

Medieval Lyrics

Natalie Jones, University College London

Introduction

As a result of the great thematic, formal, and stylistic diversity that marks the lyric genre throughout the Middle Ages, the medieval lyric is somewhat difficult to define in precise terms. Modern expectations of the term “lyric,” typically understood as words set to music or as a poem designed to convey the emotions of the author, while not entirely inappropriate, do not have immediate or universal relevance here. The medieval lyric is most often, and perhaps most simply, understood as a term which refers to a short poem, typically written as verse, on a given subject. Such a definition may initially seem unhelpful, but it is necessarily and even usefully broad, given the lack of overall uniformity which governs the lyric corpus. Although a considerable number of lyrics survive in Middle English, the lyric genre initially flourished in the Latin and French literary traditions. Indeed, the earliest medieval lyrics were written in Latin from around the fourth century onwards, with such early writers as Juvencus and Prudentius composing Christian Latin verse. Although the Latin lyric remained a popular form throughout the Middle Ages, by the twelfth century an increasing number of writers had begun to compose lyrics in the vernacular. The earliest and most influential composers of vernacular verse were the French poets known as the troubadours or trouvères. Writing in their own regional dialects, these poets typically composed songs about love and courtly themes and which were often accompanied by music. Given the proliferation of the early lyric in Latin and French, it is perhaps unsurprising that these poems served as a direct source of inspiration for the earliest writers of lyrics in Middle English. Written from the turn of the twelfth century to the first half of the sixteenth, the Middle English lyrics are a remarkably varied group of texts: the poems, which are largely anonymous, exhibit great diversity in terms of subject matter, style and sophistication, and they are preserved in a wide range of manuscript contexts. In keeping with the scholarly treatment of medieval lyric more generally, the Middle English lyrics are traditionally divided thematically into religious and secular poems, although often within these two groupings lie smaller, thematic units of texts. For instance, within the category of Middle English religious lyrics we find Christological, Mariological, and moral poems, while the Middle English secular lyrics include courtly verse on love and nature, as well as political lyrics and poems which are commonly described as “popular.” In addition to the Middle English lyric tradition, it is also important to note that a significant corpus of lyrics survive in Medieval Welsh, Scottish, and Irish, respectively. Although this article takes as its primary focus the Middle English lyrics, space is devoted to the lyric traditions in Latin and French, as well as those lyrics written in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland throughout the medieval period.

Bibliographies and Reference Works

Those wishing to study the Middle English lyric corpus in detail should be aware of the wealth of reference works and indexes available to aid in the navigation of what is a vast and complex field. The Middle English lyrics were first catalogued in an index by Brown and Robbins 1943 and this, in conjunction with Robbins and Cutler 1965 and Hamer 1995, still provide a useful resource to locate and identify lyrics. It is important to note, however, that the new index by Boffey and Edwards 2005 largely supersedes these three volumes and is now the standard reference work used by scholars. Ringler 1988 and Ringler 1992 assist in the investigation of those lyrics which appear in early printed books, or in manuscripts which date to after 1500, the point of termination for Boffey and Edwards 2005. Also worthy of consultation is Mooney, Mosser and Solopova 1995-, which provides a digitized edition of Brown and Robbins 1943 and Robbins and Cutler 1965. For those wishing to review the critical work done on the Middle English lyrics, Greentree 2001, which includes all material up to 1995, is an invaluable comprehensive resource.

Boffey, Julia, and A.S.G. Edwards. *A New Index of Middle English Verse*. London: British Library, 2005.

Abbreviated to the NIMEV, this work corrects and updates Brown and Robbins 1943 and Robbins and Cutler 1965. Entries are numbered and arranged in accordance with the format followed in the IMEV, but those poems which have been discovered since 1963 have been added. It includes a thematic, as well as a manuscript, index.

Brown, Carleton, and Rossell Hope Robbins. *The Index of Middle English Verse*. New York: University of Columbia Press, 1943.

The IMEV provides a list of all known Middle English lyrics at the time of publication. All entries are arranged alphabetically and numbered. Information about manuscript context, numbers of extant poems, and authorship, where relevant, are supplied.

Greentree, Rosemary. *The Middle English Lyric and Short Poem. Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature VII*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2001.

This annotated bibliography includes all material published on the Middle English lyric up to c.1995. It lists all published editions of lyrics as well as relevant critical works, both large and small scale. Material is arranged chronologically, rather than alphabetically. The volume includes a helpful introduction.

Hamer, Richard. *A Manuscript Index to the Index of Middle English Verse*. London: British Library, 1995.

Provides an index of manuscripts, which is missing from the IMEV and its Supplement. It is worth noting that Boffey and Edwards 2005 provides an updated index of manuscripts.

Ringler, Jr., William A. *Bibliography and Index of English Verse Printed 1476-1558*. London: Mansell, 1988.

An index and bibliography for those lyrics which appear in early printed books and incunabula. The volume is a useful tool to consult alongside Boffey and Edwards 2005, which refers its readers to this source for all entries of verse which are recorded in print sources.

Ringler, Jr., William A. *Bibliography and Index of English Verse in Manuscript 1501-1558*. London: Mansell, 1992.

Ringler's index lists all known examples of English verse which are recorded in manuscripts from 1501 to 1558. As with Ringler 1988, Boffey and Edwards 2005 directs readers to this volume for those lyrics which postdate 1500.

Robbins, Rossell Hope, and John L. Cutler. *A Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*. Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1965.

Serves as a supplement to the IMEV. It includes those poems recorded between 1943 and 1965 and increases the chronological span, adding lyrics written or copied after 1500. It also provides a number of corrections to the original index.

****The Digital Index of Middle English Verse*. [<http://www.dimev.net/index.html>]*. Edited by Linne R. Mooney, Daniel W. Mosser, and Elizabeth Solopova, 1995-.**

A searchable, online database, based on Brown and Robbins 1943 and Robbins and Cutler 1965. The DIMEV includes some new additions and also renumbers all of the entries (for ease of access, the original IMEV and NIMEV numbers are also supplied). Its point of termination is 1550.

Collected Anthologies and General Editions

There are a significant number of collected editions and anthologies of Middle English lyrics which seek to introduce the reader to the thematic scope and range of these poems. Some of these are intended as scholarly editions, while others are more suitable to the classroom or general reader. Brown 1965, Greene 1977, Brooke 1968, and Dobson and Harrison 1979 are recognized as critical editions suitable for academic use, with each volume offering the reader a tailored selection of lyrics grouped because of their date, form, or manuscript context. Editions intended for teaching, or at least aimed at a reader seeking a more general introduction to the lyrics, include Davies 1964, Luria and Hoffmann 1974, Hirsch 2005, and Duncan 2013. These four editions include a range of secular and religious poems that date from the thirteenth century to, at least, the end of the fifteenth century.

Brook, G.L., ed. *The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of MS Harley 2253*. 4th ed. Old and Middle English Texts. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968.

An edition of all the English and macaronic lyrics, secular and religious, preserved in London, British Library, MS Harley 2253. This manuscript contains an important collection of English lyrics written in the fourteenth century. Brook assigns titles to each poem and in this, the fourth edition, includes some revised notes. The first edition was published in 1948.

Brown, Carleton, ed. *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932.

This edition is one of the standard reference works for the Middle English lyric. The poems are arranged according to manuscript and, where relevant, different variants of the same poem are presented. Brown retains the original orthography, but introduces punctuation as well as assigning his own titles to the lyrics.

Davies, R.T, ed. *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology*. London: Faber and Faber, 1963.

A good student edition which offers a comprehensive range of lyrics. The poems presented date from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries and all material is arranged chronologically. Helpful notes on each poem are given at the end of the volume.

Dobson, E.J. and F.L.I. Harrison, ed. *Medieval English Songs*. London: Faber and Faber, 1979.

Offer a selection of Middle English lyrics preserved with music.

Duncan, Thomas G, ed. *Medieval English Lyrics and Carols*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2013.

This collection presents a varied selection of religious and secular lyrics, including courtly verse as well as drinking songs and antifeminist poems. Spelling has been regularized to adhere to “Chaucerian English” and poems are accompanied by end-of-line glosses to aid the reader with difficult vocabulary. The comprehensive introduction is informative for the new reader.

Greene, R.L, ed. *The Early English Carols*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.

First published in 1935. Greene defines a “carol” as a poem written in uniform stanzas and accompanied by a “burden” or chorus which is repeated after each verse. This edition lists all extant poems and groups them thematically. Manuscripts are identified, as are authors, where relevant.

Hirsch, John, ed. *Medieval lyric: Middle English Lyrics, Ballads and Carols*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

Poems from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. The collection is grouped largely on thematic grounds, but it does devote some sections to form (such as the carol and ballad) as well as known authors, including Geoffrey Chaucer, Richard Rolle, and William Herebert.

Luria, Maxwell S., and Richard L, eds. Hoffmann. *Middle English Lyrics: Authoritative Texts, Critical and Historical Backgrounds, Perspectives on Six Poems*. Norton Critical Editions. New York: Norton, 1974.

Poems are arranged in broadly thematic terms, with both secular and religious poems often grouped alongside each other. Marginal glosses are used to aid the reader with difficult vocabulary. In addition to the texts, the volume includes selected scholarly essays and a glossary. A good edition for the undergraduate.

General Introductions to the Middle English Lyric

There exists a number of works which seek to provide a general discussion of the Middle English lyric corpus, considering both religious and secular poems while also engaging with issues of theme and style. For the reader entirely new to the subject, Greentree 2009 and D'Arcy 2005 take the form of introductory essays that explore the rich diversity of the Middle English lyric corpus: Greentree 2009 surveys the main themes and characteristics of the lyrics, while D'Arcy 2005 demonstrates the range and sophistication of some of these poems through a series of close readings. Duncan 2005 is a collection of twelve individually-authored essays, each of which focuses on a particular category of poem (such as love lyric, moral lyric, political lyric, and religious lyric). The essays are essential reading, providing important information about context and background, as well as offering new readings and suggestions for further study. Although not designed as general introductions, Oliver 1970 and Reiss 1972 offer full-length studies which engage with both secular and religious poems. These works, somewhat informed by the School of New Criticism popular at the time of their publication, place their focus on close reading and textual and stylistic analysis. Both studies are useful for those seeking to consider the formal and structural properties of the lyrics. Lerer 1997 is interesting reading for those wishing to learn more about the rise and development of the lyric tradition in England.

D'Arcy, Anne Marie. "The Middle English Lyrics." In *Readings in Medieval Texts: Interpreting Old and Middle English Literature*. Edited by David Johnson and Elaine Treharne, 306-322. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

A helpful and concise starting-point for the student new to the Middle English lyric. The first section concentrates on the religious lyric, comprising discrete discussions of the Mariological, Christological, and moral lyrics through an analysis of a poem, or poems. The discussion of secular lyrics focuses on images of love and nature, as well as the depiction of women.

Duncan, Thomas G, ed. *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

An important, recent collection of essays on the Middle English lyric each written by experts in the field. In addition to essays on love lyrics, moral and penitential poems, popular lyrics, religious lyrics and the carol, it also includes discussions of lyric manuscripts, metre and editorial practice, and the poems' treatment of gender.

Greentree, Rosemary. "Lyric." In *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture c. 1350–1500*. Edited by Peter Brown, 387-405. Oxford: Blackwell, 2009.

A valuable introduction for the undergraduate, covering issues of context, form, theme and authorship. It also usefully draws attention to the slipperiness of the term “lyric” and the diversity and range exhibited by the lyric corpus.

Lerer, Seth. “The Genre of the Grave and the Origins of the Middle English Lyric.” *Modern Language Quarterly* 58:2 (1997): 127-161.

Examines some of the earliest surviving lyrics in Middle English. Reading these poems in the context of post-Conquest England, Lerer argues that early poems such as “Ic an witles” (NIMEV:3512) look back to the elegies of Old English literature. As a result, these lyrics can be understood as a form of defence of the vernacular.

Oliver, Raymond. *Poems without Names: The English Lyric 1200–1500*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1970.

Argues that the lyrics share a formal unity that can be demonstrated by an analysis of the poems’ shared stylistic, grammatical, and literary conventions. Oliver analyses common formal and structural devices in the poems, devoting chapters to “Word and Metaphors,” “The Three Levels of Style,” and “Sound and Rhythm.”

Reiss, Edmund. *The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1972.

A discussion of twenty-five lyrics, with particular attention devoted to language, syntax and imagery. Focuses on close-reading a poem’s style and language, rather than engaging with issues of historical and cultural context.

The Medieval Lyric and its European Context

An examination of the origin and development of the Middle English lyric can be enhanced by a consideration of the vernacular lyric in its wider, European context. A number of studies have demonstrated how lyrics in the vernacular emerged as a popular form in the later Middle Ages and have explored the links which exist between different traditions. Particularly influential is the work of Peter Dronke, who has examined in detail the medieval lyric in Europe. Dronke 1996 is a particularly important work: it approaches the vernacular lyrics of Europe as a single tradition and seeks to demonstrate the links and connections that exist between lyrics written in different languages. Those interested in this topic would also do well to consult Brittain 1951. Dronke 1965 focuses particularly on the vernacular love lyric in Europe, exploring the origins of the tradition and its possible connections to Latin lyrics. The European tradition is also discussed in Diehl 1985. This work, however, adopts a different approach to Dronke 1996 and Brittain 1951, as it deals less with content and, instead, concentrates on the formal, generic and rhetorical features that are shared by many European religious lyrics, irrespective of the

language in which they are written. For those seeking to cast their net even wider, a selection of essays on a range of topics related to medieval European lyric can be found in Paden 2000.

