some notes.
Griffith, William John A short analysis of Welsh history. London; J. M. Dent & sons Ltd. 1911. viii, 126p; maps. 16cm. Autograph of David Jones dated 1911	242	A few pencil marks, including (corrective) strikethroughs; 1 marginal mark.
Gruffydd, William John Math vab Mathonwy: an inquiry into the origins and development of the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, with the text and a translation, by W. J. Gruffydd. Cardiff: UWP Board, 1928. xviii, 392p; 20cm. Autograph and notes by David Jones dated Hydref 1958.	246	3 page refs. in front matter. A few marginal marks (| type).
Hanes Gruffydd ap Cynan The history of Gruffydd ap Cynan, the Welsh Text, with translation, introduction and notes, by Arthur Jones. Manchester: The University Press, 1910 viii, 204p, 2 plates; map. 24cm. Autograph of David Jones dated Sept. 3rd 1953	261	1 page ref. inside front cover. A few marginal marks and notes.
Hawkes, Jacquetta Early Britain. London: William Collins, 1945. 48p, 8 plates; illus, map. 23cm. Autograph and notes of David Jones dated Oct. 15 1945. Press Cuttings enclosed loosely.	868	Many marginal marks and notes.
Hubert, Henri	368	Some page refs. on inside front

The greatness and decline of the Celts.
London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.
1914.
xvi, 314p; maps. 25cm.
Autograph of David Jones; notes. dated Nov
18th 1944

cover. Many marginal marks (|,
x) and some notes.

Jones, Thomas Gwynn
Welsh folklore and folk-custom
London: Methuen & co. Ltd. 1930
xx, 256p; 20cm
Autograph of David Jones dated August 18th
1936

267

Some page refs. inside front
cover. A few marginal marks.

Jones, William Lewis
King Arthur in history and legend.
Cambridge; the University Press, 1914.
viii, 148p; 17cm.
Autograph of David Jones 'read 2nd time May
30 1925'

390

2 marginal notes.

Keeler, Laura
Geoffrey of Monmouth and the late Latin
chroniclers 1300-1500.
Berkley; Los Angeles: University of California
Press, 1946.
viii, 152p; 24cm.
Autograph of David Jones.

237

No notes.

Lethbridge, Thomas Charles
Merlin's island: essays on Britain in the Dark
Ages.
London: Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1948
xii, 188p, 8 plates; illus, maps. 20cm.
Autograph & notes of David Jones dated Aug
18th 1948

894

Many page refs. inside front
cover. Many marginal marks (|,
x) and some annotations.

Lewis, Timothy
Mabinogi Cymru.
Aberystwyth: Gwasg y Fwynant, 1931.
xvi, 240p; map. 23cm.
Compliments of the press to David Jones Jan
1947

275

1 page ref. inside front cover.

Lloyd, Sir John Edward
A history of Wales from earliest times to the
Edwardian conquest. 3rd ed.
London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1948
2v; fold map, genealogical tables. 23cm.
Autograph & notes of David Jones. dated Sept
1953. 'Copy also at Piggotts bought c. 1938'

276 (a + b)

276a: Many page refs. inside
front cover. Some marginal
marks and a few notes. 1 press
cutting (letter to the Times, 20th
March 1947 from the then
headmaster of Harrow
concerning the development of
stirrups)

276b: Some page references
inside front cover. Some

		marginal marks, and a few marginal annotations.
Lloyd, Sir John Edward Owen Glendower: Owen Glyn Dwr. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931. xiv, 162p; 23cm. Autograph of David Jones dated March 11th 1950	277	3 page refs. inside front cover. A few marginal marks and a few notes.
Lloyd, Sir John Edward The Welsh Chronicles. London: Humphrey Milford, 1928 26p; 26cm. (The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture, British Academy, 1928) From the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol 14. Autograph of David Jones.	278	Many marginal marks, a few notes.
Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin. The Black book of Camarthen, reproduced and edited by J. Gwenogvryn Evans. Pwllheli: [J. Gwenogvryn Evans], 1906. xlvi, 168p, plate; port. 28cm. Autograph of David Jones dated May 1959. 'given to me by Aneirin Talfan Davies'	1537	1 page ref in front matter. Some small marginal marks in intro.
Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch. The White Book Mabinogion: Welsh tales & romances reproduced from the Peniarth manuscripts, edited by J. Gwenogvryn Evans. Pwllheli: J. Gwenogvryn Evans, 1907. [i.e. 1909] xxx, 312p; 27cm. Autograph dedication to David Jones from Saunders Lewis. Marginal notes in SL's hand.	1538	1 page ref on title page; 1 marginal mark in introduction.
Mabinogion The Mabinogion, translated by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1949 xxxiv, 282p; 18cm. Autograph of David Jones and some notes. dated Dec. 1st 1949	285	1 page ref, sketch map and other brief writing inside front cover. 2 further refs. in front matter. Some marginal marks and notes. A few jottings in pen inside rear cover.
Mabinogion The Mabinogion translated by Lady Charlotte Guest. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1913 [8], 432p; 18cm. Autograph of David Jones dated Oct. 1948	282	1 page ref. on inside front cover, several more on title page verso. Some minor marginal marks (x, |).
Mabinogion The Mabinogion, translated by Lady Charlotte Guest...	283	Many page refs. inside front cover. Many notes, particularly on contents page. Some

London: J. M. Dent, 1937. [8], 432p; 18cm Autograph & notes of David Jones dated April 19th 1940		marginal marks.
Mabinogion Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi allan o Lyfr Gwyn Rhydderch, gan Ifor Williams. Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru (UWP) 1930 lvi, 336p; 20cm.	284	A few marginal notes in a hand probably not Jones' – see footnote 17 to Chapter 4.
MacCulloch, John Arnott The Celtic and Scandinavian religions. London: Hutchinson, [1948]. 180p; 19cm. Autograph & notes of David Jones dated March 17th 1950	371	Some marginal annotations. Some marginal marks (|).
Morris, John Edward The Welsh wars of Edward I: a contribution to mediaeval military history, based on original documents. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901. xii, 328p, plate; maps. 23cm.	261	2 page refs. inside front cover. Some marginal marks and notes. Some use of underlining.
Malory, Sir Thomas Morte d'Arthur. London: J. M. Dent, [19-?] xxviii, 402, 412p; 18cm. [preliminary pages missing] Autograph & notes of David Jones. Page 2 of holograph letter to David Jones (unknown author) and Christmas card to David Jones from Joan & René Hague enclosed loosely.	393	Front and rear covers are detached. Many page refs. inside front cover, with many more enclosed on loose papers in the book (possibly portions of the original dust jacket). Many marginal marks, some notes. 1 map drawn in pencil. 1 pressed flower. Lines from The Dream of the Rood written in Old English and Modern English on inside back cover.
Rees, Sir John Frederick Studies in Welsh history: collected papers, lectures and reviews. Cardiff: UWP, [1947]. xii, 184p, plate; maps. 22cm. Autograph of David Jones dated April 1953	319	Some marginal marks (|).
Rhys, Sir John Celtic folklore: Welsh and Manx. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901. 2v; 23cm. Autograph of David Jones.	377	No notes.
Rhys, Sir John The englyn: the origin of the Welsh englyn and kindred metres. London: Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion, 1905.	320	1 marginal mark (x).

viii, 185p; 23cm. (Y Cymmrodor, 18).
dated 1933

Rhys, Sir John The Welsh people: chapters on their origin, history and laws, language, literature and characteristics, by John Rhys and David Brynmor-Jones. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909. xxvi, 678p, 2 plates; maps. 21cm. Autograph of David Jones 'from my father on my 16th birthday' [i.e. 1911]	321	Many page refs. inside front cover. Some marginal marks (|, x) and some notes in the margins and on the map pages.
Salmon, Mary A source-book of Welsh history. London: OUP, 1927 xii, 302p; illus. maps. 19cm. Autograph dedication to David Jones from René & Joan Hague. Autograph of David Jones dated Xmas 1933.	326	No notes.
Squire, Charles Celtic myth & legend, poetry & romance... London: The Gresham Publishing Company, [s.d.] x, 450p, 5 plates; 22cm. Autograph of David Jones dated Sunday March 17th 1918.	380	No notes.
Williams, Albert Hughes An introduction to 'The History of Wales', vol. I: prehistoric times to 1063 AD Cardiff: UWP Board, 1941. x, 192p, 3 plates; maps. 23cm Autograph & notes of David Jones dated April 11th 1942 Autograph letter (typescript) to David Jones from the author enclosed loosely [an introduction to The History of Wales by J. E. Lloyd]	348(1)	Many marginal marks (|, x) and notes. Some date calculations in index at the back of the book.
Williams, Albert Hughes An introduction to 'The History of Wales', vol. II: The Middle Ages, part 1, 1063-1285 Cardiff: UWP, 1948. xii, 202p, 5 plates; genealogical tables. maps. plans. 23cm. Autograph of David Jones dated Aug. 1953 Page of notes by David Jones, xerox of O'Donnell lecture *English and Welsh* by J. R. R. Tolkien, some press cuttings, enclosed loosely --an introduction to The History of Wales by J. E. Lloyd	348 (2)	Notes and pages refs. on inside front cover. Some marginal marks (|, x).
Williams, Syr Ifor	359	Some marginal marks (x and |

Lectures on early Welsh poetry.
Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies,
1944.
76p; 21cm.
Autograph of, and marks by, David Jones.
Autograph dedication to David Jones from
Aneirin Talfan Davies.

types) and annotations. 1 date
calculation.

Rhys, John   1785   1 page ref. in front matter.
Celtic Britain. 2nd ed. revised.
London: S.P.C.K., 1884.
xv, 325p; illus. maps; 17cm. (Early Britain)
Autograph of David Jones dated Oct. 1938

Images are reproduced here with the kind permission of the Trustees of David Jones' estate.

