EDITING THE AUCHINLECK:

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE RECONSTRUCTION

OF A MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPT

DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive examination of the textual and literary criticism written about a single fourteenth-century English manuscript, National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1 (commonly called "The Auchinleck Manuscript"). It is my hope that such an examination will lead to future discussions in which the history of editorial work on Middle English texts can be chronicled and evaluated more fully. The importance of editorial influence on the progress of medieval literary studies has been stressed by important figures in the field for years now; by many estimates it will be a common task for the rising generation of Middle English editors to look with a skeptical eye at their predecessors' publications, to interrogate and rethink the fundamental notion of textuality, and to take advantage of new technologies in order to represent the artifacts of the past. I offer this project as a case study not only of the historical relationship between edition and criticism, but also of the recent dramatic change in the nature of that relationship.

The ideological support for this project comes from the new directions outlined by postmodernist criticism combined
with the growing philological interest in examining the roots of the Middle English editorial tradition. In the past fifteen years the practice of textual criticism (or "editing") has undergone radical transformations, due in part to the catalytic publication of the B-text of *Piers Plowman* by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson in 1975. The transformation is, I believe, also due to a general awareness, discernible some years before the appearance of Kane and Donaldson's monumental work, of a fundamental fallacy in the mechanism of editing as it had been routinely practiced among Middle English scholars, with little refinement and less explicit self-examination, since the 1840's.

The nature of this change has been documented in essays by Lee Patterson, Tim William Machan, Ralph Hanna, A.S.G. Edwards, David Hult, and others, all of whom have contextualized the assumptions and methodologies of editors.² Theirs has been a scholarly dialogue of considerable energy and caliber and I have been motivated intellectually to participate in it. But I have also been prompted to undertake this project because of the conviction of other scholars—among them Anne Middleton and Jerome McGann—that, in Middleton's words, "a renewed awareness of the mediated form in which all edited texts represent medieval writings has led to a conceptual remapping of what sort of scholarly activity can produce major rethinking in the field" (29). In other words, our decisions about how medieval texts ought to look and how they
should be disseminated to modern readers are now recognized to be precedent, not subsequent, to the understanding of those texts.

The Auchinleck is an excellent choice for this introductory survey of editorial history for three reasons. First is its physical condition: at some time prior to its acquisition by Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck in the 1740's, the manuscript was vandalized for the sake of numerous small illuminations which prefixed most of its items. These miniatures were cut or torn from the book, leaving behind texts which are fragmentary in a variety of manners (missing a beginning, a middle, an end, or some combination of the three). Forty-four of an original sixty-nine or more numbered items survive, and of these only five, some of the briefest in the codex, are fully extant physically. The manuscript is therefore nicely symbolic of the difficulties inherent in the textual critic's traditional goal of restoring the text to its original state. Quite apart from arguments of recension from exemplars and source manuscripts, each editor of the Auchinleck items has had to deal with actual, physical textual instability.

The manuscript is also appropriate because it contains representative items from several significant medieval genres and from the entire spectrum of attestation. Some items, such as the devotional Life of Adam and Eve and Life of St. Mary Magdalene, are known to literary studies only from their survival here. Other items exist in two or three manuscripts
in various stages of relatedness, such as the romances *The King of Tars* and *Floris and Bluncheflur*. There is then the case of the quasi-romance *Speculum Gy de Warewyke*, known in nine other copies (more than any other item in the Auchinleck). This study therefore encompasses the two dominant textual situations that confront editors of Middle English—the unique and the multiple-attestation manuscript—and part of its discussion will involve the procedural differences in editing these different kinds of subjects.

Finally, editions of and literary criticism on the Auchinleck's items are plentiful, and can be considered representative of those of later English medieval literature generally. All the items have been edited since Bishop Thomas Percy presented the first very brief selections in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765. Some items in the miscellany, such as the partially-erased, 24-line fragment *The Wench That Loved a King*, have been edited only once; others of greater length and popular appeal, such as *Sir Orfeo*, *Lay le Freine*, and the political complaint *The Simonie*, have been presented to modern readers in a dozen or more different venues. As a secondary goal, this study will compile a bibliography of all editions, collations, and other appearances of the manuscript's items, a simple and helpful resource which may become more common as Middle English editorial history is more substantially reviewed.

The style of this study is predominately narrative, and
involves considerable summary of scholarship. While some readers may consider these elements to be shortcomings in scholarly methodology, I defend their worth; until we fully understand the nature of the revolution we are in, we must, I believe, seek to avoid those rhetorical postures which reflect authority, certainty, and dominance. This study is a scouting expedition and its goal is cartographic, not legislative. It begins with a summary overview of English philological trends of the 18th through 20th centuries, with special consideration to theories of textuality and orality. This "background painting" includes discussion of the major developments in Middle English as well as of related fields such as etymology and Anglo-Saxon and Old French studies based on the intellectual histories of Hans Aarsleff and Bernard Cerquiglini. It also emphasizes the simultaneous developments in editorial theory and practice from the time of John Horne Tooke to that of George Kane.

The second and third chapters deal directly with the Auchinleck manuscript, offering observations on antiquarian and scholarly editions of its items to show the ways in which Middle English textual criticism has reflected the larger intellectual movements described in the first chapter. The fourth chapter looks closely at the singular phenomenon of the Auchinleck Bookshop, posited by Laura Loomis in the 1940's as a kind of print culture Delphic oracle within whose environs all the problems of manuscript textuality might be resolved.
Finally, the fifth chapter evaluates the most recent editorial and critical avenues of research on the Auchinleck. One limitation of the antiquarian and scholarly editions produced to date is their editors' failure to give a full accounting of their practices (and thus to make little distinction between actions of literary and textual criticism); editors since 1975, however, have been called to explain openly their views on the nature of their projects, and have provided edited texts to a professional community growing ever more impatient for a new model on which to base textual representation in the 21st century.

Kane and Donaldson's work with *Piers Plowman* has had the effect of throwing off balance the assumptions of authority and stability which so many decades of stemma-based editions appeared to create. Their Athlone Press edition of the B-text was not, of course, the first to use the technique of conjectural emendation (many previous editions of Chaucer, for example, are essentially conjectural groomings of the *Tales*), but Kane and Donaldson's self-imposed editorial regimen involved three elements never before present in any critical edition to such an extent: accuracy, candor, and full presentation of the evidence on which the editors' decisions were made (Edwards 45). The presence of these three elements is an important turning point in Middle English editing. The open, systematic presentation of "Langland's original text" intensifies the triumvirate relationship of scribe, author,
and editor, and it is possible that we see evidence of the disturbance it created in the field of textual editing in the fact that there have been several retrospective studies, but only two formal editions, made of our test manuscript since Kane and Donaldson published their work.

The facsimile of the Auchinleck, published by the Scolar Press in 1979, likewise marks the new direction of medieval textual studies. Criticism is now being vigorously applied in the direction of manuscripts, their construction, and how past theories such as that of the Auchinleck Bookshop can be replaced with more inclusive and inductive accounts of manuscript production. Timothy Shonk's landmark 1985 *Speculum* article was the first published offering of such an account for the Auchinleck, and is excellent in its characterization of the principal scribe of the manuscript as "general editor"; other articles and conference papers since then have continued this iconoclastic-synthetic revisioning.

Throughout this study, several fundamental questions are posed from a variety of angles: based on the representative editorial history of this manuscript, what now is the role of textual criticism in Middle English studies? Should editors combat Kane and Donaldson's pronouncement that any publication which stops short of a fully reconstructed original is a "poor-spirited and slothful undertaking" (129), thus abandoning the insights of poststructuralism? Should they, instead, focus on the development of a technology which provides
inexpensive facing-page facsimile and diplomatic editions of high quality—or even electronic texts, accepting the post-structuralist conviction that the very presumption of a stable origin of a text is a delusion? Is there, ultimately, any way to find a practical modern use for the hundreds of editions published by our scholarly predecessors?

I firmly believe that once students of medieval textuality have allowed ourselves the possibility of asking questions like these publicly, and of investigating the ways in which egocentrisms like vanity, obsession and personal taste, and exocentrisms like prudence and self-distrust apply to our published labors, we will witness subjective preconceptions inevitably winning out over postures of scientific dispassion. This study concludes that we need no longer deal with the question of how to go about eliminating subjective judgments from our work; instead, we should ask ourselves how we can represent the effects and possible contradictions of subjectivity in medieval textual research to their best effect. Viewing the past in terms of the present is no longer something we should, or can, avoid doing. The present generation of workers with texts will work under this paradigm of plain acknowledgement, and because of it—not because of technical superiority—we will stride ahead from the resting-place to which our scholarly predecessors have brought us.
CHAPTER I
Philology, Textuality, Humility

The mystery is at last unravelled.


We cannot discuss the ways in which poststructuralist theory challenges the role of the textual critic without first making an historical review of traditional editorial methodologies. While it is now generally recognized that the subjective value judgments of textual editors are profoundly influential and can condition editors' philological preferences and choices, no debate about "the next step" in editing can take place without a foundation in the philological trends of the past two centuries. The future of editing medieval texts will be shaped by our responses to a series of questions which we can only pose because of our experience with past works: Is it possible, let alone desirable, to attempt to exorcise subjective judgments from an edition? Is full disclosure of methodology, especially in activities such as conjectural emendation, really possible, or would such disclosure constitute merely a re-performance of a subjective editorial process? In short, is emendation a "science" or an
"art"? Later in this study I will turn to recent editors and examine their responses, but since none of the editors of the later 20th century has come into her role except through the patterns and forms of her predecessors, we must begin with the appropriate context.

Before I begin I must offer one procedural note. The following historical review brings into question the relevance of the work of several medievalists, living and dead. Some of my findings are unflattering, and I would like to be clear that my intention is not to question the importance of a single voice in the scholarly dialogue. I believe that many editors of the past two centuries have relied on a psychologically-driven mechanism which helped them marginalize the importance of the variant nature of medieval texts, and that in some circumstances this mechanism is displayed publicly as intellectual arrogance. Unflattering as this interpretation may be, I do consider it necessary to make if we are to move forward in the study of Middle English texts. It is, however, equally important that I foreground at this early point in my study the sincere devotion which rising scholars such as myself may feel toward our predecessors, some of whom spent decades of their lives producing editions for the Early English Text Society and other projects. Their work will be considered invaluable even though ours may come to bear little resemblance to it.

There is one mollifying aspect of this review of past
editors, however, and that is the necessity of employing anecdotal information. The latter has been curiously relevant to this study; at times it has seemed to me that the rigidity and formality of past decades of philological scholarship, characterized by an aversion to levity and a rhetorical posture of inscrutable objectivity, has in part brought about the need for a dramatic change in approach to textual study. We can rail against Karl Lachmann for having been a kind of High Priest of vernacular German texts in the sense that his rhetoric magnifies the operations he is performing (to the point that his rhetoric is an active element of his edition)---we can rail against this, but we must be aware that without opening ourselves to fresh sources of information and to a more informal and more self-reflexive way of expressing ourselves we will be philologists in the same spirit as Lachmann. This loosening of formal expectations does not, I think, bring along with it a lessening of rigor; in my opinion it amounts more to a kind of circumspect humility. And as I have just suggested, humility is a needed currency at the present time.
i. Philological Paradigms

The allurements of emendation are scarcely resistible. Conjecture has all the joy and all the pride of invention, and he that has once started a happy change, is much too delighted to consider what objections may rise against it.

--Samuel Johnson

My stepping-off point for discussing editorial history is Hans Aarsleff's compelling survey of philology in the 18th and 19th centuries, The Study of Language in England (1967). Among its chief values is its theme that scholarship is dialogic and unfolds itself over long periods of time during which men and women act and react to one another; scholarship, to Aarsleff, therefore requires a retrospective stance in order to be fully understood. His narrative of the rise and fall of John Horne Tooke (1736-1812) is of particular value because it provides us with a context in which we can better understand the intellectual phenomena of our own time.

According to Aarsleff, Tooke succeeded in achieving what might be called the ultimate aim of his century: the formulation of a theory of universal grammar. The theory, described and exhaustively illustrated in Horne Tooke's great work The Diversions of Purley, achieved what neither Locke nor Condillac could do. Working from the philosophical foundation that intellect and grammar are identical in structure, he offered in the Diversions his proofs that all languages are pragmatic, utilitarian reflections of objects, motions, senses, and
causations in the material world. The mind, to Tooke, remains essentially passive in its reception of communal names for those sensations, and language is therefore perfect as a vehicle for mental intercourse. He perceived no irregular forms and structures; all words were reducible to names of sensations, and the mind was a perfect medium for reflecting the known world.¹

The idea was not a new one--dozens of writers on the subject of language origin, from Plato to Plotinus to Augustine, had of course rehearsed it--but Tooke's air of philosophical radicalism, his particular phrasing, and his highly selective documentation gave his readers the impression that language was conforming to the rules of another exciting new science. Chemistry, for example, which was just becoming recognized as a field of natural philosophy at the close of the eighteenth century, could have offered no more encompassing physical laws than did the language precepts of Horne Tooke; in fact, it seems appropriate to say that Horne Tooke's influences can be best understood in their relationship to other contemporary sciences (Aarsleff 88-92).

But for the field of philology the problem was that the Diversions gave to language the appearance that all problems were solved, and that what had formerly been considered a complex series of relational equations between signifiers and signifieds had in one swift stroke of the pen been reduced to their common denominators. As the epigraph to this section
suggests ("The mystery is at last unravelled"), Horne Tooke presented the *Diversions* from beginning to end as a near-divine revelation. No more epistemological inquiry seemed necessary in the field of grammar, and Englishmen could look elsewhere for innovation and application.

Aarsleff reports that the intellectual community in England through the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th was all but unanimously behind Horne Tooke and his ideas; natural philosopher Erasmus Darwin and philologist W. Carew Hazlitt are just two of the prominent figures who supported him. Horne Tooke’s lauds often mounted to hyperbole, such as the conviction that he was "better than Plato" on the subject of etymology (74). Certainly his influence was felt in grammatical texts as late as the 1820’s; still later texts such as Goold Brown’s thousand-page, prescriptive *Grammar of English Grammars* (1851), for example, cites him regularly as an authority. But even before the eighteenth century closed, enthusiastic disciples such as Samuel Henshall and Walter Whiter began drawing Horne Tooke’s notions to lunatic proportions—depending on the paradigm of etymological universality to justify even the most offhand of verbal relationships.²

Horne Tooke’s enterprise, based as it was on an *a priori* method of theorizing, in which a system of beliefs is applied to the world and actual conditions are "made to fit the theory," induced his fellow philologists to stop studying
etymology critically. His colleagues had no impetus to seek a system based on any other principle (historical usage, for example) because Horne Tooke had made his seem so clearly right. So it was that no significant advances were made in English philology between 1800 and 1830: while Germany, France, and Scandinavia were striding forward in studies of old languages and literature, England had nothing comparable to offer. Only in the decade 1830-1840 did philologists in England begin to act, and many assessments of the discipline made at that time offer laments of its "deplorable" state. Witness the following profound review from 1840:

It is with a mixture of mirth and amazement that we look back to the position it used to occupy; when even those who felt it to be wrong and ridiculous, could only qualify themselves to appear as its opponents by first paying homage to its ingenuity and learning. It reflects little credit on English philology that it should have been so regarded then; and it is not much to our praise now, that it should still be named in works of science of a respectable character, and named without censure, or even with eulogium and deference. Its authority and influence have done much harm to us as philologists, both in our reputation and in our progress. It has lowered the high name which England once could boast in Teutonic philology. It has blinded us to better guides—it has led us upon a false track, and lulled us into a delusive security. It has palsied our better efforts and aspirations, like a nightmare upon our breasts. Let us escape from the slavish fear or silly superstition that has tyrannized over us; let us shake the incubus from his hold, and hail with gladness the beaming of a better day, in which, under fairer auspices, we shall pursue, with reverential zeal and humble diligence, some of the worthiest and most mysterious subjects of knowledge that the study of man can open to our understandings. ³

And Horne Tooke was the chief culprit. He is the "it" which
the reviewer reviles; he is the blinder, the deceiver, the tyrant, the incubus, the nightmare now so utterly despised.

What Aarsleff describes as having taken place in England in 1830 is a perceptible paradigm shift: in that year the old philosophic antiquarianism began to be displaced by a "new philology"—a utilitarian, inductive method marked by a "disinclination to make the phenomena of language the bases of metaphysical speculations" (204). We observe and describe the phenomena of language, and then, from that vantage-point a posteriori, we bring into being theories which explain what we have witnessed. It is simple and obvious; at the time it was revolutionary, and Benjamin Thorpe's 1830 translation of Rask's Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Tongue brought it to England. When Thorpe and Kemble began to edit Anglo-Saxon texts according to their new principles within a few years, those antiquarians and others practicing the "old" philology withdrew to the comfortable and secure confines of their private printing clubs.

This odd and interesting revolution is critically important to us for two reasons. First, the work of those men on the "old" side of the paradigm shift—Henshall, Whiter, and Horne Tooke himself—has as its chief rhetorical characteristic the free association of ideas. The act of putting a theory or an observation into words seems to lead them to hurry forth a plethora of semi-related observations, anecdotes, and conjectures which then, also by association, demand
of the reader the same serious consideration as the thesis. I believe that this may be considered a feature of antiquarian writing generally; as such it is diametrically opposed to the concept of scholarship, in which a proposition is presented in a linear fashion with all stated evidence supporting a main thesis (or cluster of theses) and in which all nonessential information is either discarded or is relegated to discursive footnotes. When trained philologists begin to publish their findings in the middle of the 19th century, their rhetoric is generally more direct, deliberate, and formal, but it is also more prone to the exclusions and oversights which selectivity engenders. (One locus of such rhetorical formality is discussed in Chapter Four below.)

The second reason Aarsleff’s observations of Horne Tooke and his remarkable influence are important is that the birth of the New Philology was what enabled substantial new thinking in the field of language study. Advances could not have taken place under the old system because it could embrace any muddled, thoughtless, or madcap notion—the very qualities that a method, if it works, is supposed to remove. After it became clear that Horne Tooke’s Diversions was not the last word on the subject of etymology, groups such as the Philological Society of London could move forward with constructive projects; the Society’s idea of assembling a new historically-based dictionary (the work that would ultimately become the Oxford English Dictionary), for example, was conceived in
1842.

The lesson is a profound one. John Horne Tooke was first perceived as a champion of universal grammar, then as a kind of Siren who distracted men of letters from rigorous investigation. Using his case as an object-lesson, we observe that it implicitly contains the twin notions of profession and transgression: if we transfer the lesson to experience in general, we are led to suspect that in each generation of scholarship there are predecessors who are being at once praised and scorned, not necessarily for their findings but for the paradigms in which they worked.

While there may have been a paradigm shift in etymology and in Anglo-Saxon studies around 1830, with Kemble publishing in Cambridge on the one hand and a "bevy of old saxonists" in Oxford holding fast against the New Philology on the other, there is no corresponding controversy in Middle English studies. By virtue of its development as a discrete specialization several decades after Anglo-Saxon, Middle English bypassed the birth throes which led to the incorporation of the new paradigm into etymology and Anglo-Saxon. Editions of Middle English works, produced by antiquarians throughout the period of controversy and paradigm change, were largely unaffected by the new philological method. But even more recent editions—up to the 1970's—show little self-examination. In short, when we look at most editions of Middle English works produced between 1780 and 1970 we see a funda-
mental agreement of method—a philosophically-based a priori approach still extant in this area of study 140 years after its demise in other related fields.

The eventual catalyst which, I believe, forced Middle English editors to examine their paradigm was the Kane-Donaldson edition of the *Piers Plowman* B-text (1975). Theorists since that time—among them some of the clearest voices in medieval studies—have put forth essays which have created a wholly new vocabulary ("mouvance," "cascading variation," "scribal profile") but which include once again the familiar phrase "New Philology." In the face of mouvance, old philology blanches—critical editions swoon—classical stemmatics gathers its winding-sheet. We are now witnessing a radical rethinking of medieval textuality precisely comparable to the shift in etymological paradigms in the early nineteenth century. We will have to discard the basic assumptions of many works of scholarship with which we are familiar—our school texts, for example, in whose margins we may consider our detailed knowledge of Middle English to have developed, but whose editorial principles are so deeply embedded in the old method that they can no longer be called illuminative. And when we do still use such texts, we will always be aware of the concessions we are making.

And yet at the same time that so many familiar forms and assumptions are given up there comes into being a respondent invigoration. To some of today’s scholars this has taken the
form of technological advances such as hypertexts, electronic texts, and electronic facsimiles; to others, the energy provokes theoretical discussion of the revising ideal of textual criticism. Through the kinetics of intellectual activism English philology is once again having its secrets told, and we must now turn again to history to more fully understand our present.
ii. Editors and Their Authors

The second poem in this Volume, intitled *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, having been offered to the Reader with large conjectural supplements and Corrections, the old Fragment itself is here literally and exactly printed from the Editor's Folio MS. with all its defects, inaccuracies and errata; that such austere Antiquaries, as complain that the ancient copies have not been always rigidly adhered to, may see how unfit for publication many of the pieces would have been, if all the blunders, corruptions, and nonsense of illiterate Reciters and Transcribers have been superficially retained, without some attempt to correct and emend them.


Printed editions of medieval works, it has often been pointed out go back to the Middle Ages themselves--to the time of Caxton, and then of de Worde and Thynne, in whose publications we see the problem of rendering manuscripts into printed forms confronted and resolved in a variety of ways (Edwards 34). Our understanding of the editorial history of Chaucerian texts in particular has been strengthened in the past ten years; *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition*, a 1984 collection of essays edited by Paul Ruggiers, can claim the rather enviable position of being the only chronological survey of Middle English editorial work. More localized studies have appeared (notably Anne Hudson's chapter on 19th and 20th century editing in *Editing Medieval Texts* and Arthur Johnston's study of 18th century romance reception, *Enchanted Ground*), but not even in Langland studies has there yet
appeared a comprehensive study comparable to *Editing Chaucer*. 6 If we are to fully contextualize the early editions of Auchinleck items which began appearing in the late 18th century, we must first look briefly upon Middle English editorial history as written chiefly by editors of Chaucer.

Most, if not all, of the editorial activities of Caxton and his followers are without consensual methodology. There are very few explicit indications in the productions of this first generation of Middle English editors of the many problems that arise when one attempts to transform handwritten textuality into typographical textuality. There does not appear to be any desire among editors to create a unique approach to the editing of Middle English until the time of Thomas Speght, whose edition of Chaucer arrived in 1598 (just a year before Spenser’s death) and remained the standard text of the poet’s works until it was replaced in general use by that of John Urry in 1721 (Edwards 35; Ruggiers 93). While Speght collated the earlier editions (clearing up local readings where words had been dropped or unaccountably altered) and offered a popular biography of Chaucer, it is still possible to see in his inclusion of apocryphal works such as the *Plowman’s Tale*, as well as in his wholesale preservation of much of the text of Thynne and his friend John Stow, a strongly conservative editorial function.

The type face chosen by Speght for the text of the works is, of course, the most visible evidence of this: in accor-
dance with custom, the text is given in the outdated black letter, while the apparatus and biography (the "new parts") are in Roman. This choice of type can easily be ascribed to tradition, but by making the decision to preserve Chaucer's works in this historical typography Speght was perpetuating a perception of the text which he had inherited from the earlier printers. When we consider that the black letter text is accompanied by notes and a pronouncing glossary in a clear Roman type, we can, cautiously, adopt the interpretation that a 17th- or 18th-century user of Speght's Chaucer might at least have interpreted the text portion as more difficult to penetrate than the apparatus.

There is no applicable term in textual criticism for this complex relationship of a traditionally-received presentation style and a calculated (as well as an unintended) rhetorical and graphic effect, but it seems appropriate to refer to it as a "texture." This preservation and manipulation of visual and spatial elements is engaged in by all editors when their scholarly work is printed for a reading audience, and the nature of the editor's choices can be tremendously influential on the reader's reception of the printed text. In the case of Speght's Chaucer, the eyes of a reader scanning the lines must first penetrate the (increasingly archaic) letter-forms; this act of adjustment has the perceptible effect of transferring a significant measure of authority to the inanimate text, and can provoke a sense of age and authority of which no editor or
printer can be unaware.

Unquestionably the most significant feature of Speght's edition was its pronouncing glossary, a strong indication of the growing linguistic distance separating Chaucer from an audience of 1598. Speght and his glossary are, in fact, probably responsible for setting into motion an argument which would preoccupy English editing for the entire 17th century. On the one hand there arose in the late 16th century a wish to make Chaucer texts accessible to audiences with practically no knowledge of Middle English grammar, syntax, or spelling habits; on the other there existed an impulse to preserve the text as it had been found in the manuscripts (Edwards 35, Ruggiers 87). Speght's glossary may well mark the first time in English that a printer or editor consciously attended to the needs of readers of Middle English. There had never before been so active an attempt to mediate Chaucer's language for the reading public--to work into the editorial texture an apparatus whereby the Humanist impulse for preservation could be tempered by a pragmatic audience awareness.

The practice of glossing developed into more liberal practices of emendation and annotation over the following decades, and the implications of audience awareness for editorial texturing became clear: Just how far could (should? must?) an editor stray from the manuscript's record when preparing a Middle English text? What were the limits of editorial mediation? While never voiced in so few words, this
is clearly a line of conscious thought in the work of 17th-century editors and is also clearly present in the antiquarian productions of the 18th and 19th centuries. It is the line of questioning which, above all others, characterizes the present struggle to redefine medieval textuality, for in 1994 we are once again grappling with the central role of editorial purpose and method.