Brittain, *Mediaeval Latin and Romance Lyric to AD 1300*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1951.

Originally published in 1937. Offers a survey of Medieval Latin and vernacular lyrics, in order to demonstrate the links that exist between the traditions. In addition to the Latin, there are sections on Provençal, French, Castilian, Galician-Portuguese, and Italian lyric. The discussion is followed by a large selection of poems, presented chronologically and accompanied by explanatory notes.

Diehl, Patrick S. *The Medieval European Religious Lyric: An Ars Poetica*. Berkeley, California, and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

An ambitious work that provides a survey of medieval European religious verse during the period c.300–1500 and in many languages. Chapters are devoted to such topics as function, genre, form and structure, and rhetoric. The volume concludes with a useful account of the development of the religious lyric in different languages, such as Greek, Latin, German, Old Norse, Middle English, and Spanish.

Dronke, Peter. *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Explores the origins of the vernacular love lyric, considering its possible development and influences. Dronke examines love lyrics in a range of vernaculars and explores the possible links between them, arguing in favour of shared sources and influences. The second volume is an anthology, containing a large number of poems that are referred to in volume one.

Dronke, Peter. *The Medieval Lyric*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1996.

Focusing on the emergence of the medieval lyric in both the romance and Germanic languages from c.850 to 1300, Dronke argues that these poems can only be understood “within the framework of a European tradition.” The work examines links between lyrics written in different languages and contexts, and also places a particular emphasis on song. First published in 1968.

Paden, William D., ed. *Medieval Lyric: Genres in Historical Context*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

An edited collection of fourteen essays on medieval lyric which are arranged according to historical context, rhetoric, music and ideas of genre. The essays focus on a wide range of literary traditions including the Troubadour lyric, secular Latin lyric, Italian lyric poetry, and the Hebrew Lyric.

The Medieval Latin Lyric

The earliest surviving medieval lyrics are written in Latin and date to around the fourth century. While some of these early lyrics, such as those composed by the fourth-century Roman poet Ausonius, are secular poems that are heavily indebted to the classical tradition, many of these early verses take the form of Latin hymns. The tradition of Latin hymnody developed in the fourth century and was instigated by such early religious writers as Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose and Prudentius. The hymnic tradition gained in prominence throughout the Middle Ages and is a particularly important context for those interested in the medieval lyric; indeed, some of the earliest religious lyrics in the vernacular are direct translations of Latin hymns. The Carolingian period saw a resurgence in the prominence of Latin lyric, as authors began experimenting with new poetic forms and styles. Important writers of this period include Alcuin, who had direct affiliations with the Carolingian court, as well as such figures as Hrabanus Maurus and Theodulf of Orléans, who both composed religious verse. A tendency towards experimentation is witnessed again in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For instance, the well-known manuscript, the *Carmina Burana*, which dates to the early thirteenth century, contains one of the most extensive and important collections of Latin lyrics from the period. These poems, which are thought to have been mostly composed in the twelfth century, are varied in theme and focus, but include religious lyrics as well as poems on love and nature. In addition to these more familiar poetic themes, the collection is particularly distinct for its inclusion of what is commonly referred to as “goliardic” verse. Generally thought to be composed by clerics, goliardic poetry is distinct for its satirical voice, which it often directs towards the church, and for its engagement with the themes of drinking, physical desire and lust (as opposed to courtly models of love). One of the most famous Goliardic poets to feature in the *Carmina Burana* is the anonymous Archpoet.

Editions

A number of authoritative editions of medieval Latin lyric are available. Waddell 1929 and Raby 1959 provide good introductions, offering a wide selection of poems, both secular and religious, and spanning a considerable chronological period. For those particularly interested in the Latin poetry composed during the Carolingian period, Godman 1985 offers an accessible selection of material. Dreves and Blume 1886–1922 and Walpole 1922 provide authoritative editions of medieval Latin hymns. Two editions of material from the *Carmina Burana*, one of the most significant collections of Latin lyric, are of note. Hilka, Schuman and Bischoff 1930–1970 is regarded as the standard, scholarly edition and is thus the one to cite; the more general reader, however, may find Parlett 1986 more accessible.

Dreves, G.M. and C. Blume, eds. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi*. 55 vols. Leipzig: Reisland, 1886–1922.

The standard collected works of Latin hymns from the medieval period. Extensive notes are also included.

Godman, Peter. *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*. London: Duckworth, 1985.

Focuses on Latin poets of the Carolingian Renaissance, such as Alcuin, Theodulf of Orléans, Walafrid Strabo, and Sedulius Scottus, among others. Divides material along chronological lines into two sections, “Charlemagne and the New Age” and “The Successors of Charlemagne.” Notes assist in the study of the poems and also support the reader in drawing links between material. The Latin text is presented with facing page English translations.

Hilka, A., O. Schumann, and B. Bischoff, eds. *Carmina Burana*. 4 vols. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1930–1970.

The critical edition of the poems of the *Carmina Burana*. The first three volumes present the Latin poems; the fourth volume contains explanatory notes and commentary. In German.

Parlett, David. *Selections from the Carmina Burana: A New Verse Translation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.

An accessible edition suitable for the student as well as the more general reader. The selection of poetry presented seeks to demonstrate the range and variety of the lyrics in the *Carmina Burana*.

Raby, F.J.E. *The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Contains 290 Latin verses, dating from the third century up to around 1350. The collection supplies the Latin verse only. The notes at the end of the edition are useful, citing other editions as well as offering translations of difficult lines or phrases.

Waddell, Helen. *Medieval Latin Lyrics*. New York: Henry Holt, 1929.

Material arranged chronologically and according to author. The poems range from Petronius Arbiter and Ausonius in the fourth century, through to lyrics from the thirteenth century. The volume supplies the original Latin text with facing-page English translations. Helpful, detailed notes on each lyric, as well as authors, are supplied at the end of the volume.

Walpole, A.S. *Early Latin Hymns*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1922.

An early work but still authoritative. Presents a collection of hymns composed by such early Christian writers as Hilary, Ambrose, Prudentius and Sedulius. Texts are accompanied by extensive notes.

General Studies

There are a number of useful studies which survey the literary history of the Latin lyric and would thus serve as good, general introductions to the topic. Indeed, the work of two eminent scholars, F.J.E. Raby and Joseph Szövérfy, stands out in particular. The two companion volumes of Raby 1934 and Raby 1953, which offer histories of secular Latin lyric and Christian Latin lyric respectively, are essential reading for anyone new to the subject. Consultation of Raby 1953 should be supplemented with Szövérfy 1992–1994. This work also offers a detailed account of the secular Latin lyric but, unlike Raby

1953 which sets its point of termination at the thirteenth century, Szövérfy 1992–1994 extends its reach into the fifteenth century. For those seeking an introduction to the tradition of Latin hymnody, Szövérfy 1985 offers a good overview of its history and most prominent figures. The account of the hymnic tradition in Messenger 1953 is suitable for the more general reader. Godman and Murray 1990 offers a selection of essays on the influence of the classical tradition on medieval Latin poetry; the collection includes a number of essays on the goliardic poets.

Godman, Peter and Oswyn Murray, ed. *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Contains some useful essays on the influence of the classical tradition on writers of Latin poetry. Peter Dronke's essay on "The Archpoet and the Classics" is worth particular mention.

Messenger, Ruth Ellis. *The Medieval Latin Hymn*. Washington, D.C.: Capital Press, 1953.

An accessible introduction to the medieval Latin hymn. Useful for the undergraduate looking for a concise discussion of the hymnic tradition from its beginnings in the fourth century through to the rise of sequences and processional hymns in later Middle Ages.

Raby, F.J.E. *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934.

This is a detailed account of the rise and development of secular Latin poetry from the third and fourth centuries, through to poetry of the thirteenth century.

Raby, F.J.E. *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953.

A comprehensive account of the history of Latin poetry as it develops in the Christian tradition up to the thirteenth century. Chapters are arranged chronologically and are often confined to period or place; for instance, space is devoted to the religious poetry of the tenth and eleventh centuries in Italy, Germany, and France. First published in 1927.

Szövérfy, Joseph. *A Concise History of Medieval Latin Hymnody: Religious Lyrics Between Antiquity and Humanism*. Leiden: Brill, 1985.

A concise survey of the history of Latin hymnody, from the fourth century through to the fifteenth. The chapter on the contents of hymns, which encompasses theology, classical allusions, as well as historical and ecclesiastical references, is noteworthy. This work is a useful starting-point for those seeking an introduction to the subject.

Szövérfy, Joseph. *Secular Latin Lyrics and Minor Poetic Forms of the Middle Ages: A Historical Survey and Literary Repertory from the Tenth to the Late Fifteenth Century*. Concord, New Hampshire: Classical Folio Editions, 1992-1994.

An important work. It provides a detailed but accessible survey of the history of secular Latin lyric from the tenth to the fifteenth century. It includes in its discussion such other “minor poetic forms” as love poems, personal or political poems, as well as satire and parody. The fourth volume is a general index.

The Medieval French Lyric

The earliest vernacular lyrics emerged in France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These lyrics, composed by poets known as troubadours and trouvères, were written in the poets’ own regional vernaculars and were often set to music. The importance of musical accompaniment and its role in the composition and performance of these verses is demonstrated by the frequent presence of musical notation in the surviving manuscripts, known as songbooks or *chansonnières*, which preserve these texts. Although the poetry of the troubadours and trouvères has many points of similarity, being both courtly and aristocratic, these two groups of poets were actually participating in two distinct regional traditions. While the troubadour movement was located principally in the area of southern France, with poets composing verse in their local dialect of Occitan, or Old Provençal, the trouvères, who emerged slightly later than the troubadours, wrote their material in Old French and lived predominantly in the north. In spite of this geographical distance, however, it is generally agreed that the trouvères were inspired by the lyric movement of the south and that they borrowed themes and poetic forms from their southern counterparts. Indeed, while both the troubadours and trouvères composed religious lyrics, debates, and dance songs, it was the theme of love, particularly the refined love of *fin’amors*, which was the most dominant theme of their works. It is this aspect of the works of the troubadours and trouvères that is particularly noteworthy, having a direct influence on the secular poetry of other vernaculars. Indeed, the tradition of *fin’amors* is an important theme in the Middle English courtly lyrics.

Editions

Those new to the poetry of the troubadours and trouvères would do well to equip themselves with a user-friendly edition which offers facing-page translations, such as Goldin 1973 or Rosenberg 1998. Rosenberg 1998 is a particularly good resource, supplying musical notation for some of the texts. For those interested in exploring the verses of the women troubadours, (known individually as *trobairitz*) a good selection of material can be found in Bruckner 1995. Although the presence of female poets in northern France is far less conclusive, Doss-Quilby, Grimbert, Pfeffer and Aubrey 2001 offer a collection of poems which may either be attributable to female poets or which utilize the female poetic voice. Di

Bacco and Stringer 2007-2012 is a searchable database that is a useful tool for those wishing to find out more about the development of the French lyric in the fourteenth century.

Bruckner, Matilda Tomaryn, Laurie Shepard, and Sarah White, eds. *The Songs of the Women Troubadours*. New York: Garland, 1995.

A selection of 36 poems, including the work of twenty known female poets, as well as some anonymous material. The original text is accompanied by facing English translations. The introduction discusses issues of context, genre and identity, is particularly useful reading for the newcomer to the topic.

Doss-Quinby, Eglal, Joan Tasker Grimbert, Wendy Pfeffer, and Elizabeth Aubrey, eds. and trans. *Songs of the Women 'Trouvères'*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

Although the existence of female trouvères has long been debated, this collection brings together a selection of poems which are either attributed to female authors or, more commonly, adhere to the genre of *chanson de femme*. The edition begins with a useful survey of the critical response to the possibility of female poets during the period.

Goldin, Frederick, ed. and trans. *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères: An Anthology and a History*. New York: Anchor Press, 1973.

Groups the poems into lyrics by troubadours and those by trouvères. Poems are arranged according to author, and each of these sections is prefaced by a brief discussion of the named poet's work and background. Offers the original texts with English translations.

Rosenberg, Samuel, Margaret Switten, and Gérard Le Vot, eds. *Songs of the Troubadours and Trouvères: An Anthology of Poems and Melodies*. New York: Garland, 1998.

Material is divided into troubadour and trouvère lyrics and authors are given, where known. The original texts of the poems are presented, with facing English translation and commentary notes. Musical notation is also supplied for a significant proportion of the material (a CD of music accompanies the edition).

****Je chante ung chant. An Archive of Late-Medieval French Lyrics*. [<http://jechante.exeter.ac.uk/archive/index.html>]*. Edited by Giuliano Di Bacco and Gary Stringer, 2007-2012.**

An online searchable database of late-medieval French lyrics, largely comprising of songs and motets from the fourteenth century newly transcribed for the archive. The archive includes a number of motets by Machaut. Provides full texts of the poems and lists the original manuscript source.

General Studies

The medieval French lyric is a rich area of study that has attracted a wealth of critical attention from musicologists, as well as literary scholars. As a consequence, there is an excellent range of resources available to the new and more informed reader wishing to engage with this wide-ranging material. For the new reader, the essays compiled in Gaunt and Kay 1999 serve as an excellent point of entry into the topic of troubadour poetry. Paden 1989 also provides a useful collection of essays on the works of the female troubadours. In recent years, a number of studies have approached the material through a consideration of the complex relationship between music and poetry. Placing a particular emphasis on song and melody, O'Neill 2006 offers an important study of the courtly love songs of the trouvères, while Butterfield 2002 focuses on the written contexts in which vernacular songs survive and the way in which this shapes their reception and meaning. Also taking up the issue of context is Huot 1987, which examines the contexts in which these poems circulated and the relationship between the written and oral currency of these texts. Paterson 1993 offers an important analysis of Occitan society, reflecting on the context in which troubadour poetry emerged and proliferated. Taylor 2008 provides a useful discussion for those interested in how the medieval French lyric developed in the later Middle Ages, after the decline of the troubadours and the trouvères.