Appendix C2 – 'He Frees the Waters', reproduced from the *Anathemata*
(page is an insert between p. 212 and p. 213)

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Paris, Bibliothéque Nationale Francais, Collection Francais 146

London, British Library, MS Harley 3766

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(For a complete listing of the primary sources relating to chapter 4, see Appendix C1)

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Prefatory note to the Creative Component

The following poem has been set out for a page size of roughly A5 dimensions. This size is closer to the B5format generally used in printing contemporary poetry books, the final publication form for which this work has been prepared. This consideration particularly affects the layout of the first section, which has pages composed in two columns, with the text of each column distinguished by serifed and sans-serif faces. Page numbers are given for individual pages in the A5format, rather than the larger page sizes used for the other portions of this thesis.

King Harold

Harold's Prologue

Lately I have not been myself. I have
been given now and then to pondering,
to vacillation, to doing things by halves -

yet I will write. I will be Harold,
made hermit at the end of time
in that room between the house's cold

and windows where the sun passes,
illuminates and fades – where we are awake
to shadows and the discarded presences

that spill behind us into an empty room,
spaces where we will look up sometimes
to find that alone, we are not alone,

where lives of Harold, William, Sweyn
pack the soft spaces behind plasterwork,
or are exhaled from attics in a rain

that, amazed, sunlight streams through.
This book is Harold. Is history,
by which I mean - the reading
                                   is up to you.

Harold's Chronicle

a. I

if he approaches

*1022, or might it be
better written MXXII?*

*

Wulfstan on the point
of laying aside his pen
instead bequeathed it.
Deposuit. Tollo. Incipiam.

Not a pen, exactly, but a
stylus dipped in ink. Dry,
it was used to mark out
straight lines for the
scribe to work on.

*

Over north, that was north
and west, that was west and wealas

'Foreign'

to England, that was half England;

That is, half Danish.

out of the red field and the common field,
by wyrm-wood and rood-wood,

Land, its tenure and
obligations.

one foot by Humber-bank.

*

steadily walking, to pass ditches
hitching his saint's robe

*

Snorri spat in his hand,
turned down the television.

"Ah, Harold Cnuts-son, him
who runs hare-fast, who rides
on whale-road and many other
formulae. Worthy falconer,

Hence Harold Harefoot.
'Hron-rade'

horseman and sailor both,
who crosses water seldom
without he wins treasure.
  A fine young man!
  And a dependable patron."

The Danes, like the Saxons, were keen falconers and admired good horsemanship.

"Not that Harold, dear. The other Harold."

*

Gytha, of course, was proud:
another one! Swein certainly
the strong one, the one to get fame;

Gytha, sister-in-law of Cnut.

but this one would do. If he could avoid
dying of ague, or measles.

Even noble children could consider themselves lucky to survive infancy.

*

'Se sweord is scearp;
þa sweord sindon scearpu'

'The sword is sharp;
the swords are sharp.'

"Could you change the channel, dear?
I can't find the remote."

*

An exercise, if you like.
The first steps into language.

Or a preamble, the argumenta which precedes a more lengthy writing.

*

If he approaches.

a. II

After some deliberation, Æthelnoth wrote:

Then the Archbishop of Canterbury.

'today's young men are the problem,
hanging round the king's estates,
or the bishop's; looking for some cows
or a fat abbess to carry off.

Many of them have ships
and go raiding in summer.'

Sat back and paused.
Even to him, it didn't look right.

*

A little late in the day, his father
came to see him.
                    "Goo goo ga ga," he said
to the curious, in-leaning beard.

A second son was generally a useful asset, usually as a replacement for the first.

A stamp of hunting-boots,
mud on the floor.

Definitely not a favourite son.

*

This might seem a little out of place in 1023. Fortunately annis domini are more pliable than they might first appear.

After compline the news admonished
the acquisitive, the treacherous, those
whose lust for coin overreached their duty.

"Those bankers should be strung up"
grunted Snorri, sparkling in the new-

minted garb of a king's thegn.

Literally, a man of the king's retinue; an official.

*

At the marble-effect hearth they gathered
to tell stories in light of its electric two-bar:

"King Edmund rode from the west
to the east and back again. It availed

It was probably in these years that Cnut's anglo-danish administration really began to put down roots.

him but little, since seven years ago this
St. Andrew's day he died.

Hail Cnut, of course, who started his reign
so very well:

Eadric Streona
gutted and thrown over the city wall."

Eadric of Mercia, who had betrayed both Edmund Ironside and Æthelred in turn; the best account claims that he was beheaded in Cnut's court and flung onto a midden.

*

Setting aside his chess-board
Cnut summoned the nobles
of England for a quick round
of celebrity blankety-blank.

In fact, this 'putting down roots' often meant watering with blood. Where the previous forty years of war had started in its demolition of the old Wessex nobility, Cnut merely finished the process.

*

In the first quires, many erasures.

a. III

Æthelred, Unred;

after a while it mattered less and less.

*

New estates, new livings. A gated
community in Sussex, a hall
in Dorset. Clean, safe villages for slaves.

*

In his cups the newly-returned king
confided, sometimes too freely:

"I may not have any evidence
but those bastards Ulf and Eilaf
are obviously plotting something.

When this war comes before the council
you know what to say, I hope?"

*

Nothing decided. From the marshes
with their mere-locked islands,

the north-waters with chapels
already halfway to ruin,

in all quarters the marches
of man's work. Between languages
he advances, the sunlight blinding

Æthelred, 'noble counsel'. His nickname, on the other hand, means 'no counsel'.

Dispensing with an old nobility, Cnut needed a new one to help him govern his new kingdom.
- which you may note. Literally, a king's doom or province of his judgement.

The Chronicle is confused here, writing the names of quite minor lieutenants where it should have written Olaf and Anund, kings of Norway and Sweden

Britain at the close of the Viking Age; still a country of wide, deep estuaries, marshes and islands.

Or mark, or border territory. Perhaps equivalent to the late Roman *limes*.

on his cross, his tonsure, his gown.

*

Mac Bethad mac Findlaích – ave
Mormaer, ave thane of Cawdor.

MacBeth was a close
contemporary of Harold.

Who shall be king hereafter?

*

Over cream and canned peaches
he finally asked.

"Are you sure this is the right one,
my dear? He doesn't look like much."

*

That said, there was some inevitability to it.

Her on þisum geare wæs þæt gafol gelæst;
hic Cnut Rex Anglorum naves fecit.

'in this year the tax was
levied'
'Here Cnut, king of the
English builds a fleet.'

*

Waving his doubters aside, the king
drew favourites and heel-draggers alike
to him at Christmas. The mead splashed,
the fairy-lights glittered gold and dragon-
red. Gifts were given, burnt wrapping-paper
wheeled away over the cold roofs.

a. IIII

In groups, Godwin's men smoked,
backs hunched against the snow.

In such weather the SA-80
was known for a faithless weapon.

*

"At Holy River the bodies lay
machine-gunned in a ditch. Others
they say were drowned, or were buried
in the soft sands. Cnut himself
held the day."
                To which Snorri added:
"Although personally I thought
that he retreated, with many dead."

Unimpressed by his stories,
the children continued to eat
from their laps.

*

'Se helm is brocen. Þa modra sind wepende.'

A clever child. Perhaps his first words.

*

Sweyn's face reddened under its puppy-fat.
"Mummy is the king's sister-in-law
even if dad is a nobody. Mummy kissed
the king and that's how I was born."
The circle of boys drifted outwards,
muddy hands parting the hedges.

Or Helgea, to use the
name given in the
Scandinavian poetry.

The accounts differ as to
who actually won; but
Olaf of Norway was
unable to force Cnut to
halt his campaign.

'The helmet is broken.
The mothers are
weeping.'

Sweyn Godwinson
would later claim
exactly that: that he was
Cnut's son.

"And if anyone doesn't believe me
I'll fight them behind the bike sheds."

*

"What it was for? Why, the roast beef
of Old England! And our Danish king."

As he fiddled with the remote
the official poets put it far more succinctly.

*

Over winter, the chess-game stood unfinished.

The priests stared, Jarl Ulf lay
beside the altar, frost
already collecting on his eyes.

Militum x qB3? I think not.
Kings often make bad losers.

*

Behind the dykes
and palisades
they sharpened
spears against

the north wind.

The runestone of Bjorn Arnsteinson records that he 'found his death in Godwin's host when Cnut sailed to England'

The chronicle intermittently resorts to poetry which appears to support an 'official' version of events.

The Heimskringla goes into some detail on how Cnut had Ulf killed after he refused to allow the king advantage in a game of chess.

The Danes and subsequently the English mastered a kind of infantry warfare which often relied upon the construction of fieldworks and temporary strongholds.

a. V

As always, some confusion over dates:
interlace of moveable and immovable feasts.

*

"It is entirely possible that at this time I was
not even born. Instead, reader, I include this
brief chronicle of the times to show how my
early life was shaped not only by the characters
of the great men of those days but also by the
grace of God."

- This among the many writings
completed near the end of his life.

*

We offer as parallel to the drownings
at Holy River this swift dowsing, the brush
of cold stone. The same blessed waters
as flowed through Palestine.

Air rushed through his lungs. The priest
said the name of a Danish king. Harold.

*

"Are you sure?" the registrar murmured.
"He'd make a lovely Dominic. Or a Jason."

Whereon the bishop rushed forward
to point out that the man was clearly
out of order.

*

The calculation and calendation of time was a serious business, especially when the timeliness of rite was a factor not only in guaranteeing the universality of the church but also in courting the intercession of the divine.

One of the numerous manuscripts completed in his retreat into religious contemplation.

At Helgea a great dam was burst which apparently drowned large numbers of Danes and English.

Named for Cnut's grandfather, Harald Bluetooth.

After all, medieval children were usually christened early rather than late.