Both conservative and liberal approaches to the construction of "user-friendly" medieval texts can be found in the 17th century. Some editors, like William Bedwell (Tournament of Tottenham, 1631), transcribed fairly accurately and were obstinate in their refusal to shed light on any of the "obsolete and outworne" words and phrases they admitted were in their texts. At the other pole were editors like William Stansbury (Morte Darthur, 1634), who judiciously removed all suggestions of King Arthur's swearing and restored difficult passages "so that as it is now it may passe for a famous piece of Antiquity revived almost from the gulph of oblivion, and renued for the pleasure and profit of present and future times" (Edwards 36). Much as our modern sensibility might lead us to laud Bedwell's relative conservatism and to be offended by Stansbury's censoring impulse, we cannot dismiss either of them as inconsequential figures—both were participating in a larger, dynamic experiment in editorial mediation.

The existence of these two mutually exclusive approaches in the 17th century suggests to me not only that our modern
questions about the nature and effects of editorial activity can profit from the rigorous and experimental work of our predecessors, but that in fact we must look to historical examples for insight on our contemporary concerns. Then as now, persons of great talent and perceptive powers were handling medieval manuscripts. Then as now, they were guided in their work by the assumption of a moral purpose for literature (or a pedagogical one, which amounts to the same thing), a purpose which would silently justify the preservation of certain medieval texts and would go on to shape the presentation of those texts. And then as now, editors envisioned themselves as the adjudicators through whom chaotic medieval textuality was "calmed down," "smoothed out," or "repaired" into a form acceptable to contemporary readers. In short, for centuries editors have always felt that they must do something to Middle English texts if they were to be printed for contemporary audiences. But do what? Those "whats" comprise the yet unwritten history of Middle English editing.

In the field of textual criticism the arrival of the newest philological paradigm means the disruption of editorial texturing along highly defined lines. We will not abandon editions altogether, but we will dismiss the Romantically-conceived notion of authorship that has always pervaded them, and we will consequently stop evaluating the influence of scribes as having been uniformly destructive to the existence of textual originality. This simple assumption that "truth is
original and sin is scribal" (Embree and Urquhart 52)--with all its elaborate vocabulary of procreation, generation, maturity, natural selection, predation, infection, decay, and degeneration--is based on a definition of authorial poetic genius which came into being in print culture but which has consistently been applied to manuscript culture. It is the one assumption to which most decisions of editorial texturing may be traced.

The paradigm which the proto-discipline of linguistics discarded when it overthrew John Horne Tooke is quite comparable to the textual approaches being discarded today: both are methods of situating the known and the ideal, in which the ideal is given preference (a priori) and the known is described only insofar as it fits. For medieval texts this has meant that works which most closely match our post-Humanist notions of originality and authorship have been praised ("noble auctour, Geoffrey Chaucer"), while the activity of scribes, whose variety of actions cannot accurately be reproduced typographically, has been considered a necessary but harmful influence. Most textual criticism through the 1970's has been spent on seeking the originals which have been thought to lie behind scribal evidence--of peeling away the onion-like layers of error and misprision in which ignorant hack scribes have sealed genius up. The highly selective, biased editorial texture which results is quite similar to the highly selective, biased etymological evidence offered by
Horne Tooke and his followers. Middle English editors and their editions have institutionalized the devaluation of scribal influence.

The pursuit of originality in medieval texts lies behind the continued interest in one of the more controversial figures in textual criticism, the German philologist Karl Lachmann (d. 1851), who is generally attributed with importing the techniques of textual recension to vernacular philology from Biblical and classical studies in the 1820's. In particular, his compelling arguments for the construction of a stemma—a manuscript tree based on speculation about scribal habits—still have the power to provoke discussion. Although several especially damaging criticisms of the Lachmannian method were brought forth as early as World War I (for example, the speculative nature of the enterprise and its surprising lack of interest in observable scribal phenomena, and the assumption that transcription can pass only down a family of manuscripts), industrious editors throughout the 20th century shared in the paradigm which produced them and geared their editions toward the production of such family trees. Even when an editor had serious doubts about the legitimacy of the stemma he had produced, he included it in his edition as a sort of legitimizing mark—"I have done my work as an editor; here's my stemma, though I am not satisfied with it." 

The most comprehensive attack on Lachmannian stemmatics
came from Italian scholar Giorgio Pasquali and from Joseph Bédier, whose introduction to his edition of the Old French *Lai de l'Ombre* (Société des Anciens Texts Français, 1913) may be looked upon as an anti-Lachmannian manifesto. Bédier's chief objection was to the enormous potential for misapplying the method, and he was the first scholar to draw attention to the bifurcations and hypothetical texts which haunt manuscript stemma. Most stemma created using Lachmann's principles, he demonstrated, result in a two-branched product with unidentifiable, but crucial, manuscripts poised at the junctures. While there is of course no doubt that many manuscripts have been lost and that many were actually inscribed in a manner reflected by this pattern, traditional stemmatology would have us believe that such circumstances are ubiquitous—even to the point of having bifurcation be a noticeable feature within manuscript families.¹⁰

As Lachmann himself had no doubt been aware, there was considerable potential for misuse in the "dichotomizing" routine. As Bédier puts it, "The force of dichotomy, once unleashed, acts to the end. The Lachmannian system has launched [the editor] on a hunt for common errors, but has given him no way of knowing when to stop" (175). Sometimes the misuse amounted to no more than well-intentioned shortsightedness; sometimes, however, it took the form of scholars spending many pages mathematically calculating the possible proportions of manuscript trees based on this or that number
of original manuscripts, with these or those incidences of error.

Bédier's condemnation of ubiquitous 2-branch stemma was due to the case of the *Lai de l'Ombre*: he found that traditional stemmatics called for a grouping of *ab* (cd, where a and b shared a common error uniting them as a family, while c and d did not share such an error. In such a case, Bédier stated, it was likely that an editor would be led to "prefer" the reading of *ab* to that of *cd*. There was no real reason why *cd* should be treated as a family in this decision-making process except for the fact that Lachmann's method could only be used to prove that a relationship existed--it could not prove that a relationship did not exist. "If at any point of the text *cd* provides a common reading which seems inferior to that in *ab*, the editor will be tempted to regard *cd* as a family, and not as two independent groups" (Whitehead and Pickford 108).

Bédier's final claim was that in this particular case there were three groups of manuscripts and that therefore, according to Lachmann's system, there was no possibility of producing a stemma. There was also, therefore, no possibility of an old-style critical edition. Bédier's response to his findings was to offer the first self-conscious "best text" edition: he published one manuscript with apparatus and commentary, and signalled to Old French studies that an age had passed.
In so doing, Bédier was responsible for ushering in an age of extreme editorial conservatism in Old French. Certainly he helped drive a wedge between the French and German schools of medieval textual study by regularly criticizing German editors. R. Howard Bloch points to the period between the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) and the First World War as a time in which the "rigor of method" replaced the "softness of theory" in France; philologists such as Bédier institutionalized medieval study in their country by removing the mystery--the Romanticism--associated with German medievalism (40-46). Paul Maas, whose slim pamphlet Textkritik was published in 1927, reacted stiffly to Bedier's charge of near-unethical behavior in the use of stemmatology by offering an "innocent explanation" of the two-branch phenomenon:

First of all we must remind ourselves that of the twenty-two types of stemma possible where three witnesses exist, only one has three branches.... Furthermore it is in the very nature of the medieval tradition that in the case of little-read texts three copies were rarely taken from the same archetype; more rarely still have all these copies, or descendants of each of them, survived; on the other hand where texts were much read there is a tendency for contamination to creep in, and where contamination exists the science of stemmatics in the strict sense breaks down. (48)

Bédier seems to have unintentionally maneuvered Maas into offering some extremely problematic defenses here, to the extent that he (Maas) seems unconsciously to be undercutting his own trust in stemmatology.

Because of Bédier's work, medieval scholars from the 1920's onward had the option of approaching the presentation
of their texts as either old-style critical editions or the newer best-text kind. But what Bédier introduced was simply an alternative method of presenting originality—the search for originality itself, the belief that there was an original hidden behind the scribal intervention, was never questioned, and thus remains a consistent predicator of editorial textures through this tumultuous period. Both sides in these "stemma wars" believed that literature was a referential and genetic mimesis in which both reference and genesis are given meaning by the direction of the author (Stephen Nichols 6).

The value of the stemma wars to the present generation of textual inquiry goes far beyond the discrete arguments themselves (although, as I have suggested, it is still important for textual critics to school themselves in the Lachmannian method). The enthusiastic appropriation of the stemma by so many editors of the 19th and 20th centuries—the rather dilletantish assumption that a stemma could be formed to place any particular manuscript into its own secure cubby-hole in the writing-desk of medieval codicology—is what draws us here. Nearly every stemma I have viewed of a Middle English text (including the representative ones noted above) involves the placement of hypothetical manuscript agencies in locations too abundant, too convenient, to reflect actual textual circumstances. Middle English editors, we must conclude, have chronically misapplied Lachmannian stemma, making up rules for recension in pursuit of the re-constitu-
tion of an imagined archetype. When he is operating under the paradigm of authorial correctness and scribal error, any editor, no matter what the details of his method, will inevitably introduce elements of "rightness" and "wrongness" into the texture of his edition. He will be led to introduce sections from other witnesses, no matter how far distant in provenance. He will be led to introduce silent changes to the text based on the assumption that what he found in the manuscript could not have been intentionally put there—or, even if it was intentional, that it has no value to a modern reader.

Thus even after the innovations of Bédier editors were, in a sense, able to continue thinking of authors and scribes in the traditional Lachmannian manner. They had changed vocabulary and methodology, but their new positivism was as much a pseudo-science as its predecessor because it relied as heavily on the belief in the objectivity of textual investigation and the recoverability of meaning in historical texts (Bloch 36). Bédier’s positivism strongly influenced Spitzer and others of his generation—the preoccupation of these scholars of the 1940’s, 50’s, and 60’s in particular was with exactitude founded in a reliance on edited and printed texts. (Spitzer in particular gave anachronistic emphasis to readings of Marcabru which involved hyphenated Old French words, readings based in a print culture rather than a manuscript or oral one.) For many scholars of this generation, the
medieval artifact had been supplanted by the amply-textured critical edition.

What no philologist of this generation (including the far-seeing Vinaver) was equipped to do was to give up the notion of textual corruption altogether. Even Bédier, who advocated the printing of a single text, did so as a preferable alternative to the combinatorial-critical method; the editor's task is consistently to undo the corruptions brought to the original text by external forces. The belief that each manuscript is important and studiable precisely because of its individual idiosyncrasies—that such variation is "medieval" while authenticity is "modern"—is not evidenced until after the disruption of the mid-1970's. God may have been dead by 1900, but textual originality outlived Him.
iii. New(est) Philology

The present interest in manuscript clues and in the opening up of expression, the minute attention brought to the preparation of the work as well as to the insecurity of the writing—all this reflects our impatience with the written text. This uneasy study of written genesis attempts to avoid the iron collar of textual fixity through the destabilization of writings.

--Bernard Cerquiglini, 1989

The chief catalyst which has brought the phrase "New Philology" back into the minds of medieval literary specialists (long after the paradigm shift of 1840 and the development of linguistics and of Middle English as specialized disciplines) and which has forced us to scrutinize our assumptions of authorship, knowability, and editorial practice, was the edition of the B-text of Piers Plowman published by the Athlone Press in 1975, and edited by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson. It is hard to describe the reaction to this edition in literary studies; it has energized and empowered some scholars; it has caused others to look closely at their work and wonder if they have not been sleeping for a long time under the influence of an unproductive method which they inherited from our predecessors and which they only assumed was right, fixed, and helpful.

Whatever we may think of their method and goals, Kane and Donaldson took the central issue of knowable authorial intentionality—or, rather, of authoritative, knowable,
personality—to its ultimate conclusion. They substantially increased the range of editorial prerogative, and their work has been both praised and blamed because it incorporates in one publication so many of these far-flung issues of medieval textuality. Kane and Donaldson, I believe, have become our generation's Horne Tooke; their edition of Piers Plowman is our Diversions of Purley. They have almost single-handedly caused the issues surrounding the nature of medieval textuality to become the most important concern of rising scholars.

One of many responses to the editorial challenges which the B-text raised is Christopher Kleinhenz' Medieval Manuscripts and Textual Criticism (1976), which examines the state of textual criticism at that time and suggests, sotto voce, that a new paradigm for the practice of editing is needed. The volume contains, for example, an essay by David Diringer called "The Book of the Middle Ages" which is included to represent some of the latest views on the subject and which is general almost to the point of offering stereotypes. Diringer is surprisingly quiet about manuscript production itself: in the twelve-page essay he spends very little time actually discussing scribal activity.¹⁴

Charles Moorman's Editing the Middle English Manuscript (1975) also begins from scratch ("What is Palaeography?", pages 9-31). His booklet is even more a marker of the uneasy relationship of manuscript studies and medieval literary studies because he passes along the dicta of Maas, Greg,
Thorpe, and others with no degree of caution and no charge as to the limitations of the mechanism:

The modern critical edition began with the mid-nineteenth-century German scholar Karl Lachmann who, dissatisfied with the traditional eclecticism of editing classical texts, hit upon the "genealogical" method as a means of establishing the relationship between MSS, a process usually referred to as recension (recensio). The purpose of this complex process is to identify, if possible through comparison and elimination, the "archetype" (sometimes called the "original"), the most primitive and therefore hopefully the most accurate extant text, the text from which all surviving MSS presumably derive. (49)

And Moorman goes on to tell budding editors how to go about applying the Lachmannian method to Middle English texts. Bédier's objections are mentioned only once, in passing (page 54), and after a dismissive "At any rate..." Moorman continues to preach the gospel of the stemma.

Both publications seem in retrospect to be painfully inadequate; neither work is effective because the needs and motives of medieval scholars were at that time in the process of changing dramatically. In the same volume as Diringer's essay, though, we can see minds visualizing new areas of paleographical research. Frederick Whitehead and Cedric Pickford affirmed that while we may have a somewhat clear notion of the way texts were copied and distributed after having been composed (such as the universities' pecia system), we know next to nothing about the circumstances under which multiple copies of a work were made "at the immediate request of the author." They state, in 1976, what seems in its
context of historical review something approximating an innovation:

In other words when one comes to draw up a stemma of manuscripts, it is appropriate to take into account not only the text as such but also everything that is known about the other aspects of the manuscript as a book, namely copyist, illuminator and owner. If this is done, one sees that it is increasingly difficult to draw up a stemma which does not represent a considerable amount of cross-influences from one family of manuscripts to another. Furthermore these cross-influences are sometimes quite independent of literary or aesthetic considerations. The workings of chance have their part to play....

The real purpose of textual criticism is to question our easy faith in texts as they have been transmitted to us and to attempt to delimit the areas of our knowledge and our ignorance.... (114)

Once we read these words, we know that we are entering a new era of medieval scholarship.

It took about ten years for these notions to crystallize into the renovated "New Philology." The most recent spokespersons for editorial theory have been Bernard Cerquiglini, Paul Zumthor, and the contributors to an issue of Speculum devoted to the resurgence of New Philology. Although Chapter Five of the present study will discuss the implications of this group of theories (and the significant publications of the 1950's and 1960's which led up to them), I will introduce them here so that our brief summary of philological trends may be brought up to date.

Cerquiglini in particular has proved to be the lightning rod for much good discourse on editorial theory and its effects during the past five years, and for precisely the
reason I stated when I began this chapter: his monograph Éloge de la Variante consciously undermines the French philological community by pointing out that the vocabulary of organic decadence ("corruption," "purity," etc.) was institutionalized in France after the Prussian War because of the certainty that the prevailing Realism was the only true one (80ff; see also Stephen Nichols 4, n6). Cerquiglini's ideas have ballooned out of proportion in a very short time precisely because of the historical context into which he sets the vocabulary of organic growth and decay of texts. The ideas engender passion because scholars in 1993 want radical transformation of the unsatisfying methods of our predecessors: but we need to understand the causes and motivations of those predecessors in order to convince ourselves that we are not paralleling their procedural oversights with new ones of our own.

Cerquiglini is also one of the best speakers on the subject of mouvance, a term coined by Zumthor for the interplay of variants and the plays of meanings they produce. The postmodern conception of medieval textuality is one in which a destabilized plurality of variants (the variation in forms within a single text, as well as those among manuscripts in families or traditions) is characteristic of pre-print culture. In Cerquiglini's singularly mnemonic phrasing, "Medieval writing does not produce variation; it is variation" (111). And as another gifted spokesperson, Suzanne Fleisch-
man, points out, this flexible, joyous, almost erotic quality of manuscript textuality is the first thing that is lost when a text is edited—this is why the evaluation of variants in order to try and find the one nearest the Original has lost all its charm for the present generation of scholars (25). Variation, not singularity, is the illuminating light.

Where does this leave us? Certainly the weight of traditional aesthetics is no longer on our side, and we will need to create our own. The impulse which had informed textual criticism since the time of the Humanists—that the closer you got to the ipsissima verba of the great authors of antiquity, the more resonant and beautiful the words would become—has had its legitimacy and comfortable center denied.

The modern critical faculty, while of course better equipped technologically to produce the kinds of editions published between the 1830's and the 1970's, and better able to produce and manipulate strings of variants through electronic assistance, no longer sees the real practical value in doing so. The utility of such projects has been diminished by an awareness of ever-expanding global concerns, by the dynamics of international scholarship, by the increased time demands of the university environment—and, as I have suggested, by the substantial re-examination of scholarly paradigms. Critical editing become soteriologically impossible at the very moment technology could have aided it tremendously, and I find that fascinating.
CHAPTER II

The Antiquarian Edition, 1760-1860:
Rude Poems, Gentle Readers

Among all the nacions in whome I have wan-
dered, for the knowledge of thynges, I have founde
none so negligent and untoward, as I have found
England, in the due serch of theyr auncyent hystor-
es, to the syngulare fame and bewtye therof. Thys
have I (as it were) wyth a wofulnesse of hert, sens
my tendre youthe bewayled; and so muche the more,
for that I have not, accordinge to the naturall
zele whych I beare to my countreye, ben able to
redresse it, for ungentyll poverta.

--John Bale, 1540

The new analytic methodology forged by students of
literature and language during the early 19th century helped
to institutionalize the editorial assumptions now being
scrutinized. But the actual development of critical method in
Middle English editing has never been studied, and the purpose
of this chapter and the following one is to survey antiquarian
and scholarly editions and to illustrate some of the ways in
which the texture of critical editions is dependent on conven-
tions which developed outside of the self-reflective philolog-
ical method of the 1830’s. The present chapter focuses our
attention on the work of antiquarian editors—both those whose
work was done before the philological paradigm shift (such as
Bishop Thomas Percy, Joseph Ritson, and Sir Walter Scott), and those who were present during its early institutionalization but who "retreated," in Aarsleff's words, into the security of private printing clubs and who continued to publish Middle English texts without the stamp of the new scholarly method.

Before we begin, a word or two should be said about the pejorative use of the term "antiquarian." By the middle of the eighteenth century the word had already gained negative connotations; Bishop Warburton, for example, referring to Thomas Percy's ballad editing in the 1760's, lamented that "...antiquarianism is, indeed, to true letters what specious funguses are to the oak, which never shoot out and flourish till all the vigour and virtue of the grove be effete and nearly exhausted." Reviews and casual remarks of a similar nature are not difficult to come by--eighty years later, in the 1840's, one can find criticism along much the same lines still being made relevant:

Antiquarianism, then, is the knowledge of the past enjoyed by one who has no lively knowledge of the present. Thence it is, when concerned with great matters, a dull knowledge. It may be lively in little things; it may conceive vividly the shape and colour of a dress, or the style of a building, because no man can be so ignorant as not to have a distinct notion of these in his own times; he must have a full conception of the coat he wears and the house he lives in. But the past is reflected to us by the present; so far as we see and understand the present, so far we can see and understand the past; so far, but no farther. And this is the reason why scholars and antiquarians, nay, and men calling themselves historians also, have written so uninstructionally of the ancient world; they could do no otherwise, for they did not understand the world around them.
These remarks of Thomas Arnold's (from his "Introductory Lectures on Modern History," 1842) show that the stereotype of the antiquarian as an unsuccessful visionary (if not a parasitical fungus) transcends individual generations; it is used as a way of warning students against a fundamental misconception about the appropriate teleological relationship of a human being to any subject of inquiry.

Despite the ubiquity of such remarks against the antiquarians, it is seldom that one actually finds an enlightening specific, divorced from poetry and venom, for the pejorative. As nearly as I can judge, what is consistently being pointed to as the "flaw" of antiquarianism is the urge to treat history shortsightedly, with a fixation on the mere details of archaeology, numismatics, architecture, and the like, in the absence of understanding how the details fit into the continuum of a culture or a person's life. Thus, when we see Sir Robert Cotton in the late 16th century presenting a serious paper on the history of castles which starts with the Tower of Babel and inventories its way forward, we are dealing with an antiquary; however, if Sir Robert had formed a thesis which caused him to actively restrict his presentation to one relevant unit—say, to Norman innovations in castle design and why they came about—he would be demonstrating an international identification with the life and historical processes of the past, and might today be called an historian.

The products of an untempered collecting impulse can be
quite thrilling to observe, and while a degree of respect for
the collector (however much it might be tempered by suspicions
of insanity) is nearly always obtained in such products, it is
usually the case that the collector's tremendous commitment to
minutiae has caused him to neglect depth and coherence.
Important expansive trends will be overlooked; common-sense
approaches will go unnoticed; the fact that the earth moves
around the sun may be temporarily forgotten. This character-
istic submersion in what might be called "the art of collect-
ing" causes any modern reader of antiquarian commentary to
grow frustrated and all too often to abandon whatever line of
inquiry brought her to the antiquarian work in the first
place. As a result, reams of heavily detailed, labyrinthine
antiquarian essays and comments on virtually every subject of
historical interest gather dust on library shelves--resistant
to index and, to the modern scholarly sentiment, unreadable.

The century of greatest antiquarian activity, 1760-1860,
happens to coincide precisely with the first generation of
editions made from the Auchinleck manuscript. Since during
that time no accounts of the manuscript, its contents, or its
history were published apart from these editions, I will, in
surveying the editions, also be summarizing all published
writings on the Auchinleck itself. My primary intention is to
point out features of antiquarian editing which have never
been examined because of the sudden and complete eclipse of
antiquarianism by scholarly method between 1830 and 1860; by
using the Auchinleck as a "periscope" into the age, I believe that I can offer an insightful overview of antiquarian Middle English editing.
i. Antiquarian Textures:
Thomas Percy and Joseph Ritson

The purchaseërs and peruseërs of such a collection are deceive'd and impose'd upon; the pleasure they receive is derive'd from the idea of antiquity, which, in fact, is perfect illusion.

--Joseph Ritson, 1803

The Auchinleck became the subject for editorial interest very soon after the announcement of its donation by Alexander Boswell to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, and it is noteworthy that the first detailed account of the manuscript was made by a man who never saw it himself. This was Reverend Thomas Percy (1729-1811), later Bishop of the See of Dromore, Ireland. His Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (3 volumes, 1765) was immediately successful in sales and popular acclaim; he played a small but crucial inspirational role in the incipient Romantic movement, and the major literary figures of the period (especially Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Walpole) cite Percy as the model for the rural, retrospective ethos found so pervasively in their work.¹

The book marked the dawn of an age in the history of English literature, the first true revival of native English ballads and romances. Many of the ballads Percy presented were drawn from a large, worn folio in an early seventeenth-century hand which he had begged his friend Humphrey Pitt to give to him because the latter's maids were using it to light
the parlor fire. In addition to printing from this personal treasure, Percy invited men of letters from all over Britain to send him transcriptions and accounts of brief and unusual ancient narrative poetry wherever it might be found. The result, the Reliques, may be considered the first reader of medieval English literature.

One of the many manuscripts whose descriptions were sent to Percy in this far-ranging search was the Auchinleck, mentioned in correspondence by Hugh Blair, Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh. Percy incorporates Blair's information into the second of his three volumes: "a MS. quarto volume of old English poetry" housed in the Advocates' Library. He then provides a cursory inventory, offering the first two lines of several poems and naming the work when he recognizes it (Horn Childe, Guy of Warwick, Rembrun, Bevis of Hampyouth, Arthur and Merlin). Other poems which he does not recognize, including "a Romance about Rouland" and several other unfamiliar works, he simply lists (185-88). Percy's reliance on Blair's information is complete, even to the point of repeating Blair's observation that there may be more individual poems in the Auchinleck which, owing to its fragmentary nature, have not yet been identified as such.