Butterfield, Ardis. *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Butterfield's study examines the complex links between song and poetry in medieval France, focusing particularly on issues of genre and context. Considering in detail those works which combine narrative and song, Butterfield considers how the poetry's meaning is shaped and informed by the written contexts in which they survive. Particular attention is devoted to the refrain.

Gaunt, Simon, and Sarah Kay, eds. *The Troubadours: An Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

A useful starting-point for the undergraduate. This collection of seventeen essays covers the major topics essential to a full appreciation of the troubadours and their repertoire, including discussions of the courtly culture, the early troubadours, and the *trobairitz*. Also includes essays on important aspects of troubadour poetry, such as *fin'amors* and music and versification.

Huot, Sylvia. *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Focusing on the French courtly lyric and lyrical narrative poetry, Huot notes the changing status of the book, as well as the written preservation of texts, in a literary tradition that prioritizes oral delivery. The work is divided into three main sections, covering "The Nature of the Book in the Thirteenth Century," "Lyricism and the Book in the Thirteenth Century," and "Lyricism and the Book in the Fourteenth Century."

O'Neill, Mary. *Courtly Love Songs of Medieval France: Transmission and Style in the Trouvère Repertoire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

A full-length study of the repertoire of trouvère lyric, focusing particularly on the *chanson d'amour*. Through an examination of the work of seven trouvères, O'Neill demonstrates the variety implicit to the repertoire of trouvère love lyric, particularly with regards to style and melody.

Paden, William, ed. *Voice of the Trobairitz: Perspectives on the Women Troubadours*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989.

A collection of eleven essays on the women troubadours. Paden's introduction to the volume provides useful context as well as a precise account of the number and types of poems that are confidently ascribed to these female poets.

Paterson, Linda M. *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c. 1100-1300*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Examines the troubadours and the society in which they lived. Useful for those wishing to learn about the historical context in which the troubadour movement emerged. Provides chapters on a range of topics which engage with different aspects of Occitan society, including "Towns," "Peasants," "Occitan feudalism," and "Women."

Taylor, Jane H.M. "Lyric Poetry for the later Middle Ages." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*. Edited by Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, 153-166. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Considers the development of lyric poetry after the troubadours and trouvères. Examines, in particular, the emergence of new lyric forms which do not require musical accompaniment but, instead, rely on *musique naturelle*, or poetic craft.

The Middle English Religious Lyric

The majority of Middle English lyrics that survive are religious, rather than secular in theme. The expansive category of religious lyric is noteworthy for its considerable diversity, not only with regards to subject matter, but also in terms of style, form, and length. Indeed, while some of the earliest poems are notably short, spanning no more than four or five lines, a number of religious lyrics from the fifteenth century reach well over a hundred lines in total. A particularly distinguishing feature of the Middle English religious lyrics is their use of voice: although the detached, third-person mode of address is a popular choice with authors, a considerable number of poems make use of first-person narration, constructing the voice of the meditator or, as became common in the fourteenth century, the voice of

Christ which addresses the reader directly. Although the variety of motifs and ideas explored in the religious lyrics is numerous, the poems are traditionally divided into three main thematic categories: Christological, Mariological, and moral. In spite of these neat distinction it is perhaps worth noting that some religious lyrics could easily be situated in more than one of these categories at once. Given their focus, it is perhaps unsurprising that many of the religious lyrics are heavily indebted to the Christian tradition, often drawing inspiration from scripture, Christian iconography, and the liturgy. Indeed, it is worth noting that some of the earliest surviving religious lyrics in Middle English were direct translations of Latin hymns. Traditionally, scholars have associated the rise of the religious lyric in Middle English with the arrival of the Franciscan Order to England in the thirteenth century. Early critics typically regarded the function of these poems as primarily didactic, viewing the poems as simple preaching aids designed to teach and instruct the laity in the tenets of the Christian faith. While the Franciscan influence on the early lyric cannot be refuted, recent work on the lyrics and their early manuscripts reveals that these poems were recorded in a wide range of contexts and had multiple functions. Indeed, the suggestion that the religious lyrics are intended as simple teaching aids is belied by the complex theology and learned background which informs many of these poems. In addition to this, it is worth noting that late-medieval devotion, particularly the tradition of affective piety, is also an important context through which to approach many of these poems.

Editions

For those wishing to study the Middle English religious lyric corpus in detail, a number of scholarly editions are in existence. The standard, critical editions are Brown 1952 and Brown 1939, which offer a selection of religious lyrics from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries respectively. Brown 1965 (cited under *Collected Anthologies and General Editions*), which includes a significant number of religious lyrics from the thirteenth century, should also be consulted. For those interested specifically in the Middle English Mariological lyrics, Saupe 1998 offers useful collection of poems. Patterson 1911 and Gray 1992 present serviceable selections of religious lyrics from the period; Gray 1992, in particular, is a useful edition for those new to the subject and seeking an accessible and well-selected collection of lyrics.

Brown, Carleton, ed. *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939.

The third and final volume of lyrics edited by Brown. Poems are arranged thematically and Brown assigns his own titles. Original orthography and capitalization has been retained. Notes to each poem are provided at the end of the volume.

Brown, Carleton, ed. *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*. 2nd ed. Revised by G.V. Smithers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

One of the standard critical editions of religious lyrics. Lyrics are arranged according to manuscript, along vaguely chronological lines. This second edition includes a number of corrections to the printed texts of the poems. Originally published in 1924.

Gray, Douglas, ed. *English Medieval Religious Lyrics*. Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1992.

A comprehensive collection of Middle English religious lyrics divided into thematic categories such as "The Fall," "The Promise of Redemption," "The Passion of Christ," "Penitence and Christian Life," "Prayers and Poems to the Virgin Mary." The collection is preceded by a detailed introduction which places the lyrics in their historical context and in relation to contemporary developments in devotion. Useful notes on each lyric are included. Originally printed as *A Selection of Religious Lyrics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

Patterson, Frank Allen, ed. *The Middle English Penitential Lyric: A Study and Collection of Early Religious Verse*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1911.

A useful collection of material. Although somewhat dated, it has a detailed introduction that is helpful for those seeking to learn more about the influences which shaped the development of the vernacular religious lyric.

Saupe, Karen, ed. *Middle English Marian Lyrics*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997.

A selection of Mariological lyrics. Groups poems thematically according to such topics as the "Annunciation," "Nativity," "Mary at the foot of the Cross." Offers a useful introduction which charts the origins and development of Marian devotion in the Middle Ages. Available as an online edition, via the *TEAMS website[<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/saupe-middle-english-marian-lyrics>]*.

General Studies

In the mid-twentieth century, scholarly interest in the Middle English religious lyrics surged. The pioneering studies of Woolf 1968 and Gray 1972 mark the highpoint of these scholarly endeavours and have thus remained fundamental to the study of the religious lyric ever since. In spite of their shared focus, these two studies take slightly different approaches: Woolf 1968 focuses on the meditative background to the poems, while Gray 1972 examines their use of imagery, particularly contemporary religious iconography. While Woolf 1968 and Gray 1972 engage critically and sensitively with a large number of poems, other volumes build their discussions around close readings. One such work to adopt this approach is Weber 1969, which explores a select number of poems in order to draw attention to their theological background, particularly their use of the liturgy. Those interested in considering the style and literary features of the religious lyrics, should consult Manning 1962. A number of scholars have also expressed an interest in studying the influences which shaped the emergence of the religious

lyric tradition in England. Both Robbins 1940 and Jeffrey 1975 argue that the earliest religious lyrics are the product of Franciscan authorship. Wenzel 1986, however, is superior to these two studies, examining the relationship between the lyric and the tradition of preaching. A concise and informative introduction to the main aspects of the religious lyrics can be found in Whitehead 2005.

Gray, Douglas. *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric*. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

An impressive and engaging discussion of the religious lyrics and their range of images. After a discussion of the Christian background, Gray moves on to examine how these poems utilize iconographic motifs. Focus is directed towards those lyrics which depict Christ's Passion, the Annunciation, the Resurrection, and the Assumption. The moral lyrics are also examined.

Jeffrey, David L. *The Early English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1975.

Through an examination of the relationship between Franciscan spirituality and the religious lyric, Jeffrey argues that the Franciscans were largely responsible for the introduction of lyric into England and that these poems should be understood as a form of "Franciscan song." The work and its assertions have been criticized.

Manning, Stephen. *Wisdom and Number: Toward a Critical Appraisal of the Middle English Religious Lyric*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1962.

Describes the lyrics as songs designed to illicit an emotional response in the reader. Focusing closely on the texts themselves and offering close readings, Manning devotes chapters to "Sound Patterns," "Religious Structures," "Analogy and Imagery," and "Piety and Wit." His discussion demonstrates the complex workings of the lyrics as poetry, as well as their utilization of Christian liturgy and imagery.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "The Authors of the Middle English Religious Lyrics." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 39 (1940): 230-238.

Argues that the early Middle English religious lyrics, before the middle of the fourteenth century, were composed by Franciscans. Pays particular attention to early lyric manuscripts and their likely Franciscan origin. It is worth noting that more recent studies (see Boffey 2005, cited under *Manuscripts: Studies on Manuscripts containing Lyrics*) have questioned the extent to which some of the early lyric manuscripts might be categorized as "Franciscan miscellanies."

Weber, Sarah Appleton. *Theology and Poetry in the Middle English Lyric: A Study of Sacred History and Aesthetic Form*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1969.

An examination of the ways in which medieval theology, and particularly the liturgy, shaped the Middle English religious lyric. Divides its discussion into three sections: "The Annunciation and the Birth of Christ," "The Crucifixion," and "The Joy of Mary." Close readings of poems demonstrate the importance of theology to the imagery, structure, and purpose of the lyrics.

Wenzel, Siegfried. *Preachers, Poets and the Early English Lyric*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Wenzel examines the relationship between sermons and the Middle English lyric, engaging particularly with issues of manuscript context. Particular attention is directed towards those poems which survive in preaching manuscripts, such as collections of sermons or preachers' notebooks. Wenzel also examines the functional appropriateness of lyrics as preaching aids. Includes a valuable discussion of the fourteenth-century friar John of Grimestone and his preaching book.

Whitehead, Christiania. "Middle English Religious Lyrics." In *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 96-119. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

Whitehead offers an astute analysis of the contexts, themes, and influences which shape the religious lyric tradition, while also highlighting areas worthy of further investigation. A useful starting-point for undergraduates.

Woolf, Rosemary. *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Essential reading. Offers a comprehensive discussion of the religious lyric tradition from the thirteenth century to the end of the fifteenth century. Woolf approaches the lyrics as "meditative poems" and examines them in relation to contemporary theological and devotional contexts. Woolf divides her study along chronological as well as thematic lines, separating material into that which dates from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and that from the fifteenth century. Within these two sections material is discussed according to theme (such as "The Passion," "Death," and "The Virgin and her Joys").

The Christological Lyric

Christological lyrics, or those poems which focus on Christ (be it as prayers addressed to Christ or as poems which explore his life and Passion), occupy a significant portion of the Middle English religious lyric corpus. Indeed, Christ's death and Passion is one of the principal themes that recurs throughout these poems. Often placing particular emphasis on Christ's humanity, these lyrics are typically informed by the tradition of affective piety and encourage the individual to engage with Christ and his Passion in a personal, emotional, and bodily way, rather than focusing solely on the Passion's theological significance. A number of studies are helpful for those wishing to consider in detail how the tradition of affective piety shaped the themes and images that recur in the Christological lyrics. Focusing

particularly on those lyrics which recount Christ's Passion, Bennett 1982 and Breslin 2001 examine the lyrics' depiction of the Crucified Christ and consider how the texts serve to inspire devotion and compunction in the reader. Also worthy of consultation, particularly for those seeking more information on late-medieval piety, is Barratt 1975, which links developments in the fifteenth-century lyric to the influence of Books of Hours or "prymers." Woolf 1962 explores the depiction of Christ as lover, a motif encountered frequently in the religious lyrics, while Gray 1963 and Breeze 1985 are useful reading for those seeking to understand the prominence given to Christ's bodily suffering in the lyrics, particularly the Five Wounds inflicted on Christ at the Crucifixion. Wimsatt 1978 offers an excellent close reading of the well-known Christological poem, "In a valey of þis restles mynde" (NIMEV:1463), which draws on the Song of Songs, demonstrating its theological complexity. Copeland 1984 is useful for those interested in learning more about the sources which inspired some of the earliest lyrics, examining a cluster of poems which derive from a direct translation of a single Latin phrase.

Barratt, Alexandra. "The Prymer and its Influence on Fifteenth-Century English Passion Lyrics." *Medium Ævum* 44 (1975): 264-279.

Argues that the increase in literacy among the laity in the fifteenth century, and the ensuing popularity of "prymers" or Books of Hours, resulted in lyrics which were more theologically complex. Barratt examines a number of lyrics which were informed by devotions in the "prymer," as well as considering those poems which are direct translations of material within it.

Bennett, J.A.W. *Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.