Certainly in the tumult of those days
events were misplaced, or bound
in the wrong order.
                    The historian in him
was often busy with needle and thread.

It was not unknown for
new books to be created
from old simply by
rebinding the pages.

*

On his long road, the king
wrote letters home. 'Weather fine,

To Rome.

though I can't stand the fancy foreign food.
Connie and Rudolph send their love;
Papa John asks to be remembered. Do
send money, ships, and men. I'll deal
with Norway when I get back."

Conrad, Holy Roman
Emperor; Rudolph, king
of Burgundy.

*

'Either way, the war was soon over;
King Olaf turned insurgent
with Russian backing, Cnut
bribing the local chieftains
to bring him to heel.'

Olaf's support crumbled
as Cnut bribed his Jarls
to turn against him. He
spent some time exiled
in Russia as a result.

To humour his children, Snorri
switched to something educational.

*

'Se sweord is scearp;
þa sweord sindon scearpu'

Although in this case
not nearly so cutting as
a strong, valuable
coinage.

a. VI

Bony hand on the back of his head.

"No, no, no. Begin your colloquy
again."

A speaking-together, or
a conversation, usually
a teaching exercise.

*

Many apologies. If I mis-spoke,
the fault was ever mine.

*

The island of Britain is eight hundred
miles long and two hundred broad;

and here in this island are five languages,
English and British and Welsh, and Scottish
and the Book-language. The first settlers
in this island were the British, who came
from Armorica. But they were driven
from the southern part of this land
long before Alfred or Ine's time.

But even this attempt to
begin again has its
errors; you may easily
find my own concerns
drowning out those of
Bede.

A version of this passage
begins some texts of the
chronicle.

*

Burst into sunlight laughing. Sweyn
often ran ahead, shrieking Danish
at the crooked trees. A flurry of smoke,
and dung. The hollow trunks rattled
to their boasts and the clash of sticks.

*

For who could look upon the lions of the foe,
terrible with the brightness of gold?

Emma's encomiast,
describing the English
fleet.

*

An unwilling pupil, forever amok
among his father's officers and slaves.

The monks of Holy Cross
were pleased to have him, all the same.

The monks of Waltham
later claimed that
Harold had been
educated in their house.

*

What nonsense. He was educated
at home, among hall-troops, thegns,
and his mother's household.

"Waltham's abbot will grow fat enough
without our son's education in his paw."

Such a situation would
have been at the least
unusual.

*

A thing well-begun?

Sweyn stared at the fragments
of fine pottery, tears swelling
over his reddening cheeks.

*

'Norway conquered stop will be home soon
stop'

Gytha smiled a little. All this history
had been getting rather out of hand.

Not least because its
manufacture was an
expensive business.

a. VII

From Lapland, Reindeer skins
worked with witch-magic
until harder than armour-rings;

Such a coat was said to
have protected St. Olaf's
adversary at Stiklestad.

from Pavia, fragments of the true cross.

The relic-market of
Pavia was famous and
formed part of the well-
used route between
England and Rome.

Other places with goods yet more exotic:
'fond memories of Latium,'
'a present from Normandy,'
the white sugar shot through with blood.

*

Cnut with his fleet
filled the waters
of Øre Sund
from Sjælland
to the Skane side.

That is, the tight neck of
water between what is
now Copenhagen and
Sweden.

Harek of Thjotta sent word
to the outlying districts
before Godwin's broadcast
for the BBC confirmed it.

Harek, though a
follower of Olaf, is said
to have sailed past
Cnut's fleet unmolested.

*

Familiar with horse, and hounds.

I do not invite you to
imagine the scene.

Beyond the book-room windows
the havoc bated for the lure
and windward thrust of the glove.

I invite you to witness
and to understand.

*
Clergy came and went.

Not Harold's biography
but the Life of Harold.

Scribes with their pen-calluses,
monks clean-pated, glistening.

From the top of the hay-rick
Harold watched, curiously,
sometimes quick-witted enough
to shout "baldy!"

*

Propelled out of the house by his father
and his rabble of new siblings.

*

He spoke the king's Danish,
English at shire-moot, a little French

when he called on his auntie Emma,
which was only now and then.

*

Loaded with souvenirs, Cnut's ship
rammed the beach at Sandwich.

He stayed long enough to give
his wife a peck on the cheek

and to have dinner
with his favourite dogs.

A powerful man always had a large household; not only managers and labourers, nor even professional warriors, but men of learning and ability: encomiasts, historians, poets and their amanuenses.

It is likely that Harold understood some Latin and Welsh along with the English and Danish expected of him as a member of the nobility.

Literally, 'Sand Bay'; the Heimskringla claims that Cnut's own flagship was a massive vessel by the standards of the day, quite possibly too big to be drawn up as were the smaller Viking vessels.

a. VIII

After the hard years some recovery,
green corn from furrows
laid over with ash.
                    Knowing
what was good for them, the minsters
purchased new ornaments and,
where they could get them, relics.

Cnut was prosperous where Æthelred had been bankrupt; a new wave of church-building can be dated to this period.

*

Slow trickle of restitutions.

Woman suing the warlord
dying peacefully in his bed.

The late Saxon bureaucracy made such things possible; where estates had been usurped in the disorder of Æthelred's reign there are court documents that show such cases being brought - usually to the benefit of the churches who preserved them.

*

"Did I neglect to mention
the twinkle in Duke Robert's eye?

A clever girl, and not one
to go slipping up the back stairs;

Clever enough to secure a dukedom for her son, or author for herself a new position.

brought through the castle gate
in a fine cloak, and a four-horse-

drawn Mercedes."

                    "Do change
the subject, darling. The children
can hear, you know."

Snide *commentators* made much of her substitution: *possessio* for *positura*; an innatentive scribe, perhaps?

*

Christmas, Lent, Easter; Rogation, Ascension.

Loaf-mass to harvest. Orchard to training-yard.

Lammas, or the Hlaf-mas.

The household flourished on its hoard
             of Ordinary Time.

'It was about the rogation-days that it befell' was a common chronicle entry. A family of soldiers, they knew how the holy year interlocked with the campaigning-seasons.

*

Generous with dole-checks and sparing
with ASBOs, it seemed that each year
brought new and eager followers
to his father's door.

Advancement was normally through patronage, and free men would often pledge their service to a powerful man.

*

'Long, hot summer. Golden autumn,
snow in winter. Or, if you prefer,
a long period of sustained growth.'

Cnut ruled wisely over the G7
for as long as his time was.

England, Denmark, Norway; Sweden, Scotland, Wales, Dublin.

*

William looked up from his cradle
at the blue-eyed priest. The cross
dangled from his neck, spinning
and shining. "Bastard," it seemed to say.

*

The suggestion of Florence of Worcester that Godwin was a cowherd who befriended Æthelred after he had lost his way whilst hunting seems fanciful.

In spite of his generosity, nobody could deny
that his father seemed to grow richer
at his neighbours' expense. People muttered
of his descent from cowherds,
though never to his face.

a. IX

In a far-away country
that was not so far away
Olaf died. A king,
a battle and a date.

Recovering from his wounds
young Harald dreamed often
of the Emperor's golden city
and summer's long roads.

That, after all, is what viking meant.

*

King Olaf died in the thick of battle.
King Olaf was found hiding in a pit.
King Olaf performed many miracles.

Godwin's attempt to balance these reports
briefly earned him the nickname 'dissembler'.

*

Standing on his mother's favourite chair,
Sweyn was adamant: "although he was
my auntie's cousin he wouldn't accept
daddy – my real daddy – as king even
when everyone else said they would.
That's why his head was cut off."

"That's nonsense" said Edith, "and he's not
                              your dad."
The resulting scuffle splashed soup
over the floor. The pewter dish rang
off-key and rolled away.

Stiklestad, 1029. Olaf
too on the night before
his death had visions;
both of the earthly
kingdom that would
never be his, and the
kingdom he would
inherit in its despite.

To Romanus Agyros via
Yaroslav of Rus.

As with such men killed
on the battlefield, a holy
light collected around
his body – so that even
the poor folk who lived
nearby knew that a
saintly man lay there.

This episode is not
recorded. Is it
invention? Is it sensible
interpolation of fact?
Beware of voices that
speak through the wall
of the page, or Daniel
speaking from a lion's
mouth.

*

"That's very well,"
                        said Iago,
"but I don't see
what it all has
to do with us."

Iago ab Idwal ap Meurig.
An obscure prince of
Gwynedd: a cipher, an
integral part of this
manufacture.

*

'Victory in Norway! Our great Empire
now reaches from the Throndheim country
down to Kent, and all from Orkney
to the southern part acknowledge him!
Meanwhile all over Denmark mean
and great alike strike out the bunting.'

'Deheu-barth'; as over-
king.

Martial music. Seo moder
is wepende. Se rinc is blodig.

I leave this translation as
an exercise for the over-
zealous reader;
'Bloody'? Perhaps.
'Gore-spattered' for the
florid or ambitious.

*

From the royal aircraft carrier,
Godwin's band was careful
to play only old favourites.
Rule, Denmark. Hearts of Oak.

*

Dreamy-eyed at the rushlight
he thought in his father's language,
then his mother's.

Se cyning. Þa kong.

It seemed that the
smoke blurred only
earthly things; I liken
the five languages of
these islands to the five
wounds on the tree of
passion.

a. X

Phons, antiphons. Protestations
of innocence. Toffee slithering
down chair-backs, gospel in leatherette.

So much in response to the time.
So much the time itself.

*

"Meanwhile, they say that Edward
the Nobody was living as a monk
somewhere in France. The Normans
later added that he performed there
certain miraculous cures."

Lengthening pauses. The clink
of forks on the best china.

*

More of the same? It is hard to say.
Their history-books were full of kings
who burst from the sidelines
in wakes of regalia like the hairs
of a falling star.