I do not wish to make more of this example than it warrants; the briefly-quoted lines were never intended to stand as edited extracts but simply as a gesture toward
inventory, a necessary step in any taxonomy. But two points can be made even here. First, we will find that the act of receiving transcribed material from a colleague or hired secretary with direct access to the manuscript is one of the defining characteristics of antiquarian scholarship. Percy’s occupation is not that of a textual transcriber whose methodology is consistent and is made explicit to his audience; rather, he is a presenter, a gatherer of old poems whose publication is to a marked degree dependent on the observations of other men and whose decisions in synthesizing that information into an edition are given over wholly to his imagined audience. In such a relationship, technical accuracy is a negligible factor; where Blair omits or misperceives, so does Percy.³

Audience-based considerations control the shape of the Reliques: prepublication advice given to Percy by Samuel Johnson and by Percy’s longtime friend William Shenstone helped determine, for example, that two long narrative poems would not be printed back to back, that the publication should be restricted to two volumes if at all possible, and that the notes and glossary should be kept as brief as possible. His advisors also suggested that Percy take careful consideration of the literary forms to be printed in his collection: he should give his readers a sampling of sung or recited poetry, and be less inclined to include works that were not of the ballad or song type.⁴
Percy's identification of known items from the Auchinleck was, however, an act of canonizing. The named items (mostly romances with English heroes) are given obvious preference in his brief catalogue, and they are then ready for examination by other antiquarians who could use the identified poems in their own growing inventories and histories. Romances are clearly the most popular subjects for subsequent editors, and of all the Auchinleck's varied contents they are the first and most often to be published.\(^5\) [See Tables 1 and 2.]

Thus even though Percy did not edit any items from the Auchinleck, he is of interest to the present study because of his perceptible preoccupation with decorum: in the preparation of the *Reliques* he was self-conscious to an extreme, constantly wondering whether his peers would think it a vain, idle, profitless pursuit. To this characteristic may be attributed the liberties for which Percy is today notorious--his "rewriting" of about half of the contents of the *Reliques*.

Percy's changes generally consist of turning phrases into a pseudo-medieval English to better suit the rhyme or meter. He also used different versions of similar ballads to synthesize a new ballad under one title, and in some few cases he simply made up incidents: there are poems in the *Reliques*, such as *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, which lose almost all resemblance to any manuscript or printed copy.\(^6\) When not creating or fusing text, Percy corrected freely. If a syntactically or metrically difficult passage presented itself
he would rewrite as much as necessary to smooth out any difficulties, inventing in the process new rhyme schemes. At the end of each chapter, in conformity with current practices, he offered verses explicitly of his own manufacture in order to appeal to his reader (and perhaps to apologize for a particularly rude poem).

What Percy created for his reading audience was thus partly an edition, but also partly a performance—it was an appearance of an image of an age, and was designed not to convey objective linguistic or archaeological data but rather to inspire, to amuse, and to charm. The contents of Percy's Reliques are not so much texts as they are textures—highly artificial textual products which are informed by medieval works but which are not limited to them. As an editor, Percy has "corrected" the texts by both pruning away problematic material and by adding in phrases and incidents which he believed captured the spirit of the poems in his folio. The dedication of these highly artificial volumes to Elizabeth Percy, Countess of Northumberland may thus seem ironic to us, but Percy is earnest:

These poems are presented to your Ladyship, not as labours of art, but as effusions of nature, shewing the first efforts of ancient genius, and exhibiting the customs and opinions of remote ages: of ages that had been almost lost to memory, had not the gallant deeds of your illustrious ancestors preserved them from oblivion.

In providing texture instead of text, Percy was being neither radical, nor sinister, nor naive. He had the implicit
sanction of his peers to take such liberties for the sake of an audience, and we may be certain that he was aware of the tension between his "antiquarian" practice and his scholarly instinct to seek out authenticity. He wrote the following to fellow ballad editor David Dalrymple in 1763:

I suspect they [i.e., Dalrymple's ballads] received some beauties in passing thro' your hands. This was not only an allowable freedom (if they did) but absolutely necessary to render them worth attention. You will hence infer that I take the same liberty myself; I do it when it seems wanting, and in the case I mention it in my introduction, without any scruple.  

But there was scruple. The complex of fears which fed on Percy before the publication of the Reliques may have been due in part to his self-image and his clerical ambitions, but it is impossible to imagine that they did not also include doubts about his methodology. James MacPherson's dazzling translation of Erse fragments in 1760 and his speedy translations of the Ossian epics Fingal and Temora in 1762 and 1763 was coming under the scrutiny that would prove them to be hoaxes just as Percy's Reliques was in its final stages of preparation. Johnson had denounced MacPherson, and Percy had sided with Johnson in calling the works an "imposture."

It was not until the Reliques had gone through three very popular editions that critical suspicion zeroed in on them. Percy, who had risen to the Deaconate of Carlisle and finally to the Bishopric of Dromore, was subjected to one of the most persistent and virulent attacks in all of literary history—his personal devil, his own private Fury, complete with brass
wings and claws, was Joseph Ritson (1752-1803), whose acrimony at what he perceived to be Percy's intellectual abuses bordered on the psychotic. Beginning in the early 1780's Ritson publicly insulted Percy in essays on minstrels and old poems, often departing from a discussion of old writers to rail against "the most learned prelate" and his historical errors.

Ritson's crowning glory as a Percy gadfly was to call into suspicion the very existence of the folio manuscript in which Percy had found so many of the ballads he printed. Percy's sense of honor refused to allow him to bow to this challenge; he never allowed Ritson to view the manuscript, though he did show it privately to many friends. Still, Ritson's ability to hone in on the manuscript itself as the key to the whole business is singular: Percy was close with the folio because he knew that the textuality the manuscript contained could testify immediately for or against the texture of the *Reliques*. He knew that there existed a conspicuous difference in the two versions of the ballads, and evidently felt disturbed enough at the prospect of having his texture challenged that he withheld an artifact which he once took great joy in owning.

By the time he published his *Ancient English Metrical Romanceés* [sic] (3 volumes, 1802) Ritson had conceded that the manuscript did exist, but he continued to make sharp, hyperbolic statements about the "elegant and refine'd work it gave
occasion to." The following may be considered typical of his criticisms of Percy:

...there is scarcely one single poem, song, or ballad, fairly or honestly printed, either from the above fragment or other alledge'd authoritys, from the begining to the end; many pieceës, also, being inserted, as ancient and authentick, which, there is every reason to believe, never existed before its publication.  

"Elegant" and "refined" were, for Ritson, editorial qualities that betrayed the purity and dignity of the (as yet undefined) editorial project. Ritson therefore provided a statement of editorial policy, the clearest one yet written in England:

To correct the obvious errors of an illiterate transcribeër, to supply irremediable defects, and to make sense of nonsense, are certainly essential dutys of an editour of ancient poetry; provideëd he act with integrity and publicity; but secretly to suppress the original text, and insert his own fabrications for the sake of providing more refine'd entertainment for readers of taste and genius, is no proof of either judgement, candour, or integrity. (cix.)

Having declared that it is the duty of an editor not to "secretly suppress" textual material, Ritson then proceeded to print thirty pages in parallel of "The Marriage of Sir Gawaine" from Percy's 1775 edition of the Reliques and from the more faithful fourth edition of 1795. Passages that were Percy's own invention are printed in italics, and they are extensive. [See Figure 1.]

Its pure entertainment value aside, the controversy Ritson forced into the public arena is significant because he is pointing directly at editorial texture—he is attacking a fellow antiquarian as a sell-out to popular tastes. He never
uses the word "pander," but it is clear that to Ritson there
is nothing less moral than giving readers the impression that
they have experienced real antiquity when in fact they have
not. Ritson's true gift as a scholarly power—the fixation
which perhaps best characterizes his descent into antisocial-
ability, insanity, and death—was his stubborn impatience with
duplicity, deceit, and imprecise statements. Although for the
most part he engaged himself in criticizing the arguments and
proofs of his contemporaries without necessarily offering
comparable proofs of his own, in the present instance his odd
and cantankerous gift illuminates us.

We should also note that Ritson is offering a profession-
al critique of a colleague's editing. He allows his reader to
make observations about the intricacies of the editor's
actions (on the letter level, the word level, the phrase
level, the stanza level) without himself employing a vocabu-
lar y to describe these different kinds of changes. This is an
important point. Ritson at this moment has popped an anti-
quarian balloon in front of the reading world, but his
technical description of what Percy has actually done remains
surprisingly vague:

This mode of publishing ancient poetry dis-
plays, it must be confess'd considerable talent and
genius, but savours strongly, at the same time, of
unfairness and dishonesty. Here are numerous
stanzas inserted which are not in the original, and
others omitted which are there. The purchasees and
perusees of such a collection are deceive'd and
impose'd upon; the pleasure they receive is de-
rive'd from the idea of antiquity, which, in fact,
is perfect illusion. If the ingenious editour had
publish'd all his imperfect poems by correcting the blunders of puerility or inattention, and supplying the defects of barbarian ignorance, with proper distinction of type (as, in one instance, he actually has done), it would not onely have gratify'd the austereëst antiquary, but also provideëd refine'd entertainment "for every reader of taste and genius." He would have acted fairly and honourably, and givëen every sort of reader complete satisfaction. (cxli-lii)

Ritson wanted above all an editorial faculty which was actively engaged in improving the defects of manuscript texts, and one which disclosed the correcting and the supplying of emendations through the use of distinct type fonts or square brackets. But while he himself takes part in these practices in order to avoid conveying an "idea of antiquity," he does not have a vocabulary (or a temperament) which allows him to itemize the practices as a helpful prescription to future editors.

Thus, the best use we can make of the controversy, I think, is to see it as a moment in which the role of the editor gained an unusually strong foregrounding. The Ossian controversy of the 1760's provided textual editors with a clear example of the abuse of editorial license, but until the attack on the Reliques there had not really been a challenge to the liberal attitudes of editors of actual old texts. Here, in lively voice, a self-proclaimed gadfly succeeded in drawing the attention of his fellow antiquaries to this very subject.

And Ritson's criticisms of Percy were very effective. When it came time to work up a fourth edition of the Reliques
in 1794, Percy had publicly (though briefly) acknowledged that he had made changes for his readers' sake.\(^{10}\) His statements about *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine* capture only some of the petulance with which Percy dismissed the activities of scribes who copied down medieval texts:

The second poem in this Volume, intitled *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, having been offered to the Reader with large conjectural supplements and Corrections, the old Fragment itself is here literally and exactly printed from the Editor's Folio MS. with all its defects, inaccuracies and errata; that such austere Antiquaries, as complain that the ancient copies have not been always rigidly adhered to, may see how unfit for publication many of the pieces would have been, if all the blunders, corruptions, and nonsense of illiterate Reciters and Transcribers have been superficially retained, without some attempt to correct and emend them.

It was only through editorial correction that ballads and metrical romances became fit for publication, and the fact that Percy was to become a more careful editor of Middle English at this point should not hinder us from noticing that it is not of his own free will. (Nor should we fail to notice that Ritson's desire for care and conscientiousness in recording departures from the manuscript text does not preclude his sharing Percy's low opinion of scribes: Ritson's comments concerning "the blunders of puerility or inattention" and "the defects of barbarian ignorance" are enough to demonstrate that, in this small regard at least, he and Percy were in accord.)

The revised/corrected fourth edition of the *Reliques*--a perceptible step forward on the track of Middle English
editorial history--owes its existence to Joseph Ritson. The intellectual acrimony of Percy's peers succeeded in making editors more self-reflective, and editors would eventually detail their activities for their readers. Percy's printed "apology" (if that is what it was) reflects the adoption by men of his generation of a new outlook on their activities: while the noun "edition" in its modern sense has existed since the 16th century, the verb "to edit," meaning actively to prepare a text for public presentation, comes into English usage in 1794.\textsuperscript{11}

For his own part, Ritson prided himself on his rigorous pursuit of accuracy. In the Advertisement to the Romanceês he assures us that "every article [of the present edition] is derive'd from some ancient manuscript, or old printed copy, of the authenticity of which the reader has all possible satisfaction; and is printed with an accuracy, and adherence to the original, of which the publick has had very few examples" (iii). His referencing system does show tremendous vitality: encyclopedic at all times, it mediates between manuscript and printed versions of texts with facility.\textsuperscript{12}

Ritson shares with Percy a dependence on textual witness provided by others--not so much a deviation from his (Ritson's) scrupulous explication as a necessary condition of his day. The only poem from the Aucharinleck printed in the Romanceês is Horn Childe and Maiden Rimmild, offered on pages 282-320 of Volume Three. Curiously, Ritson seems intention-
ally to have tried to cloak the presence of this text: it is announced only fifteen pages before it actually begins, and in fact is printed as an analogue to *King Horn* (a main offering of the volume), in the "Notes" section of that romance. The name of *Horn Childe* does not appear in the Contents, the edited text has much less apparatus than featured texts (no line numbering, a more restrictive spacing), and no notes are given for it except a few out-of-hand biographical and geographical identifications. Compared to the other contents of the volume, *Horn Childe*'s texture is stark and insubstantial.

How do we explain why Joseph Ritson, a man of exhaustive editorial enunciation, provided a text which fails to meet any of the standards he has elsewhere set for himself? What can have caused him to place what he would have considered a "half-edited" text into a volume otherwise so carefully crafted toward purifying literary history? Did Ritson intend this *Horn Childe* to be received by his readers as an analogue only--a curious supplement to *King Horn*? Considering that *Horn Childe* is a romance unique to the Auchinleck and that no item from the Auchinleck had yet been presented in full in any printed form, would not Ritson have been rather inclined to highlight the work?

Given his predilection for showing off arcane knowledge and the fact that he mentions the Auchinleck only twice in the three volumes (and in relation to *Horn Childe* both times), I
believe that Ritson could not have transcribed the text himself—he was working from a transcript, and if he ever actually saw the manuscript it cannot have been recently or for any extended period of time. In no case does Ritson make any mention of other Auchinleck items, while he speaks freely of Harleian and other manuscripts. The inclusion of the Horn Childe text, despite its ambiguous source, is certainly made because of Ritson’s antiquarian desire to "complete the story"—to collect analogous information on a topic and then present a long dissertation using whatever far-flung data have been assembled. And, it must be pointed out, whatever Ritson’s objections, Percy’s improvements to his ballads share precisely the same primum mobile as Ritson’s inclusion of Horn Childe.

Percy and Ritson thus turn out to be odd bedfellows: while of opposing personal temperaments and scholarly metabolisms, they share a surprising number of fundamental, implicit assumptions about the purpose for recovering ancient poetry. Their shared urge to synthesize their discoveries into grand, dense dissertations relatively unbound by a linear method allows them both to publicly present as their own work transcriptions of texts which they have not personally viewed and to lament as uniformly negative the actions of illiterate minstrels and semi-literate scribes. Though these characteristics may seem slight, the fact that they are shared by two such different editorial figures suggests that there existed
at the turn of the 19th century a universal threshold of self-
examination beyond which editors were unwilling or unable to
go. The ethics of editing were evolving—the Reliques and
MacPherson's epics guaranteed this—but they were not being
revolutionized.
I felt as when the Reliques of Ancient Poetry were first put into my hands, an era in my poetical taste which I shall never forget. The very grass sod seat to which (when a boy of twelve years old) I retreated from my playfellows, to devour the works of the ancient minstrels, is still fresh and dear to my memory. That you are pleased to approve of my intended work, will prove to me an additional stimulus in the execution.

--Sir Walter Scott, responding to an encouraging letter from Bishop Percy, 1801

We see in Walter Scott’s *Sir Tristrem* (1804) and Henry Weber’s *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries* (1810) much the same audience-oriented antiquarian approach as in the work of Percy and Ritson; the former are, in addition, monuments to a nationalistic editorship that would hold sway in Britain for the ensuing half century. Ritson’s caveats about full disclosure were not lost on Scott, who was born at about the same time as the controversy over the Reliques and who, by the end of the century, is certain to have studied the Auchinleck in Edinburgh (Morrill xxviii). Scott was also, as is well known, enthusiastic from an early age to recover and promote the literary history of his native country, and his *Tristrem* contains a sustained attempt to claim Scottish authorship for the poem.

Scott’s edition of *Sir Tristrem* has been considered nearly a work of art by fellow Scots almost since its publica-
tion, and belongs to that small class of philological writings (including Lewis' *Allegory of Love* and some of Tolkien's work on *Beowulf*) which are taken up by general readers out of a kind of general humanistic appreciation for a fiction writer's voice. A reader of Walter Scott may begin her relationship with the Waverly novels, but if she becomes truly devoted to his stylistics and insights, she may very well take up *Sir Tristrem* to share her author's more scholarly pursuits. In this case, Scott's association with a heretofore little-known English miscellany was transformative: the Auchinleck manuscript has received the attention that it has partly because of Walter Scott's interest in it.¹⁵

The title page alone speaks volumes. [See Figure 2.] "Sir Tristrem," offered in strong Roman capitals, is appended by a subtitle printed partly in Gothic and partly in a smaller, more delicate Roman. The apportioning of the text to these fonts is no whimsy: the phrase "A Metrical Romance of the Thirteenth Century" is presented in the antique form, dignified but obscure, which then, as the eyes pass down the page, transforms itself into the clear, modern font for the phrase "By Thomas of Ercildoune." By choosing this latter font for the name of the supposed author of the poem--the font is the same as the one used throughout the introduction and the text--the editor quietly aligns himself and his activity with the consciousness that created the verse. Both the genre and historical period are relatively obscured by the Gothic
font; Thomas' epithet, moreover, is made parenthetical by the use of italics. The visual effect of the title page, therefore, is to make the lines "Sir Tristrem" and "Thomas of Ercildoune" primary to the other lines surrounding them and paired with one another. As we will see, this immediate and strong attribution of authorship on Scott's part—as well as his wish to "prove" the authorship to his readers—will dominate the edition.

Walter Scott put more energy than any other editor of his generation into placing manuscript information into the hands of his readers. His edition of Tristrem contains the first full report of the contents of the Auchinleck (cvii-cxxvii), including incipits and explicits, the number of leaves each item occupies, the nature of its condition if fragmentary, and so on. Throughout his description of the contents Scott reserves adjectives solely for the romances in the manuscript: thus we have "a beautiful romance of chivalry" (Amis and Amilon), the "beautiful romance" of Sir Degare, the "celebrated romance" of the Seven Sages, the "beautiful tale" of Floris and Blancheflur, the "popular romance" of Sir Guy, the "very spirited romance" of Otuel, and the "great" romance of Alexander. Items other than romances are given only the most functional descriptions ("On the seven deadly sins—Complete. Two leaves."). This catalogue of the Auchinleck will remain the standard reference source until the new inventory of Kölbing in 1884, and will be invoked verbatim in editions of
other Auchinleck items throughout the 19th century.

The edition also comprises the first accounting of the manuscript's origin and the first references to the handwriting of the Tristrem scribe (the principal scribe of the manuscript). Scott calls his hand "distinct and beautiful," adding that "the most able antiquaries are inclined to refer [the hand] to the earlier part of the [14th] century." He goes on to note the following:

In two or three instances [in the manuscript] there occurs a variation of the handwriting; but as the poems regularly follow each other, there is no reason to believe that such alterations indicate an earlier or later date than may reasonably be ascribed to the rest of the work; although the Satire against Simonie, No. 43, seems rather in an older hand than the others, and may be an exception to the general rule.

Paleography for Scott is obviously a tool for dating a piece of old writing, but it can do no more. He does not make many observations on the relationship of the handwriting to the manufacture of the book, although his suggestion about the Simonie scribe possibly being older in age shows that he is working in the direction of such speculations. He gives his reader the (correct) impression that the manuscript is a unit: that for all its missing corners and leaves, the Auchinleck does not seem to him to consist of works of various dates which were later sewn together into a single volume. He even notes that two folios of The King of Tara were misplaced by the most recent binder and may be found in the midst of The Legend of Pope Gregory (cix); this is helpful to future
readers of the manuscript, but it acts to make "manuscript-tness" a slightly more accessible quality for all his readers.

A second interesting gesture on Scott’s part to bring his reader into the orbit of the manuscript text is a facsimile drawing of the first column of the text of the poem (f.281 r.a.), which follows the inventory of the manuscript and immediately precedes the text itself (again, Scott’s act of placement shows much insight--the facsimile is a "bridge" over which the reader enters the domain of the text). [See Figure 3.] Drawn by one James Johnstone, the column is indeed very close to the original; it may be the work of an artist hired with no other direction than verisimilitude. I know of no precedent for this drawing, but (as we will see) it was a fashion which caught on, and which was of course eventually replaced by rotograph or photograph frontispieces in critical editions at the close of the century. Wherever we find them, though, the purpose of these "showpiece" artworks is not scholarly: it is to give the reader a mnemonic gift, a picture to which she can attach her experience of the text and through which her relationship with the text may be slightly enhanced.18

Yet another device to bring the reader closer to the text is the "Argument," which Scott prefixes to each of the 3 fyttes of the poem. These read like little Gothic novels, little Walpolings or Radclyffings of the plot:

3.—The princess discovers her passion to her preceptors. 9.—The praises of Rouland Risle, with
an obscure account of his being wounded in battle, and of the consequent distress of Blaunché Flour. 10.--The princess repairs in private to the chamber of the wounded knight, and Sir TRISTREM owes his birth to this stolen interview. (2)

These running headnotes to the major divisions of the romance (inherited as they may be from the Italian tradition of Boiardo and Ariosto or their English descendant Spenser) have the effect of privileging interpretations of narrative actions considered by Scott to be especially important. These headnotes effectively foreground certain themes (furtive love, romantic entanglements), while suggesting that others are not as interesting (the "obscure account" of Rouland Rise's wounding). Like Bishop Percy, who invented freely in order to make his ballads more authentic, Scott here applies his creative skills and thus increases the texture of the edition—his active intervention gives Sir Tristrem a more familiar and comfortable appearance.

But the most striking feature of the edition—striking to the modern sensibility, at any rate, especially if informed by the Percy-Ritson controversy—is the conclusion to Sir Tristrem which Scott himself composes to finish off the story. "Abridged from the French metrical romance, in the stile of Tomas of Ercleldune," the conclusion is separated from the rest of the text but is typographically identical and is prefaced by the same kind of narrative argument as the text proper. Scott's "performance," some sixteen stanzas of neo-Middle English, begins as follows:
The companyons fiftene,  
   To death did thai thringe;  
And sterveth bidene,  
   Tho Tristrem the yinge;  
Ac Tristrem hath tene,  
   His wounde gan him wring,  
To hostel he hath gene,  
   On bedde gan him flinge  
     In ure;  
   Fel salven thai bringe,  
His paine to recure.

It is an earnest attempt to provide narrative closure for the reader in an artful way, rather, we can assume, than resort to a bleak prose summary.

All of these innovations in Sir Tristrem—the emphasis on relating particulars of the manuscript, the inclusion of a facsimile page, and the composition of prose introductions and a stylized conclusion—give the edition its distinctive antiquarian texture. As was the case with Percy’s Reliques a generation before, Scott’s Tristrem contains significant creative elements; the editor has sought out and gathered up the text, but before offering it to his readers he marks it with his own style.

Texture is only perceptible once one orients oneself away from passive reception of printed texts. If we acknowledge that in every piece of writing there are interacting elements of purpose, audience, language, background (sources and analogues, for example), and authorial posture, we begin to see the power that is built into the textures that Percy and Scott (and Ritson, though to a lesser degree) have produced. First, it is not quite true that the only goal of the text-
uring elements is to make the poem more palatable to readers. When the posture that an editor has assumed is a creative one (a "confectioner" rather than a "textual journalist"), we must expect that the purpose of his edition will likewise be other than neutral.

In Scott's case, editorial posture is linked with the strong central purpose of celebrating Sir Tristrem as a Scottish poem. As early as the edition's title page the work has been identified as being that of "the earliest Scottish poet" Thomas of Erceldoune (v.). The fervent nature of Scott's conviction leads him to spend the majority of his long introduction in a rhetorical proof that Thomas wrote Sir Tristrem--nearly every paragraph works in support of this thesis, and in several places Scott has not hesitated to advance as generally accepted notions about the genesis of the manuscript which must be particularly his own.¹⁹

After eighty pages of conjectures about Thomas' biography and the background of the Arthurian legends in Scotland (in the best rich antiquarian tradition), Scott turns to the Auchinleck text he is about to offer the reader. He has by this point established proximity, by placing Thomas, the Arthurian legends, and Middle English in Scotland all at the turn of the fourteenth century. Now he must establish likelihood, using the facts of the manuscript copy to connect Thomas to the recorded text. This is an important test, because it involves the interaction of author, minstrel, and
scribe: Scott's explanation of how Sir Tristrem came to be written down in the Auchenleck was probably the most difficult part of the whole introduction to compose, and it is the clearest evidence of the very political purpose which this edition is serving. Here, in part, are his conclusions on the subject:

It seems more reasonable to conclude, that some minstrel, having access to the person of Thomas the Rhymer, had learned, as nearly as he could, the history of Sir Tristrem, and, from his recitation, or perhaps after it had passed through several hands, the compiler of the Auchenleck MSS. [sic] committed it to writing. As Thomas certainly survived 1284, betwixt thirty and forty years will, in the supposed case, have elapsed betwixt the time, when the minstrel might have learned the romance, and the date of its being committed to writing; a long interval, doubtless, and in which many corruptions must have been introduced, as well as a material change in the style, which, in poetry preserved by oral tradition, always fluctuates, to a degree, with the alterations in the language.

... On the other hand, if this romance be really the production of Thomas of Erceldoune, we must expect to distinguish the peculiarities pointed out by Robert de Brunne; that quaint English, which was difficult to compose; and that peculiarity of stanza, which no minstrel could recite without omitting some part of the couplet: For, although we may allow for the introduction of more modern words, and for corruptions introduced by frequent recitation, these general characteristics of the original composition of Thomas must still be visible, or the romance which we read is none of his.