Although the focus of this study is not exclusively on the medieval lyric tradition, Chapter Two, "The Meditative Movement," engages frequently with the religious lyric. Bennett examines the Passion and Christ's suffering as depicted in a number of religious lyrics, placing popular images and motifs in their wider devotional and meditative contexts.

Breeze, Andrew. "The Number of Christ's Wounds." *The Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 32 (1985): 84-91.

A discussion of the prominence given to the number of Christ's wounds in the medieval lyric, engaging with Middle English, Welsh, and Latin examples. Notes that the total of Christ's bodily wounds was either given as 5475 or 6666 in most poems. Discusses the wider, devotional traditions which account for the treatment of this motif in the Middle English religious lyrics.

Breslin, Carol. "Love Songs and Lullabies: The Compassionate Crucified Saviour in Late Medieval English Lyrics." *Downside Review* 119 (2001): 297-306.

An accessible discussion which examines the depiction of Christ and the treatment of the Passion in the religious lyrics. Breslin engages with a number of poems in the course of her discussion, reflecting on the ways in which Christ's divinity and humanity are depicted.

Copeland, Rita. "The Middle English *Candet Nudatum Pectus* and Norms of Early Vernacular Translation Practice." *Leeds Studies in English* 15 (1984): 57-81.

In this study of vernacular translation, Copeland examines those lyrics (nine in total) which translate the Latin phrase or "tag," *candet nudatum pectus*. By analysing the evolution of the poem from Latin into Middle English, Copeland draws particular attention to the influence Passion iconography had on the shape and form of these translations.

Gray, Douglas. "The Five Wounds of Our Lord." *Notes and Queries* 208 (1963): 50-51, 82-89, 127-134, 163-168.

After presenting a transcription of a lyric on the Five Wounds from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 1 (NIMEV:1011), Gray offers an analysis of the devotion to the Five Wounds and considers how this tradition is treated in the lyrics. Gray notes that in the lyrics the wounds are typically depicted as remedies, a site of refuge, or as wells or fountains.

Wimsatt, James I. "The Canticle of Canticles, Two Latin Poems, and 'In a valey of pis restles mynde'." *Modern Philology* 75 (1978): 327-345.

Provides a detailed analysis of the language and imagery of the Christological lyric, "In a valey of pis restles mynde" (NIMEV:1463). By considering the depiction of Christ as a bridegroom and the imagery of the side wound as a bridal chamber, Wimsatt asserts that the mystical imagery deployed in the lyric has its roots in the Songs of Songs.

Woolf, Rosemary. "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature." *Review of English Studies* n.s 13 (1962): 1-16.

An important discussion for understanding the imagery of Christ as "lover" in the religious lyrics. Woolf examines the popular allegory which likened Christ in his Passion to a knight who dies to win the love of his lady. Engages with this motif as it is deployed in a number of lyrics, as well as in some other texts.

The Mariological Lyric

As devotion to the Virgin Mary reached new heights in the later Middle Ages, lyrics praising her status as virgin, mother, and queen of heaven became increasingly common. Poems celebrating the Annunciation and Nativity, or her role as intercessor to Christ, are frequent, as are those poems which focus on Mary's grief at the Crucifixion. Indeed, a significant number of lyrics on the Passion dwell in detail on the Virgin's sorrow, encouraging the reader to empathize with her grief and, through visual

contemplation, to share her role as witness to Christ's death. Scholars have frequently examined the depiction of the Virgin in these poems and have commented on their meditative and devotional qualities. Approaching these lyrics through an interest in gender and theories of the gaze, Stanbury 1991 examines the presentation of the Virgin as witness in these poems and reflects on the emphasis placed on her gaze, which Mary directs to the suffering and dying body of Christ. A good survey of the genre of the *planctus Mariae*, or Lament of the Virgin, is provided by Keiser 1985 and two poems of this type are examined by Fein 1992. The depiction of the Virgin's sorrow as expressed through the common motif of her "tears of blood" is explored by Breeze 1988. In addition to those lyrics which examine Mary's grief and laments at the death of her son, the well-known poems "In a tabernacle of a toure" (NIMEV: 1460) and "I syng of a mayden" (NIMEV:1367) have also received critical attention. Manning 1960 and Steffes 2002 unpick the exegetical complexity of "I syng of a mayden;" Manning 1960, in particular, also draws attention to the poem's rhetorical skill. Such concerns are also at work in Cross 1972, which offers a close reading of "In a tabernacle of a toure." Finally, for those interested in the Mariological lyric of the later Middle Ages, particularly with regards to those poems which celebrate and praise the Virgin, the analysis of the images and titles bestowed on the Virgin in Phillips 2000 is insightful reading.

Breeze, Andrew. "The Virgin's Tears of Blood." *Celtica* 20 (1988): 110-122.

Investigates the popularity of the motif of the Virgin shedding tears of blood at Christ's Crucifixion. Breeze examines a considerable number of Middle English lyrics from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century and also considers Celtic sources. Breeze concludes that the theme must have entered the Welsh and Irish literary traditions under English influence.

Cross, J.E. "The Virgin's *Quia Amore Languet*." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972): 37-44.

Arguing against the rather negative reading of "In a tabernacle of a tour" presented in Woolf 1968, Cross asserts that the poem is in fact complex and accomplished. The fitting nature of the language and imagery ascribed to the Virgin throughout the poem is explored and attention is given to the poem's *chanson d'aventure* opening (on the *chanson d'aventure*, see Sandison 1913 cited under *Middle English Secular Lyrics: General Studies*).

Fein, Susanna Greer. "Form and Continuity in the Alliterative Tradition: Cruciform Design and Double Birth in Two Stanzaic Poems." *Modern Language Quarterly* 53 (1992): 100-125.

Analyses two poems which conform to the genre of *planctus Mariae*: a lyric which takes the form of a dispute between the Virgin and the Cross, beginning "Oure ladi freo on Rode treo make hir mone" (NIMEV:2718) and the poem known as "The Foure leues of the Trewlufe" (NIMEV:1453). Fein examines their careful structure and symmetry and notes that both poems deploy gate imagery which, in serving as a symbol of "metaphorical birth," evokes Christ's immaculate birth as well as the rebirth of humankind achieved through Christ's death and resurrection.

Keiser, George R. "The Middle English *Planctus Mariae* and the Rhetoric of Pathos." In *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*. Edited by Thomas J. Heffernan, 167-193. Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

A good introduction to the genre of the *planctus Mariae*, or lament of the Virgin, to which many religious lyrics adhere. Focuses on the use of antithetical style and structure deployed in these poems though their use of contrast, comparing, for instance, Mary's joy at the Nativity with her sorrow at Christ's death. Keiser argues that these contrasts are fundamental to the *planctus* and are used to create pathos.

Manning, Stephen. "I sing of a Myden." *PMLA* 75 (1960): 8-12.

Offers a detailed analysis of "I syng of a mayden," exploring the lyric's imagery, use of puns and number symbolism. Manning focuses on the description of the Virgin as "makeles," pointing out the way in which the lyric exploits the multiple meanings embedded in this word. Also engages with the poem's exegetical and homiletic background.

Phillips, Helen. "'Almighty and al merciabele Queene': Marian titles and Marian lyrics." In *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain*. Edited by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchinson, Carol M. Meale, and Lesley Johnson, 83-100. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.

Phillips examines the many honorific titles and images bestowed on the Virgin in lyrics which either praise Mary or function as prayers to her. She considers the effects of this complex, often riddle-like language through an analysis of three lyrics, unpicking the complex liturgical and exegetical background which informs many of the images deployed.

Stanbury, Sarah. "The Virgin's Gaze: Spectacle and Transgression in Middle English Lyrics of the Passion." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 106 (1991): 1083-1093.

Stanbury examines the female gaze and the importance of "acts of looking" in Marian laments depicting Mary at the foot of the Cross. Although the significance of Mary's gaze on Christ's crucified body serves to intensify the meditative force of these lyrics, it also empowers the Virgin while simultaneously transforming her into a spectacle for the reader.

Steffes, Michael. "'As Dewe in Aprille': *I Syng of a Mayden* and the Liturgy." *Medium Ævum* 71 (2002): 66-73.

Focuses on the "dewe in Aprille" motif which recurs throughout "I syng of a mayden." Noting that the image appears in the liturgy for the feast of the Annunciation, in addition to the liturgy for advent, Steffes unpicks the biblical and liturgical background that informs the use of the motif in the poem.

The Moral Lyric

The third strand which makes up the corpus of religious lyric is moral poems. These lyrics are noteworthy for their preoccupation with moral instruction and repentance, and they take as their major themes death, the inescapable passage of time, the need to live a good life, and the fate of man's soul after death. Traditions such as the "Last Things" and the "Three Foes of Mankind" (the world, the flesh, and the devil) are also commonly encountered. For those seeking a general overview to the topic, Gillespie 2005 offers a comprehensive discussion which engages with a range of moral and penitential poems, while also placing them in their wider literary and homiletic contexts. A consideration of language and descriptive technique is central to Fein 1987, which explores common techniques and images used by poets to depict death. For those interested in the poems' treatment of death, the small-scale studies of Robbins 1970, Malvern 1989, and Matsuda 1989 engage individually with some of the most important contexts, styles and traditions. A more detailed examination can be found in Matsuda 1997, which offers an excellent examination of attitudes to death and purgatory in a range of poems from the later Middle Ages. Wenzel 1982 is an important study which reminds us of the long tradition to which the moral lyrics, and particularly those which explore man's mortality, adhere. Finally, the edition of the well-known poem "Erthe upon Erthe" and its variants, found in Murray 1911, raises some interesting points about the form and contexts in which this lyric survives. This discussion would be particularly useful for those interested in manuscript context and the idea of *mouvance*.

Fein, Susanna, G. "The Ghoulish and the Ghastly: A Moral Aesthetic in Middle English Alliterative Verse." *Modern Language Quarterly* 48 (1987): 3-19.

Fein examines the techniques used for depicting death and the grotesque in alliterative poems. She notes that the poems often make use of "gruesome apparitions" as well as graphic description, such as that which draws attention to bodily decay and disfigurement after death. These techniques are used to highlight the reader's inescapable mortality and thus to inspire penitence.

Gillespie, Vincent. "Moral and Penitential Lyrics." In *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 68-95. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

A comprehensive and insightful discussion that would serve as a useful introduction to those new to the subject. Explores the poems' engagement with such themes as death, repentance, transience, and man's worldliness, while also considering the wider traditions and homiletic context which inspired this verse. Devotes a section to the Vernon lyrics.

Malvern, Marjorie M. "An Ernest 'Monyscyon' and 'pinge Delectabyll' Realized Verbally and Visually in 'A Disputacion betwyx þe Body and Wormes,' a Middle English Poem Inspired by Tomb Art and Northern Spirituality." *Viator* 13 (1982): 415-433.

Focuses on "A Disputacion betwyx þe Body and Wormes" (NIMEV:1563), examining its manuscript context, use of iconography, and relation to late-medieval piety. Malvern provides a close reading of

the poem's central debate episode and reflects on the accompanying illustrations in the lyric's manuscript. It is argued that the poet seeks to assuage the reader's fear of death by encouraging them to accept their own mortality and view death as a means through which eternal bliss may be achieved.

Matsuda, Takami. "Death and Transience in the Vernon Refrain Series." *English Studies* 70 (1989): 193-205.

Concentrating on the so-called Vernon Refrain lyrics, Matsuda argues that their 'non-homiletic quality', and their tendency to focus on didacticism and secular wisdom, is informed by the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. Through an examination of three main poems, Matsuda demonstrates how these lyrics inspire a pragmatic and intellectual attitude to death while also promoting prudence and self-knowledge.

Matsuda, Takami. *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry*. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1997.

Devotes chapters to Middle English homiletic poems on death and to images of purgatory in the lyrics. Matsuda observes that most Middle English poems are governed by a homiletic tone designed to inspire repentance and, as a result, allusions to purgatory are not at all common. The poems seek to inspire a pragmatic attitude towards death. Discusses the Vernon lyrics, the moral poems in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102 and London, British Library, MS Additional 37049, and the poems of John Audelay.

Murray, Hilda M.R. *The Middle English Poem, Erthe Upon Erthe, Printed from Twenty-Four Manuscripts*. Early English Text Society 141. London: Kegan Paul, 1911.

Provides critical editions of the surviving poem and identifies an A, B, and C version. The introduction provides a useful discussion of the different versions of the poems, manuscript context and the poem's origin and development. Murray argues that this family of lyrics has an English source and notes its sophisticated punning of the word "erthe."

Robbins, Rossell Hope. "Signs of Death in Middle English." *Mediaeval Studies* 32 (1970): 282-298.

Examines the origins of the "Signs of Death" tradition, reflecting on its function as a diagnostic list in medical texts, as well as a motif deployed in religious lyrics to inspire repentance. The Latin origins of the motif are examined and Robbins lists the Middle English versions of the poem, including previously unpublished texts.

Wenzel, Siegfried. "Pestilence and Middle English Literature: Friar John Grimestone's Poems on Death." In *The Black Death: The Impact of the Fourteenth-Century Plague*. Edited by Daniel Williman, 131-159. Binghamton, New York: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982.

Examines the collection of lyrics on death preserved in John of Grimestone's preaching book, comparing them to poems composed before the Black Death. Wenzel notes that the Grimestone lyrics show that the Black Death did not have a profound influence on the treatment of death in the literature of the late fourteenth century: rather, authors continue to adhere to longstanding and traditional treatments of death and mortality.