*

At last Godwin called for his son
on the progress through his many shires.
Harold watched the dust plume
under Sweyn's tiny, receding horse.

*

Victori in psalmis.

Convertere exaudi me
Domine Deus meum.

These times, those
times. The slow ticking
of the Lord's years.

Who will see it and who
will write?

An uncomfortable
question. Snorri thought
of the parchments even
now piling in his
chambers.

Every margin is a
serpent grappling with a
page, or a ladder
connecting earth to
heaven.

At such times one must
decide: am I *auctor*,
compilator, or
commentator?

Miniature landscape, map. Models
of intrigue and resentment. Events
taking shape like weather
beyond the many seas.

"Why dwell upon a single part
of the web? The characters grow
like trees, swaying their antic arms."

*

"I confess," said Iago,
"I still don't see
where we come into this."

*

A crisis of narration; whose
unenviable viewpoint is this,
to see such broad country
through a warping glass?

Responding to his critics,
our holy author acknowledged them
as convenient fictions.

Polyphony of canon propaganda.

*

Cnut used the council's disagreement
to sneak in another sojourn in Rome.

Abyssus abyssum vocat,
in voce cataractum
tuarum.

Observe them going,
unaware of our witness.
Harald in his small boat
through a great
continent.

By the portage-way to
Kiev; by the Dnieper to
Cherson and
Constantine's city.

He set his sights on a
wider world: a Europe
of parchment and ink.

One clear voice, or the
assemblage of
competing voices?

Nunc dimittis; I am
composed of you, and
we compose him.

a. XI

'Having reflected upon these
and similar matters, shame
powerfully afflicts my spirit.'

Even so, hemmed in by difficulty
I fear to be called loquacious
only by the envious.

*

For the chronicler, these
were ambiguous years:

the king is here. The king
is there. I see him.

Traversing frontiers, barbaric,
inexplicably small.

*

But what year could fail
to be ambiguous in those days
of warrior-kings, of providence,

of sea-serpents thrashing
their claws bare hours
beyond the mind's reach?

*

Ware of such dangers that beset
the haunted cottages, the byres ringed
with tatters of cultures foreclosed,

But this is my voice.
Dico atque noli dicere.

Yet I cannot now fix
everything I write;
its sudden appearance
before you, brandishing
trumpets, its uncouth
sounds. Nor can I tell
who has joined
this cavalcade of words
unannounced, nor who
is translated in this,
my vulgar outburst.

For eruptio read erratio;

read also the migrations
and the obscurity, the
exploits of warriors
humbled by the divine.

For sea-serpents read
also Jormungand
gnawing upon the tree
of life;
the poison spat in Thor's
veins, the nailed one
hanging from the holy
trunk.

the King drew up charters to confirm
his gifts on earth and his reign in heaven.

*

'All things which are seen by human eyes
in this world quickly disappear.'

for erratio read a
straying from the Lord's
path, a digression that
may yet carry thoughts
heavenward.

In the mountains above, and beyond
the ringing tumults of the sea
God's will is augured; on England,

cold fronts, thunder. Chance of snow.

*

Beware, then, of fixing
your hopes upon earthly
things, of worshipping
the trees, or stones.
Instead practice your
learning in this manner:
damus,
dabit,
do.

Matins, Lauds, Vespers, Compline.
Fair Isle, Viking, Malin, Irish Sea.

Godwin was one: that generation
of listeners with ears tuned
to the forecast of kingdoms.

Read for learning,
wisdom, or intelligence.

*

A canny boy by now, given
to watching his father. Perhaps stirred
at times by histories of the Danish race,
or of the English. Wise enough
to turn suddenly inconspicuous
in face of his brother's excess.

A prediction of Christ's
intercession, his
willingness to send
comets or omens.

A crucial point. Lego or
audio? Lexi or audivi?

Responsum: our God
calls, but the educated
may read his word.

a. XII

I re-state: even in those good years
which now appear under a cloud
there were lands broken, alien or waste.

The Welsh march, Lothian, Strathclyde.
I give you a list of the missing.
I give you a list of the unburied dead.

*

Called to him in the small hours,
the chiselled face half-lit by candles.

Half-lit, perhaps. Burdened by state.
Moody with that melancholy that breeds
among gold, and fine things.

*

What a boy might see
through chinks in drapery
or cracked doors. Power
was a mentor to him, or a ghost.

*

The fleet assembled and disbanded.
Returned to shore, Edward was again
prince of empty rococo drawing-rooms,
of the odd exiled Louis Quatorze.

His Norman friends were quick
to recite his humorous titles: lord
of the Sunday rain. King of vexed promises.

The sword-edge flashed
in the dark of the tool-
shed. The ash-tree
groaned at the touch of
the axe.

For no border on earth
is appointed by God
except for the walls of
Jerusalem and the limits
of Eden.

Omnes gurgites tui et
fluctus tui super me
transierunt.

I recall. And his
response slips lightly out
of joint. These waterfalls
descend the page, step
by step, cataract by
cataract;

et quis vocat in
profundis anime mei?

Responsum: only the
waves on Finisterre,
only the shaking of sails.

*

Emma, his aunt, made a point
of showing him the needlework
prepared over winter by her women.

The cloth has vanished but the designs
remain. I show you the lion, the dragon,
the longship and the fighting man.

*

No great man in the Danish court he was
overshadowed by Haralds and Osgods,
picked out from them by the quaint
misspelling of his name.

*

In the various parlours you may
imagine them clustering at the wireless,
a passing friar, other mendicant
oracles. Render their bright
clothes in monochrome; bring out
the feast of their expectations
as meat and two veg. Outside the weather
on point of breaking holds its breath.

*

Were there already rumours of an ailing king?

Or, variously:
Emma whispered to him
the details of her
ambitions. 'You haven't
met my son Edward,
have you, dear?'

This Harold, that Harold,
battling his way into the
margins and out again,
into the currents and
the curling vines.

This Harold, that Harald.
Beset by grotesques,
huddling in the gaslight
and the bright colours
that say 'Dig for Victory'.

Transmitted thus across
the prevailing centuries,
the keyhole fit of each
scrambling him to new
and more rarified
wavelengths. Assemble
him in the clutter of a
wartime parlour, the
inside of a Saturday-
night television set –
minus his authorial x-
factor, the thing that
does and permits.
Responsum:
permits what?

a. XIII

If I may defer this inevitable
conclusion – already I suspect
you see the stately effigy, the oils,
the latinate pronouncements over
bearded, prosperous heads – I ask you
spare a thought for the living king

abased, munificent, with halting breath
at various altars, at home, abroad,
despite the fact this too is fiction
composed twelve years after his death.

∗

Expecting the worst the family
nucleated from its various demesnes:

from left to right, Gunhild, Wulfnoth,
Edith, Gyrth, Leofwine. Second row
Tostig, Harold, Sweyn. Gytha behind.
Godwin in a subtle, expensive hat.

Pop of flashbulb stunning yokels and satyrs.
Interleaving of warriors and grotesques.

∗

Carried to Ramsey by night barge,
you slow waters. Æþelric biscop.

Requiescat in pace.

∗

Softly in and out of focus. Breeches,

This closing in of walls,
hence hortus conclusus,
that rings in Cnut to
paradise. This wrapping
of lead over and about,
this fragment of silk
slender and transparent
as skin. Well he may
stand at the altar's
golden launch-pad,
paying down alms as
fuel for his apotheosis -
Hence his translation
into heaven, or England
as we sometimes call it.

Where was this photo
taken? It is difficult to
say. Or do I recognise
the shrill voices that are
still running down that
background of dark
avenues, the kicked-
over chair that swims in
summer grass?

For the memory is hard
to place. Athelric
brought home by a crew
of punting thegns, black
ribbons respectfully
lofting their straw-
boaters.

shorts. Who made the lens? Who
humped the plates uphill
to Clio's One Hour Photo?

*

"Ignore him. Think of his sons
Harald and Harthacnut,
the real players in this. At best
he was a willing apprentice
to his father's power games."

The dishwasher muttered. Snorri
picked up his king and hesitantly
knocked its head against the board.

*

An English lobby in the Danish court?
A loyal retainer seeking the best
for his own people, or himself?

The mints struck, and struck. Obverse,
the bearded king; reverse, coin sacks
with the moneyer's name and burh.

*

Speaking of which, who
sat quietly sewing
with a kingdom's treasure
under lock and key?

In stark colours they are
still there: Cnut in his
carpet-slippers, Godwin
chewing thoughtfully on
his pipe. In the kitchen,
Cnut's two Danish sons
eyeing each other over
the tinned salmon.

Heimskringla furnishes
the scene with sundry
details: a print of
horses, postcards from
Jerusalem, Rome. A
clerk coming up the
back stairs in the smell
of fried bread.

Question me. It's a poor
substitute for rhetoric,
so much as all my
ekphrases are zeugma
to myself, carrying as it
were the same verb. For
I am: compilator and
commentator, stitcher
of plural kingdoms,
pages in the book of
mundane, rather,
ordinary, life.
Or, since you resort to
numismatics, think of
this page as gold,
embossed with Caesar,
this margin as a blazon
to his likeness.

a. XIV

A brief ceremony, attended only by those
who mattered. A handful of knights,
a bishop. Some powerful men rooked
out of a kingdom. They gathered close
to acclaim the boy. "Bastard! Bastard!"
they shouted, kneeling at his feet.

*

As I say, the forecast of kingdoms;
meaning the long shadows thrown
by clouds, or boys up on the skyline
made monstrous by tricks of the light.

*

At death, a return of arms;
duty to the church, fresh gifts

for souls muddied by the world.
The king lay pickled in his shroud.

They folded the lead over him
and he was gone, gone, gone.

*

At Oxford, the laws of Danes
and English met. So did the council
looking for a king. Outside

the boys waited with the hall-troops.
Harold, Sweyn. Gold-bound blades.
A few jokes about priapism.