(lxxxii-iv)

We see here the great trap of authorial expectation: we cannot get from author to manuscript without imagining several indistinct layers of singers and scribes, but we cannot stand idly by and allow the alterations of singers and scribes to
usurp our proprietary vision of authority. Scott knows that Thomas himself could not have written down the Tristrem in the Auchenleck, yet it is precisely the moment of the recording of the text to which his long introduction has been building—in a sense, Scott’s editorial purpose and rhetorical approach have succeeded in making the Auchenleck Tristrem the natural outcome of gigantic poetic forces that labored for centuries.

His response to the problem is to attack Middle English verse styles and to distinguish the style of the Tristrem as a mark of its antiquity. He characterizes the style of the poem as it exists in the manuscript as "close, nervous, and concise even to obscurity," as opposed to the "tedious" and "circumlocutory" nature of later romances (lxxxiv). In a note on the same page, he expands the range of his accusations to further elevate Thomas’ poem:

Even Chaucer was infected by the fault of his age, and, with all his unrivalled capacity of touching the real point of description, he does not always content himself with stopping when he has attained it: It has been long since remarked, that when he gets into a wood, he usually bewilders both himself and his reader.

For a text, age means being subjected to the influence of minstrels and scribes:

...it is no small token of the antiquity and originality of the present work, that the author seems to rely upon the simple and short narration of incidents, afterwards so hackneyed, so sufficient in his time to secure the attention of the hearers.

Thus by not dealing with the actual inscription of the poem, but rather with the vague topic of orality—audience demands
and minstrel adaptations—Scott is able to avoid the crucial moment while retaining his thesis intact. It is a remarkably subtle movement, but as we will see in Chapter Four this same rhetorical dance around the physical scribal process remains a feature of some of the most influential writings on the Aulinleck nearly a century and a half after Scott’s time.

The texture of *Sir Tristrem* is thus a strained one. While on the one hand Scott went to considerable effort and expense to catalogue and describe the Aulinleck, to discuss scribes and scripts, and to offer a hand-drawn facsimile page, his ultimate political purpose requires that we not pay attention to precisely those lines of inquiry. Thomas of Erceldoune both is and is not present in the surviving copy of the poem—*he* can only be viewed through layers of scribal and minstrel changes which Scott is confident he can see through.

Scott’s editing was enormously influential, and the final editor of this early generation whose methods of presenting works from the Aulinleck I would like to discuss is Henry Weber, who presented texts of *Amis and Amiloun, Lay le Freine,* and *The Seven Sages of Rome* in his *Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries* in 1810. Weber’s edition has a great affinity in texture to Scott’s, for Weber also demonstrates a strong self-consciousness both when he presents his selections and when he discusses them internally. His purpose for undertaking the volume, he tells us in his introduction, is to “rescue all the ancient English
romances, or at least, all those which merit preservation for any reason whatever" from precarious existence in manuscripts. He says also, in what seems almost a prediction of the Early English Text Society and the Oxford English Dictionary, that he wishes to help the study of the language by providing a "regular series of English metrical compositions" and to aid in the preparation of a dictionary of post-Conquest English (x-xi).

His principles for selecting romances to edit, moreover, are not only their intrinsic merit but "the popularity they were likely to obtain." His method of presentation, also decided upon for the sake of the audience, he describes as follows:

In preparing these romances for the public, it was the wish of the editor, without in the least disturbing a single letter of the old text, to render their perusal as accessible to general readers as possible. For this reason, the longer ones were subdivided, as has been already mentioned, regular punctuation was introduced, capital letters were used to distinguish names of persons and places, the abbreviations were reduced to the peculiar standard of orthography, employed in each particular romance, and the Saxon letters for th, gh, and y, discarded. In all these points excepting the first, the accurate Ritson has given an example to the editor.... (xlv.)

Weber goes on to say that he took a few more steps "to facilitate the reader's progress still more"; these include capitalizing "I" or "Y," hyphenating prefixed intensifiers ("y-comen"), adding apostrophes to negative prefixes ("n'as"), and adding accents over final e's that are to be pronounced in order that readers may better be able to scan the lines. The
reason for doing so is that "without, in this manner, facilitating their perusal, it is in vain to expect that any but professed antiquarians should study the poems of the earliest centuries of English literature" (lxxv).

In all of these considerations we can see how fully Weber shares the approaches of his contemporaries, but it is when we turn to the selections themselves that the patterns truly strike us. His text of Amis and Amiloun is based on AUCHINLIECK because it is the oldest known copy, but where it is fragmentary (the first 96 lines, as well as the conclusion) the "defects" have been supplied from the Douce version. Since "both the copies agree in a manner which is seldom to be found in ancient manuscripts, and both of them, as far as the AUCHINLIECK MS. goes, contain the same number of stanzas" (liii), this results in a very smooth presentation, and the importation of the stanzas from Douce is in keeping with principles by now well established.

The same principle is applied to the text of the Seven Sages of Rome. In this case, age may be seen to vanquish youth and physical beauty: the AUCHINLIECK version "is deficient at the beginning and end, but is nearly a century older than the perfect one, contained in a folio MS. in the Cotton library (Galba E.7.)." "The reader will immediately discover the contrast," he adds, since the Galba version contains pervasive Northern dialect forms. In order that the reader may better keep track of the Sages story, Weber adopts
titles for its various stages from Ellis' Specimens. 20

And finally, when Weber introduces Lay le Freine, he remarks that it is a poem unique to the Auchinleck, and that thirteen lines in the middle and "a great part of the conclusion" have been lost. "In order to render the perusal less unpleasant," he continues, "these defects have been supplied from the French original by the editor, as nearly as possible in the style of the original." Weber's technique of offering his own improvised ending to the medieval romance has, as is by now clear precedents: Percy's ballads (where the editor's renderings were unannounced) and Scott's conclusion of Sir Tristrem (where the "new" work was segregated from the manuscript text). Like his predecessors in this regard, Weber is here engaged in an audience-oriented enterprise, a texturing, to make up for what he interpreted as a deficiency in the text of the poem.

These very conscientious announcements of methodology by Weber, as well as our comparison of his methods with those of Scott, Ritson, and Percy, allow us to generate a tentative list of characteristic procedures and rationales which may be said to comprise the texture of antiquarian editions.

1. Transcription of the text will have been made by an unnamed person, hired for the job, who does not have secure familiarity with Middle English. The presented text will not collate closely with the manuscript.

2. An introduction will include general discussion of the story line, its sources and analogues, and style. Other manuscript and printed versions of the story will be inventoried. Generally, ana-
logues in other languages will be quoted from; other Middle English versions of the same poem will be considered "the same poem." Authorship or minstrel transmission of the text will be discussed.

3. A prefatory summary or "running argument" of the plot may be offered.

4. Portions of the text which, through comparison with an older version, are deemed to be missing, or which are found in other versions, may be supplied to complete the story.

5. Divisions marked in the manuscript with parahps or large initials will not be followed consistently. The action of the narrative will be divided into groupings not marked in the manuscript. Fyttes, stanzas, and literary indentations will be added.

6. Manuscript foliation, or other common codicological and paleographical features, will not be discussed.

7. All manuscript abbreviations will be expanded silently.

8. Words will be combined or separated silently according to modern usage.

9. Thorn, yogh, and eth will be replaced silently by modern equivalents. "Y" will usually not be retained as the personal pronoun. Ms. "u" will be altered silently to "v" as appropriate.

10. All line-beginning words and proper nouns will be capitalized silently.

11. Modern punctuation will be imported silently.

12. A variety of type styles and fonts may be used to indicate different forms of discourse within the narrative (e.g., songs within a poem).

13. Lines containing blasphemy or graphic sexuality may be omitted, but this will be announced.

14. Textual notes will be devoted to further exploring sources and analogues.

It goes without saying, since this list is an attempt to impose standardization on an activity as yet relatively
unregulated, that there will always be notable exceptions to these observations. In none of the above cases, though, has the editor argued for a single "best text" to edit—a "better text" is chosen and its deficiencies are supplied, even if from a manuscript of significantly different provenance, until the story is complete. (The editions of Scott and Weber in particular are therefore direct precursors of the scholarly critical editions found in the later part of the century.) It is also worth noting that all of the changes listed above, with the exception of the first, are made with the reader in mind.
iii. Antiquarian Book Clubs

So far plain History. The Fiction will probably prove more attractive.

--William Turnbull, preface to Beves of Hamtoun (Maitland Club, 1838)

As the 19th century moved on into its third decade, antiquarian interests in most aspects of the British past began to grow noticeably. The Roxburghe Club, the first of dozens of antiquarian societies founded to promote the recovery of medieval and Renaissance British literature, had been founded in 1812 in London, and published its premiere volume (Surrey's translation of the Aeneid) in 1814 (Edinburgh Review 1847, 232). The Roxburghe was founded in a fusion of earnest antiquarian interest and social snobbery: it was a group of aristocrats (mostly lawyers, clergy, and landed gentry), and its membership was limited to forty. Among the conditions of membership was the publication of a manuscript or early impress of some important work, up to 100 copies of which would be printed and made available for the disposal of the members.

But as Clare Simmons has observed, this system of publication is an example of the "muddled thinking" of the antiquarian societies of the coming decades (47): on the one hand, pride often led a prestigious member to publish family records or works from manuscripts or incunables that happened
to be at hand. When this personal ambition was exercised (and it often was—after all, the definition of "an important work" is not clear, and no doubt most of the members' genealogies could lay claim to national importance), the Club was no longer truly living up to the public or national spirit of its charter. Moreover, the circulation rules of the Roxburghe stated that all of the copies of each volume, sometimes no more than the number of members plus one archival copy, were at the disposal of members only. No copies of Roxburghe Club volumes were routed to university libraries or to the British Museum.

The "snob appeal" of the Club was nonetheless felt throughout the country, and within a decade of its founding the Roxburghe had amassed a truly impressive waiting list of important Protestant gentlemen; it became apparent that membership in the Club was beyond the hopes of men of lesser social backgrounds and more modest means. (Women also were excluded, though histories of the Club do not record this as a stated policy.) Government sponsorship of historical inquiry was not set into motion until the Public Record Office Act of 1838, and in the twenty years before that time self-sponsored study seemed the only avenue available. The editions by Percy, Ritson, Scott, and Weber were all carried out as individual business undertakings by relatively established men; the Roxburghe was no aid to the large number of potential editors who did not have the reputations, or could
not afford, to produce volumes themselves.

Antiquarians of varied interests, not to be beaten away from their passions by the staff of Finance, began to form small clubs and societies of their own in various parts of the country with the goal of publishing medieval and Renaissance materials relating to certain regions or subjects. Some were devoted to particular kinds of writing—the Hakluyt Club, for example, had as its goal to publish records of early voyages and travels. Others were formed around the basis of local history, such as the modest Chetham Society, founded in Manchester "for the publication of historical and literary remains connected with the palatine counties of Lancaster and Chester" (Edinburgh Review 1847, 233).

The years 1820–1850 saw an explosion of such printing clubs in Scotland and northern England. In 1823 the Bannatyne Club was founded in Edinburgh; the Maitland Club was founded in Glasgow in 1828, and the Surtees Society and the Abbotsford Club followed in 1834 in Durham and Edinburgh respectively. The roll call then grows rapidly: the Historical Society (in 1838, to print texts of old chronicles); the Spalding Club (in Aberdeen in 1839, to print texts connected with northeast Scotland); the Percy Society, the Shakespeare Society, and the Parker Society (all in 1840). The Chetham and Hakluyt Societies came into existence as the pace of foundation was slowing down (in 1843 and 1846).  

Perhaps because they were formed in reaction against (or
in homage to) the Roxburghe Club, many of these printing societies were organized around principles surprisingly similar to the Roxburghe's. Most of them imposed membership caps and kept the copies of their volumes at the disposal of members; most promised to print neglected items of national historical interest but ended up using materials within ready reach of the sponsors' hands. The Roxburghe Club thus has the distinction of being the first of a long line of book clubs which achieved neither public popularity nor public availability. It printed books for an exclusive audience, each member of which had personally contributed time, talent, or money to the venture. The clubs were not designed to be capable of making money (in which respect they were very much like modern non-profit educational organizations), and their publications were not—in spite of dreams or intentions to the contrary—true elements of "scholarship" as we would define the word.

It is important to view the printing clubs in a balanced light, however; they may have imitated the Roxburghe's panache and thus its drawbacks, but as a whole they were determining the course that future literary activities and scholarship would take. They were, for example, adapting and experimenting with genre and subject-matter. The members did not have to imagine the tastes of an abstractly-defined public audience: most members of a given club either knew their colleagues before the club formed, or grew to know them well, and so each was all but free to choose whatever he wished to
publish without fear of an unknown reviewer's condemnation wrecking his reputation. And, more to the point, the clubs created a forum in which editorial action could take place with a different set of audience and purpose concerns than those we witnessed in the cases of Percy, Ritson, Scott, and Weber. In a number of ways—the training and motivation of the editor, the selection of the text, the physical appearance and apparatus offered—the book club editions are distinct from other antiquarian publications of the period.

The energy and vigor which accompanied the foundation of the clubs was not, however, sustained. Of the dozens that rose into existence by 1840, only a few survived the century and most of the others had disbanded or merged with government-sponsored institutions by 1860.23 One can imagine the logistical or secretarial problems of maintaining a special-interest group of this sort, but whatever the specific troubles of an individual society it is fair to say that the nature and purpose of the clubs as a whole was, from the first, uncertain. This is in part what Simmons means by "muddled thinking": most were formed by a single enthusiastic antiquarian, or a small group of them, whose personal energies and advocacy kept the organization afloat. These individuals generally served as Secretary of their respective clubs (the Presidency generally being reserved for a titled member, such as the Earl of Glasgow in the case of the Maitland Club), and were thus able to correspond most easily in the name of the
society. When this founding member and general advocate died, retired, or moved, a great deal of the raison d'être of the whole project went with him.

Another force which contributed to the downfall of most of these minor clubs was the simple lack of a discernible goal. With a modest membership of between two and three dozen men, each of whom was committed to publishing one volume, a society could naturally not expect to exist after two or three dozen years. Without a flexible corpus of study texts—or even, as in the case of the Early English Text Society, a goal of printing "all texts"—there was simply no real catalyst other than enthusiasm to make the scheme a fulfilling one.

Nonetheless, recognition of what the societies were doing was widespread in Britain during their vogue. Accounts of their editions as an antiquarian phenomenon begin to surface in periodicals such as the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* in the early 1840's. While the reviews do not deal with the actual texts inside the volumes (there would be no profit in doing so, since copies were so scarce), these accounts are quite helpful in pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the editions as a class.

The following passage from the 1848 *Quarterly Review*, for example, demonstrates that our modern concerns about the significance of selections and the availability of volumes were felt while the clubs themselves were still operating:

We are quite willing that family documents, which not more than twenty people are likely to care
about, should be hoarded as cabinet curiosities; neither do we quarrel with those who have restricted to five-and-twenty copies re-impressions of uniques, of which there was already one too many. But the case is different with works possessing, not merely a British, but an European interest. (312)

The same anonymous author goes on to say:

We should be less inclined to complain of the close Clubs if they left a more free course of action to other parties; but in more instances than one they have shown themselves not a little sensitive about any apparent invasion of their supposed monopoly.

The reviewer has here in mind the case of Furnivall's edition of *Havelok the Dane*, published by the Roxburghe Club. A request had been made to run a second edition of the volume so that copies of the popular work might be distributed to libraries and individual readers, but "This simple request was positively refused!" On another occasion, the author continues, the members of the Roxburghe were informed that over half of their editions were not contained in the British Museum. "The reply was--'We are glad to hear it!'" The smaller societies, while not carrying the weight required for such contempt of public access, still obviously considered their "publications" to be private property.

We thus witness a series of consequences and biases which have helped to cloak the productions of the printing clubs from use. First, the limited production runs imposed by the clubs themselves. Second, the relative rarity, even within the publications of the clubs, of texts of truly wide appeal. Third, the unwillingness of many of the clubs to share their
volumes with the public, especially with stationary institutions. To these we may add a fourth, which asserts itself by degrees: the censure of reviewers, not of the contents of the editions, but of the editions themselves. The Roxburghe in particular, because of its detachment from an interested literary community, earned the special wrath of commentators like the one in the Quarterly Review just mentioned, who refused to evaluate the Club's editions on the very logical basis that they were not perceived to belong to an open community of readers and learners. A few clubs, chief among them the Surtees Society, gained a reputation for "liberality" in their printing and in access to their editions, and hence--despite the significant imbalance in the number and physical quality of the volumes themselves--one may find more written in the 19th century about works edited by the Surtees Society than about those of the Roxburghe Club.

Finally, the actions of the book clubs' officers and editors has also had an unfortunate legacy for modern scholars. The volumes published by the clubs are now nearly as rare, though of course of lesser antiquity, as the manuscripts and incunables whose texts they offer. If we recall that imprints for a given club might be limited to some thirty members, we realize that the number of copies of each volume contained today in public or university libraries must be very small indeed. The OCLC system lists, on average, four holdings for each of the volumes involved in this disserta-
tion, and many libraries are reluctant to make even those volumes available for interlibrary loan. As "Special Collections" holdings, some of the volumes must be visited in their respective libraries; when they are lent, the borrower feels the same curious mix of gratitude and camaraderie for the lender that the reviewer of 1848 must have felt towards the management of the Surtees Society. The same limited print run which made the volumes prestigious and economically feasible in the mid-19th century has led to their relative neglect in the late 20th; the work of Levine and Simmons has set the productions of some printing clubs in their social contexts, but to my knowledge there does not exist even a cursory survey of the smaller literature societies such as the Abbotsford and the Maitland.

Publication of contents of the Auchinleck was undertaken by two societies: the Maitland Club (founded in Glasgow in 1828), and the Abbotsford Club (founded in Edinburgh in 1834). The moving forces behind both clubs were William B.D.D. Turnbull, an Edinburgh attorney, and David Laing, a prolific editor who was twice considered for the post of Librarian at the Faculty of Advocates. Turnbull's influence as a member of the Abbotsford Club cannot be overstated: for several years he seems to have been the Club, editing nine of its thirty-two volumes himself between 1835 and 1845 (including, from the Auchinleck, *Arthour and Merlin* (1838) and *The Romances of Sir Guy of Warwick and Rembrun his Son* (1840)). In 1852 he moved
to London and resigned as the Club's Secretary, signalling the demise of the organization.  

Laing, a younger bibliophile who edited more than 75 volumes in his lifetime for groups as diverse as the Woodrow Society, the Bannatyne Club, the Shakespeare Society, and the Hunterian and Spalding Clubs, edited six volumes for the Abbotsford and took over as secretary when Turnbull left. But it is clear that Turnbull's personal energy had kept the Club together for some time. In 1866, three years after Turnbull's death, Laing published a final list of the publications of the Club in which he affirms that "Mr. Turnbull was at that time [1834] appointed Secretary; and it was mainly owing to his enthusiastic zeal and unwearied exertions that the Club owed much of its success." He continues:

The Club has continued for several years to have had little more than a mere nominal existence; although a few volumes have been contributed by individual Members, as the following Catalogue will exhibit. But the Club may now be considered to have reached its termination.

Even with the energy of David Laing at its helm, the Abbotsford Club had no way to break free from its almost physiological association with its founder.

The Abbotsford and Maitland were sibling clubs. Closely aligned in subjects of inquiry, they shared 30% of their members in common and published joint volumes in 1842 and 1859. During the period 1836-57, they seem to have "claimed" the Auchinleck, and they provide most of the editorial releases of items from it during that time. Both clubs used
the services of the same Edinburgh printer (Lawrie & Co.) and
the volumes they produced are nearly identical: full quarto
size, with cloth on board bindings in a variety of somber
colors and textures. The poems are uniformly printed in 12-
point Roman in black ink (with occasional titles or other
decorations in red) in a single column at the center of each
page, leaving broad, snowy margins free of any apparatus
except a header title and line and page numbers. [See Figure
4.] The sizes of the volumes vary from slender (46 pages in
the case of Sire Degarre) to ponderous (the combined length of
Guy of Warwick and Rembrun is 482 pages).

The editing of the Auchinleck items was undertaken by
Laing and Turnbull, both of them members of both clubs, who
volunteered to edit romances from the manuscript under the
"sponsorship" of one of the other members (the rules of the
clubs, it will be remembered, required that each member pay
for the editing and printing of a text, whether he actually
did the transcribing himself). When, for example, the
Abbotsford Club offered as the fourth of its publications in
1836 the Auchinleck poems Roland and Vernagu, Otuel a Knight,
and King Alisaunder in one volume, the book was presented by
Alexander Nicholson, an Edinburgh solicitor--but the actual
editing had been done by Turnbull (Laing, Rules, xviii). As
if Walter Scott's heavy-handed interpretation of Sir Tristrem
had left any doubts about the contemporary perception of the
Auchinleck as Scottish property, these two societies did not:
while the manuscript contains only occasional traces of northern Middle English dialects, and while only the background of Sir Tristrem can even be remotely connected with Scotland, these two Scottish clubs demonstrated "possession" of the manuscript by setting into type, between 1836 and 1857, nearly two-thirds of its bulk.

Turnbull was an amateur who performed his editorial duties for the clubs when not busy with his law practice. And while in many ways his editions are entirely characteristic of antiquarian productions (their texture is very much in accord with the characteristics listed in the previous section), we can also see a degree of experimentation with presentation styles on his part. His volumes of Beves of Hamtoun (Maitland Club) and Arthour and Merlin (Abbotsford Club), for example, have little scholarly value but are well crafted and pleasing to the eye. Both were published in 1838, and each is prefixed by a pen and ink drawing by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe in the "nightmare gothic" school, designed not to imitate medieval representational style but to be suggestive of a prevalent emotion. In this regard the drawings function as mnemonics—memory-hooks upon which the reader may hang her experience with the story. [See Figures 5 and 6.]

As was the case with Scott's Sir Tristrem, the Beves volume also includes a hand-drawn facsimile page leading the reader into the text. These elements of texture, in conjunction with the ample margins, modern typography, punctuation,
and very brief introductions, render Turnbull's works eminently comfortable. They are entirely non-confrontational: the decoding of their contents by the reader requires a minimum of effort, and the reader can instead spend his time drinking in the pleasantly curious story. As trustworthy, scholarly analyses of medieval texts, Turnbull's volumes fail, but as enticements to study the Middle Ages they can claim a measure of success.

But in other editions Turnbull breaks from the antiquarian norm and seems almost to be playing with textures in order to find one that he likes. His combined edition The Romances of Sir Guy of Warwick and Rembrun His Son for example, published by the Abbotsford Club in 1840, contains a lengthy introduction on sources and analogues (unlike Turnbull's previous volumes), and presents the texts of both poems in 12-point Gothic textura--without a single punctuation mark on any of the 482 pages! Moreover, in this volume he preserves the meaning of the manuscript's paraph marks (though not the marks themselves) by indenting two spaces where he found them. [See Figure 7.]

The approach in his Legendae Catholicae: A Lytle Boke of Seyntlie Gestes, printed privately by Turnbull the same year (1840), is again slightly different: the font is now once again a solid Roman, but punctuation and other syntactic helps are again absent. [See Figure 8.]

This variety in presentation styles used by a single
editor within a relatively brief period of time is probably the result of several influences. As we have seen, no notion of a common "look" yet existed for editors of Middle English: with their audience always in mind, antiquarians rather freely modulated their textures and thus produced a variety of effects. Without the constraining posture of scholarship to restrict their creativity, the editors could change fonts, try different stanza notations, incorporate or dispatch with modern punctuation, and so on. Each operation no doubt had its own decision-making process behind it, but on the whole the relationship of the editor to his text is a relatively unregulated kind of play.

In the work of David Laing, however, we see a degree of seriousness and method indicative of the growing philological professionalism—indeed, Laing was one of the first Englishmen to make the historical study of English language and literature his profession. He is the first editor in this survey who is working under the influences of the New Philology: just as etymologists and Anglo-Saxonists were abandoning the *a priori* approach of philosophers of language like Condillac and Horne Tooke in the 1830's, Laing was coming to intellectual maturity. He was still a young man exposed to the "new" scientific approach of gathering verbal data first and formulating theorems on its relationship to genius afterwards.

The effects of this exposure are noticeable, and when we
see them we may consider the period of antiquarian editing to have come to an end. Laing, a librarian by training, follows a clear thesis in his presentation of evidence; his locutions are neither spiral nor tangential, but linear. His method as editor includes the conscientious notation of sources (down to the page numbers), and unlike his predecessors Ritson and Scott he is able to charge contemporaries with lapses of judgment while not committing the same errors himself.

His volume of miscellaneous verse from the Auchinleck entitled *A Penni Worthe of Witte* (1857) is one of the last publications of the Abbotsford Club, and contains first printings of nine items from the manuscript. Laing reprints Walter Scott's account of the Auchinleck in his introduction to the volume, annotating the description in order to update information on editions, sources, and analogues published or discovered since 1803. His edited texts contain very few transcription errors (perhaps he made the transcriptions himself!) and the presentation of the text includes significant announcement of manuscript detail. [See Figure 9.] Laing includes foliation markers, has interpreted the rubricated parahs to mean stanza breaks, and, most significantly, does not introduce modern punctuation (with the exception of the affixive hyphen). This is a professional job, done by a man with a careful and patient eye. It is not accompanied by an apparatus (glossary, notes, linguistic evaluation), but is as close to a critical text as one can find among Middle
English editions of the mid-19th century.