The Middle English Secular Lyric

A significant number of Middle English secular lyrics survives. Although the size of this corpus is smaller than that of the religious lyrics, the diversity and breadth of content found in the secular poems is striking. Indeed, within the category of secular poems we find courtly verse and love lyric, political and historical poems, as well as those which are typically described as "popular;" within these groupings we also find a range of voices, tones and moods. One of the most significant collections of secular verse survives in the famous Harley manuscript (London, British Library, Harley MS 2253). This manuscript dates to the first half of the fourteenth century and contains material in French, Latin, and English. Although it features religious as well as political poems, it is perhaps most well-known for its collection of courtly love lyrics. The courtly love lyric is one of the most recognisable forms of secular verse and is heavily indebted to the French lyric tradition and *fin'amors*. Indeed, the love lyrics often conform to the traditional tropes and motifs found in earlier French models. For instance, poems may typically have a male speaker who refers to his own love-sickness and feelings of refined love; they may include a conventional rhetorical description of female beauty; and they may also use nature and spring as conventional settings and sources of imagery. Love is also a theme that appears in some popular lyrics, although its treatment differs from that found in the courtly poems; rather than the male, refined love of the courtly tradition, we find, instead, poems spoken by abandoned women, for instance. To some extent, the popular lyric is the most expansive category of secular lyric, including ballads, drinking songs, pastourelles and other, more miscellaneous poems that resist firm categorization. Although there has been a tendency in the past for scholars to draw a distinction between the "courtly" and the "popular" traditions, it is worth noting that such a division does not extend to audience: the assumption that aristocratic audiences would read courtly verse while the common man would enjoy the popular lyric is decidedly problematic. If we wish to draw a distinction between the courtly and popular poems, it is more appropriate to do this according to tone, register, and attitude: unlike the courtly lyrics, the popular poems may be governed by comedy, satire, and even parody, for instance. In addition to the traditions of courtly and popular lyric we also find a significant number of poems that are political or historical in focus. These poems often explore the running of the state and the role of the king, as well as recounting or engaging with historical events, such as battles or conflicts. These poems are distinct,

perhaps, for the way in which they provide a degree of social commentary that is often absent from other secular poems.

Editions

A number of editions of Middle English secular lyrics are available for the student and reader. Robbins 1955 remains the standard critical edition of secular lyrics and should be the starting-point for those seeking to engage seriously with the corpus. Robbins 1959 offers the authoritative edition of historical poems and should also be consulted. Wright 1996, with its updated introduction by Peter Coss, offers a selection of political poems from the reign of John to Edward II, while Wright 1859-1861 completes the chronological span, including a range of political and historical poems from the reign Edward III to Richard III. For those with a particular interest in those secular lyrics which explore the theme of love and courtship, Stemmler 1970 and Salisbury 2002 (which presents nine verses on marriage), are worth noting.

Robbins, Rossell Hope, ed. *Secular Lyrics of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.

Includes over two-hundred poems. Offers a selection of all types of verse, divided into four categories: "Popular Songs," including drinking songs, love songs, popular songs; "Practical Verse," such as charms and lyrics linked to the almanac; "Occasional Verse;" and "Courtly Love Songs." As with other editions, modern titles are assigned to texts and notes are included at the back of the volume. First edition published in 1952.

Robbins, Rossell Hope, ed. *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.

Includes one-hundred historical and political lyrics. Avoids reprinting poems already published in Robbins 1955 and Brown 1932 (cited under *Collected Anthologies and General Editions*). Some poems are grouped according to manuscript, such as those from London, British Library, MS Harley 2253, but the remainder are grouped thematically according to such topics as "The Great Revolt," "Popular Ballads," "Politics in Song," "Commemoration of Kings," and "The Wicked Age."

Salisbury, Eve, ed. *The Trials and Joys of Marriage*. Kalamazoo: Michigan, 2002.

The final section of this varied edition, entitled "Select Secular Lyrics of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," presents nine lyrics which focus on marriage and the plights of husbands and wives. This edition is also available online, via the *TEAMS website[<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/salisbury-trials-and-joys-of-marriage>]*.

Stemmler, Theo, ed. *Medieval English Love-Lyrics*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1970.

Although this collection includes poems from the Old English period to the end of the fifteenth century, the vast majority of them (all except three) date to the Middle English period. It includes popular, courtly, and satirical poems, as well as a number of poems by Chaucer. Material is arranged chronologically.

Wright, Thomas, ed. *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed During the Period from the Ascension of Edward III to that of Richard III*. Rolls Series, 2 vols. London: Longman, 1859-1861.

Includes a sizeable selection of poems in Middle English, alongside material in Latin and French. The introduction includes a brief description of each poem in its historical context.

Wright, Thomas, ed. *The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to That of Edward II*. Introduction by Peter Coss. Revised ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Originally edited by Thomas Wright in 1839. This edition includes poems in Middle English, Latin, French, Anglo-Norman and Provençal. Coss' new introduction offers an updated discussion of the collection's poems and their broader significance; it also helpfully points out some errors in Wright's initial dating of the material.

General Studies

In contrast to the scholarly engagement with the religious lyrics, full-length studies that embrace the range of secular poems are decidedly rare. Most studies either adopt a narrow focus, concentrating on a distinct sub-category of secular lyrics such as courtly or political poems, or are small-scale analyses of individual poems. In light of this, Moore 1951 is something of a rare work, studying different types of secular verse in a single study; it remains, then, an important point of introduction for the general, as well as academic, reader. Both Kane 1972 and Reichl 2011 acknowledge the lack of full-scale studies on the secular poems and seek to address this: Kane 1972 reflects on some of the challenges posed to critics wishing to examine the poems, while Reichl 2011 argues that the importance of the Middle English secular lyric tradition may only be understood through an examination of the poems' manuscript contexts. Sandison 1913 offers a survey of the *chanson d'aventure* opening in the Middle English lyric. Although, as Sandison acknowledges, this motif also appears in some religious lyrics, the majority of her study is devoted to a discussion of the trope in secular poems. Finally, for those interested in studying the secular lyrics of a known poet, Rudd 1992 offers a detailed analysis of Chaucer's lyric poetry.

Kane, George. "A Short Essay on the Middle English Secular Lyric." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972): 110-121.

Kane notes the lack of detailed studies on the secular lyrics and considers some of the possible reasons for this, such as problems of dating, modes of preservation, and often unknown authorship. Kane argues

that a successful reading of the poems must approach them historically, considering their origins and influences, verse form, and style.

Moore, Arthur K. *The Secular Lyric in Middle English*. Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1951.

A valuable introduction to the secular lyric, if somewhat dated in parts. Focusing on material from the early thirteenth century through to around 1500, Moore firstly examines the main influences which inform the Middle English secular lyrics, before going on to devote chapters to the “Harleian Love Lyrics,” “Songs of Satire and Protest,” and “The Chaucerian Lyric Mode.”

Reichl, Karl. “The Beginnings of the Middle English Secular Lyric: Texts, Music, Manuscript Context.” In *The Genesis of Books: Studies in the Scribal Culture of Medieval England in Honour of A.N. Doane*. Edited by Matthew T. Hussey and John D. Niles, 195-243. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.

Argues that a fuller appreciation of the secular lyrics may be derived from a study of their manuscripts. An analysis of a number of early poems in their manuscript context demonstrates that there was a burgeoning secular lyric tradition in England. This tradition most likely emerged out of a clerical milieu and, in keeping with the European tradition, placed great emphasis on music and orality.

Ruud, Jay. “‘Many a Song and Many a Lecherous Lay’: Tradition and Individuality in Chaucer’s Lyric Poetry.” New York and London: Garland, 1992.

A detailed study of Chaucer’s lyric poetry, offering close-readings of individual poems. The work seeks to demonstrate Chaucer’s development as a lyric poet noting how, over time, Chaucer relies less on the convention of courtly love and instead deploys new poetic voices and structures in his work.

Sandison, Helen Estabrook. *The Chanson d’Aventure in Middle English*. Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania: Bryn Mawr College, 1913.

Discusses the convention of the *chanson d’aventure* opening in the Middle English lyrics. After tracing the origins of the convention in the French tradition, Sandison examines its use in Middle English love lyrics, didactic poems, and what are termed “miscellaneous” poems (that is, satirical, political or occasional verse). Includes texts not before printed in an appendix.

The Courtly Lyric

The courtly lyric and the rhetorical traditions which it often deploys have been the subject of a number of studies. For those seeking an overview of the courtly lyric, Scattergood 2005 and Gray 2005 offer excellent, small-scale introductions to the topic. Scattergood 2005 focuses on the courtly love lyric from the thirteenth century to the time of Chaucer; it includes a useful consideration of context and influences, and also provides an analysis of a range of poems, including some from the Harley manuscript. Those

interested in the courtly lyric of the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries should consult Gray 2005, which concentrates on the secular poetry of Chaucer, Gower, and Hoccleve, among others. The courtly lyrics preserved in the Harley manuscript have, perhaps unsurprisingly, received a considerable amount of critical attention and an appreciation of these poems is essential for those wishing to familiarize themselves with the main themes and ideas of this mode of lyric. Brewer 1955 is important reading for those interested in the Harley lyrics' depiction of women, while Spritzer 1971 offers an excellent close reading of the Harley lyric known as "Blowe, northerne wynde" (NIMEV:1395). Howell 1980 makes a case for the poetic skill of the Harley lyrics, arguing that the poems make innovative use of literary convention and verse form. Finally, for those interested in lyrics written in the thirteenth century, Moser's study of the short and highly ambiguous poem, "Foweles in the frith" (NIMEV:864), is worthy of consultation.

Brewer, D.S. "The Ideal of Feminine Beauty in Medieval Literature, Especially 'Harley Lyrics', Chaucer and Some Elizabethans." *Modern Language Review* 20 (1955): 257-269.

A discussion of the courtly, formal description of a woman's physical attributes found frequently in the lyrics. After exploring the origins of the tradition, Brewer offers a close reading of two of the Harley poems, "The fair maid of Ribblesdale" (NIMEV: 2207) and "Alysoun" (NIMEV: 515). He then goes on to consider how the convention is used by Chaucer.

Gray, Douglas. "Middle English Courtly Lyrics: Chaucer to Henry VIII." In *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 120-149. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

Focuses on courtly lyrics written in the later Middle English period. Gray notes that while these poems still reflect the influence of the French poetic tradition, there is also evidence of increasing independence. Indeed, although the theme of love remains important, some poems adopt a more moral or philosophical focus. The lyrics of Chaucer, Gower, Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Charles d'Orleans are considered, in addition to some anonymous material.

Howell, Andrew J. "Reading the Harley Lyrics: A Master Poet and the Language of Conventions." *ELH* 47 (1980): 619-645.

Argues that the use of rhetorical and courtly conventions in the Harley lyrics demonstrates the originality of their authors. The poems also make innovative use of verse form. Howell offers a close analysis of "Lenten ys come with love to toun" (NIMEV:1861), noting how the poet plays with the literary convention of the *chanson d'aventure* and the nature opening. This poem is compared to "In may it murgeth when it dawes" (NIMEV:1504), which is likely to be the work of the same poet.

Moser, Thomas C., Jr. "'And I Mon Waxe Wode': the Middle English 'Foweles in the Frith'." *PMLA* 102 (1987): 326-337.

Explores the short lyric which begins “Foweles in the frith” (NIMEV:864), a poem seemingly about the pains of unrequited love. Moser argues that for a contemporary reader the poem could have both secular and religious meaning; the reference to the “beste of bon and blod” in the last line could refer to the speaker’s lady or to Christ. Useful for those interested in the ambiguity of meaning present in some of the lyrics.

Scattergood, John. “The Love Lyric Before Chaucer.” In *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 39-67. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

Explores early examples of love lyric, many of which adhere to the courtly mode. Discusses the importance of *fin’amors* and the lyrics’ role in disseminating this tradition, as well as considering the influence of French models on some poems. Offers an excellent examination of some of the courtly lyrics preserved in the Harley manuscript.

Spritzer, Leo. “Explication de Texte: Applied to Three Great Middle English Poems.” *Archivum Linguisticum* 3 (1951): 1-22, 137-65.

The first part of this study (pages 1-22) offers an insightful close reading of the Harley lyric that is typically known as “Blowe, northerne wynde” (NIMEV:1395). Spritzer notes the use of rhetorical convention in the description of the lady and explores the poem’s imagery in detail.

The Popular Lyric

In studies of the poems which fall under the somewhat expansive category of popular lyrics, critics have frequently questioned the appropriateness of the term “popular” and the assumptions embedded within it. Such interrogation may be found in O’Donoghue 2005 and Woolf 1970, both of which explore the problematic assumptions, particularly with regards to audience, implicit to a distinction between the courtly and the popular. O’Donoghue 2005 and Woolf 1970 are also valuable for those seeking an introduction to the topic of popular lyrics, as both studies offer a survey of the range of poems within this category. Also useful for those seeking to engage with the tradition of popular lyric in detail is Boklund-Lagopoulou 2002: although the formalistic approach adopted in this study has been questioned, it nonetheless provides a good overview of the development of the popular lyric throughout the Middle Ages, focusing particularly on the lyric form known as the ballad. A consideration of the ways in which some popular lyrics parody courtly motifs can be found in Stemmler 1984; this study concentrates on a number of fifteenth-century lyrics and notes the ways in which they often play with the conventional roles and voices ascribed to men and women in courtly verse. Some of the most familiar popular lyrics have been the subject of detailed attention. For example, the possible contexts which informed the writing of the well-known Blacksmiths lyric (NIMEV:3227), which complains at the noise and disruption caused by a blacksmith working late at night, has been examined by Salter 1988, while the festive tradition which informs the “Boar’s head carol” (IMEV: 3313) has been discussed by

Spears 1974. Plummer 1981 explores the range of popular poems which may be designated as woman's songs or complaints. For those interested in studying the enigmatic lyric, "Maiden in the mor lay" (NIMEV:2037.5), Wenzel 1974 surveys the critical responses to the poem and argues that it should be read as a secular dance song.