Question me, discover
whose authority has
driven this hand line by
raking line, to finally
remit the erasures
foisted on me by a
triumphant duke. Que
ducit, as they say, to my
petty underworld of
texts, to regnal lists
graffitoed with laundry
lists, uninked stylus
making their ghostly
marks 'Harold was here'
– or was he, considering
this work is unauthored,
unidentifiable, blessed
with neither provenance
nor prime recension –
But you may guess
as to my status. The king
is dead, he plummets
upward out of sight
raining his bounty
in one last silver shower.
So far as this margin
ventures to descend
into the depths, so far
must he rise.
Where is the king? We
seek him. He is within,
he is at his writing.
What writing is that?
This writing, this
translation of an old
joke into five languages,

*

"Give me that."

"Shan't!"

Many voices indeed.

*

After they had made off with Cnut's treasure
Emma alternated mourning her husband
with plotting the overthrow of his sons.

*

The pen drew ink from the cracked well.
The mould looked suspiciously
from the wall. Finding his last bifolio
full, he drew the chapter to a close.

*

Broad country seen through the windows
of a colophon. Marginal witterings
about the weather. Excipits confused
with incipits and vice versa.

*

"Oh I get it," said Iago, speeding towards
                                        Chester.
Behind him, the minibus rocked to their war-
                                        song.

"Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go."

or wounds. And since you protest, prevaricate upon the threshold, as it were, so I, by many fulnesses of speech seek to delay your grasp of that last verb, the verb which we have hedged about but hitherto not conjugated. Well would you part with treasure, which is temporary in this life, to learn it, that one verb which permits the to-and-fro, the lively intercourse between the margins and the page.

- That verb which, while the king was dead, his sons forgot in sumptuous feasting, in warlike attitudes, in sometime animosity, though they were each in their turn crowned capita of totius anglorum, which I will render in a crude or pottage pun, that which has been reworked for rational designs as 'ergo sum',

which I correct:

Harold's History

Ego, Harold. Atque rego: I am   *1. Prologue*
the anchorite, the author
and the fighting man.

To any history the introduction
lies in that book that tells
of Achilles, and Troy's destruction

and there this history's incipit is
already written. This legend
is its sequel, a far-flung British

coda to those better days
whose lords and princes, knights
and deeds are merely paraphrase

of noble Ector, wily Ulysses,
the well-walled city and its wreck
scattering heroes over the haunting seas;

but in their ends our own book is begun
and through time, like them, we feel the call
of empty England, its lights left on,

its windows dazzling the night and clouds,
its model spitfires twisting in the gusts
that shake the ivies and the plastic clocks

whose faces, through a sheen of dust,
still point out with radium's finger
last year's time, still waiting to burst

into the here, and now, and wake
the past's deep-buried circuits with a flash
of voice or current, so that the clock

sings, and ticks, and the wireless

stammers its news of forty years ago,
and we as children given lease

upon our parents' world are drawn
into that dream of radios and wordless air
like those Olympus smiles upon.

And if among those sons and sons-of-sons
of half-remembered gods was one
who, turning his boat out of the waves' long

slow-rolling broadcast from Ithaca, came
into these northern straits to find
the empty beaches and the foam

of marram carrying the dunes
into the cold, clear Humber skies,
and if, as this present I, this self, assumes

authority over the unpeopled page
so he displaced the crumbled works
of giants for burh and hidage,

soke- and book-land, minster, country pile,
branch-line, church and chapter-house,
bypass, bingo palace and shopping mall,

if there was such a man who swept up
the centuries' impedimenta, who laid out
past and future Britain like a map,

and in setting out our memories
and memories of memories arranged
the smell of airy landings, carpeted seas,

our sense of Troy, the first lost home,
in such a way as gave that past a voice,

which, being human thought, needed a name,

we made him Brutus, just as I am Harold -
for we as present authors will persist
after our books are burned or stories told.

So Brutus came, and gave these isles
to one true rule.　　　　　But by our sins
　　　　we squandered it in selfish broils

　　　　and conflicts, wherein the sword,
　　　　the spear and martial vigour
　　　　all stood second to a traitor's word,

　　　　so that upon the latest of these wars
　　　　the dying king, seeking to save his folk
　　　　by splitting his realm between two laws,

　　　　instead severed his people from themselves.
I am that wound.　　　　For being born
of two tongues, on two halves

of the one kingdom, I remain
didactic; I arise within that speaking
between idem and the same,

self and self, that is England
and its bride, the rain.

2. Argumenta

This being my journey. On either hand

great houses, follies, potteries
arise like clutter from some overcast
West-Midlands Genesis

as I go back over the raddled ground
　　　　that was my Eden.

<div style="text-align:center">Their petty dynasties, their grand</div>

and pious plans, their usury
of rights and privilege,
their love of glory and of money:

they are gone. But the rooms remain,
that neither fall quiet nor quite empty
of the smell that is last season's rain,

their curtains faded, their plaster furred
with soft, spreading shadows that recall
departures not quite long enough deferred:

and it is strange to think that this
was once history's province, where
among the wilderness of clink and kiss

of glass were set in order
'res gentis anglorum'; or that the hours,
the sharp words, the ardour

that was written on the mind's page
there, which was the very word of history,
would be a dowry or mortgage

for silence. So line by line
I let this ladder down the page
to reach myself, still trying to climb

out of that mirrored, dust-
sheeted room that is concluded time,
or history, our hoarded past.

For these divisions multiply
within me, until all unity
of speech is lost in the reply

of Harold to Harold, their echolalia
of authorship the sound
of each one griping the ladder,

daring to hope these voices
whose profound imploring rolls
out of the dark as thundering noise

might yet find rescue, but, blind,
call those above to reach them
even as they reach for those behind,

even though, as each second is joined,
so does each Harold grip upon
the one below, foot on shoulder, hand

on interlocking hand – and some links
being weaker, I, the latest I, must ever fall
through centuries of eye-blinks

to where memory itself spools
from my mouth in the silence
of those empty, shuttered rooms,

with each step down my effort to translate
this moment's rhyme into the last,
each new line holding up the present's weight,

proving descent so difficult and long
that, should I be pressed
to add an interlineal rung

as spacer between this
and some more learned tongue
I ask - don't take it amiss.

3. Liber primis

So Cnut was dead. About time
too, my sources quibbled, while on
that much-minded but unspoken line

that splits 'Englishmen' from 'Danes'
the great men met for council
to choose whether the mundane

or righteous should ascend the throne -
        that is, Harold - the bastard,
        upon whose head the crown

        might never sit anointed,
        Harold the misbegotten,
        Harold whose one role appointed

        him by God was to be gone
to the dogs while good men heard mass -
or Harthacnut.   You will guess which one

        grand, listless dame Clio still favours.
        But Mnemosyne may sometimes overrule
        the whim of her Parnassian sisters

just as Godwin was briefly prevailed
upon to back the present man
over the right one.   So Harold

        it was, upon whom no priest
        would lay a consecrated hand
        or holy oil, and whose slightest

        iniquity would stain a nation red,
        a second Paris scattering abroad
        the seed that would grow trees of blood,

that would leave our second Ilium

aflame, our heroes fled, our arms
downcast, and bring England, wallowing

under those fulsome, slaughter-fed
leaves to understand at last
Saul's madness, the woes of Israel, and the flood.

And yet   - despite the warnings
          of his bishops,   or the heaven-sent dreams
that racked his nights with hangings,

mutilations,   visions of each English branch
          turned gibbet with their hideous fruit,
          his country's glades hung over with the stench

          and prospect of damnation - and yet,
          despite wise counsels to abandon
          to God's grace the crown that death,

          God's servant, had given back
          into God's keeping, he would not listen,
          and spurning his creator took

          the crown and rod that lay
          upon Christ's altar, as though he thought
          the lead of his soul could be defrayed

by a king's robe: I saw it. I was there
to watch the hour's dictator
dress in purple and be called Caesar.

Caesar of what? The empty ways
and lanes, the kilns and lime-pits
and the cold breaking waves

that return from Normandy
and Finisterre: king of the red earth

and its hoards, of the guilty

and the unrighteous.   Emma
      heard those waves over the noise
      of Harold's men taking her treasure,

      over the whispered politics
      that deafened the feasting,
      and heard too that faint Roman music

      that was Jumieges and Saint-Omer,
      was dux and dignitas and comites,
      the church set on the wreck of the basilica

      that was Normandy,   and home,
where her two sons by an English king
also kept, watching the cold foam

rise up the beach and then return
as empty-handed as it came, day
after day, tide upon tide, season

on snowy season. But Harold,
jealous of their birth, and the sure auguries
and dreams that each night told

how Emma's sons might yet be kings
in England, falsified her hand
to deceive and draw them to him.

Both sailed, but only one
came in to land: for Edward,
granted by God a premonition

of some treachery turned back
where Alfred, whether through simple faith
or greed, went on – or so the books

of other writers claim. Likewise
it is said that Godwin, my father
overtook the prince and by artifice

or sincerity prevailed on him to wait where,
while they slept Harold's men came
and, binding the prince's followers,

tortured them, executed them, dumped
the bodies, still bound, in a pit
while Alfred they stripped and blinded.

       A blinding so cruel, the hot iron
       pierced the brain. A brief scream,
       the flash of a soul released, like ions

       scathing the upper atmosphere.
       A brief proximity to God as coda
          to an exile of twenty years.

But I dismiss these, and my own, accounts,
disregarding as they do the role
of Christ, and his providence,

since the brand that split
the prince's body from his life
took Harold's soul and parted it

from God, showing his true nature
as one among the damned.
For it was said that Emma,

not Harold, sent for the prince,
and that my father, Godwin, was a ready aid
to Harold's usurpation and his schemes.