Up to the present time it has been possible for scholars to dismiss the publications of these printing clubs as mere dilletantism: the antiquarians did not, even in their day, make claims of definitiveness, but rather only to primacy, and all have been raked across the fires of scrutiny by subsequent editors eager to expose their inexpert transcriptions and their unfortunate locutions. We very seldom now see antiquarian publications listed in important bibliographies, and when we do they are usually carefully parenthetical. But we must not lose sight of the very meaningful things that these volumes can tell us.

As Laing's work shows, they unquestionably represent a prototypical form of the critical edition. It can be said, in fact, that the first critical editions were published by antiquarian book clubs: certainly Madden's collection of Gawaine poems for the Bannatyne Club in 1839 comes very close to the critical method in his clear and consistent enunciation of procedures for the presentation of texts. His has been called the "first completely scrupulous edition of Middle English works," though it must be considered a rare exception at the time (Edwards 44-45). Madden's inestimable paleographical genius (and probable photographic memory) combined with a truly scrupulous regard for the notation of his activities—he indicates emendations no matter what the size or frequency, and also provides substantial textual notes, glossary, and
introduction (Edwards 45). And Laing's work, though not as forthcoming as Madden's, is of similar scholarly scruple.

But here we encounter a myth: it has long been assumed that there must be a substantial difference between the work of antiquarians and that of professional philologists or medievalists. (After all, we call the groups by different names with the expectation that we are signifying disparate characteristics.) But as the following chapter reveals, the only significant difference between an antiquarian editor and a scholarly editor seems to be the level to which each describes the changes that he has made to the manuscript text in order to prepare it for publication. As we have seen, even after Percy's example the practice in antiquarianism was not to suddenly become more "accurate" in the sense of offering a diplomatic transcription of the manuscript; rather, the trend has already been set to inform readers in an increasingly explicit manner of how the printed page was arrived at.

Editors of the mid-19th century and later received this trend from their antiquarian predecessors, but they themselves did not invent anything new: in fact, cloaked by the new vocabulary and the rhetorical posture that scholarship would soon provide, many editors of the later 19th and 20th centuries succeeded once again in burying the desired explicitness of method. Editorial texture--the anachronistic, usually silent combination of comforts and softenings added by the expert mediator--still remains a powerful force in Middle
English editing. Thus while we may believe that when we are reading a scholarly critical edition we are reading it "for the text" and not "for the editor," we have in fact been sold a packaged product which may be no more self-reflective than the antiquarian publications we have been taught to laugh at.
CHAPTER III

New Audiences

Turnbull was an amateur, by no means a philologist; his editions were, in consequences, not meant to be used by philologists, but only by general readers. So we cannot wonder that he takes into account only the Auchinleck MS. [...] Still, it would be a merit of his, to have made known this highly interesting epic poem to a limited number of readers, if his text were to be called an accurate reproduction of the undoubtedly oldest MS.; but unfortunately, his edition of Sir Beves is quite as carelessly done as his edition of Arthour and Merlin and of The Visions of Tundale.

It is not very likely that Turnbull troubled himself to copy the MS.; he probably left that duty to a paid scribe. People had not then the slightest idea that to copy an old manuscript accurately, needs a man well versed in the language of its time and in palaeography. Nor can Turnbull evidently have read his proofs with the MS. in the Advocates' Library, or he must have observed the many blunders of which the copyist had been guilty.

--Eugen Kölbing, Introduction to Beves of Hamtoun (1885)

Most Middle English editors of the later 19th century considered their activities to be qualitatively superior to those of their predecessors for the same reason Joseph Ritson had felt superior to his colleagues: he voiced a method, a relatively specific set of procedures designed to be brought to bear when certain textual situations arose. Anyone who has
worked with a critical edition produced before 1970 will recognize the conventions of a century earlier, and while it may be true that such editions are "better" than their antiquarian counterparts in the sense that they are the publications of literary specialists rather than amateurs, it is becoming increasingly clear that the textures of editions—their format, their shape, and the conventions through which they express medieval textuality—have actually changed very little.

Under the new scholarly professionalism which marks the later 1800's were created most of the 450 volumes in the Early English Text Society series, as well as the works published in text-oriented journals such as Englische Studien and Archiv. And while the editions vary in their programs of stated procedures, we can see in most Auchinleck editions from this scholarly period a clear record of transcription, collation, and emendation.

Eugen Kölbìng, a Professor at the University of Breslau, is a trusty spokesman for this new professionalism. His relationship with the Auchinleck alone spanned some fifteen years. Understanding that new work on old manuscripts could not go forward without a re-evaluation of bibliography, Kölbìng instituted a series of investigations, "Vier romanzenhandschriften," updating the descriptions of several manuscripts which he felt had received inadequate attention by the antiquarians. His new description of the Auchinleck, pub-
lished in *Englische Studien* in 1884, embraces and surpasses all earlier work on the manuscript. Moreover, Kölbìng takes the opportunity to offer corrective collations to previous editions of some works, and even to edit some of the brief pieces which remained unedited.¹

At the same time that editors of the new scholarly generation were more concerned with technical accuracy in the preparing of an edition than had been their antiquarian counterparts, they also succeeded in shifting focus away from the minstrel figure as a mode of transmission. The attribution of text either to an authorial, "original" version, or to the influence of scribes, became a subject of keen interest. By 1880, theories and suppositions about minstrel recitations, the mainstay of so many antiquarian meditations, seem almost to have disappeared; they are replaced by accounts focusing exclusively on observable (i.e., literate) phenomena. This may have been due in part to the influence of mid-century German textual theorists like Lachmann, but it is clear that the vocabulary of discussing scriptive error matured considerably in the later part of the century. Here, for example, is Kölbìng’s account of the quality of *Sir Tristrem* as he found it in the manuscript:

This transcript by no means presents to us the author’s version. This is clear from the way in which the scribe has, though not on the whole careless, destroyed the rhyme by introducing dialectic forms which differ from the original; has substituted in one passage a commoner for a rarer word, although the rhyme suffers by the change; has, by an oversight through which his eye has confounded distinct lines of the stanza, inserted
words contrary instead of favourable to the sense; and finally, has in two instances skipped over a couple of lines. Many a difficult or directly inexplicable passage may have been corrupted, because the scribe did not understand what he was copying, or because defective spots or erasures in the parchment prevented his reading it. (1882, xxix)

As theories of recension and error transmission gained influence, it was natural that editors should align their discussions of textuality toward a systematic comparison of manuscript versions in order to determine their relative authority. While during the antiquarian period the urge to collect and extravagantly to offer as much evidence as possible had led to endlessly tangential introductions and slim apparatuses, the new conception of the organic existence and decay of texts led inevitably to qualitative analysis being the editor's chief occupation.

This perceptible increase in professionalism, however, did not carry with it a corresponding change in attitude toward scribal activity. Kölbing, like Turnbull and Percy before him, retains the passive notion that scribes inevitably engendered mistakes—as with the antiquarians, "scribe" and "meddler" are synonymous. Even when Kölbing discards other ways of handling data as being outmoded, he preserves this significant one; and, as I have stated, this prejudicial image of the blundering scribe is a quiet element of editorial theory from the antiquarian period through the middle of the twentieth century.

The nature of this continuity and its resulting effect on
the presentation of texts is the subject of the following chapter. To speak closely about *difficilior lectio*, erasure, and eyeskip, as well as about the many other routes to error which Kölbing considers elsewhere, required more than the energy and diligence of enthusiasm. It required training.²
i. Zealous Discharge of Duty:
The Early English Text Society

This Society has been formed with the object of publishing a series of Early English Texts—especially those relating to KING ARTHUR—on the same plan as those which were printed by the Philological Society, but which have now been discontinued.

A vast mass of our early literature is still unprinted, and notwithstanding the efforts of the Percy, Camden, and other Societies and Printing Clubs, more than half our early printed literature (including the romances relating to the national hero, Arthur), is still inaccessible to the student of moderate means. The publications of the Society will consist of works, some of which will be printed for the first time from the manuscript, and others re-edited from the MSS. from which they were originally printed, or from earlier MSS., when such are known to exist. Nor will reprints of scarce printed books, of which the MSS. are not in evidence, be considered as beyond the Society’s province.

---Notice in EETS Original Series #1 (1864)

Members are asked to realise the fact that the Society has now 50 years’ work on its Lists,—at its present rate of production,—and that there is from 100 to 200 more years’ work to come after that. The year 2000 will not see finish all the Texts that the Society ought to print. The need of more Members and money is urgent.

---Notice in EETS Extra Series #75 (1898)

As originally envisaged, the task of the Society may be completed in another twenty years. Some of the texts now being issued are naturally less interesting than those which claimed the first attention of the founders of the Society. It is well to print them, as otherwise students would continually be wasting time in investigating their uncertain merits.

---Notice in EETS Original Series #191 (1933)
No monument to the new spirit of critical editing can
compare with the Early English Text Society. The last of the
major English publishing societies to be established, its
goals, as outlined in preliminary advertisements and announce-
ments, closely resemble those of the Abbotsford, Maitland, and
other clubs of thirty years before: to publish a series of
early texts in order to promote the study of English history
and literature. But the differences in its editors' training,
as well as in the public relations of this last society, are
significant: it received the services of the growing number
of university-trained language and literature specialists, and
neither membership nor the number of printed copies was to be
limited. Moreover, the EETS editors were to work for free,
and the cost for each volume was to be kept as close as
possible to the cost of production.  

These changes are not the only reason for its immense
success, however. The following anonymous review from the
Edinburgh Review of 1867 offers an additional explanation for
the increased necessity of an institution of older literature,
which the EETS "happened" to fill:

...but of late years we have been recognising, as
we never before recognised, in our schools and
colleges, the value of a close study of our own
language and literature. By the current of opin-
ion, and by the tests applied at civil service and
other examinations, the young Englishman is now
almost compelled to attempt some systematic study
of the speech and thought of his country. He
cannot study the language without reference to
Early English Texts, and the best of these have
hitherto been costly and almost inaccessible. Of
many that he may expect an examiner to question him
about, he must be content to take what he knows from the description given by his teacher, which is a way of acquiring little but the art of seeming to be well informed. The cheap distribution of good texts of Early English writers has become, therefore, a necessary supplement to the new movement towards greater thoroughness in English Education.... (235)

According to this reviewer, it was not until older literature (especially national literature, and the Arthurian material in particular) became a regular component of institutionalized learning that the need for common texts gained a moral force.

The other major element of publicity which helps account for the early success of the EETS was its affiliation with other projects and its self-promotion to libraries and universities. Frederick James Furnivall, Richard Morris, W.W. Skeat, and others involved with the Society's founding had realized that a secure body of texts was a requirement for the New English Dictionary project, also then being brought into being after the dissolution of the Philological Society. In order to provide a sound footing for etymological references it was necessary to have a reliable corpus of texts of all types, and the anecdotes about the "index card" nature of what later became known as the Oxford English Dictionary are in part stories about EETS editors gathering citations from manuscripts and incunables and supplying them to the Dictionary field editors.

The EETS was thus perceived by its founders as both a literate and a national enterprise, and the women and men who volunteered to be editors were urged to pay close attention to
peculiarly literate concerns such as orthography and written dialect. Both enterprises (or, rather, "the enterprise," for it is impossible to extract the EETS from the OED) were promoted by British and American universities and their libraries, and soon after its founding the EETS had a significant number of standing orders from institutions as varied as Durham and Cincinnati. Subscribers were no doubt pleased to witness the scholarly influence of an English philological society on the collections and editions of other vernaculars at long last: the Scottish Text Society, the Old French Text Society, the Anglo-Norman Text Society, and even an Early Russian Text Society came into being after the EETS.

It is apparent by the end of the century that the chilling crises of scope, goal, and personal energy which had gotten the best of the earlier clubs by their twentieth or thirtieth years would not stop the EETS. Tucked among the advertisements in Extra Series volume 75 (1898), for example, is the following call to arms—not to keep the Society alive, but to further its reputation as a promoter of British literature:

An urgent appeal is hereby made to Members to increase the list of subscribers to the E.E. Text Society. It is nothing less than a scandal that the Hellenic Society should have nearly 1000 members, while the Early English Text Society has only about 300!

The millennial estimate of works in progress that forms the second headnote to this section follows soon after—and it is clear when reading these notes to subscribers that the early
promoters of the Society were using the seeming endlessness of
the corpus of native literature as a selling point.

The battalions of editors whose observations and perceptions informed the EETS volumes at the close of the century are nearly beyond estimation. It was a kind of militia, not an army stockpiling and sandbagging in the face of a siege, but one rallying and crusading under the increasingly influential banner of Philology. It is in this spirit that the following notice was offered, again from 1898:

Members will also note with pleasure the annexation of large tracts of our Early English territory by the important German contingent under General Zupitza, Colonel Köbling, volunteers Hausknecht, Einenkel, Haenisch, Kaluza, Hupe, Adam, Holthausen, Schick, Herzfeld, Brandeis, &c.

... The sympathy, the ready help, which the Society's work has called forth from the Continent and the United States, have been among the pleasantest experiences of the Society's life, a real aid and cheer amid all troubles and discouragements. All our members are grateful for it, and recognise that the bond their work has woven between them and the lovers of language and antiquity across the seas is one of the most welcome results of the Society's efforts.

This paragraph is particularly interesting bibliographically (quite apart from its political context—-one notices the conspicuous absence of French names among the soldiers), because it betrays an aspect of the EETS’s publication methods which does not fit in perfect accord with the utopianism exhaled rhetorically. "General" Julius Zupitza was dead by 1896; the ebullient praise of him was crafted before that time, and the content of the advertisement had not changed
even though its book-lists were updated to include forthcoming publications for 1899. The word "late" is finally introduced in 1907 (for Kölbings and Zupitza; the rest are humorously grouped as "living").

The significance may appear trifling--this is just an ad on a page tipped in to the back of the volume, after all--but the time lag in the notation of the deaths of these prominent philologists symbolizes the growing strain that the Society must have been feeling at the same time it was publicly expressing great optimism. Instead of working with a limited or vaguely-defined group of texts, and instead of relying on the commitments of gentlemen scholars to bankroll the editing of a volume "at some time during their membership," the staff of the EETS was having to deal with the large number of its possible publications--the cycle plays, the legendaries, the meditations, the medical treatises, the pageants, the Arthurian, Charlemagne, and Alexander material, the grammars, the miscellanies, on and on (to say nothing of the Anglo-Saxon and Renaissance texts!). It could revel in this happy surplus of textuality, but the logistics of printing and distributing the texts certainly caused corners to be cut and oversights to occur.

Even the establishment of the Extra Series between 1867 and 1920, designed to encompass new editions of works edited at some point in the past but not now easily attainable, could not accommodate all of the titles jockeying for inclusion
amongst the little brown volumes. Despite its financial soundness, the Society was, by the turn of the century, having routinely to deny offers of gratis editing simply because it could not afford to print in acceptable numbers most of the works that were on its slate at any one time.4

Within the required parameters of presentation the EETS editions do display a healthy variety of styles—whatever the volunteer editors received from headquarters in the way of a "press kit" (i.e., directions on what kinds of notes to offer, or what kinds of words to gloss), it of course did not reach into the subject of stylistics. The natural assumption which I believe most users of EETS volumes share is that all of its editors are brought to some sort of understanding regarding the audience to which they should write—after all, the EETS is a "project," and projects usually have some compass-points (a panel of readers, for example) toward which rhetoric and contents can be geared. But this does not in fact seem to have been the case with the EETS. While the editors may all have been engaged in finding and citing words for the Dictionary, and while they may have applied a uniform format to those citations, the edited texts themselves do not evidence any common approach, editorial consensus, or standard audience conception. Taken as a whole their quality and presentation style is very uneven; whatever basic guidelines the general editors did hand out obviously could not dampen the excesses of some editors or inflate the brevity of others. Far from
being a fault of any kind, this diversity may be one of the chief reasons for the EETS’s success.

Three volumes in particular from among our Auchinleck editions may be used to mark stylistic and methodological points on the EETS calculus. At one end of the calculus we have Georgiana Morrill’s leviathan edition of the Speculum Gy de Warewyke (E.S. 75, 1898). After being caught up in production delays for more than two years, during which time some of its contents became redundant (xii), the volume appeared with what is arguably the most tedious apparatus of any critical edition ever made. More than three hundred pages of introduction and notes are offered to support a text of just over a thousand lines; Morrill’s interests are stemmato-logical, and a good proportion of the introduction is spent in describing manuscript relations and offering verbal evidence to perform Lachmannian recension.

At the other end of the calculus is Sidney Hertrage’s edition of three Charlemagne romances, The Taill of Rauf Coilyear, with the Fragments of Roland and Vernagu and Otuel (E.S. 39, 1882). Hertrage’s introduction is brief to the point of being cursory: twenty-three pages (five of which are plot summary) to support the combined four thousand lines of three poems. Hertrage’s introduction and notes are bare summary of work already done; his lack of interest in dialect and manuscript context are such that when (as was required by the EETS general editors) Hertrage does offer a decision on
the dialect of the two fragmentary texts in the volume, he is as unhelpful as to say "the poems were written by an East-Midland scribe, who for some reason or other was acquainted with Southern literature" (xvi). He overlooks in doing so the fact that the two poems were written down by two different Auchinleck scribes.

These are two extreme examples of what could go wrong when the impulse to get a work into print overrode any realistic appreciation of audience. Morrill's and Herritage's editions can only be called incidentally helpful to a person interested in the works they contain; they are, first and foremost, exercises for their editors. But located between these extremes of numbing prolixity and equally deadening brevity, and on the whole marked by very good sense, is the Harrowing of Hell volume edited by William Henry Hulme (E.S. 100, 1907). This is a work of confident and sensitive scholarship; its contents display, moreover, a mature sense of context for the work at hand, for its ambition is to supersede all of its predecessors in quality and in method. In his preface, Hulme itemizes the following concerns that have driven the edition:

An attempt is made in the present volume (1) to make easily accessible to students of English literature all the known Middle-English versions of the Harrowing of Hell and the poetic Gospel of Nicodemus; (2) to give exact reproductions of the several manuscripts in parallel columns, so far as that is possible in print, as well as the variant readings of all previous reprints; (3) to give in the Introduction a succinct but comprehensive bibliographic account of the manuscripts in which
the poems have been preserved and of all those manuscripts, so far as they are known, which contain prose versions of the ME Gospel of Nicodemus; (4) to furnish a glossary of obsolete and unfamiliar words. (v.)

The prioritizing of these concerns is important: first comes the audience, to whom Hulme will, throughout, be explicit in his statements of purpose and in his notations. Second on the list, but perhaps of equal importance to Hulme, is the explicit concern for technical accuracy (which, as we have seen in the case of the antiquarian editions, is a justified one). The third priority is comprehensiveness in the scholarly dialogue; the fourth is the glossary, by which we infer that Hulme is not just using the text as a mine for dictionary nuggets.

Hulme is very clear in his presentation of editorial method. He tells his reader that if he ever changes the manuscript reading, his marginal notes will record that change; moreover, he states that he has emended very rarely, and that emendations are always enclosed in brackets. He expands manuscript abbreviations in italics and retains the upper- and lower-case conventions of the manuscript. The only significant modernization, he tells us, is the importation of punctuation.

Hulme might be called a "good EETS editor" precisely because of his consciousness of his reader's need to know what vehicle has gotten the text from the manuscript to the printed page—and we must note that his edition stands out from the
grab-bag of EETS styles for this very reason. While he does texture his edition for the comfort of the modern reader (he adds helps such as punctuation, line numbers, and running summaries at the tops of pages), he maintains a small degree of what we might call "manuscript strangeness" by not emending the texts very often and by retaining the medieval case usage.

The EETS did not have exclusive sway in Middle English editorial matters, of course, although it would remain the chief publisher of such texts for several decades. The same variety of editorial textures can be found in journals, monographs, discrete editions, and in the series of the smaller societies. George McNeill's 1886 edition of Sir Tristrem for the Scottish Text Society, for example, is as laudable as Hulme's in its ideals of supercession, technical accuracy, and announcement of editorial methodology:

The editor's aim has been to reproduce the pages of the Auchenleck MS. with as much fidelity as the exigencies of the press will allow. Corrections of obvious clerical errors in the MS, conjectural readings, and all such amendments on the text as would necessitate and alteration of the written lines, have been relegated to the notes. The proof-sheets of the printed text have been collated with the MS. in order to ensure the greatest possible accuracy. (xlvii-viii)

Also like Hulme, McNeill's interest in the Auchenleck as a context for the poem can be found when he discusses the nature of the large colored capitals which he has preserved in his text, and how they mark transitions between incidents or between scribal stints.

Editions created under the new professionalism are thus
not by nature good, thoughtful ones; they could be, but they could also be hastily constructed and oblivious to the presence of readers. What all EETS critical editions do have at their heart, however—what helps to define them as critical editions—is a manuscript stemma. The introductions of most, if not all, of the EETS editions of the generation 1870-1930 (including the editions of Morrill, Brunner, and Leach mentioned elsewhere in this chapter) are based around manuscript stemma, with a good portion of the discussion and sometimes the selection of the base text itself dependent on the nature of the stemma.

It is often difficult to know just what people mean when they talk about "a critical edition." We all have a general definition which includes associations such as "scholarly," "bibliographically comprehensive," "authoritative," and so on, but loose modern usage of the term has caused these three qualities to be just about all that we might expect most literature specialists to be able to agree on. Already in this dissertation I have used the term synonymously with "circumspect" and "mature," as well as to mean "a text offered with explanatory apparatus."5 "A critical edition" seems to be something we all know when we see, and the existence of which we are on the whole pleased by, but about the precise contents of which we might not be able to agree. In its simplest form, it might be "an 'edited' version of a 'best' text"—this phrase has been offered by Charles Moorman (x).
But the problematic use of the two signalled words immediately leads us to suspect, again, that in neither the function nor the selection are matters really settled.

I am led, both by this frustrating lack of definition and by my close association with the EETS volumes, to propose a new, more descriptive, less vague definition of a critical edition. A significant portion of such volumes gets its nature from the strict hierarchy of stemmatics in which an editor is enabled to uncover the original readings of a text. Editorial texturing (in the text portion of the edition) and the belief in authorial originality (explored in the apparatus) combine to create a publication whose goal is not the objective presentation of a medieval text, despite the fact that this is what the publication explicitly claims to be. Instead, the goal of the publication is to draw the reader closer to the editor's vision of the ipsissima verba of the original text by forcefully guiding the reader through the gauze curtain of scribal error. A "critical edition," based on the findings of this study, is thus an artificial textual construct with a persuasive aim, not an informational aim, at its heart. And as is the case with other forms of persuasion (mass market advertising, political speeches), we are best to approach critical editions with our senses tuned to subtexts, assumptions, and stereotypes.

Let us now examine some of the forms of editing engendered by the critical approach to editing: first, two subsets
of the critical edition (parallel and best-text editions), and then the odd case of the published collation. As we do so, we will look to neither apparatus nor text exclusively, but rather to the combined effect of both on the perceptions of the reader.
ii. Parallel and Best-Text Editing

The major task of the editor is putting the text into the shape that, in his opinion, best fulfills the intentions of the author. When that work has been completed, it remains for the editor to give an accounting of his text. The principle which ought to govern is that this accounting should be as brief as the purpose of the text requires and the users of the edition need.

--James Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism* (1972)

It should be clear, based on the examples we have examined thus far, that this traditionally-accepted assertion of Thorpe's is, for medieval literature at any rate, problematic at almost every turn: not only do the phrases "intentions of the author" and "accounting of his text" seem unlikely to engender consensus, but we may in fact be beginning to wonder whether the phrase "when that work has been completed" can really be said to apply. But based on the persuasive elements uncovered in the previous section, Thorpe's observation that a strong conception of an edition's users should be the governing notion in the preparation of an apparatus bears further investigation.

One of the more significant problems with critical editions such as those in the EETS series has been their lack of shared attitude or posture toward readers. As in the cases described in the previous section, it is possible that the editor of a critical edition can be so self-involved that she
seems to have geared her edition for only one person: herself. Whether they do it intentionally or not, editors always influence readers' perceptions of medieval textuality in anachronistic ways, and perhaps the best way to interpret Thorpe's advice is as a call for keeping that fact in mind and for being as above-board about it as possible.

Significantly, while this study has now witnessed several examples of editors referring to the wants and needs of their audiences, it has not included an editor who specifies just who his audience consists of—we are accustomed to making a guess at the ages, backgrounds, and textual goals of these audiences. In short, no editor in this survey has yet described the literary community which he assumes will benefit from his labor, despite the centrality of this concern to the very impulse of textual mediation.

Moreover, despite its functional dependence on a manuscript stemma and despite the fact that it is often a composite of several closely-related manuscript versions, a critical edition is quite often thought of as a scholarly presentation of a single text which stands out above others as worthy of extraordinary attention. Twentieth-century users of such editions, who for the most part have not been sensitized to precisely the textures this dissertation attempts to foreground, generally perceive a critical text as a self-contained meaningful unit; the editor, after all, has centralized one text, literally and figuratively, and has surrounded it by an
explanatory apparatus designed to report on all contexts that are of interest—manuscript, dialect, bibliography, and so on—the net result being that of an extended gloss on a finite text. And readers of critical editions have traditionally adopted a submissive posture with regard to the texture (if not the text) in front of them: they understand that the goal of the edition is to help them understand the centered text, and they know that such understanding in and of itself is a healthy and helpful way of learning.