Boklund-Lagopoulou, Karin. *'I have a yong suster': Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric*. Dublin: Four Courts, 2002.

Focusing on manuscript evidence, Boklund-Lagopoulou examines the Middle English popular lyric from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. A range of material is considered, particularly ballads (for instance, sections are devoted to "Outlaw Ballads," "Comic Ballads," and "Historical Ballads"). The evidence suggests that there was a vibrant oral tradition of vernacular folksong in England.

O'Donoghue, Bernard. "Cuius Contrarium': Middle English Popular Lyrics." In *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 210-226. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

Devotes substantial space to a consideration of the term "popular" and its appropriateness for those lyrics typically described as such. O'Donoghue reflects on the dominant themes and features of a selection of poems, as well as pointing out their sophistication.

Plummer, John F. "The Woman's Song in Middle English and its European Backgrounds." In *Vox Feminae: Studies in Medieval Woman's Song*. Edited by John F. Plummer, 135-154. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University Press, 1981.

Plummer argues that those Middle English lyrics which take the form of a woman's song or complaint should not be dismissed as "popular" texts distinct from the courtly tradition. They are, in fact, complex works that are part of a longstanding and learned European tradition of woman's songs that are composed in the vernacular and written by men. Both these poems and courtly, male-voiced lyrics demand a degree of sophistication on the part of the audience.

Salter, Elizabeth. "A Complaint against Blacksmiths." *Literature and History* 5 (1979): 194-215.

Salter examines the possible historical and literary affiliations which help us understand the origins and character of the Blacksmiths lyric (NIMEV:3227). She considers the legal and social contexts, as well as historical evidence which testifies to the craft guilds seeking the prohibition of night work. The tradition of complaint literature is also considered.

Spears, J.E. "The 'Boar's Head Carol' and Folk Tradition." *Folklore* 85 (1974): 194-198.

Considers the origins of the festive tradition of the Boar's Head deployed in the poem known as the "Boar's head carol" (IMEV:3313). Notes that the tradition has its origins in early Germanic folk culture and that for the Anglo-Saxons the motif of the boar's head was invested with protective powers. The

motif in literature can be traced back to before the composition of the carol: it appears, for instance, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Woolf, Rosemary. "Later Poetry: The Popular Tradition." In *The Middle Ages*. Edited by W.F. Bolton, 263-311. London: Sphere Books, 1970.

Discusses lyrics as well as drama and romances. Notes the problematic distinction between courtly and popular lyrics and observes that those surviving lyrics which can truly be said to be popular are dance songs. Examines a range of forms popular in the fifteenth century, such as the *aube* (a "dawn song"), the woman's complaint and the pastourelle. Also devotes some space to religious lyrics.

Wenzel, Siegfried. "The Moor Maiden—A Contemporary View." *Speculum* 49 (1974): 69-74.

Wenzel examines a reference to the "Maiden in the mor lay" (NIMEV:2037.5) preserved in a mid-fourteenth century sermon, noting the description of the lyric as a "karole." This fact, in addition to the sermon's focus on the moral decline of humankind, leads Wenzel to argue that the poem is a secular dance song and that the moor maiden is a figure from medieval folklore.

Stemmler, Theo. "My Fair Lady: Parody in Fifteenth-Century Lyrics." In *Medieval Studies Conference. Aachen 1983: Language and Literature*. Edited by Wolf-Dietrich Bald and Horst Weinstock, 205-213. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984.

Defines parody and its workings in the lyrics, before examining a number of poems. Stemmler notes that in some poems the tradition of *fin'amors*, such as conventional descriptions of female beauty, are parodied by authors through the techniques of juxtaposition, contradiction, and irony.

The Political Lyric

Although the political lyrics have not received as much critical attention as other secular lyrics, the work that has been done on these poems demonstrates the interest and richness of the material. The most important and influential full-length study on the political lyric is Scattergood 1971. This work, which examines the political lyrics in their historical context, is essential reading for anyone wishing to undertake a serious study of the poems. For those seeking a good but concise introduction to the topic, Turville-Petre 2005 provides an accessible overview of the poems' main themes and concerns. The political lyrics preserved in the Harley manuscript are the focus of Scattergood 2000. A number of small-scale studies have considered the treatment of a particular theme or motif in the political lyrics: Embree 1985 examines the motif of the "King's Ignorance," while Müller 1983 explores the depiction of the Battle of Agincourt in a select number of poems. Those interested in the function of the political lyrics should also consult Arens 1989, which considers the ways in which the political poems might be regarded as "public poetry" designed to educate its readers. Kane 1986 is a useful read for those interested in the possible limitations of classifying lyrics as "political."

Embree, Dee. "The King's Ignorance': A Topos for Evil Times." *Medium Ævum* 54 (1985): 121-126.

The topos of the "King's Ignorance," in which the king is viewed as blameless for the errors of government, appears in a range of poems. Embree observes that while the motif is deployed to condemn the lords or officials who serve as intermediaries between the king and the commons, some poems also contain an implicit criticism of the king himself.

Kane, G. "Some Fourteenth-Century 'Political Poems'." In *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature*. Edited by G. Kratzmann and J. Simpson, 82-91. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1986.

Offers a discussion of three political poems found in the Harley manuscript, as well as commenting on other works. Kane argues that rather than viewing these lyrics as poems of protest and dissent, they should be understood in relation to the tradition of estates satire.

Müller, Wolfgang G. "The Battle of Agincourt in Carol and Ballad." *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 8 (1983): 159-178.

Compares the poetic treatment of the Battle of Agincourt in the "Agincourt carol" (NIMEV:2716) and the ballad, "King Henry V's conquest of France." Notes that while the carol is a simple narrative poem that places an emphasis on religious sentiment, the ballad focuses on non-historical incidents and avoids any religious feeling.

Scattergood, John. *Politics and Poetry in the Fifteenth Century*. London: Blandford Press, 1971.

Essential reading for those interested in the political lyric. Approaching the poems through their historical context, Scattergood analyses a wide range of poems in order to shed light on the attitudes and responses to contemporary political issues. Particular attention is devoted to poems which comment on the running of the state and English society.

Scattergood, John. "Authority and Resistance: The Political Verse." In *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*. Edited by Susannah Fein, 163-201. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

Examines the political lyrics in the Harley manuscript. Identifies a number of themes and concerns prevalent in the poems, such as anti-taxation, a nationalistic agenda, the questioning of royal authority and the king's will, and the problems and abuses of feudalism. Scattergood asserts that, as a whole, the poems promote conservatism and a suspicion of the new.

Turville-Petre, Thorlac. "Political Lyrics." In *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 171-188. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

A good introduction to the topic that examines the main themes and aims of the political lyrics. It begins by focusing on the political poems in the Harley manuscript. The repeated engagement with

contemporary social and political events, as well as issues of English national identity, are a notable feature of the political poems.

Arens, Werner. "Late Middle English Political Poetry as 'Public Poetry'." In *The Living Middle Ages: Studies in Medieval English Literature and its Traditions. A Festschrift for Karl Heinz Goller*. Edited by Uwe Böker, Manfred Markus, and Rainer Schöwerling, 167-181. Stuttgart: Belsler, 1989.

Argues that some political poems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries should be approached as public poetry. Through a close analysis of a number of lyrics, Arens asserts that from the reign of Richard II political poems show a concern for the common good and also develop a more personal voice. This voice seeks to unite the king and the commons, while also boosting English nationalism.

The Medieval Welsh Lyric

Students interested in the medieval vernacular lyric in these islands would do well to remember the vast numbers of lyrics which survive beyond those written in English. Indeed, the corpus of medieval Welsh lyric, perhaps not widely known or studied by some students, is undoubtedly worthy of consideration. The lyric tradition thrived in Wales throughout the medieval period and the corpus of poems which survives is varied. In addition to religious poems and love lyrics, there exists a significant number of poems which explore heroic deeds, warfare, and nature. Often regarded as being aristocratic or ceremonial, it would appear that these poems typically had a public or social function. The Welsh lyric tradition is particularly complex, having three main stages of development. The earliest surviving Welsh poetry dates from around c.600 and these early poets, known collectively as the *cynfeirdd*, composed bardic poetry in Old Welsh. Taliesin and Aneirin are two of the earliest named Welsh poets and are often celebrated as the founders of the *cynfeirdd* and thus the Welsh poetic tradition. The *gogynteirdd*, or "rather early poets," is the name given to the group of poets who flourished after the *cynfeirdd*. Writing from the very early twelfth century through to c.1400, these poets were often sponsored by royal or wealthy patrons and are sometimes referred to as the *Beirdd y Tywysogian*, "poets of the princes." Finally, the last group of poets to emerge are known as the *cywyddwyr*, or "poets of the gentry." This later period, which spans roughly 1340–1620, is celebrated by some critics as signalling the true flowering of Welsh poetry. Notable poets of this period include Dafydd ap Gwilym, Iolo Goch, Siôn Cent, and Guto'r Glyn.

Editions

The editions of Joseph P. Clancy, either the original collections published in 1965 and 1970, or the more recently revised edition in 2003, remain the authoritative editions of medieval Welsh poetry. For those seeking a more general introduction to medieval Welsh verse, Parry 1962 offers a good selection. A number of editions focus exclusively on the work of particular Welsh poets, most notably Dafydd ap

Gwilym. Johnston 2010 is now generally regarded as the authoritative edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's work, although Parry 1996 is also a useful scholarly edition. Those seeking an edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry in English translation should see Loomis 1982.

Clancy, Joseph P., ed. *Medieval Welsh Lyrics*. London: Macmillan, 1965.

Offers over one-hundred Welsh poems from the later Middle Ages, all of which conform to the metrical verse form known as *cywydd deuir hirion*, which is the verse form favoured by Welsh poets of the later Middle Ages.

Clancy, Joseph P., ed. *The Earliest Welsh Poetry*. London: Macmillan, 1970.

Presents a good range of early Welsh lyrics in English translation. Material is arranged chronologically and divided into two sections, "The Cynfeirdd (600–1100)" and "The Gogynfeirdd (1100–1400)."

Clancy, Joseph P., ed. *Medieval Welsh Poetry*. Dublin: Four Courts, 2003.

This recent edition brings together the poems from Clancy's earlier editions of Welsh verse (Clancy 1965, 1970) in revised form. The poems are accompanied by notes and annotations which take into account the most recent scholarship.

Johnston, Dafydd. *Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2010.

Now widely regarded as the critical edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's works (previously Parry 1996). In Welsh.

Loomis, Richard M. *Dafydd ap Gwilym: The Poems*. Binghamton, New York: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1982.

Supplies the complete collection of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poetry in English translation. Also contains a useful introduction as well as annotations to the poems. A glossary of names and places is also included.

Parry, Thomas, ed. *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

One of the principle anthologies of Welsh poetry, including poetry from the sixth century through to the twentieth century. A significant portion of the edition is devoted to the Welsh lyric before 1500.

Parry, Thomas, ed. *Gwaith: Dafydd ap Gwilym*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996.

An authoritative, critical edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poems. In Welsh. Original published in 1952.

General Studies

A considerable amount of scholarship has been published on the medieval Welsh lyric. For the beginner or student seeking a good overview to the topic, Gwyn 1953 offers a useful survey of the development

of medieval Welsh poetry from the earliest examples through to the sixteenth century. Williams 1997 and Jarman 1981 have studied the *cynfeirdd*, or early poets, in detail; Jarman 1981, in particular, offers a concise and accessible overview that is a good starting-point for beginners. Those with a greater interest in the *gogynfeirdd*, or those seeking to understand the links between the *cynfeirdd* and the later poets, should consult Williams 1994. The court poet, Dafydd ap Gwilym, has also received considerable attention. Fulton 1989 and Edwards 1996 provide two excellent studies which examine the wider influences and traditions which shaped the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym. Those interested in exploring the wider links between medieval Welsh poetry and the English and Irish traditions in particular, would do well to consult Henry 1966, which examines these three poetic traditions alongside one another.

Edwards, Huw M. *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Influences and Analogues*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

A study of the range of influences, traditions, and cultural sources which shaped the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym and other poets of the *cywyddwyr*. The study devotes space to what are described as “popular” influences, namely the satirical poetic tradition and nature poetry, and argues for an interaction between the popular and courtly traditions in Dafydd ap Gwilym’s work.

Fulton, Helen. *Dafydd ap Gwilym and the European Context*. Cardiff: University of Wales press, 1989.

This study places the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym in a wider European context. It argues that Dafydd ap Gwilym’s poetry should be considered not only in light of the native tradition of court poetry in Wales, but also through a consideration of the European influences which shaped his work. The early chapters provide useful discussions of the love lyric and Latin secular poetry.

Gwyn, Williams. *An Introduction to Welsh Poetry from the Beginnings to the Sixteenth Century*. London: Faber and Faber, 1953.

A full account of the development of Welsh poetry from 600 to the sixteenth century. Discussion is arranged chronologically, with chapters devoted to particular time periods. In addition to engaging with context, the study has a strong literary focus with Williams devoting considerable space to discussions of the major poets and their works.