I admit: I am unsure. Years after
I confronted him about it, whittling
at tinned salmon, the quick silver

of his fork chiming now, and again,
against the best china. The dahlias
dropped their slow, drooping flame

over the sideboard as he let
the silence settle. Eat with me,
he said – and I, not understanding, sat.

4. Liber secundus

Some things we believe and some
we understand, and history lies somewhere
in between: history is that room

perched between the deep cold
of the house at five or six o'clock,
and the sun that turns to sudden gold

a pair of ordinary lives, so that the day's long,
slow hours become a beam of light
framing my father through the rhododendrons,

that makes even the restless sleep
of dying flowers spark up
in tongues of fire, and speak.

But to be so translated out of time
is also history's flaw, since we are here,
in our own voices, sitting at home

sieving the atmosphere
for news, while the sun's quick beacon
turns away, and memory's door

falls shut. Or, if you will,

I know the truth, the very moment
of the past, but cannot tell -

or if I tell, I cannot know,
since truth and telling, making
and discerning, come and go

as round and round Augustine's tread
we run, with history's engine
      drawing us no nearer to The Good,

      but by circularities - the fall
      of Troy, the rise of Parva Troia,
      the four miserable ages of Daniel -

      gently wandering downwards
      on a broad straight track to hell.
Four years of swingeing discords,

of bargain-basement avarice
and humdrum greed, four years
of backbiting and artifice,

and then heaped on their backs
two more, Cnut's sons chasing each other
around the same circling track

of greed and manslaughter, of drink
and its merciful companion, death,
to wash the Danes at last over the brink

of history. Or so that Harold thought,
my distant self, rich with the green-gold
summer, the hooded falcon taut

above his wrist, where his hounds
and courtiers unfailing start after the hind

that through the willows oversteps the bounds

of the tapestry's window, and chases now
out through the empty halls, the crumbling
Georgian rooms, its hooves a sigh that blows

down through the winding heart
of time to where I write – and I,
who huddle round the little heat

that leaks in through the interlace
of all my lost and unrequited futures,
I feel a fragment of myself give chase.

So much forgotten: so much not to be,
my two-voiced kingdom with its tides
that haul   from each extremity

      of Europe heaven's flotsam,
      saints' bones, shivers taken from the tree
      of passion, whose shoots at Saint-Omer and Waltham

      grew then 'the life of Harold,' 'Vita Ædwardi,'
      which once threw shadows over England,
      drowned out its colloquy of sea and sea

      only to fall silent,   to let the sun
sit quietly upon the suburb's roofs,
to briefly light the brick-walled gardens

and the drawing-rooms where history
is written, struck out, momently abandoned,
reworked and lastly allowed to lie

lining an attic's chests or tied
with fading ribbons, its perfume
recalling only rain and winter brides.

Some things are given and some
we can contrive to steal: a history
will swell a petty kingdom into Rome,

its light throwing long shadows
over the silences that are the turning points
of sons and fathers, as dusk grows

quietly over the lawn, where Edward sails
away, towards, his hopes risen, his hopes
now dashed, the roses like clench-nails

driven into the grass, the washing,
bellied with autumn, ghosting
the paths like the arrival of a king.

Around, and round. Alfred raises his head,
blood-stained, dripping, my father talks
round and around him. Said and unsaid

the shadows reel. The ordinary lives
of Harold throng the lamp.
I see him now as Lazarus   sees Dives.

                                        5. Liber Tertius

A king marshalls ships and the hearts
of men.   Duke William commands.
          Who are these shadows leaning towards the hearth,

their cracked lips murmuring: 'hides,
hides for the tanner's son'?   Red earth,
salt-pans.   So hides and hundreds. William rides

left-right, from history   into now. Threads
plucked one by one   from their frame breed discord.
Musicians falter   at their playing. Monstrous heads

peep over worsted borders.   Video
Sweyn, ensconced, treating with same. Reed-beds
furrowed with keels. The falling snow

covers Harold – am I too late? Too early?
Where is the king? I see him. He smiles
upon my father. He hoists the crosstree

of a vacant gallows.   He waits.
Behind, a newsreel of the fleet plays on a loop.
Marshal. Dismiss. Repeat. A checkmate

called on empty space: no red king
squares up to white. Godwin provides a queen,
the pawns, both knights. Notice that scowling

cut to their faces, the ivory marked in deep bold
strokes, how similar, how different they both are -
this one call Sweyn. The other, Harold.

Ivory in sunlight opens its pores. Radial cracks
          open in walrus-tooth,   hold oils, red stain, blood.
Too often handled.   The bishop frowns. The rooks

bite their shields. A knight's move brings him
to the far side of the board   – 'and there he ruined
                himself with the Danes.' The cold rim

          of Europe. Harold frozen in place, his rich clothes
worn to the bone.   Winter's checkerboard. Black woods,
          white hills, a pale horse stopped.The groves

by Bosham silent under snow. There Harold squats
astride his mare; history pins him
under its gaze, among the broken pots,

the post-holes, long-buried boats ferrying

under pub car-parks to forever
their cargo of nameless heroes, trailing

their wakes of dust and rabbit bones
past Harold locked in his cist while I scrape
down through the centuries of loam,

      the moles' still, sepulchral cities,
into his cell, as dark   as mine is light,
      where not yet love but pity

guides me down towards that close,
sealed space: that need to feel a living hand
      meeting my own, to outweigh history's loss

      with kindness, just as Christ's call
      woke even Adam in his narrow vault
      and led him grey and weeping out of hell.

Yet that distant horseman and myself
are one: the winter trees grow out
into the same space. For history admits no halves,

no segregations, and where the white page flows
from Bosham woods to this bright room
that lofts its beams and lilting floors

above the roofs of a provincial town -
history is the current, the pull of wrongs
and kindnesses that have long outgrown

the old wounds that they cut, or deepened,
or once tried to heal: Harold flickers in
and out of focus, here riding, here pinned

to vellum by some flourished stylus,
or stitched large among his somehow

more distant brothers, in the stills

for the film of his own life oddly blurred,
or facing off-screen when the script
calls for the audience to be stirred

by patriotic appeals, the fourth wall broken,
the mise-en-scene failing to locate the leads
among an interlace of sward and bracken,

rain on waves, palaces and rutted highways,
headlands and ships where Harold, slipping
out of shot appears, miniscule, the sun's rays

lighting him briefly and then passing on
to empty sea; history is not the anchor
that chains us to the past but the plumb

we swing to tell ourselves how far we've gone,
how near to reefs of past despair,
how deep happiness' channel might yet run,

how long we have before a turn of tide or wind
drives us again home: if I could live
        my long and unreal life again   I would be kind;

and I would stop, in the narrow daylight
of woods before Christmas   and give thanks,
        before the boat turns through the brightness

of the rain and swells to: what?
        The camera can't find focus.   The film
                slacks on the spools,   the crew dipping into shot,

looking on bored, unpaid, resigned;
        off-camera the director (whoever he is)
rants about his film's appeal, his grand designs

        for vast, improbable sets he can't afford.
High winds pitch rubbish off the cliff. Headlights
show Harold's Morris Traveller, the 4-by-4s

of the producers slouching down the coast
to different centuries.   Nobody stays. The tripods
      buckle under sudden years.   A bloom of rust

        wedges the outtake reel into its tin:
     Sweyn smoking beside the M4; Edward,
tweed-suited,   crank-starting a Bentley; Godwin

sporting a Rolex to his daughter's wedding;
    they frame an absent Harold,   the king Quixote,
      who can't fight history's mill but keeps on trying.
           6. Liber Quartus

A mid-life crisis. A man's estate. An earldom.
Itineraries to give structure to a life.
Eastenglum. Wincecaester. Rome:

a Europe given to moving on. Where
is all this going? To what end is Harold
endlessly begun?   Or, did I prepare

the ground aright? Must I rake over it
each year, putting thegns and prelates
like potatoes in their proper spots, with wit

my shovel, insight my fork? I think not.
History is no allotment which I work,
weeding to keep its growths inside the plot,

shouldering my spade through debris
to seed my crops of learned, elegant prose;
and if I dig, let me go through centuries

like the earthworm, tracking ever down
into time's white, fleshy heart to find
what other people might have sown

in my place, how they once filled the frame
of a garden; or how in being -   parallel, apart -
we make history somewhere to be from.

So can we assume those early troubles
          safely past? What of the rivalries -
Edward   and his over-mighty nobles,

Tostig with Harold,   Sweyn with everyone
and himself – are they all settled?   Are they
even begun?   Has a new spring sprung

in England, the old   divisions put aside,
brothers embracing,   justice in its place,
its people wealthy,   king and subjects unified

in better lives? Look.   Here is Europe,
where clerks and prelates,   earls and abbots
come: here Ralf   with his outlandish castles

running from the Welsh; Robert of Jumiéges,
friend of the king,   sometime archbishop,
his tiny minster closed   in his fist, his pages

hitching his skirts   as he runs – runs
with Watling Street   wide behind him,
to show all England   washed with a season's rain,

its clouds toppling   onto the empty hills,
where Sweyn, red   with murder, white
with his last devotions, among ruined halls

and new-build semis   rattles his staff

and pilgrim badge   at his own absence;
where Earl Beorn,   stone-dead, nail-stiff,

lapped in his grave   by the afterlife's tides
hauls his black bulk   from the sands,
his spine keeling surf, his hands' blades

urging him on   into the dark that rolls
beyond the pleasure-pier.   And suddenly
it is evening, and I am alone as the light fails

in the street outside, and the small blindnesses
that fill the gaps between parked cars
are generations deep.   For the Lord blesses

       these days all in equal measure: who has made
            each second of the green earth;   for whom
      the future does not lie   as scattered seeds

among the dross of human action but goes
        second   to shining second, bright
and preordained;   to know this my *geasa*,

my hurt and prayer,   that I am cold
and quick all in the one look,   the man
young and old.   For only God sees Harold,

       and by his grace I have this vision
       of the long hours of my dying, my life
       no more a sanctuary than it is a prison.