But viewing critical editions in this passive way—overlooking the differences between the varieties of critical editions that exist—is not healthy because it overlooks the diversity of approach that does in fact exist within what is usually called "the critical edition." When we look more closely we see that there are no fewer than five major types of editions of medieval works—critical, best-text, parallel-text, collational, and pedagogical—each with its own approach and each with strengths and weaknesses. (Critical and best-text forms in particular are easily confused, an observation which causes considerable concern for those who realize that they incorporate competing, if not opposing, methodologies.) And with the possible exception of the unpredictable student textbook, each of the forms offers a different solution to the citation of variant versions of texts. Each presents the past through a different set of lenses, and in each case the juxtaposition of variants seems different: the texture of
each of these editorial styles—the placement of "the same" verbal data on the page in different ways—causes its users to perceive the medieval artifact text differently. Each of these editorial forms is therefore a persuasive device which actively or passively attempts to cause the reader to share the epistemological paradigm of the editor.

The precise definition of "critical edition" I came to at the end of the previous section might be summarized as follows: it is a publication featuring a textual product that has been synthesized from available variant versions, and accompanied by an apparatus whose chief function is to explain the relationship of those variant versions to the Original which the featured textual product approximates. This form is fundamentally different from the other common editorial style of the 20th century, the best-text format first recommended by Joseph Bédier in 1913; while the printed pages of the two forms may look alike (sometimes they are indistinguishable), the apparatus of a best-text edition bypasses much of the pseudo-scientific evaluation of variants and focuses instead on the relationship of the selected version to the author's original.

Both kinds of editions look the same because both involve the use of footnoted variants. The best-text editor does not offer a diplomatic transcription of his selected version; it is part of his editorial function to remove the scribal mistakes from the version in order (like the critical editor)
to achieve an approximation of the Original. The only real
difference in the presentation of the texts under these
opposing formats, then, is the technical nature of their
footnoted variants: those in a best-text edition will refer
to the original reading in the chosen manuscript, while those
in a critical edition will refer to the variant readings in
other manuscripts. If a critical editor has chosen one of his
manuscripts to be a base text (i.e., a "better text" which
will then be added to and subtracted from based on the
readings in other manuscripts), this information will also be
in the critical edition's footnotes.

To examine these different forms of critical editing we
must begin by discussing two format devices which enable the
editor to present his text: footnoted variants and parallel-
text printing. Both do essentially the same thing, displaying
the relationship of versions in greater (collation) or lesser
(parallel text) degrees of verbal agreement. When they are
used to accompany a text, their ostensible function is to bear
witness to the variety of the work's witnesses and to privi-
lege the readings which "made it" into the main text; even in
the parallel format, where all the versions should theoreti-
cally be of equal importance, such visual pejoration is often
unconsciously employed in favor of one of the versions.6

Let us examine the implications of parallel texts further
(collations will be discussed in the following section).
First we examine some edited text of the Auchinleck Saint
Mergrete from Carl Horstmann's *Altenlische Legenden* (1881). [See Figure 10.] The text is presented in a virtually unassisted manner; there are no variants and no explanatory notes, only the editor's transcription from the manuscript altered by punctuation and assisted on the page by line numbers and paleographical footnotes. The manuscript text has undergone critical interpretation on Horstmann's part, according to a methodology which allows us to recover the actual manuscript reading with a high degree of certainty.

Now let us compare a selection from *Saint Katerine* in the same volume. [See Figure 11.] In this selection Horstmann has presented another Auchinleck text in parallel with a version from Caius College 175. Our eyes are invited to compare the two versions and we can see that they are very close to one another, though with pervasive local changes which might be determined to add up to stylistic ones. This tacit comparison seems to have been Horstmann's reason for printing the versions next to one another--he does not discuss them in contrast to one another in his survey.

Both of these can justifiably be called critical editions of saint's lives, but they are not the same in their effects on the reader. Horstmann has caused the relationship of reader and edited text to change when he adds another version of *Katerine* and printed it in parallel with the Auchinleck version. He has interpreted both of the *Katerine* texts in order to print them, but in his presentation of them both on
the page he has predicated an interpretation of them which is fundamentally different from the one he brought about for the sole version of *Mergrete*. How do we express this added level of enforced interpretation? Despite the lack of discursive analysis (Horstmann provides no discussion, but merely prints texts), does not the very impulse to print the versions in parallel carry with it a powerful interpretive weight for the reader?

The fact that I can pose such questions about an edition as sparse as Horstmann's helps to point to an interesting feature of the new types of editions being generated at the end of the 19th century: even when they do not contain scholarly apparatuses, the very placement of their text on the page can be a highly influential act of critical judgment. Parallel printing has peculiar rhetorical power, and as far as I can determine it belongs solely to the new age of editing--the earliest use of the parallel text format I have found in my Auchinleck sample is Kölbing's *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* in the premiere volume of *Englische Studien* (1877).

Whenever this device is employed by an editor, we are no longer in the presence of a truly autonomous medieval text. Certainly parallel printing undermines the concept of a best text because it is a gesture toward conjectural emendation: it lays verbal data in front of a reader and suggests a fairly specific set of comparisons. The editor must realize that no user of any kind of edition will be so idealistic as to
regularly "read" more than one version, and yet the evidence
on the page cannot be visually ignored; the perceptions of the
reader inevitably force her to perform the editorial function
of selecting a base text and of comparing it, irregularly, to
the other visible samples. Thus the offering of parallel
texts, on whatever grounds they have been chosen for the
honor, is a mirage—a gesture in the direction of the organic
precedence of one of the versions which is constantly being
undermined by the reader because of the juxtaposition of the
other versions.

The parallel format has been used effectively to display
evidence of highly divergent texts, and the arguments for its
use are compelling (see below the case of The Simonie). More
often than not, however, the format becomes unwieldy and
actually presents a stumbling-block to any use of the edition.
Wilhelm Linlow, for example, offers The Disputisoun bitwen the
Bodi and the Soule in 1889 in a manner much like Horstmann's
Katerine; but since the Laud 108 text of the poem diverges
widely, Linlow must use a combination of extra line numbering
and blank space to keep the texts in order. [See Figure 12.]
Julius Zupitza's Guy of Warwick (EETS, 1883), which offers the
Auchinleck text in parallel with Caius College 107, is more
problematic since the versions are all on the order of 10,000
lines. The nearly 700 pages of the edition consist of facing-
page texts with alternating sections of blank space where the
"story" in one version does not agree with the story in the
other at all. [See Figure 13.] At one point in Zupitza's edition we find a long passage which is particular to the Auchenleck version; three full pages of the text of Caius do not "exist" here, and therefore the pages are blank. [See Figure 14.] However, when the Caius text contains a long incident not found in the Auchenleck version, Zupitza suddenly begins printing Caius on both the recto and verso pages. [See Figure 15.] This continues for ten pages, and Zupitza then reverts to the original format. As might be expected, throughout the edition the line numbering is subject to several major changes and special notations. Thus there are half a dozen perceptible rules of presentation at work, none of which is comprehensive enough to cover this complicated textual situation.

Finally, it is possible to find editions which must simply be pronounced unusable due to the insatiable consequences of the parallel text format. Kölbing's impossibly complex parallel-text edition of Beves of Hamtoun, which may well have signalled the death of the critical edition, will be discussed in the next chapter; but a similar example, offered here merely to show the outer limits of editorial presentation, is Karl Brunner's Seven Sages of Rome (EETS, 1933). The edition starts off in a sensible-looking parallel format, offering the versions of Egerton 1995 and Balliol College 354. [See Figure 16.] But Brunner's ambition was to include the complete range of variation from all nine of the extant
manuscripts—thus the Auchinleck and Arundel 140 versions quickly become the third and fourth principal parallel texts, and five other versions (Rawlinson poet. 175, Cambridge University Dd.I.17, Cotton Galba E.ix., Cambridge University Ff.II.38, and the 16th century Asloan manuscript) become footnoted variants. The result is like a verbal fireworks display, dazzling but unapproachable.⁸ [See Figure 17.]

Each of these editions, with the exception of Brunner’s, belongs to the nineteenth century, and it is clear that in them we witness experimentation with the limits of critical editing. The unwieldiness of an edition like Brunner’s was no doubt beginning to appear a liability rather than an asset to a growing number of scholars, and editions of popular medieval works—for example, of the metrical romance Sir Orfeo—betray an increasing level of discomfort with critical practices.

The textual problem which Orfeo presents is classic. Because of vandalism to the Auchinleck, the introduction of its version is lost;⁹ the rest of the version survives, and in fact is very clearly-written in the hand of Scribe I, with regular rhymes and relatively few problematic areas (Bliss xv). The other two extant versions—Harley 3810 and Ashmole 61—are complete texts, but have consistently been ranked below Auchinleck in quality. None of the three agrees with the others on a regular basis, but the Harley and Ashmole versions (as well as the Auchinleck poem Lay le Freine) contain formulaic Breton Lai introductions which may be like the
one which the Auchinleck has lost. Furthermore, there is one passage near the beginning of the Orfeo story—a very attractive passage, and an interpretively-significant one—which the Auchinleck version does not contain but which the other "lesser" versions do:

Orfeo most of ony þing
Lovede þe gle of harpyng;
Syker was eueri gode harpure
Of hym to haue moche honour.
Hym-self loued for-to harpe,
& layde þeron his wittes scharpe;
He lerned so, þer noþing was
A better harper in no plas.
[In] þe world was neuer man born
Þat onus Orpheo sat byforn
(& he my3t of his harpyng her)
—He schulde þinke þat he wer
In one of þe joys of Paradys,
Suche joy & melody in his harpyng is. (Bliss 4-6)

This is the passage as it appears in Harley 3810, and any reader familiar with the poem will see how important it could be to one’s appreciation of the story: if we do not have this information, the effects of Orfeo’s use of music later in the poem (the enchanting of the forest creatures) loses some of its impact, and the effect of the climax of the narrative action (the winning of Heurodis) is diminished. And, of course, the self-reflective reading of the poem (in which it is seen as a metaphor for the poetic gift which the singer of Sir Orfeo is himself sharing) is also diminished if these lines are not present in the story.

In other words, we would prefer for the poem to tell us that Orfeo is a man with the gift of joyous harping in order to have our interpretive preconceptions met. Since the
Auchinleck does not contain these particular lines (they may have been on the lost folio, but as easily may not), it has been the burden of the editor to either 1) choose Auchinleck as his best text and faithfully omit the harping passage; or 2) choose Auchinleck as his best text and prefix the harping passage to it; or 3) choose Auchinleck as the base text of a critical edition which will include the same treatment of the harping passage as #2, among others; or 4) choose the Harley or Ashmole versions, both of which contain the important passage, and face choices 1-3 again. The presentation of these 14 lines can thus be considered a barometer of critical method, and we can be illuminated considerably in these otherwise theoretical matters by looking at how a few editors have dealt with them.

Editors such as Sisam (1921) supplied the opening formulaic introduction (24 lines) and the later lines concerning harping from Harley 3810, enclosing them in brackets and providing an explanatory footnote for the latter: "These lines are not in the Auchinleck MS., but are probably authentic. Otherwise little prominence would be given to Orfeo's skill as a harper" (209). This uncomfortable bit of logic centers on the word "authentic" and reminds us that to an editor of Sisam's generation the dramatic reading of a medieval poem (or rather, our expectations of how a medieval poem might best be read dramatically) can be precedent to his editorial judgment. Likewise in a note to a hypermetric line,
Sisam reports the following:

There is no task more slippery than the metrical reconstruction of ME. poems, particularly those of which the extant text derives from the original not simply through a line of copyists, but through a line of minstrels who passed on the verses from memory and by word of mouth. (210, n.382)

Sisam here pairs his discomfort with the task of reconstruction (a discomfort flagged for us by the sudden verbal foregrounding of his role as editor) with the actions of scribes and copyists; he links his own limitations to the actions of persons who are also extremely verbal and yet whose verbal actions are not within the professional grasp of his profession. Sisam’s doubts have spilled over into his communication with the reader at this precise point.

A.J. Bliss’ 1954 edition of Sir Orfeo deals with the same difficult cases. It is authoritative and easy to use, and might be considered the most respected critical edition that has ever been made of an Auchinleck poem; in fact, it all but stopped the creation of discrete editions of the poem. It attempts the not immodest task of presenting the complete texts of all three versions of the poem, but several important elements have been added to its design to make it quite user-friendly.

The three versions of the poem are all at the reader’s fingertips, but no attempt has been made to enforce a similitude among them. The Auchinleck version is visually more prominent than the others—its type size is larger—and this seems to lessen the impulse to use it in conjunction with the
other versions. Moreover, the versions have been clearly separated and marked and their headings follow them throughout. The effect is one of relative disassociation of the texts, even though they are in a parallel format; the reader is accompanied by the secondary versions, but the impulse to look into them, or to match up text with them, is much less than with the formats of Horstmann, Linlow, and the others. This format can probably claim as much responsibility for the success of the edition as can the quality of Bliss' observations in the introduction--the format is, again, part of his work as editor, as Thorpe's quotation suggested.

Bliss also takes the initiative to discuss places in which textual and literary criticism cross paths--in his notes he describes how the punctuation which he (or a previous editor) has added influences the dramatic effect of a passage. In one note, for example, he observes the following:

Sisam mispunctuates this passage by placing full stops after lines 324 and 327 instead of after line 326. Orfeo and Heurodis do not speak to each other, not because of any enchantment, but because she is full of pity at the sight of his misery; the other ladies make her ride away because they see her tears falling. (53, n.323-30)

The effect is, again, to close the distance between the editorial act and the reading act, and to embrace the needs of all potential users of such an edition of a popular medieval poem.

When we look closely at the harping passage, however, we see once again that it causes obvious discomfort to the
editor. Bliss' desire to print the contents of each romance in quasi-parallel format comes into conflict with his desire to borrow from them, and from other poems in the Auchenleck manuscript, to fill in the gaps in the preferred Auchenleck version of Orfeo. As his predecessors had done, Bliss offers first the lines from the introduction to Lay le Freine, then the harping lines from the Harley version, and then finally picks up the Auchenleck text where the manuscript begins. [See Figures 18 and 19.] The passage describing Orfeo as a joyful harper is included in the Auchenleck version in square brackets--it has been borrowed from the Harley version on the same page! Bliss has altered orthography to fit Auchenleck usage, but from the second half of line 24 through the end of line 38 the Auchenleck version is the Harley text; the extant portion of the Auchenleck Orfeo begins at line 39, with a paraph sign and foliation mark referring to the text in that manuscript.

This is a very visible penetration into a parallel-text edition of the editor's belief in an original text--Bliss obviously felt sure that the harping lines belong to the "real" Sir Orfeo, and even though his edition prints all the known manuscript versions of that poem (with the harping lines available to the reader in Harley and Ashmole) he takes the extra step of adding them into Auchenleck as well. Note that there are no notes on the page--apart from a brief note in the introduction, the only signals of this elaborate splicing job
are the square brackets. The reason I call attention to this is that it—like Sisam's expressions of editorial discomfort at precisely the same point—is an uncharacteristic bump in what is otherwise a very smooth editorial texture. For the most part, Bliss is very good at keeping the driving mechanisms of the edition (i.e., the reference points for keeping the manuscripts straight) at the fingertips of the reader. But here, where his work as editor comes into close proximity with his deep assumptions about textual originality, he defers from complete openness with his reader.

We can find another example of the same phenomenon in the political complaint The Simonie. The challenge it poses to the critical editor is to account for the very divergences we have been dealing with in this section: Where do they come from? Are they indeed scribal errors, or are they authorial acts? How can we as editors presume to venture into a forest of variants with uncertain knowledge of their taxonomy and systematics? These questions could be raised in the case of Sir Orfeo, but in the Simonie they are unavoidable.

The Simonie is extant in three manuscripts—Auchinleck, Bodley 48, and Cambridge Peterhouse 104—and each of the three manuscripts has been published by itself. The version contained in the Auchinleck was first edited by Thomas Wright for the Camden Society in 1839; it was followed in print by a Percy Society edition of the Peterhouse version in 1849. But when Thomas Ross discovered yet a third version in the Bodley
manuscript and published it in 1957, he knew that he had made an extraordinary find. None of the three versions of The Simonie agrees substantially with the other two; while the longest of the three is only 476 lines, only 178 of these (37%) are common to all three. Unique material, the ordering of stanzas, the intensity of expressions—almost every possible level of variation is in evidence among the versions. (In this regard The Simonie resembles the collected South English Legendary, the fifty or so manuscripts of which vary so much in content that they cannot realistically be considered to be a single unified work. "The" Simonie may therefore be as misleading as "the" South English Legendary or "the" Piers Plowman.) The problem is obvious: how do editors approach what are almost certainly three different scribal/authoritative versions of "the same" poem?

Ross himself was the first scholar to tackle the situation, and his 1960 "composite edition" of the poem contains several points where editorial action is so affected by the textual circumstances that it recedes to the point of a transparent veneer. Here is Ross' initial attempt to discuss them, in the specific context of explaining the curious lack of direct reference to historical events of the time of Edward II in the Simonie:

The poem was probably written for oral delivery; therefore the poet and those who recited the verses in public were understandably reluctant to make direct or specific attacks which could easily be remembered by their listeners, with possibly dangerous consequences for the author or 'singer.'
It seems very likely that memorial reconstruction accounts for some of the differences among the three versions, since the lines will often vary considerably, though the rhymes (and usually the rhythm) are retained; however, since there are only three MSS, it is impossible to establish this with certainty. (7)

At this point Ross turns to stemmatology. He makes a note to W.W. Greg's *Calculus of Variants*, citing Greg's theorem that when one has only 3 manuscripts in a given sample it will not be possible to establish a common source for a pair to the exclusion of the third. And there he leaves the issue. His response to perhaps the hardest textual situation a medieval scholar can face (wide variations among three copies of a vernacular poem) is to approach it neither through paleographical investigation, nor through conjecture about oral delivery, nor through conjecture about the intervention of scribes—he merely lumps paleography and orality together in a heap and invokes Greg's 3-manuscript rule as an "out" for not following up any further.

Soon thereafter Ross makes a similar move, saying that the one stanza unique to the Auchinleck text may be attributed to the fact that the other two manuscripts are later versions of the same author's poem, and either "timidity or good taste" led him to excise the stanza (which happens to deal with homosexuality). Ross' answer to the absence of the stanza in the later two versions is a literary interpretation of a paleographical fact, enforced by a corollary theory of single authorship of all three extant versions of the poem.
The fact that the stanza deals with an uncomfortable subject is all the more reason to look at Ross' rhetoric here very closely: as we saw with the Sisam and Bliss' treatments of the Orfeo passage it is during uncomfortable moments that an editor's least postured actions may be observed. Ross begins comparing the Simonie author to Langland at this point, and utterly refuses to come to terms with the stemmatic relationship of the Simonie manuscripts:

Of the three MSS, obviously MS A [Auchinleck] must be granted primary authority. It is idle to speculate, in any kind of scientific way, using the processes of modern textual criticism, on the relationship of the three, since 'where three manuscripts only are concerned, no merely formal process can throw light on the relationship between them;...it will never be possible to establish a common source for any pair of manuscripts to the exclusion of the third.' Therefore MS A has been chosen as the base text, with the additional lines provided by B and P.

(12 [with internal quotation from W.W. Greg])

He goes on to say that detailed collations of manuscripts "consume space which is not available to me. Such technical matters are, in any event, likely to be tedious."

Like Sisam's quick note on how hard it is to emend metrical romances, this may be an example of an editor foregrounding his own role when he nears the actual physical subject of his investigation. Ross has now quoted the "tripartite disclaimer" passage from Greg's Calculus twice, each time using it to forestall discussion about the variation of the Simonie texts and then deferring an analysis of the variants which should, theoretically, support his argument.
The text Ross offers is a composite of all three versions. Not as sophisticated as a work of conjectural emendation, it is instead a fusion of all the interesting parts of all three versions into a single hybrid. He has "edited a text that never was," as a last resort after abandoning all the models available to him.\textsuperscript{13}
iii. Collation Editing

\[\text{\textit{ius \textcircled{\textregistered}o leuedis fair \& bri3t}} \quad 895
\]
\[\text{Boden for \textcircled{\textregistered}at gentil kni3t}
\]
\[\text{To lain he bodis to.}
\]

\[\text{895 \textcircled{\textregistered}o: \textit{e HS; This D. ladies SDH. 896 Beden}
\]
\[\text{SH; Bede D. 897 lay her bodies too S; leyn}
\]
\[\text{here bodyes twoo D; leggyn hure bodyes twoo H.}
\]

---

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--Amis and Amiloun, ed. Leach (1937)

The phenomenon of a published collation (a string of variants, usually footnoted to a base text) bears significant ideological resemblance to that of the parallel text insofar as they are both concessions to verbal variety. The importance of this kind of minute textual data, so vital in the creation of manuscript stemma, is shown by the great number between 1875 and 1935 of published collations unaccompanied by base texts of any kind. These "textkritik" publications, for the most part the work of German scholars, can be found in Englische Studien, Archiv, and other related serials; they usually take the form of corrections to a previously printed text, as in the case of Kölbing's 1883 collation of Weber's 1810 edition of the Seven Sages of Rome. [See Figure 20.]

The main point of the operation is a simple one: to correct transcription errors. But the collation also allows the later investigator to undo some of the normalization of letter-forms that early editors had made. Note in the above sample the preponderance of collated words containing yoghs; this is made
necessary by Weber's consistent transformation of the letter to modern equivalents. (The parenthetical !'s are Kölbings's "sic"--his way of marking manuscript readings that may seem to be unlikely, but which, for the stemmaticist, need to be recorded in their scribal form. ¹⁴)

More often, the collation takes the form of notes in an edition. The problem with correction-collating a previous edition is that in order for a third party (say, you or I) to make use of the data, we must have access to the earlier work; to use Kölbings's correction of Weber, we must have copies of both on the table in front of us to transfer the readings. And as we have seen, the scarcity of the antiquarian editions was a problem even in their own day.

The more common practice was thus to offer collations of all kinds in the footnotes of a new edition. In an age when visual examination of a manuscript text was even less ready an undertaking than it is today (due to travel difficulties and the existence of only a few published facsimiles), the phenomenon of a collation was often used to represent a manuscript text not of immediate, but rather secondary, interest. Especially for the decade or so on either side of the century mark, shorthand collations were offered at the feet of full base texts in the hope that if a student were more interested in the nature of that secondary source, he might be able to recover its text by an operation of inserting the variants "up" into the base.
This "backtracking" is an operation which I have discussed with several colleagues, but I have found no one to vouch for its efficacy. In fact I know of no one who has ever tried to use a string of variants to recover more than one or two lines of a text, in places where a reading is particularly important—say as a number, a date, or a word or phrase which might carry significant interpretive weight. This raises an interesting question: just how far can footnoted variants take us in recovering a manuscript text? What are the limitations of a collation, and what can it not show?

To address these questions we can try a simple experiment: choose a representative example and try to backtrack from it. Alois Brandl and Otto Zippel's 1927 edition of the conclusion of the romance King Alisaunder, printed on pages 66-71 of their textbook Mittelenglische sprach- und Literaturproben, will serve. The Auchinleck text of Alisaunder is given as variants to the base text of Bodley Ms. Laud 622. In order to reconstruct the Auchinleck text, we will be engaged in combining the Laud base text with the footnoted variants.

The first 19 lines of the base text are as follows:

7826  In þis werlde falleþ many cas; Gydy blisse, short solas! Ypomodon, and Pallidamas, And Absolon, þat so fair was,
7830  Hy lyveden here a litel raas; Ac sone for3eten uchon was! þe levedyes shene als þe glas; And þise maidens, wiþ rody faas, Passen sone als floure in gras! So strong, so fair, nevre non nas, þat he neshal passe wiþ allas!
Aventure hafe turned his paas,
A-3eins hae kyng and rered maas.
pat understonde Olympias,
And sende to Alisaunder warnyng,
As to her owen swete derlyng,
pat he hym warie, on al wise,
From Antipater, his justise.
And Antipater understonde wel:
hae kyng is fel and cruel.

7840

In a footnote, the editors offer the following variants to the
Laud text (called by them A₀), by which it is implicit that
the Auchinleck text (A₇) can be reconstructed:

A₀: Variants to A₀: 7826 warld 27 Sidi blis and
schorrt 29 Absalon 30 Hy]haieras 31 ich so was
32 levedis schene al so 33 hae rudi fas 34 passe
so flour 35 no fairner non nas 36 no schal 37
Aventour so ha] pas 38 O-3aines mas 40 Alisaunder
bihas 41 omitted 42 hi war in 43 Fram 45
feloun and cruel

If we "backtrack"--that is, if we apply the footnoted variants
to the base text--we get the following:

7826

In hae warld falle many cas;
Sidi blis and schorrt solas!
Ypomodon, and Pallidamas,
And Absalon, pat so fair was,
7830
haieras here a litel ras;
Ac sone for3eten ich so was!
hae levedis schene al so hae glas;
And hae maidens, wi hae rudi fas,
Passe hae sone so flour in gras!
7835
So strong, no fairner non nas,
pat he no schal passe wi allas!
Aventour so ha] turned his pas,
O-3aines hae kyng and rered mas.
pat understonde Olympias,
7840
And sende to Alisaunder bihas,
pat hi war in al wise,
Fram Antipater, his justise.
And Antipater understonde wel:
hae kyng is feloun and cruel.
If the variant notating system has worked, the latter text should be an accurate edition of the Auchinleck text of *Alisaunder*. In order to compare them, we can look at a copy of the corresponding lines in the Auchinleck (f.278 r.b.), made from the facsimile, along with a diplomatic transcription. [See Figure 21.]