Henry, P.L. *The Early English and Celtic Lyric*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966.

A useful read for those wishing to explore the possible links and shared traditions between the different poetic traditions in England, Wales, and Ireland. Offers a chapter on the Welsh background to penitential poetry as well as a discussion of early Welsh verse.

Jarman, A.O.H. *The Cynfeirdd: Early Welsh Poets and Poetry*. Writers of Wales Series. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1981.

An accessible survey of the early Welsh poets, especially suitable for the reader new to the topic. Covers the development of the Welsh poetic tradition and historical context, while also offering some discussion of the work of Taliesin and Aneirin. One drawback is that the book is written as a single long essay, without any chapters or an index.

Williams, J.E. Caerwyn. *The Poets of the Welsh Princes*. Writers of Wales Series. 2nd ed. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994.

An excellent introduction to the *gogynfeirdd* and a useful starting-point for any reader. Shows links between the *gogynfeirdd* and the *cynfeirdd*. As with Jarman 1981, the book does not have chapter divisions or an index. First edition published in 1978.

Williams, J.E. Caerwyn. *The Court Poet in Medieval Wales: An Essay*. Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1997.

Focuses on the *cynfeirdd* and the *gogynfeirdd*. The early sections of this study consider the composition and transmission of the poetry as well as possible influences. Later sections focus on particular writers, such as Meilyr Brydydd, who is one of the earliest court poets.

The Medieval Scottish Lyric

It was not until the mid-fifteenth century that the lyric, or short poem, truly flourished in Scotland. Although this may seem to be a late development, it is important to note the relative scarcity of surviving texts written in Scots before this time; indeed, the earliest surviving poem in Scots is John Barbour's *The Bruce*, which dates to c.1375. The rise of the lyric genre in Scots is most commonly linked to the Middle Scots poets or "makars," most notably William Dunbar, Robert Henryson, and Gavin Douglas. William Dunbar is perhaps the most important of these writers and a considerable number of lyrics or short poems are attributed to him. Due to his associations with James IV of Scotland, a significant proportion of Dunbar's poetry engages with his life at court: some of these poems engage with courtly themes, or serve as formal poems of petition and commemoration, while others have a flair for the comic and satiric. It is also worth noting that Dunbar composed religious lyrics, many of which deploy an ornate, aureate style, and that some of his works show a concern for the private, rather than the public. Robert Henryson is best known for his three major works, *The Testament of Cresseid*, *The Moral Fables* and *Orpheus and Eurydice*, however, he also composed a selection of shorter poems. Gavin Douglas is famed for his *Eneados*, a translation of Virgil, and his poem *The Palice of Honour*. There exist a number of important sixteenth-century manuscripts which contain the poems of these three writers, as well as the works of other "makars," such as Sir David Lindsay, Richard Holland, and the author of the *Kingis Quair* (commonly thought to have been James I of Scotland). The Bannatyne manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 1.1.6) boasts perhaps the most significant collection of Middle Scots poetry, containing a large amount of material by Dunbar and

Henryson, as well as poems attributed, mostly erroneously, to Chaucer. A significant collection of Dunbar's poems is also found in the Maitland Folio (Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2553), which was compiled by Sir Richard Maitland and also contains a large number of his own poems. The Maitland Quarto (Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 1408), written at a later date but most likely in the same household, is a near-copy of the Folio. Finally, the Asloan manuscript (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 16500), which is the earliest of the anthologies, contains a selection of religious and secular prose and poetry.

Editions

There are a number of authoritative, scholarly editions of Middle Scots lyric. The poetry of the three most popular "makars" is available in critical editions: Bawcutt 1998 provides the authoritative edition of Dunbar's works; the poetry of Robert Henryson should be consulted in Fox 1981; and Bawcutt 2003 serves as the critical edition of the work of Gavin Douglas. Mention should also be made to Craigie 1955–1958, which provides the authoritative edition of the poetry of James VI of Scotland. In addition to collections of individual poets' works, editions of the important sixteenth-century anthologies are also available and these present, in edited form, the entire contents of the manuscripts. The Maitland folio, which contains a significant number of poems by Dunbar, has been edited by Craigie 1919–1927, while Ritchie 1928–1934 presents an edition of the Bannatyne manuscript. Craigie 1923–1925 presents the contents of the Asloan manuscript. For the general reader seeking an introduction to the material, the selection of Middle Scots verse presented in Watson 1995 would be a useful starting-point.

Bawcutt, Priscilla, ed. *The Poems of William Dunbar*. 2 vols. Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1998.

The critical edition of Dunbar's poetry. Volume one presents all poems attributed to Dunbar in early printed books and manuscripts; the texts are arranged alphabetically. Volume two includes detailed notes and commentary on the poems, as well as a glossary. In addition to discussing editorial issues, Bawcutt's introduction offers a useful survey of the manuscripts and books which contain Dunbar's work.

Bawcutt, Priscilla, ed. *The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*. 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2003.

Originally published in 1967, this remains the critical edition of the poetry of Gavin Douglas. It includes *The Palice of Honour*, as well as two poems of less firm authorship: *Conscience* and *King Hart*. The work begins with a detailed introduction which discusses each work in turn; the volume also has extensive notes and a glossary.

Craigie, James, ed. *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*. Scottish Text Society, 2 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1955–1958.

A comprehensive selection of poetry written by James VI of Scotland, including those poems printed during his lifetime (largely in volume one), as well as those preserved in manuscripts (volume two). Both volumes have an introduction and notes to the texts.

Craigie, W.A., ed. *The Maitland Folio Manuscript*. Scottish Text Society, 2 vols. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1919–27.

The first volume presents the edited works, printed in accordance with the sequence in which they appear in the manuscript. A description of the manuscript and textual notes are included in the second volume.

Craigie, W.A., ed. *The Asloan Manuscript: A Miscellany in Prose and Verse*. Scottish Text Society, 2 vols. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1923–1925.

Works of prose are featured in volume one, while the poetry is printed in volume two. Features poems by Dunbar and Henryson.

Fox, Denton. *The Poems of Robert Henryson*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

The authoritative edition of Henryson's poems. Includes the *Moral Fables*, *The Testament of Cresseid*, and *Orpheus and Eurydice*, as well as all the short poems attributed to Henryson in manuscripts. Detailed commentary on each of the poems is provided at the end of the volume.

Ritchie, W.T., ed. *The Bannatyne Manuscript*. Scottish Text Society, 4 vols. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1928–1934.

The works preserved in the manuscript are printed in volumes two, three and four, following the order in which they are recorded in the manuscript. Volume one includes a description of the manuscript and notes.

Watson, Roderick, ed. *The Poetry of Scotland: Gaelic, Scots and English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.

An accessible edition for the new reader. Although not focused exclusively on the medieval period, the early material covers all the main writers and gives a good introduction. The medieval selection begins with extracts from John Barbour's *The Bruce* and ends with material from the Asloan, Bannatyne, and Maitland anthologies.

General Studies

A number of important full-length studies have been written on the work of the "makars." Essential reading for those seeking to learn more about the work of Robert Henryson is Gray 1979, which discusses Henryson's major poems, as well as the shorter lyrics. Bawcutt 1976 offers a valuable study of Gavin Douglas' works, examining his poetry and the literary background by which it is informed. The

most important study of the poetry of William Dunbar is Bawcutt 1992. Useful for those seeking a shorter introduction to the “makars” is Fox 1966: this study describes Dunbar, Douglas, and Henryson as the “Scottish Chaucerians” (a term which has had great currency but is now somewhat outdated), examining the works of the three poets and their possible debts to Chaucer. For those interested in the influence these poets had on later writers, MacDonald 2001 offers an interesting discussion of the impact Dunbar’s works had on the poetry of Sir Richard Maitland. Bawcutt 1998 offers an important study for those seeking to understand the literary climate of Scotland in the sixteenth century and the influence and prevalence of Scottish literature on English readers. Some of the religious poems which survive in Scots is discussed by MacDonald 1988, while an examination of the Scottish poetry written before the “makars” is studied by Purdie 2014.

Bawcutt, Priscilla. *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976.

Examines the poetry of Gavin Douglas in relation to the cultural background and traditions which shaped it. Particular attention is devoted to Douglas’ approach to translation in his version of Virgil’s *Eneados*. His poem, *The Palice of Honour*, as well as his prologues, are also discussed.

Bawcutt, Priscilla. *Dunbar the Makar*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

A detailed study of Dunbar’s poetry that is essential reading for those interested in the poet. Bawcutt approaches Dunbar’s poems through a consideration of genre, literary tradition, and cultural influences. Through close analyses and detailed discussion, Bawcutt demonstrates the many voices and personas present in Dunbar’s work.

Bawcutt, Priscilla. “Crossing the Border: Scottish Poetry and English Readers in the Sixteenth Century.” In *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*. Edited by Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood, 59-76. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998.

Reflects on the effects Scottish literature had on English readers by considering which Scottish poems are known to have circulated in England and the likely circumstances which brought that about. Considers the travel of printed books as well as the importance of oral transmission; also reflects on the popularity of Gavin Douglas and Sir David Lindsay.

Fox, Denton. “The Scottish Chaucerians.” In *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*. Edited by D.S. Brewer, 164-200. London: Nelson, 1966.

Explores the appropriateness of the (now perhaps somewhat outdated) term, “Scottish Chaucerians,” before going on to consider the ways in which Chaucer’s poetry shaped the literature of these poets and the references made to him in their works. Offers a detailed discussion of select works of Henryson, Dunbar, and Douglas and notes that in spite of their distinct qualities, all three poets have a skill for producing intricately-structured verse.

Gray, Douglas. *Robert Henryson*. Leiden: Brill, 1979.

An excellent discussion of the poetry of Henryson. Although most space is devoted to Henryson's *Moral Fables* (the subject of three chapters), *The Testament of Cresseid* and *Orpheus and Eurydice* are also discussed. A chapter is devoted to Henryson's shorter poems.

MacDonald, A.A. "Religious Poetry in Middle Scots." In *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. 1. Edited by R.D.S. Jack, 91-104. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988.

Useful for those seeking to learn more about the religious lyric in Middle Scots. MacDonald notes that, in contrast to secular verse, much less religious verse in Middle Scots survives. The background to these poems, and the possible detrimental effects of the Reformation on their survival, are examined. Divides the lyrics into poems of "meditation," "celebration" and "argument." Considers such works as the *Gude and Godlie Ballatis*.

MacDonald, A.A. "Sir Richard Maitland and William Dunbar: Textual Symbiosis and Poetic Individuality." In *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*. Edited by Sally Mapstone, 134-149. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001.

It is noted that Maitland's poetry is heavily influenced by Dunbar's and shares similar concerns, such as the life at court. In spite of this debt, however, Maitland does not copy Dunbar unthinkingly and some of his works demonstrate independence, particularly those which engage with the themes of war, patriotism and the moral decline of society.

Purdie, Rhiannon. "Before the Makars: Older Scots Literature Under the Early Stewart Kings." In *A Companion to British Literature, Volume 1*. Edited by R. Demaria, H. Chang and S. Zacher, 293-307. Oxford: Wiley, 2014.

Focuses on Scottish literature written before 1450, reflecting on the literary culture that existed prior to the emergence of the "makars." Considers Barbour's *The Bruce*, the *Scottish Troy Book*, the *Buik of Alexander*, the *Kingis Quair*, and Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*.

The Medieval Irish Lyric

The tradition of Irish verse can be traced back to at least the sixth century. It is generally agreed that the majority of religious lyrics produced during this early period were composed by monks; indeed, the poetry attributed to the eighth-century monk, Blathmac, which praises the Virgin Mary, is an important testament to this early poetic tradition. These early religious verses have come down to us because they were recorded in manuscripts, sometimes written in the margins surrounding other texts. In addition to the religious lyric, the tradition of "bardic verse," or praise poetry, occupied an important

place in the literary culture of early Ireland. Prior to the twelfth century, the most important poet figure was the *filii* (meaning “seer”). Verses composed by the *filii* typically dealt with such topics as genealogy, patronage, and eulogy, and they often had intricate metres. At this time, the *filii* was closely associated to the monasteries and occupied a position of great learning and influence, often taking on the role of advisor or chronicler to the household or patron to which he was affiliated. However, as a result of the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169 and the subsequent changes to church administration, the tradition of bardic poetry, as it was previously understood, underwent a shift that gradually gave rise to the “bardic schools” or groups of professional poets. The verses composed by these later poets are notable for their intricate verse forms and patterns of rhyme, as well as their focus on political and dynastic concerns. Like their earlier counterparts, these later poets held great sway and influence: their verses, which were often commissioned, had the power to enhance the reputation of their patron. In spite of the important status of poetry in Irish literary culture, across all periods we find that poets often had a greater interest in writing lengthy sagas rather than short poems, and thus many of the poems which do survive, particularly those of an early date, tend to be very short. It is also worth noting that many Irish poets also wrote Latin verse, rather than composing exclusively in the vernacular. In addition to the study of Irish lyric, there are also a number of lyric collections which were composed in Ireland but contain works in English, Latin, and French. For instance, the well-known Red Book of Ossory, which dates to the fourteenth century, contains a small number of English verses alongside the important collection of Latin lyrics composed by Richard Ledrede, who was Bishop of Ossory from 1317 to 1360. Attention should also be drawn to the group of Hiberno-English lyrics which survive in the Kildare manuscript (London, British Library, MS Harley 913) and which are thought to have been written down in Ireland in the early fourteenth century.