And if in life the weight of the divine -
          that dark rich pressure on the skull
       whose smell is now of blood, now wine,

          that drove each of the saints in turn
       to martyrdom or the blindness hidden

in the earth's vaults, oak-roots, stones -

     if that strange, sweet redolence was light
     upon my days of hounds and chase, the hawks
     toiling into a spring sky on such slight,

     intimate spans of almost nothing – if then
     I was unmindful of how men are freighted
     for heaven, or with what tears they turn again

     at the tomb's door -   then when night flows
     in over England,   and the street drifts
     out beyond the rain and clouds   I know.

                           7. Liber Quintus

     - No.   I will not dwell on jealousy
         or the anger that burns a summer through
a man's heart,   flourishing like a green tree.

     I will not ask what the noises are
     that call him from sleep, that make him rise -
     silently -   and leave a sleeping lover.

     But I have woken in the night's empty hours
     and heard nothing, and said nothing, and known
     something awry, as though my heart's verse

     had skipped not beats   but lines and stanzas,
     whole pages   torn out as I slept, antiphons
     missing their phons, riddles   without answers,

     whole lifetimes suddenly forgotten,
villages excised from the map   names scraped
     from registers   fissures opened in parchment

and found myself standing   on a distant shore
watching my world   clouding the horizon,
its mountains eye-blue,   hazy with wind-shear

and hung with storms.   For I have seen
two old men bitter   with their lives' winter,
earls sick with ambition,   a king without sons,

and I have seen the looks,   the sly glances
that bring a bloom of frost   to glasses
or warp the afternoon light   as through a lens

so what is here   and what is then swims,
the ruby-red of wine   diluted, the struck gold
of polished lino white   as a parade of swans,

their unkind words   swimming in bubbles
over the chipped willow-pattern.And I recall
the anger of men   when midwinter hobbles

          the land. I remember Harold   the glass
slipping from his hand   small, afraid, alone.
     The anger of adults   those strange motiveless

unbiddable beings   surging through the house
     the careless door open   and the light
only a light enough to now rehearse

the dark   the sudden hollowness of heart
     that seeds night-terrors   and dreams of losing
      or blood, or killing,   that make dawn a red hurt

creasing the sky the house-doors broken
the windows cracked   their frames mould-dusted
     the stairs buckled   the airy rooms damp   the garden

a writhe of thorns   or the whole house gone
     a mound in the earth   or less a shape
a shadow in soil plough-smeared   a mark in the grain

of the evening light   an outline in loam
to show that fathers   sons   brothers
     came here   ate   sat   and called it home.

For I am Harold and I have been afraid
of the voices of my parents in those same
airy landings, wiping away the blurred,

     fragile voices from the radio   that murmur
over again   that I am home;   and I have seen
my father's shadow growing   giant with anger

troll-tall in the doorway   bristling like a king
and I have heard   lies   he would not obey
    nor burn his town   nor do injustice   nor wrong

lies   they came against us   we rode
    lies   they would not catch us   lies
we […]   we fled

and I am Harold and I have seen men shrink
from the steel in their hands from the meaning
of a bed of hydrangeas and the pale links

of light breaking through the laurels behind
and I have seen my father put down his head
and stare and have no words come to mind

to soften the loneliness of five o'clock
or the sounds of a house inhabited
by mirrors and the carpet-soft tick-tock

of time, Harold's time, pacing away
from that one point I have retraced
my whole life to reach, and reach out, and say

what? [T]he words I could not find?

The last piece of God's holy puzzle, time?
[Something both true, father, and kind.]

I will not speak of the jealousy that dwells
in the maze of a man's past. I will not look
into those private hells in case the calls -

[Harold! Help me!] which shake me even now
- in case the hands, the looks, that reach for me
out of unalterable years   are ones I know.

                                        8. Liber Sextus

For I will discuss the fate of the exile,
the masterless men, the ones who may not
look back. For whom the seas exhale

salt storms, barring their return, or winds,
or currents coiled as serpents sloughing foam
about rocks, eyots standing-to as wounds

black against moonlight. For I will relate
the journeys we had, beside black cliffs
where only our mast stood rallied

against the waves, farewells given to brothers
and fathers, all gifts and giving slipping
as a wake in the white race of breakers,

rollers, churning sea-caves, swash, backwash,
backwash, swash –   how we ran fosse way
          by night, the horses white-eyed with the flash

          of foam at their mouths, the clink of arms
          and saddle-girths, the buzz of moths like lights
          slipping over the horizon as we passed farms,

          chapels, minsters, halls, ring-roads, bright
          constellations of sodium-lamps and fires,

the great towns like embers piled and wrought

in the dark –   or how we shipped a lifetime
          of spoils and rents to all the grey coasts
          shadowing England, our hoards of spume

          and silver pennies slipping out
          of history's view -   to Flanders, Brittany,
               Ireland, Rome; and England, empty film-set,

          bereft of principals, recedes [except
          that in these after-hours of history
          Edward, crowned, sainted, steeped

     in his drink, reels back the film
     from the deserted rigs, only to find
     each shot spoiled as bad light, waving arms,

extras, backdrops coming suddenly un-nailed
in wind ruin the take: and from every angle
no camera captures Harold...] -

all this I will expound.   Except
          that history has found me   on other shores
               its many threads now caught   now slipped

                    from my grasp, and I who hung once
                         at the crux of warp and weft must sit
                    uneasily in every tableau - out of place

               and time and telling   an effigy rising
          from damp plaster   a hunt or wild dance
beneath protestant whitewash   when the hissing

that precedes all rain   breaks in upon the quiet
          of the garden   and all the strands of grass
               stand taut with such unspoken weights

[I will see you again. I will
not lose you.]   as make them shine
          [On this I set my seal.]

     green even as they bend. For I will discuss
     the fate of the exile, bound to return from all
     quarters of the winds, though the waves cease,

     though the reason ebb from men's hearts
[In dei nomine amen]   though even the blood.
       For I am Harold and I am a part

          of England: more than the outline in the grass
               clutching its tarnished pennies, more than the cry
               romantics raise for an imagined past;

               not Churchill, Robin Hood or Hereward;
          but I am risen and I am the call
[I leave these alms; this book; this sword]

of every England, present, past, potential,
my voice riding the bifurcations
       of that might-be kingdom; seneschal

          of council estates, reeve of death's shires,
               patron of superstores and chancels,
                 drawn in Viz or cut into the seats of choirs,

               compost of the Latinate and vulgar,
          born to great, obscure destinies,
     [holy writer, bore, and king of nowhere;

God, Harold. You do go on] I know my rights
       and will be heard, even on distant coasts
               that loom barren, hung with witch-lights

before the traveller [Not eager to relate
that he was well received in Dublin,
treated as a brother by Diarmaid

macMael na m-Bo, the king of Leinster,
spending a cosy winter] and I will say
[nothing of interest no doubt] who's there?

to all the polyglot divided Englands
that shipped with me across the gulf
that keeps them, cliff and beach and scoured headland

from this now   this present moment which is
that bright petal in the flower of time
for being among all our alternatives

precious, for being ours, for being here
for being lifted on those same dividing waves
that let it drop down like a tongue of fire

and lie there for some little scrap of sun
[still in the house's quiet hours]
to fall between the rhododendrons

and make them turn and speak   within the boy
beside his father asking after history
not knowing that our history is now

and ready in the touch of human minds
to be a glimpse of others unlike us.
[the rock stood black against the sound.

the ship heaved once and they were still]
9. Liber Septimus
We sailed. We crossed, recrossed, sent emissaries.
England rose against us like a wall.

We fought, killed, looted and took ship,
turned the point of Cornwall in the night
watched Finisterre, Portland, Sandwich shape

and fall astern. We sailed the Kentish Knock
past Sheppey, ghosted the Barrage to the pool.
[I saw Blackfriars, the Eye, St. Mary Mortlake,

the tideway empty just as it was full
sailing through other fleets that anchored
and made sail   in the same instant and fell

far off into the night   and all the chorus
of London   present was in that past] I digress
the king   with music-hall pomp restored us

and all was well and history came   happily
to an end   and just as truly there was
a great battle   and blood flowed readily

and so it was and it was not
[I will not lose you. I will love you
still]   and history was very small and neat

No
For there is loss where there are Englands
in the heart   [We're all bound to go,

so haul away, boys]
so that when Sweyn dies
and my father dies

[The candle sputtered and grew dim;
the great man fell drooling in his soup]
they do not stumble – as in some West Midlands Doom -

upon the higher life   but with them fade

the woods in snow   the hunt
      the fleet in Ore Sund

         the moment in between
      the shadow of the laurels that I have waited
         all my life to see   and never seen

[poor Harold. He will not have done:
      he sickens at his Latin
         just to glimpse against the Rhododendrons

      a father struggling to tell a son
         his guilt or less his sense
      of things contested but not won].

We sailed. And without urgency we came
      upstream to Winchester
         my father's ship before us riding the calm

         [O you
      Solent waters] where the afterlife draws to him
         on slow currents, with bright oars.

         [my father. How you fall now
      out of sight   under the world's rim,
         beset by judgement's squalls: the sail shown

      white against the sky;
         my father you are sailing still
      out of the reach of history

         and in that tide
      I cannot see you. Rain.
         Traffic and night outside.