The differences between the two records of the Auchinleck text—the one first hand, the other reconstructed—are not massive, but they are pervasive. They can be divided into the following groups:

1. addition of modern punctuation marks
2. substitution of modern capital letters
3. expansion of manuscript abbreviations
4. substitution of letter preferences
5. word separation
6. misreading of Auchinleck
7. inadequate information in footnote

The first two categories of departures from Au's text are, as we have seen, the most common in all editions, generally being provided to help the reader along by signalling syntactic units, proper names, and affixed intensifiers. We should note, though, that when we backtrack from the variants we are offered absolutely no guidance as to the placement of punctuation—we ourselves must perform the additional operation of either accepting or rejecting the editor's punctuation marks in the base text, which may or may not apply to our reconstructed text. Punctuation marks are added by the editor at the end of each line, and in the middle of five lines; modern capitals are added at the beginning of each line, and in prop-
er names.

The third category is likewise also common, though Brandl and Zippel do not signal their expansion of manuscript abbreviations because theirs is a school text. As with punctuation, the process of backtracking offers us no guidance on matters of scribal abbreviations. All three of the abbreviations in this passage, especially the Latin-based ones, are in standard use in the 14th century; the shape of the "+" used for "and" is a particular hallmark of Scribe I.

Of the fourth category, the interpretation of manuscript "u" for modern "v" is common; the interchange of "y" for manuscript "i" is inexplicable here, and may be a transcription error. Category five, word separation, is often a matter of opinion and is usually performed by an editor in favor of modern usage as it has been here (such as in "Pailiueden" in line 5).

All of these departures, with the possible exception of the use of "y" for manuscript "i," are within what we might call the margin of error of a critical edition's variant readings—after all, since the reconstructed text was not the basis of study in the first place, scribal habits and the long-term effects of interpretive punctuation are obviously not considerations for Brandl and Zippel. So far as categories 1-5 are concerned, the variants do provide a way of getting back within close verbal proximity of the Auchinleck text—close enough to be able to create a stemma, or to gloss
a word. Certain problems do develop (such as how to use line numbers effectively when a version drops a line, as line 7841 in the base text is not found in the Au text), but considerable textual concensus has been realized by the operation.

The final two categories require a closer look. If we set aside the cases of word separation which might be contested, the only case of a misreading of Au reported in the variants is the "sidi" in line 2 (7827 of the Laud text). The meaningless word, obviously misread for "gidi," is probably due to the transcriber's unfamiliarity with the scribe's "g" letter-form, compounded by the presence of a rubrication on the initial letter to mark it as a line-beginning.

More important is the fourth line from the bottom (line 7842 in Laud), in which the Laud line "þat he hym warie, on al wise," has been footnoted "he war in." Logically, if we wish to restore the variant, we should match up its first word (the "signal" word) with its correspondent in the base text and, if no space or ellipsis is offered in the variant note, we should replace the base text with the variant text until the syntax closes itself again. Thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{þat he hym warie, on al wise,} & \quad \text{(base)} \\
+ \quad \text{he war in} & \quad \text{(variant)} \\
\hline
\text{þat he war in al wise,} & \quad \text{(reconstruction)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The Auchinleck reading, which expands as "þat he him war in al wise," is thus not obtained because the retention of the
reflexive pronoun is not signalled; this is the only one of
the 17 variants in this passage which fails to reproduce a
syntactically accurate text.

Using this very small sample, it would seem that it is
quite possible to reconstruct, within limits, the text of an
"unedited" manuscript by backtracking variants from a differ-
ent base text except for persistently unregulated punctuation
marks, which seem to be in every case a matter of taste. The
process becomes infinitely more problematic if the versions
are even slightly more divergent than those of Alisaunder, or
if the collation and the edited text are offered by different
persons (in which case notation forms can stand in the way of
clarity).

To return to my initial questions regarding collations,
then, it is clear that the editorial form privileges verbal
features. It operates like a primitive database into which
strings of alphabet characters (and morpheme-related punctua-
tion marks such as hyphens) may be stored, only to be called
up for use at a later time. But in practice the format
violates the syntactic integrity of both the base and the
collational manuscripts; phrases, like words, are data, and
are important only insofar as they supply orthographic data.
The mechanism for replacing parts of phrases is imperfect, and
there is no mechanism for dealing with more complex collations
of larger syntactic units.

Finally, regarding my nearly-rhetorical question of who
uses such autonomous collations: only those scholars wishing to partially spot-check the range of readings in a particular locus. Reduced to such minute particles, and detached from syntax and other forms of linguistic continuity, collated textual data does not carry enough meaningful context to be generally useful. But literary criticism on the Auchinleck manuscript in this century does provide us with one fascinating example of the use of collational material (and other detailed textual data) in source text establishment: the Auchinleck Bookshop theory.
CHAPTER IV

Edited Text as Medieval Artifact: The Auchinleck Bookshop Theory

"But papa," the little boy persisted, "why isn't the Emperor wearing any clothes?"

--The Brothers Grimm

No concensus has existed among Middle English editors, even well into this century, concerning the presentation of scribal variation. Classroom purpose, scholarly expediency, romantic faith in the existence of an original text--all of these forces have had their influence at one time or another, and have effectively created a bibliographic record of the Auchinleck manuscript which consists of a rather heterogeneous collection of editions. Few of these editions take into account codicological features, and none views scribal variation as anything but a veil to an assumed original. In the previous two chapters we have seen, both in editors' findings and in their very rhetoric, a strong approach-avoidance with the physical circumstances of scribal variation, an almost ritualistic display of extrinsic variation (that is, a display of variants only in their relationship to the perceived organic textual tradition of a specific poem
within the manuscript) without a complementary discussion of *intrinsic* variation (that is, the nature of the variants in the individual scribal environment). Extremely conscientious editors such as Kölbing attempted to record both forms of variation, and were overwhelmed; less cautious ones such as Ross resolved problems by skirting critical methodology altogether and opting for an arbitrary synthesis of varying texts.

The evidence of the past two chapters also makes it clear that editors are guided by a cluster of hidden assumptions about the users of their editions. The pole-star of all the Auchinleck editions examined thus far is the modernization of manuscript texts in order to be useful—the tacit belief that a texture which typographically interprets for the reader is not merely a desirable, but is in fact a necessary feature of a medieval edition. While the texture's parameters necessarily change from age to age (from an Abbotsford Club work to a classroom anthology, for example), editors have consistently chosen to remove from their subject works the single most unstable element of all: the strangeness of the manuscript text itself.

This discovery discourages idealism. When we realize that editors can at the same time be highly influential through the visual texture of their publications, but also that they must inevitably accommodate the aesthetics of a book-buying public, we are led to the conclusion that an
active, rigorous posture on the part of the editor is an inevitable part of the editorial aesthetic. In this light, the proscriptions against conservative editorship made by the more ambitious theorists, as well as the rise of critical editing and stemmatics in the late 19th century, are found to have much in common.¹

But what is the cumulative effect of the application of this procedure to the dozens of items in the Auchinleck? The creation of a critical edition is fundamentally linked to the desire to find authority in poetic originals, and as the 20th century has progressed and the trust in these poetic Ur-texts has declined and the once proud glory of the critical edition has been challenged. How has the practice of critical editing affected broader literary criticism on the Auchinlecks' contents? This is the question which we address in the present chapter by looking closely at the origins of the Auchinleck Bookshop theory and of a rather obscure theory concerning two of the romances in the manuscript, Roland and Vernagu and Otuel a Knight. The claims made for each theory are the product of a strong trust in editorial action; when we examine the details of the theories we will see how a select few medieval scholars utilized the data of edited texts.

First, however, I would like to offer one final example from the Auchinleck editions to show that some scholars did know their inherited formats would not be of much real help in dealing with medieval textual variation: it is surprising to
discover that as early as the 1890's some far-sighted editors were already signalling the death of the critical form.

When Eugen Kölbing finished his edition of Sir Beves of Hamtoun for the EETS in 1894, he had been working on it for over a decade and a half—it was published, in fact, by the Society in three volumes (Extra Series 46, 48, and 65) which were later bound together singly. The edition itself therefore spans an uncharacteristically long period, both in terms of publication and a man's adult life, and everywhere in Kölbing's combined volumes we see retrospection and summary. He was near the end of his life when he completed the project, a life filled with tremendous praise for his careful paleography and his publication of scores of medieval English poems. I do not wish to flatter his memory unduly, but Kölbing's work in the 1890's is filled with qualities so valuable that they must be given considerable weight: as an editor he was prodigious, but calm wisdom and good sense underlie nearly all of his philology. When he found that he could not explain physical circumstances in the texts he edited, he willingly said so.

In the midst of the Auchinleck version of Beves of Hamtoun, for example, there exists an abrupt change of meter from couplets to tail-rhymes. This is not uncommon for long narratives of the period; the meter of Guy of Warwick changes in the same way, and Roland and Vernagu shifts subtly from tetrameter to trimeter couplets, but assigning a reason to the
observable fact is very difficult. Is it the result of a scribe using different exemplars, or just one exemplar which contained the same shift? Has the Auchinleck scribe introduced the change? Was one or the other of the sections in an exemplar, and the other the result of scribal innovation? What might be the reasons for this inventiveness? Amidst all the speculation, the decision to admit that it is impossible to satisfactorily attribute the cause of such a change is the most difficult. Yet this is what Kölnbing does:

The reason for these changes of metre in the middle of the text, is altogether unknown. Neither in Sir Beves, Guy of Warwick, nor Perumbras, is there anything to correspond with this change in the original French versions. [...] Even the conjecture that this part of the poem was originally written in rhyming couplets, and the caudae added afterwards by the scribe, is entirely unfounded; for, in many cases, these short lines are absolutely necessary for the context. So we must confess that we do not know what induced the English translator of Sir Beves to change the metre in such a remarkable way. (1894, xi.)

This is significant. As a member of a generation of editors oriented toward the exhaustive recording of verbal variations and the drawing of genealogical relationships, Kölnbing might have taken up the challenge presented by the Beves text and offered a theory of manuscript ancestry which would easily have explained the spliced rhyme. The conjectures are easy to make, and as we will see later in this chapter they are easily supported. But they appeal to the inventive faculty, and that is dangerous; the range of explanation for such phenomena is, in fact, similar to the
vast range of explanation for the traditional "scribal errors" of invention and improvement.

Kölbing resists—he demures—and in doing so he makes himself vulnerable to attack by those who might think him a lazy or inadequate thinker. But he does offer a stemma based on the associations he is able to make. [See Figure 22.] The evidence which has led Kölbing to posit the paired relationships of these texts is in line with common Lachmannian practice—shared errors form themselves into "families" of manuscripts. Kölbing's reasons for separating A from S and N in the x family involve passages which S and N share but A omits, as well as S and N's tendency to re-introduce the couplet rhyme after the point at which the tail-rhyme is taken up. But Kölbing has no evidence of any texts precedent to A which might address the subject of rhyme within A itself—it is the oldest of all the extant versions, and its use of rhyme does not match S or N's.

The problem lies before us: the textual criticism developed by Kölbing's German colleagues has provided him with a method of distinguishing families of qualitatively better and worse manuscripts. But even after principles of recension according to external evidence have been thoroughly applied, there will remain textual features such as this change in rhyme which will pervade a particular version—which cannot be extracted from it—and which, since they cannot be accurately tested against other witnesses, ultimately cannot be judged as
either good or bad. They are scribal meddlings and tamperings, yes—but they stick in the craw of the stemmaticist because he cannot work them into what he wants to be a "Unified Field Theory" of medieval textuality. These features' existence is not completely compatible with recension, and the editor must either cover them up, ignore them, admit them, or discard his theory and present his text in a form which has no precedent in accepted scholarship.

Kölbing chose to retain the method, but his description of the classification of the manuscripts contains several strong indications of his discomfort with his findings. In the introduction to Beves he offers the following apologies:

But also considering the readings of the English MSS. for themselves, my readers will meet now and then with a case where this pedigree appears to be crossed. Nor can it be otherwise with a text that has a history of its own in England, the greater part of the documents being irreparably lost. Nor do I imagine that I have given more than a first sketch. As I have supplied the reader with the whole of the materials which I could get hold of in the course of seventeen years, the field is open for any one who takes an interest in these things, and thinks himself able to draw a perfect picture in stead of this rough draught. (xli)

Kölbing has brought us to an ideological summit in the history of Middle English editing: he has produced an edited text to which he has not only been unable to apply recension successfully, but which he himself considers after a labor of seventeen years to be unsuccessful! He earnestly invites his reader (or perhaps it is a dare?) to do a better job with the materials he has worked with. Finally the moment is upon us:
After all that has been stated in the foregoing §, I do not believe that anybody will ever be able to make a thoroughly critical edition of the poem, without introducing a lot of arbitrary changes. I quite agree with Dr. Furnivall that, in a case like this, even trying to edit the work critically would be only making it far more difficult for the reader to form a judgment of his own.

... I have therefore simply restricted myself to laying before the members of the Early English Text Society the whole of the materials. (lxii)

Here we have the breakdown of the critical edition. Kölbing had the skill, the experience, and the acumen to see that the logical extension of editing *Bevis of Hamtoun* would be madness ("variation," "mouvance") itself. His editorial method is found here, on page xliii of his introduction, in the midst of his most profound uncertainties about the nature of critical editing, and he admits that what he has done is to fail in that task and to offer transcription accompanied by incompletely consolidated variants.

Kölbing had been aware of the titanic problems he was going to face as early as 1885, when he sent forth the first volume of the edition. In that portion of the work he calls *Beves* "undoubtedly the most complicated one of all the Middle-English romances," and states:

Many difficult fundamental questions have to be solved regarding it: for instance, are those passages in which one MS. of *y*, or all of them that don't show any resemblance to A, parts of another independent translation, or simply the work of copyists, who now and then felt themselves inspired to play the poet, and compose a scene anew? (1885, vi.)

Were Kölbing able to see the activities of students of
medieval literature in the 1990's, with instructors working into their syllabuses cutting-edge topics like scribal profiles and "inscription as authorship" (and thus bringing the subject of verbal variation to the attention of the latest generation of scholars), he might wonder that it had taken a hundred years—but he would not be surprised. We see him pointing at the same features a century ago. If the Anglo-Germanic philological establishment of his own age had allowed it, the Middle English critical edition might at that time have undergone the serious self-examination it did in France under the competing editorial tyrannies of Gaston Paris and Joseph Bédier.

To Kölbing the importance of the findings was accompanied by a concern for their effect on his reader. The "dare" that he offered—not that he be proved wrong, but that someone provide a hypothesis that was more sufficient than his own—is telling. Moreover, his reference to his labor of seventeen years is a justified attempt to garner increased respect for the product such as it is. Many times in his introduction he offers apologies such as "The great discrepancies between the different MSS. now and then have rendered the arrangement of the apparatus very difficult, and I am afraid that on some pages it may not be perspicuous enough..." (xlii). The strangeness of the editorial form begins to approximate the strangeness of the medieval manuscript itself, and the editor must surely wonder whether the appearance of the following
might not be more of a hindrance, in its crafted mechanisms, than a simple rotograph facsimile would be with its minims and abbreviations. [See Figure 23.]
i. Print Culture and the Auchinleck Bookshop Theory

In other words, if a medieval author shows himself aware of texts found together only in one manuscript, and of texts that are found nowhere else, and of readings that occur nowhere else, we may feel that in all human probability this was the manuscript that he read.

—Laura Hibbard Loomis, 1940

Kölbing's sagacity in the matter of textual reception by modern readers and his willingness to accept the limitations of attributable evidence for direct written transmission were not shared by many scholars over the subsequent decades. The urge to connect texts, to turn medieval chaos into modern cosmos and thereby somehow defeat the forces of oblivion and entropy, is a prominent feature of most textual scholarship of the period 1860–1970. Today, this Whitmanish "urge to merge" is often discussed; it has become commonplace for us to talk about the obsession with literal accuracy and with omphaloskeptic verbal test systems such as manuscript stemma. But so far as Auchinleck studies go, we can nowhere better observe the strikingly selective application of textual data than in the Auchinleck Bookshop Theory advanced by Laura Hibbard Loomis in the 1940's.

Loomis wrote five articles between 1940 and 1951 in which she displays a marked dependence on editions for verbal information—information she would in turn use to construct what is no doubt the farthest-reaching theory ever made
concerning the origins of the Auchinleck. The first, "Chaucer and the Auchinleck Ms: 'Thopas' and 'Guy of Warwick'," appeared in 1940 with the purpose of proving that Geoffrey Chaucer had read several romances in the Auchinleck manuscript before he wrote *The Tale of Sir Thopas*.² She offers evidence to support her belief that Chaucer was textually influenced by the Auchinleck poems to the extent that phrases and lines from the latter show up verbatim in his own poem, albeit in a context of caricature.

It is certainly an intoxicating prospect to be able to identify specifically a medieval author's vernacular forebears, and the activity has analogues in the reconstructions of the libraries of so many of the English poets--Jonson, Pope, and so on. Loomis' proof, though, is not, like the proofs involving the latter authors, based on handwritten notes, inventories, or sale records. Instead, she states that proof of Chaucer's use of the Auchinleck lies in the "large number of small but specific combinations" of words shared by *Thopas* and the lengthy Auchinleck romance *Guy of Warwick*. While *Guy* exists in other manuscripts and in other versions, Loomis determined that a "crucial combination of words, phrases, rimes, details, etc." allows us to pinpoint the Auchinleck as the *Thopas* source (1940, 138-39).

Her evidence is easy to examine. It consists of passages from *Thopas* and *Guy* printed in parallel so that verbal similarities may be observed by readers and they may judge the
correspondences for themselves. [See Figure 24.] The correspondences are striking, and are made more so by Loomis' decision to print them in italics and to further explain their nature in the footnotes. This kind of evidence continues for eight pages, at the end of which Loomis closes by stating, "The long, foregoing list of quotations needs no further commentary; the individual and the cumulative effect can hardly be denied" (148). The case is thus authoritatively declared closed. It is a fabulous discovery--a source-seeker's dream, in a manner of speaking.

But quickly there come to mind three problems with the notion of textual proof that Loomis has presented here. First is the assumption that literate begets literate--that it would have been impossible for Chaucer to have created the readings in Thopas independently.³ Metrical romances are extraordinarily formulaic creations (a feature which has long caused them to be berated by literary critics, who have used the "rim, ram, ruf"'s of the Thopas as ammunition), and one quickly notices that nearly all of Loomis' evidence involves formulaic phrases or end-rhymes which belongs to the tail-rhyme repertoire of stock devices.⁴ Loomis acknowledges the excessive formulaism of Guy, but then relies on the belief that "nearly all the combinations of elements here noted are, in themselves, unique" (139, emphasis mine). That is, she argues that despite the lines' origin being in the verbal stock-room, the Auchinleck text as we receive it is fixed on
the page and its particular combination of words and rhymes could be read and utilized by a later poet such as Chaucer. She continues:

Though we cannot, in view of all the manuscripts known to be lost, give too much importance to the fact that today a manuscript text is unique, still we cannot refuse to credit the converging evidence of unique combination [sic] of texts and of unique readings in those texts. For we have, after all, the positive evidence of all our still extant manuscripts to establish their essential individuality. Manuscripts can be grouped by families, relationships can be traced, but in Middle English at least it is certain that no compilation of romances exists which is an exact copy of another. It is, therefore, fundamentally improbable that a manuscript satisfying not one but all of the exact and peculiar conditions noted above should ever have been duplicated. It must have been the actual manuscript known to the medieval author. (135)

She does not continue the thought, however. The logical continuation of this line of reasoning would be that Chaucer, himself a 14th-century word-oriented Londoner, would be just as able to pull stock phrases, tags, and tails out of his head as he could from a source text. Her hard-nosed conditions for proof of textual identification (quoted as the headnote to this section), in which a combination of readings can lead to positive identification of transmission, is grounded in observation but is too reductive. It ignores the unrecoverable variety of linguistic experience of which the Auchinleck texts are surely but a small part; it ignores error, whimsy, and other conscious and unconscious mental processes.

Most of all, though, Loomis' proof ignores culture. To think that any manuscript source needs to be exactly pinpoint-
ed for what is essentially a feature of medieval cultural literacy borders on the laughable—as though a philologist of the 27th century would want to look back at our own contemporary love songs and trace the transmission of the ubiquitous phrase "Baby baby, you’re my baby." The future philologist might indeed be able to make connections, but would these connections have any resonance for art, craft, or culture? No: the investigator would merely have re-established the fact that her evidence was all of a similar date. To make such connections is to force significance unduly upon what may well be, for all the seeker’s wishes, verbal coincidence.  

The first objection to Loomis’ method of proving verbal borrowing, then, is that it relies excessively on literate transmission as the only force in inscription. The second objection is simpler. The quotations from The Tale of Sir Thopas are, as you can see, offered consecutively: Loomis has not presented a full text of the poem, but what she has given is in consecutive order. The quotations from Guy of Warwick, however, are imported as needed from all over the poem—from locations 276 stanzas (over 3300 lines) apart in the case of Thopas stanza 2. The asterisks Loomis has placed next to the "2(5-12)" and other stanza/line references are intended to suggest particularly close textual similarity—but the lines are anything but close in the context of Guy of Warwick. The fact that she has needed to pull together evidentiary phrases separated by thousands of lines of meaningful narrative is
truly disturbing, and of course Loomis does not discuss this aspect of her methodology in the article.

These common-sense observations are certainly enough to produce misgivings. While it is certainly possible that Chaucer did once read from the Auchenleck manuscript (that claim per se is not really a subject for dispute here), what we are dealing with is the article as Loomis wrote it. Her intention was to offer this comparison of Thopas and Guy in order to show that this was one of the scores—hundreds, perhaps—of books that Chaucer had read from. But that context is not voiced; as I have just shown, it is not part of Loomis' rhetoric to allow a healthy modicum of potential doubt about her findings. When she is finished presenting her data, she presents the case as closed—there are no qualifications and no calls for further inquiry. This "silencing" feature of her rhetoric merely reinforces a restrictive textual microscoppy which treats manuscript distances as inconsequential and which rams the two romances together with an almost comic abruptness.

Finally—and this objection is the most telling for our survey—for her quotations from Chaucer and from the Auchenleck poem, Loomis has relied entirely on edited sources: F.N. Robinson's 1933 edition of The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer for the Thopas selections, and Julius Zupitza's 1883 EETS edition of Guy. Although in one note she does acknowledge "the helpful courtesy of M.R. Dobie, Keeper of MSS [of
Advocates' Library, Edinburgh] in replying to questions and in facilitating my use of the MS" (133, n.8), Loomis has obviously not seen the manuscript itself. When she comments on the poor quality of the surviving miniatures, for example, her footnote shows that this observation is based on the hand-drawn facsimile prefixed to Turnbull's 1838 edition of Bevis of Hamton for the Maitland Club. Her information on the scribes, moreover, comes entirely from the "old but outstanding" description by Köllbing, as well as supplementary information from editors such as Zettl and Brunner.

Her choice of Zupitza's edition is not a bad one—it is as technically careful a critical edition as one can find and uses the standard policies of its generation (with, of course, the standard omissions as well). Her use of Robinson, though, is puzzling: nowhere is there any mention that what Robinson offers in his edition is not the record of a single manuscript. In keeping with standard Chaucerian practice, Robinson's text is composed of the Ellesmere manuscript of the Tales freely emended by a variety of other copies in cases of unsatisfactory readings (Robinson 1004).

An examination of the collation of the Thopas text shows that there is not a great deal of variation among the manuscripts Robinson synthesized for the text, but there are some readings which mar the ease of Loomis' findings. Line 805 of Thopas, for example, which in Robinson's edition reads "That to him durste ride or goon," is noted in the collation to
exist only in three manuscripts: Cambridge Dd.4.24, Cardigan, and B.L. Royal 17.D.xv. If it were Loomis' project to compare two textual witnesses (Auchinleck and Ellesmere), the line should not be part of the evidence. But she makes a leap of faith—she equates Robinson with Chaucer—and thus she uses the editor's product in order to quote the line as part of her textual evidence.

In her use of both editors, then, Loomis at the very least demonstrates a lack of concern with editorial decision-making. In her use of Robinson she silently accepts the considerable grooming of Chaucer; in her use of Zupitza she has silently mined for text without regard to narrative position. In neither case does the texture of the edition—the goals, audiences, and methods of the editor and their influence upon the printed result—enter her article. The question for the present student of editorial history, then, is one of motivation: has Loomis taken advantage of the editors with full knowledge of these potential objections, or was she rather idealistically accepting that the editorial mechanism had done its job correctly and that there was no reason to suspect that the edition could not be attributed the authority necessary to make this kind of comparison? Unlike Kölbing, who was faced with an inexplicable circumstance and left it that way, Loomis' desire is to give the appearance of solution to all textual problems within the radius of the Bookshop.
The only stable perspective on this frustrating use of edited material is, I believe, that Loomis is working as a medievalist of her age. At nearly every turn in the article she claims that she is being explicit in her use of manuscript information ("For we have, after all, the positive evidence of all our still extant manuscripts to establish their essential individuality" (135)), but to our taste she does not match this claim with practice. Her definition of "manuscript evidence" is not the same as ours because she believed implicitly, like so many others, that edited texts were medieval texts.