Editions

A good range of accessible editions of Irish lyric provide the reader with a wealth of material with which to engage. Authoritative editions that present the original text accompanied with English translation include Murphy 1956 and Carney 1967; Begin 1970 is notable for its selection of bardic poetry. Meyer 1911 offers a large collection of early Irish verse in translation, while the poetry of Blathmac has been compiled in Carney 1964. For those students interested in the poems of the Kildare manuscript two editions will prove useful: Lucas 1995 was formerly the critical edition, but has been superseded by Turville-Petre 2015, which contains the most up-to-date scholarship. Colledge 1974 offers an edition of the Latin lyrics composed in Ireland and preserved in the Red Book of Ossory.

Bergin, Osborn, trans. *Irish Bardic Poetry*. Edited by David Greene and Fergus Kelly. Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970.

A collection of Bardic poetry which supplies the original text, along with English translations that are included at the back of the volume. The material covers both religious and secular verse.

Carney, James, ed. *The Poems of Blathmac, Son of Cú Brettan*. Dublin: Irish Text Society, 1964.

An edition of Blathmac's poems to the Virgin Mary. Provides the original Old Irish poem with facing English translation. Detailed textual notes are also supplied.

Carney, James, ed. *Medieval Irish Lyrics: Selected and Translated*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.

An accessible edition offering a selection of 41 lyrics written in Irish and Latin. In both cases, Carney provides the original text as well as an English translation. Useful notes are provided at the end of the volume.

Colledge, Edmund, ed. *The Latin Poems of Richard Ledrede, O.F.M., Bishop of Ossory, 1317–1360*. Studies and Texts 30. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974.

An edition of the Latin poems preserved in the Red Book of Ossory. The introduction provides useful historical context, examining Ledrede's life and career as well as the tradition of Franciscan spirituality as it emerged in Ireland.

Lucas, Angela M., ed. *Anglo-Irish Poems of the Middle Ages*. Blackrock, Dublin: Columba Press, 1995.

An edition of the so-called Kildare poems, which survive in London, British Library, MS Harley 913. This edition contains a helpful discussion of the manuscript, as well as extensive notes on individual poems.

Meyer, Kuno, ed. *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry*. London: Constable, 1911.

Offers a wide range of material divided into thematic categories. Such topics include "Religious Poetry," "Bardic Poetry," "Songs of Nature," "Myth and Saga." Poems are in English translation.

Murphy, Gerard, ed. and trans. *Early Irish Lyrics, Eighth to Twelfth Century*. Dublin: Four Courts, 1998.

Focuses on material from the eighth to the twelfth centuries. Poems are divided chronologically and into two sections: "Monastic Poems" and "Secular Poems." The original text and an English translation are supplied, along with modern titles. Originally published by the Clarendon Press in 1956.

Turville-Petre, Thorlac, ed. *Poems from BL MS Harley 913: 'The Kildare Manuscript'*. Early English Text Society Original Series 345. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

The most recent edition of the Kildare poems. Turville-Peter distinguishes between those poems that show evidence of an Irish provenance and those that are of English origin.

General Studies

Many critics have explored the tradition of "bardic" or praise poetry that was written in Ireland throughout the period. Carney 1973 offers an accessible discussion for those interested in the poetic tradition as it

develops before and after the Anglo-Norman invasion. Focusing particularly on the bardic poetry produced from 1200 to 1600, Caball 2006 provides a useful overview for those new to this topic, discussing the origins of the poetry as well as its major themes and concern. Also focusing on this period is Simms 1987, which considers bardic poems as vehicles for both truth and insincerity, and O’Riordan 2007, which provides a useful approach to the language and rhetorical features deployed in some of these poems. For those interested in the early religious material, Lambkin 1987 offers an interesting discussion of Blathmac’s poetry and the importance of lament. The relationship between the English and Irish poetic traditions, particularly in relation to the early material, is discussed by Henry 1966. Those interested more specifically in the composition of English poems in Ireland, should consult Alspach 1959 and Seymour 1929: both of these works devote space to the so-called Kildare poems.

Alspach, Russell K. *Irish Poetry from the English Invasion to 1798*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959.

A survey of the poetry written in English in Ireland from the twelfth to the end of the eighteenth century. The chapter, “From the Invasion to 1400,” focuses on the Kildare poems, discussing their provenance and date, as well as the evidence for their Irish authorship. Also makes brief reference to the short English verses preserved in the Red Book of Ossory. First published in 1943.

Caball, Marc. “The Literature of Later Medieval Ireland, 1200–1600: from the Normans to the Tudors. Part I: Poetry.” In *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature, Volume 1*. Edited by Margaret Kelleher and Philip O’Leary, 74-109. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Focuses on the tradition of bardic poetry in the period 1200–1600. Considers the origins of these professional poets, the effects of the Anglo-Norman invasion, and the public and political role of their poetry. Also considers the diverse cultures in Ireland which led to poetry being composed in English, French and Anglo-Norman.

Carney, James. “Society and the Bardic Poet.” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 62 (1973): 233-250.

An excellent discussion of the context in which bardic poetry emerged and of the role and purpose of the poet as it developed in Irish society before and after the Anglo-Norman invasion. Useful reading for those seeking an introduction to the topic.

Henry, P.L. *The Early English and Celtic Lyric*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966.

Important reading for those wishing to explore the links between early Welsh, Irish, and English lyric. This volume includes several sections on the early Irish lyric: it examines the motif of *peregrinatio* and considers Irish gnomic poetry in comparison to English and Welsh examples.

Lambkin, Brian. “The Structure of the Blathmac Poems.” *Studia Celtica* 20 (1985): 67-77.

Considers the different types and workings of the “keen,” or lament, present in Blathmac’s poetry.

O’Riordan, Michelle. *Irish Bardic Poetry and Rhetorical Reality*. Cork: Cork University Press, 2007.

Offers a close analysis of a number of poems in order to demonstrate their sophisticated use of language and rhetorical skill. By examining the poems in relation to their wider, European context, O’Riordan asserts that the Irish bardic poets participated in a literary tradition that extended well beyond their native land.

Seymour, St John D. *Anglo-Irish Literature 1200–1582*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1929.

Although somewhat dated, this volume is still useful for its critical analysis of the Kildare poems. It devotes single chapters to the manuscript’s religious, secular, and satirical lyrics.

Simms, Katherine. “Bardic Poetry as a Historical Source.” In *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence*. Historical Studies XVI. Edited by Tom Dunne, 58-75. Cork: Cork University Press, 1987.

Considers the value of bardic poems as historical records, but also draws attention to their inherent falsity or insincerity, due to the fact that each poem was composed at the request of a patron. Simms notes that, in spite of the fact that these poems reflect a patron’s political views and self-image, the idiosyncratic features of particular poems may reveal information about the patron and the circumstances in which a poem was produced.

Lyric Manuscripts

Any study of the medieval lyric cannot ignore the complex and varied contexts in which lyrics survive. Indeed, perhaps due to the unanswered questions regarding the authorship or function of many Middle English lyrics, scholars have repeatedly sought to learn more about these poems by turning to the manuscripts. Although, for example, the concept of the “friar miscellany” has been influential when it comes to categorizing the earliest manuscripts which contain religious lyrics, the evidence suggests that both religious and secular lyrics survive in a wide variety of contexts, ranging from manuscripts produced in religious houses to household books, anthologies and miscellanies, and song books. It is also worth noting that some Middle English lyrics survive in non-manuscript contexts, with lines of verse appearing in stained glass and tapestries, for instance. Some of the most well-known manuscripts to contain lyrics in Middle English, and which have been the subject of repeated study, include the thirteenth-century manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86, and the well-known London, British Library, MS Harley 2253, which dates to the first half of the fourteenth century. The Vernon manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet a.1), which contains one of the largest collections

of Middle English texts (including lyrics) as well as material in Latin and Anglo-Norman, has also been the subject of study, as has the Findern manuscript (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.1.6). Those manuscripts which contain Middle Scots verse, such as the Bannatyne manuscript, the Asloan manuscript, and the Maitland Folio and Quarto, have also received attention.

Facsimiles

Many of the manuscripts which contain significant collections of Middle English lyrics are available in facsimile, as demonstrated by Beadle and Owen 1977, Doyle 1987, Ker 1965, and Tschann and Parkes 1996. The Bannatyne manuscript, which contains an important collection of Middle Scots lyric, is available in Fox and Ringler 1980.

Beadle, Richard and A.E.B. Owen, intro. *The Findern Manuscript: Cambridge University Library MS Ff.1.6*. London: Scholar Press, 1977.

The facsimile's introduction discusses the manuscript's provenance and association with the Findern family. The manuscript's quiring and collation are also considered. A detailed list of contents is included.

Doyle, A.I., intro. *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Poet a. 1*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987.

A large volume which reproduces the Vernon manuscript at 92% of its original size. Largely in black and white with some smaller colour plates. The introduction considers it in relation to its sister manuscript, the Simeon manuscript (London, British Library, MS Additional 22283), and also comments on codicological and palaeographical features, as well as provenance and cost of production.

Fox, Denton, and William A. Ringler, intro. *The Bannatyne Manuscript, National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS. 1. 1. 16*. London: Scholar Press in association with The National Library of Scotland, 1980.

Preliminary material includes a detailed description of the manuscript, a list of contents, and a table of authors and attributions. Also includes a useful index of first lines.

Ker, N, intro. *Facsimile of British Museum MS Harley 2253*. Early English Text Society o.s. 255. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Introduction lists the manuscript content, as well as covering codicology, script and date.

Tschann, Judith, and M.B. Parkes, intro. *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86*. Early English Text Society s.s.16. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

The detailed introduction provides a detailed list of the contents of the manuscript and also discusses its date, script, layout, and binding. The history of the manuscript is also considered.

Studies on Manuscripts containing Lyrics

Much has been written on the manuscript context of the lyrics. Perhaps the most important overview of the different contexts in which Middle English lyrics survive is Boffey 2005: this study comments on the most noteworthy manuscripts containing Middle English lyrics and is a valuable introduction for the new reader. For those particularly interested in the manuscripts in which Middle English courtly love lyrics survive, Boffey 1985 offers the most comprehensive analysis and is thus essential reading. The contents and codicological features of London, British Library, MS Harley 2253 are covered in Fein 2000. Three important late-medieval lyric manuscripts, each of which contain significant collections of carols, are discussed by Wakelin 2006. McNamer 1991 provides a discussion of the manuscript context of the Findern lyrics and makes a case for the female authorship of these poems. Those interested in the Kildare manuscript, which contains the collection of Hiberno-English lyrics known as the Kildare poems, should consult the detailed analysis of the manuscript in Benskin 1990, while the Maitland Folio, which contains a large collection of Dunbar's poetry, is discussed in Boffey 2001. Welsh manuscripts, including those which contain the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym, are considered in Huws 2002.

Benskin, Michael. "The Hands of the Kildare Poems Manuscript." *Irish University Review* 20 (1990): 163-193.

Offers a detailed discussion of the Kildare manuscript and its palaeography. Benskin identifies five different hands in the manuscript but argues that the majority of the works are copied by a single scribe.

Boffey, Julia. *The Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics in the Later Middle Ages*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1985.

An important study for those interested in Middle English courtly lyrics and their manuscripts. Focusing particularly on lyrics dated from c.1400 to c.1530, Boffey analyses the range of manuscripts in which these poems survive and considers their layout and presentation. Questions of authorship, modes of transmission, and audience are also explored.

Boffey, Julia. "Middle English Lyrics and Manuscripts." In *A Companion to Middle English Lyric*. Edited by Thomas G. Duncan, 1-18. Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 2005.

A useful starting-point for those interested in learning about the manuscript context of Middle English lyrics. It divides its discussion into sections according to manuscript "type," reflecting on the different manuscripts in which lyrics survive. Boffey offers some interesting points regarding the so-called "friar miscellany."

Boffey, Julia. "The Maitland Folio Manuscript as a Verse Anthology." In *William Dunbar, "The Nobill Poyet": Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*. Edited by Sally Mapstone, 40-50. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001.

Examines the content of the Maitland folio in order to shed light on the reception of Dunbar's works. Describes the Maitland folio as a "family book" and reflects on the order of its content and the possible use of exemplars. Considers the Maitland Folio's relationship to the Reidpeth manuscript, which was copied from it.

Fein, Susannah, ed. *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000.

An edited collection of fifteen essays on London, British Library, MS Harley 2253, each written by experts in the field. Essays cover the content of the manuscript (focusing on such texts as debate verse, political lyric, Anglo-Norman fabliaux, and French secular verse) and also explore the manuscript's scribes, provenance, and layout and presentation.

Huws, Daniel. *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002.

Offers a useful discussion of the manuscript tradition in Wales, considering their production as well as examining codices which contain significant literary works. The manuscripts preserving the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym are discussed.

McNamer, Sarah. "Female Authors, Provincial Setting: the re-versing of Courtly Love in the Findern Manuscript." *Viator* 22 (1991): 279-310.

McNamer challenges the common description of the Findern lyrics as courtly verse by reflecting on their manuscript context in detail. She argues that these texts were written by provincial women and, rather than conveying a courtly sentiment, offer sincere and emotional expressions of female experience.

Wakelin, Daniel. "The Carol in Writing: Three Anthologies from Fifteenth-Century Norfolk." *Journal of the Early Book Society* 9 (2006): 25-49.

Provides a detailed codicological analysis of three fifteenth-century manuscripts, each of which contain important collections of carols: Cambridge, St John's College, MS S.54; London, British Library, MS Sloane 2593; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. poet. e.1. The study explores the relationship between the written and oral circulation of these poems, considering their modes of preservation in the manuscripts.