         I will rise
      from my work, from setting out

the years from years, the lies

      from other lies we tell
to make the past seem less like stories;
          and I will watch the kettle

            climb to a whistle on the hob,
      steam soaking the ceiling rose
that lurks bereft under the plaster: a bathrobe

      republic all in myself] and I am sick
          of this imperial vision
that sets me here and Harold there, its schtick

      to set the past as myth
          myself   top-hatted compere
to the vaudevillian monolith

      today's ideas in the snug
and reassuring fit of yesterday
          father you're history, a shameless plug

for Harold as same old   same old
      when what I'd like
is Harold qua Harold

      [though not the audience -
yes you pawing at the page's mesh
as if my fabulism-fabliau   in ink and common sense

were something more than schmaltzy
      self-serving puff
      fired broadside at the gallery

      to give a whiff of feelgood-
      oh-it-feels-so-good
and back we go to Robin Hood

Kevin Costner, Russell Crowe
bloody, bloody Churchill
with God above, demons below

imperium wedged neatly in between] oh please
as if you knew where Harold was
in your dour stone-cut utriusque cosmi

[Harold is here. Harold is there:
he peers between lattice of the moon
he has the face of a hare

in the field margins
past borders he is dwindling
in his own telling]

but even under the granite
glints of the sky Harold
remains. Plain sight

reveals him: and every line
lets him not nearer to some stopped-up room
but continues him

in the seeing of God;
nor is he rescued from the tomb
nor is he broken from the soured weeds

of the earth but he is
grown   grass-tongued
audible in the sea's ears

in every second of his allotted time
nor needing a lone voice
nor the subtle engine   a turn of phrase or rhyme

and he is not a story except
      that he is a story about stories and nevertheless
            when his father died he wept

and when his brother died he wept
      and with the face of a hare he took the threads
            that went creeping

               about the world of his visions
      and he made something
            and it was like this

              [and so I begin again
                  for I have been Harold and I am
      the author and the anchorite and the fighting man]

           but I swear it was like this

Harold's Tapestry

I.

Harold from the gods tore
          his opera programme
     and let it float towards the stage:

"You have made me out to be some kind of monster,
     the very opposite of history."

II.

The scene was set: a scene being set. Shifters
      carrying their pasteboard ships,
      half a house standing, one-dimensional.
Telegraph wires looped from every corner of the plasterwork.

      In the pit, some Welshmen struck up a furious
and groaning music. Buckets of sand stood ready
to soak up the atmosphere. The pieces
           of Harold's programme
              came drifting over their heads.

"Snow!" shouted the lead tenor. "Now that
is opera for you!"

III.

It was obvious
      that the Old King
      couldn't act.

"Buffoon!" "Fat bastard!" The audience cat-called and threw sweets.

Luckily Harold came onstage at just that moment
riding the prop-horse. He put his foot
through one of the ships, the most lovingly painted,
      and pulled from the dark backstage a severed

head.

IIII.

That was a performance
the Welshmen couldn't top. Grumbling
          they departed, taking the score with them.

V.

       Everyone knew that Harold
was the new manager of the opera-house
       but Harold. In his creased shirt he tried his hand
at re-writing the scripts, filling whole rooms
       with his screwed-up drafts.

Still waiting on the boards, as he had for months, the old man
croaked. Briefly aroused from his obsession, Harold had him
mummified and burnt, hung from the lighting rig. The ignorant
flocked to see his terrible one-night run
       of a new play, 'The Comet'.

VI.

Int. Night: Harold is considering
the ghost of his father trapped in a chipboard armoire.

"The thought of us, still as human beings, overcoming the limits
       of time and place astounds me. If I am here
          and simultaneously elsewhere

"then the accusations are true. By my being
       in so many moments I join them. The death
       of history is an image of linked hands."

VII.

Their bodies blazed with paint. Overhead
      the star hung like an enraged moth.

"In this scene you play my brother at dinner. I play myself. Try to
remember that you are awkward, but clever, and that we are the
richest men in England."

The house-front they were using as backdrop
      chose that moment to collapse. Only Harold, stood
           - as ever -
    under the open upstairs window
        could be seen surviving.

He stood for a moment, dumbfounded. Had he been at liberty to say
so, he'd have said he was working on that gag.

VIII.

His talent search only turned up bones. In his mind he crossed oceans on cut-out boats to a land of snooty relatives: washed-up actors, clean-shaven, looking for a producer credit.

His hand touched the cloth. He swore.

Heading home, he thought of the looks on their faces. "I'm working on a new project, something big." The television purred to the cream carpet. The little tables shuddered with hot coasters, biscuits, tea.

IX.

In his scrapbooks the histories played out
      with perfect flatness. On this page, Monday. Last year
      still shiny under its cellophane sheet.

Holidays in Brittany; Turold the dwarf holding the reins of a prop-
horse. Was it the scene of comedy or tragedy? In the last picture, he
clasped Edith's fingers, tight.

As though she somehow handed him past Acheron,
the ancient lists of names blotted and excised.

X.

"I do not understand you," said William. "Hence I give you weapons,
        authorise you in their use."

Their handshake was firm but meaningless. Privately
they resolved on armies of scribblers, to make sense
        of the other's iniquity.

XI.

Alone in his hotel room, he penned his first and last miracle play:

"I have misunderstood you. I have substituted a kind word for an embrace."

"Harold, I am Harold. Beyond the redeeming power of love
      there is only history."

Revelation tolling from the high towers of cloud.

XII.

Retrospectively, he and William opted for distrust.

Harold resigned himself to his brother's company,
  the dinner-time conversations that became lectures,
  or fencing.

William took to his bed. William did not take to his bed.
  In the blackness of his little pocket-book, 'merger'
  became a gloss on 'hostile takeover'.

XIII.

Business was bad that year: a Norwegian coach party, hell-bent on grabbing their own small piece of opera; his brother absconding with the petty cash.

Harold was decisive. He went on tour. They played to sell-out crowds up and down Ermine Street.

The reviews were short and brutal. "Laugh? I could have died."

XIIII.

It played out like something
        in a rear-view mirror. The boats paper
on an indifferent sea.

"Time plays tricks with my memory. In our separate bodies
we set out for the opposite of Troy.

"How I wish it were something else!" Exile, maybe, or the bleached
carcass of Rome. But for a name goes Harold.

Seven feet. The spring and running waves.

XV.

"To be apart, to join, and be alone again. I dangle from this image like a trailing thread."

The Lord Spake Unto Me. The stacked-up benefices, squat houses for the promises of saints.

XVI.

His migraine flared like a star behind his temple. Cursed by a sense
of the historic moment, he stalked out to his Morris Traveller
            under a nimbus of rain.

Behind him, the stage-hands wobbled under embarrassments of
props. Girlfriends, gigolos
            and the committee for Northern Arts stood by

to wave them off. The rain became more vague, was read as drizzle.
Half-light became half-lit. They played, as bad recordings of
themselves.

XVII.

History has no meanwhile. William swirls the contents of his cocktail glass, watching the last of his furniture arrive.

"The model castle? Oh that goes there." Arrested by the silhouette of a local beauty, he raises his miniature parasol towards the lamp. "Good luck, dear? *Certainly*. I call it my little papal banner."

"Ah ha ha ha. Ah ha ha ha ha ha."

XVIII.

The Lord Spake Unto Me. Payment of debts, the proffered mantle of a higher life. It is so good to touch, to have, to feel the contact of a human or a divine love.

History, written as interlude. As in the Song of Songs. Lips aching on lips, the cries of children. A house going up in flames.

XIX.

Harold advanced with a large army. Harold advanced
with a small army.

The dew touched them and they woke. They lugged the squeeze-box
and the rapiers from the van.

William was nonplussed. He ordered his counter-tenor forward
            as a sop to all the hacks.

XX.

"A disaster. Ridiculous. Nudes, snakes and flowers wrestling in the wings, and half the cast with funny haircuts." "Let me just stop you there."

(Hic Harold interfectus est. In terra iacent:
threads in their long spinning joined and cut,
each moment as a strand of hair that binds or anchors us.

What are our histories but a rehearsal of
how we are separate, condemned to different lives,
driven to speech, to long sad letters home to future selves,

that fall and trickle and dry up
as we lose hope of ever reaching *us*,
ideas of home we had before the wreck of Troy,

the fireside that is ringed with far-off friends
who are yet present in all time,
in some strange happy moment where we once again might live,

      by grace)

Harold, gobsmacked by time's arrow, turns. Falls. William breezes through the scene as though on wires. So easy to imagine it another way.

XXI.

"And so I do." A hand extended from the gods, a reaching-out, a
spark, all that can be carried through.

Harold in rewind rises. He turns, takes in the empty stage, and turns
again. Shoulders nothing, asks less. Pursues some distant shadow of
a laugh

      thru sunlight
quiet as an unturned page.

XXII.

Letters from Waltham: Harold habemus.
   Legacies finally redeemed, or passed on.

A new house. Airy landings. The quiet of a cell.
   Cold draughts skewing the paperwork
   that has no seeming notion of its weight.

At night, the soft radio fuzz of scripture. Across the fields
a bell canters, in pursuit of other wars.

XXIII.

"Operam et locum opere relinquo. Imprisoned in grace
   as though in amber, I watch for history and counter-history."
   Harold struggles out of the book's wreck to a contemplation:

"To exchange one kingdom for another.
   To draw ourselves
out of our memory's well, link on link until we disappear -

how quickly we run out." Only Harold remains,
as country pile and manor, burgh and hide,
spinney, wood, copse, field, all of England under cloud,
     awaiting its bride.

XXIV.

The touch of rain. The drops threading down glass as a remembrance of some love.

"Harold is needed. As we may need. After long process, his books
    finally becoming books of us."

XXV.

Authority and art:
       doing, not as being. "Ego, Harold, reflexi et reflecto."
History their channels of negotiation.

The Lord Spake Unto Me. A mirror and a shelf of paperbacks,
windows teeming with rain. Flutter of the heart's page. A silence in
the air above.

XXVI.

Harold, standing at the book's end, delivers his prepared speech. It is long, and high-minded.

"I understand him perfectly, for once." He picks up the umbrella that he left here, years ago, tips up his hat
　　　　and disappears.

XXVII.

As he goes, the kettle sings. England and its bride
        murmur in sleep.

"Harold is history. I lay my pen aside."

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