I have examined Loomis' method in such detail because she employs it again in her later, much more influential article, "The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop of 1330-1340," which appeared in PMLA in 1942. There is much to applaud this article for: it represents the first scholarly suggestion of comprehensive pre-planning on the part of Auchinleck Scribe I, and we owe Loomis a considerable debt for bringing the scribes themselves into the foreground of criticism. Her general conclusion, in fact (that Scribe I held the role of a sort of "general editor" of the manuscript) is sound, and is corroborated by much codicological evidence. But her over-enthusiastic reliance on editions as complete witnesses of the manuscript again brings about unnecessarily sweeping conclusions.

Beginning with the observation that lines of the Auchin-
leck poems penned by different scribes repeat with accuracy, Loomis posited that the only explanation for such borrowings was that the five scribes who wrote the manuscript were gathered in one place at one time. Adding her opinion that the Auchinleck is not sufficiently decorative to be considered a work of art (she compares the extant miniatures to the work of the illustrator of Cotton Nero A.x. as examples of poor-quality illumination) she comes to the conclusion that the manuscript was the result of a commercial enterprise, a "bookshop" under the direction of an organizing leader who would be in charge of handing out copying assignments to the men working for him. Loomis suggested that a purchaser would order a copy of this or that text, and if it were available it would be translated (if necessary) and copied into gatherings that would later be bound together with others.

After printing parallel quotations (they cannot rightly be called passages) from Guy of Warwick and Reinbrun, and of Guy of Warwick and Amis and Amiloun in precisely the same format as we saw in her study of Sir Thopas, Loomis offers the following summary of her findings:

For all but five romances (Orfeo, Degaré, Otuel, Horn Childe, and the King of Tars) in the Auchinleck MS, we have still extant French texts. Though no one of these texts may be the precise original from which the English translators made their versions, it must have been on French texts close to these that they worked; by these they meant the source book or geste to which they not infrequently referred. These Auchinleck romances were copied from the texts of translators, or workers with texts, not with tradition or invention. The "authors" were in no wise original
poets, and did not, as it is generally admitted, achieve distinction of style, though a few poems, like Orfeo, have genuine charm. (1942, 163-64, emphasis original)

I do not disagree with Loomis' fundamental observation: there are ubiquitous verbal parallels among the Auchinleck poems, some of which are no doubt due to precisely the direct scribal copying that she characterizes. But to push the literate paradigm so completely on the manuscript and to ignore other key physical evidence altogether (such as catch-phrases, quire arrangement, rubrication, and variations in script suggestive of scribal stints, none of which is mentioned) is simply not a wise method. And the same rhetorical tyranny we observed in the Thopas article is operating here as well: after declaring that it is impossible to ascribe the verbal parallels between Amis and Guy to anything but "direct textual borrowing," Loomis proceeds to explain away those instances in which the scribes have not conformed to her expectations by downplaying scrupulous scribal accuracy in vernacular texts of the 14th century (1942, 181-82).

Loomis has marked an important point in the history of work on the Auchinleck: she has created in the Bookshop a setting where any of a number of verbal relationships can take place. Scribes' accuracy in the copying process can be "slavish," or can be the result of inspiration by the texts they copy; the same scribes can lapse into the middle ground of lazy hackwork. Scribes can make separate copies of the
same poem in various meters and rhymes, and then choose one and discard the others; they can also forget what they are doing and splice the copies together, resulting in the kind of enigmatic shift that vexed Kölbìng in Beves of Hamtoun. Literally anything can and does happen to manuscripts in the Auchinleck Bookshop because Loomis' enthusiasm to connect texts in a literal fashion has driven her to feel that she is looking at "the answer to the manuscript" when in fact the best that any philologist can ever hope for in these matters is to claim to be looking in the direction of that answer.

Why should she be so rhetorically tyrannical on these issues? I believe the answer is simple: because her reliance on the printed textures of critical editions as the sole source of information about the Auchinleck has removed all authentic, medieval textual elements from her consideration. She is not consulting a manuscript when she writes this article; rather, she is consulting six or seven EETS volumes and is looking upon them as the manuscript. There is no evidence (no point made in a paragraph, no offhand phrase in a footnote) to suggest that Loomis had seen the Auchinleck by 1942.

There is supreme irony in this point—that such a detailed explanation of the genesis of a medieval book should be made by a person who, like Bishop Percy and other antiquarians, had never seen it—and yet I doubt there can be any more symbolic point that can be made about the textual studies of
Loomis' generation than that it predicated such a situation. Blind faith in critical editions made the Auchinleck Bookshop theory possible: it is a product of the romantic textual vision set into motion in the 19th century, and whatever the good observations that may be contained incidentally within the pages of her article, Loomis' theory is too rhetorically loaded to be of sensible value and should now be discarded once and for all. It is simply not a line of inquiry which contains enough good revelation to outweigh the enormous consequences of its hyperliterate premise.
ii. A Middle English Charlemagne Cycle?

to otuel also 3ern
Þat was asarra3in stern
ful sone Þis word sprong

--rhyme-link between the Auchinleck
poems Roland and Vernagu and
Otuel a Kni3t (f267v.b)

The little tail-rhyme romance Roland and Vernagu (Auchinleck item 36) seems an unlikely candidate to be the featured text in any major undertaking of criticism. Just 879 lines long, the poem tells of various adventures of Charlemagne and Roland while the former was fighting wars in Spain. Its narrative is episodic, its meter and rhyme are typical of its genre, and there are no elements of plot (apart from the theological debate between Roland and the Saracen giant who gives the poem its name) which strike the reader as extraordinary. Although it has been edited three times (once, by Turnbull, for the Abbotsford Club, once for the EETS, and once for a dissertation), the poem has never been considered important for scholars or for students on the virtues of its poetic content.

Yet surprisingly, this obscure romance lies at the center of an impressive theory of a lost Charlemagne epic—a theory which gained most of its vitality in the 1940’s by Laura Loomis and her Bookshop theory. A glance at the Bibliography of Pearsall and Cunningham’s facsimile of the Auchinleck will
confirm that studies relating to this Charlemagne cycle account for nearly all of the additions to Auchinleck studies during the period 1940-1979.9

Long before Loomis' time, scholars who looked at the ten Middle English Charlemagne romances had busied themselves with documenting the ways in which two of them, Roland and Vernagu (Auchinleck item xxxvi) and Otuel and Roland (in the "Fillingham Manuscript," now BL Additional MS 37492), could be seen to be remnants of an older and longer English work given the name "Charlemagne and Roland" by Gaston Paris in 1865. Paris called this hypothetical Ur-text a "cyclic poem," a momentous collection of English verse based on French sources which contained material now extant only in the shorter poems. Despite the casual nature of his suggestion in its context,10 this hypothetical "Charlemagne and Roland" has, since 1865, attracted an increasing number of referential attributions normally associated only with existing literary works. Its existence is promoted without qualification in Hamilton Smyser's entry on Charlemagne legends in the newer Manual of the Writings in Middle English, and subsequent published scholarship has failed to question seriously any of the claims made for it there. The concept of the cyclic poem "Charle- magne and Roland" is therefore currently an unchallenged explanation of the transmission of matière de France into England.

Gaston Paris offered the first comprehensive scholarly
discussion of the Middle English Charlemagne romances in his *Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne*. He sought to argue that the English poems showed the same general filial relationship to common sources as did the Charlemagne works in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Norse. His method was not necessarily to point out gaps in contemporary knowledge (and thereby to provoke further study), but rather to decisively reconstruct with the available evidence the spread of the Charlemagne legends throughout vernacular cultures in the later Middle Ages.  

Paris' claims seem to be very impressive, but his reasoning is actually quite simple. He knew from published descriptions that *Roland and Vernagu* and *Otuel and Roland* were both in twelve-line tail-rhyme stanzas, and that, apart from the Otuel material with which the latter poem begins, they both contained episodes derived from the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*. Further, he knew that there was very little overlap in the episodes, and that *Roland and Vernagu* generally drew from the first half of the *Pseudo-Turpin* while *Otuel and Roland* drew from the second half. The two poems thus appeared complementary to him, and to explain their estrangement he stated that their author, presumably once he had finished copying *Roland and Vernagu* into the Auchinleck manuscript, decided that he preferred the couplet version of the Otuel story and "spliced" the latter in (so that it became Auchinleck item 37, titled in the manuscript *Otuel a Knight*). "Charlemagne and Roland," as
Paris introduced it, must therefore have predated the Auchinleck manuscript and must have been composed of an ur-Roland and Vernagu followed immediately by an ur-Otuel and Roland.

The impression of unity in this proposed solution comes from several rhetorical devices. First, Paris himself was not concerned with the details of verse forms or of manuscript filiation, but rather with the larger story line: for example, he expresses the elements of his "Charlemagne and Roland" only as numbered sections of a larger corpus and does not discuss aspects interior to those sections. Moreover, he offers three venerable sources from which a fourth unknown one seems to derive naturally. The weight of tradition is on the side of anyone who seeks unity in this way, and the notion of a cyclic work is attractive and compelling. But we must realize the implications of this macroscopic approach to medieval narrative: in comparing "Charlemagne and Roland" to collections like the Norse sagas, Paris endowed the word "cyclic" with the connotation of "collective," like an anthology, and the result of a single directing hand.

Despite its offhand nature, Paris' declaration of the existence of a Middle English Charlemagne cycle was enthusiastically taken as fact. "Charlemagne and Roland" was often invoked in passing as a title in the decades surrounding the turn of the century. Although the theory was unverifiable because the Fillingham manuscript containing Otuel and Roland was temporarily lost during most of the 19th century, there
can be no doubt that at the time the cyclic poem theory was universally agreed to be a correct solution to the enigma of these two romances’ existence.12

The claims for the cyclic work are undermined, however, by the simple fact that there is no other objective evidence of a single comprehensive work such as "Charlemagne and Roland" in English verse or prose before the time of Caxton. On both the general and specific levels the theory fails close inspection; it reveals itself to be in large part the result of the preconceptions discussed earlier in this study, set out in particularly inflated rhetoric. It was originally, and remains, a shortcut to explain the resemblances between two poems written down 150 years apart; it was and is no more than a falsely satisfying response to what remains a series of very difficult textual questions. And it shares, significantly, Laura Loomis' obliviousness of manuscript evidence by relying wholly on printed editions for its evidentiary foundation.

Without exception, the men and women who built on Paris' remark about the entry of matière de France into England did so from the assumption that Roland and Vernagu and its "complement," Otuel and Roland, could not have been written intentionally in their surviving forms. Certainly when compared structurally to their eventual source, the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, the romances seemed at best confused and naive readings; at worst, they seemed inept and disgraceful examples of medieval versification. Shuffled folios and
scriptorium intrigue were suggested to explain the more stubborn interpretive points in what was repeatedly described as a decay from Latin prose to English verse, and textual evidence (similar phrases, and the identical or similar spellings of proper nouns) was brought to bear inconsistently to buttress the broader theoretical discussion.

Moreover, each of the major theorists shared his interest in the Middle English with a more than casual interest in the Latin history of the Pseudo-Turpin. The scholarly ideology of each theorist promoted consideration of the English works almost exclusively in terms of their ancestries. "Charlemagne and Roland" was used rhetorically as an actual text (it in some sense became an actual text, with an ascribed form and content) because it was a vital link which these experts on the Pseudo-Turpin needed in order to account for influence of that work in England.

A very good example of the advocacy of the Charlemagne theory is its presence in John Edwin Wells' original version of the Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400, published at the end of World War I. Wells was aided in his task of cataloguing the Charlemagne romances by the recent work of the EETS editors, but he shared Paris' strong synthesizing impulse. His primary aim was to view medieval texts macroscopically--to see large units of narrative as the interesting subject--and he still had only second-hand accounts to stand in for the missing Otuel and Roland. This
led Wells to apply to the romances a very curious taxonomy: he created three categories into which each of the romances would fall, but no single criterion applied to any two of the categories. His "Firumbras Group," for example, is composed of those works which contain in any form the story of the Saracen Fierabras' conversion to Christianity (83-87). The "Otuel Group," on the other hand, is expressly defined as "versions of tales represented in an assumed great cyclic poem Charlemagne and Roland, dealing with Charlemagne's wars against the Saracens (87-92)." This second category is therefore defined not by interior qualities, but by exterior ones: its narrative relationship to other texts.

Roland and Vernagu is placed in this Otuel Group even though the Otuel story is not told in the poem, and Otuel himself is mentioned only three lines from the end in what is likely a scribal bridge unique to the Auchinleck manuscript (Mordkoff 44). Wells' reliance on the cyclic poem theory is nowhere more evident than in his placement of The Sege off Melayne ("The Siege of Milan") in this group: there is no mention at all of Otuel in that poem, but since Paris had stated that the cyclic poem contained the Otinel/Otuel story, and the Sege might be an estranged introduction to the Otuel story, Wells thus categorized it (Wells 89).

By 1920, the Romantic fantasy of a great, organically unified poem celebrating Charlemagne's legendary accomplishments was well on its way to becoming an established biblio-
graphic fact. The cyclic poem theory and its dependence on the Auchinleck text of *Roland and Vernagu* was not evaluated until 1935, when Mary O’Sullivan edited the rediscovered Fillingham manuscript’s text of *Otuel and Roland* for the EETS. O’Sullivan enthusiastically agreed with Paris that *Otuel and Roland* and *Roland and Vernagu* were the remnants of a cyclic work, and distilled her conviction into precise areas of evidence.  

O’Sullivan was the first person to really submit the theory to inquiry based on the manuscripts, and her pronouncement of the theory as viable came at just the time that Laura Loomis was writing her articles about Chaucer and the Auchinleck Bookshop. Once again, a combination of scholarly influences is visible in the bibliography of the period: the tandem influence of Loomis’ articles and O’Sullivan’s edition prompted a series of articles in the later 1940’s and 50’s by Ronald Walpole and Hamilton Smyser, headed by the former’s 1944 monograph *Charlemagne and Roland: A Study of the Source of Two Middle English Metrical Romances, Roland and Vernagu and Otuel and Roland,* which set out to cement the cyclic poem theory into Middle English literary criticism once and for all. “Charlemagne and Roland” had found a new home: the Auchinleck Bookshop.

Between them, Walpole and Smyser detailed the circumstances whereby a 13th-century French copy of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* "became" the two extant English tail-rhyme poems. Their articles build upon one another’s, and the two
men offer a complete conjectural reconstruction of "Charlemagne and Roland" self-professedly free from major omissions or errors. The articles for the most part elaborate on the cruces introduced by O'Sullivan, and may be condensed into two movements: first, they reconstruct an ancestry for the hypothetical cyclic poem; second, they offer evidence for assigning a source to Roland and Vernagu.

The filiations hypothesized by Walpole and Smyser were not made according to Lachmannian recension; instead, they were much like Ross' edition of the Simonie, a misapplication of the idea of textual descent based on large motions in the text's contents. Although Walpole and Smyser do not offer a graphic stemma of "Charlemagne and Roland," we can piece together from their statements what one would look like. [See Figures 25 and 26.] An asterisk (*) accompanies a textual group in which Walpole could not pinpoint a specific manuscript used to generate the dependent family; these are, not surprisingly, abundant.

If we untangle the skein of claims made for this group of texts, then, we are confronted with an inescapable contradiction. If "Charlemagne and Roland" was actually present as a single entity in the Auchinleck manuscript, which, in Walpole's opinion, it must have been; and if Otuel and Roland is a remnant of the same "Charlemagne and Roland"; then Otuel and Roland must also be, at least in part, a translation of one of the Old French texts in BL Add. 40142 (which it definitely is
not). Moreover, we are still left with the question of why the principal scribe of the Auchinleck would have put the couplet Otuel aknight in his work if a tail-rhyme version of the same story (i.e., the first half of Otuel and Roland) had been made at the same time from the same source. The "Charlemagne and Roland" envisioned by Walpole and Smyser would require an almost paradoxical filiation, which I think expresses its own unlikeliness. [See Figure 27.]

The four (or more) works on the second line of the filiation in Figure 27 would necessarily have to have been made at the same time and place (Loomis' Auchinleck bookshop), and toward the common goal of presenting a single, comprehensive collection of the foreign campaigns of Charlemagne. "Charlemagne and Roland," according to Walpole and Smyser's ideas, must therefore not only have been created in the Auchinleck bookshop, but must have existed in the Auchinleck manuscript in the following order: 1) Roland and Vernagu, 2) Otuel aknight, and 3) an exemplar of the second half of Otuel and Roland. The tail-rhyme Otuel must have been discarded "for some reason" once it was completed, and must have disappeared after a copy was made in Norwich 150 years later; to this copy was suffixed a copy of the Turpin-based tail-rhyme episodes originally following Otuel aknight in the Auchinleck, which have also subsequently disappeared.

One final aspect of this assumed complementary relationship between Roland and Vernagu and Otuel and Roland will
complete our overview of the cyclic poem theory. In a 1946 article Smyser sought to prove that the verse "table of contents" present in Otuel and Roland (lines 1-44) was once present at the beginning of Roland and Vernagu. The general nature of the lines, which introduce characters and situations found in the Pseudo-Turpin, as well as the similarity between the first four extant lines of Roland and Vernagu and lines 41-44 of Otuel and Roland, led Smyser to believe that the entire introduction was present almost verbatim in the earlier poem. He offers as evidence the few letters that remain on the margin stub of f262a in the Auchinleck, and in a chart he matches them up to corresponding lines in Otuel and Roland. Although the result is hardly a close correspondence (and Smyser himself admits his reliance on Eugene Köbling's descriptions of the margin stub, which he clearly has not seen himself), he feels secure in claiming "the authority and antiquity of a quondam appearance in the Auchinleck MS" for the Otuel and Roland introduction.

Our attention in Smyser's argument comes to rest not on his ostensible reasoning, but rather once again on the basic assumption that he made about the way in which these poems were transmitted and on the rhetoric in which he couches his entire discussion of them. The Otuel and Roland introduction contains many references to many episodes found in that poem, as well as to the duel between Roland and Vernagu and another episode not present in it. Like the rest of the poem, the
introduction seems to be an altered version of an earlier English text made by persons not interested in verbal accuracy: several syntactic units make no logical sense, and the stanzas are of varying lengths. There is no reason to believe that the same promises of the same episodes would be made at the beginning of Roland and Vernagu, a comparatively sound and finite work, and in no case need Smyser have claimed proof by comparing fewer than six letters of a poem written down so much later. The first four lines of Roland and Vernagu are indeed similar to Otuel and Roland 41-44, but as with the formulaic introduction and lines on joyous harping of the Sir Orfeo controversy we cannot in good conscience say that we can tell what preceded the lines in Roland and Vernagu. The consequences of such rhetoric are such that they would invite immediate building on a very untrustworthy foundation.

This is the pragmatic consequence of what Walpole and Smyser describe in their articles: a complex series of circumstances relying on the confusion or extravagance of the Auchinleck scribes and the momentous re-emergence and subsequent disappearance of the exemplars of Otuel and Roland. "Charlemagne and Roland" seems at first to solve some perplexing problems (it can, for example, justify the perceived "foreignness" of the Otuel story), and might look convincing in stemma form were we not to remind ourselves of how few of the texts necessary for the tree actually exist. When followed through, the claims made for the Charlemagne cycle
quickly prove untenable.
iii. The Bookshop as Institution

History has not revealed the name of the poet.... Whether he be called Lydgate or Alcuin, or whether he remain a nameless spirit, his name is of secondary interest. The man is to be recognized through his work. As to his individuality, as represented in his character and his personality, his mirror reflects his own features. The poet belonged to the clergy, but he was no ordinary priest. He lived no humdrum life of ascetic severity. His horizon was broadened by gifts of homely personal sympathy for his flock. His heavens had midsummer clearness through the beautifying dignity of love to humanity.

... The poet has learned the lessons that he would teach, of fortitude, of patience, of hope, of faith, of trust. He has lived through the humility of confession. He has found joy and peace.

--Georgiana Morrill, introduction to Speculum Gy de Warewyke (1898), cxcv

Loomis' Bookshop theory was, clearly, potentially dangerous if believed with an excess of enthusiasm.\(^7\) It offered the perfect literary environment to explain the most puzzling textual relationships, and Walpole seized in particular on it to describe phenomena which he admits he was at a loss to explain otherwise. He began from a conception of the Auchinleck scribal process such as Loomis described: a group of men, certainly working under one roof in a lay scriptorium, were directed by a "general editor" whose function it was to oversee the assembly of a finished product. Each of the six Auchinleck scribes (Loomis' "literary hacks") would translate (if necessary), versify (if necessary), and copy down the
piece, relying continually on his fellows for a finishing rhyme or an apt epithet—thus the intertextual nature described by Loomis.

This scenario also attracted Walpole and Smyser because it suggested either the presence in the Bookshop of a large stationary library or regular access of Bookshop scribes to other libraries. The critical approaches of both men, like that of Loomis herself, required the availability of a large pool of texts. Walpole's own research on the Pseudo-Turpin brought him to the Old French manuscript BL Add. 40142, and he was convinced that it literally sat on the shelves in the Bookshop and was the source for all but the Otuel episode of "Charlemagne and Roland." He repeatedly voiced his conviction that Roland and Vernagu was written from this particular manuscript of the Turpin, much as Loomis had argued that Chaucer must have used the Auchinleck to write Sir Thopas.

Andre de Mandach, in the first volume of his Naissance et Developpement de la Chanson de Geste en Europe, styles the idea of an English cyclic poem as a manifestation of an international poetic consciousness. He uses previous scholarship in order to characterize the Charlemagne legends in northwest Europe as the almost inevitable expression of "La Geste." While admitting that the prospect of tying all three cultural cycles (Norse, Welsh, and, of course, English) into a unified theory is very attractive, Mandach nonetheless discusses the Middle English material from the conviction that
"La Geste de Charlemagne Auchin-Fillingham de l'Angleterre" followed the same familiar (in the literal sense, as "family members") as the Norse Karlamagnussaga and Welsh Campeu Charlymaen.

Mandach's only addition to the cyclic poem theory is to personalize it: he takes Walpole and Smyser's belief in "Charlemagne and Roland" to the extreme of offering a name for its author. At the conclusion of Otuel and Roland in the Fillingham manuscript there is a faint colophon which seems to read "Amen quod I Gage." Though the "Gage" is blotted and its reading doubtful, Mandach suggests that this reference reveals the name of the creator of "Charlemagne and Roland"—that his name was probably John Gage ("'Joseph' being an unpopular name in anti-Semitic thirteenth-century England"), and that this "*John Gage" is the single directing hand responsible for the cyclic poem. Even Mary O'Sullivan doubted this reading of the name when she presented it in her edition in 1935, but Mandach seems quite content to legitimize "Charlemagne and Roland" in this manner.

The pages of the Naissance et Developpement devoted to the English cyclic poem otherwise contain the same information as does the final object for discussion here, the entry on Charlemagne legends in Severs' 1961 revision of the Manual of the Writings in Middle English. As I stated earlier, the importance of all of this critical history lies not only in its ability to help us understand the conditions of past
interpretation, but also in the extent to which those interpretations are still alive in current reference materials. Hamilton Smyser's entry in the Manual of Writings perpetuates both the "Charlemagne and Roland" and Auchinleck Bookshop theories by assigning them their own bibliographic reference numbers and by avoiding any sense of doubt or uncertainty in the presentation of the theories. Smyser chose to keep John Wells' arbitrary classification system of three "groups" of romances, changing only the order in which the members of the Otuel group are given: he rearranges the section on Otuel and Roland so that it follows Roland and Vernagu, mirroring his theoretical conviction of their onetime joining with a juxtaposition in the Manual.

Smyser's entry therefore raises a significant question concerning the progress of scholarship in this genre. If the classification of the Charlemagne romances still depends to a great degree on the acceptance of the "Charlemagne and Roland" theory (which it does), and if the theory is abandoned (which it should be), what forum exists for a fundamental reconsideration of the textual relationships involved? The motivation behind the Severs/Hartung revision of the Manual of Writings was, needless to say, to revise—to provide updated bibliographies and textual approaches which were fresh and which could serve as a dependable handbook for subsequent scholars. Smyser did update the bibliography, but in presenting Paris' "Charlemagne and Roland" without qualification as a lost
romance he has increased the potential for misunderstanding for any of his readers who do not actually read all the primary and secondary sources.

Because of their enthusiastic, unreflective faith that the texture of modern editions accurately reflected medieval textuality, Loomis, Walpole, and Smyser developed a bibliographic history for scribal circumstances which could not have existed. The paradigm of proof under which this trio of scholars worked did not require them to view manuscripts holistically; thus while the conclusions they reached are compelling and are deeply embedded in medieval bibliography, the validity of those conclusions now needs to be tested. The generations of scholars since the 1960's must do the trio's work over again--under a different paradigm--to either confirm or deny even its simplest elements.
CHAPTER V

Present Tense, Past Imperfect, Future Progressive

In the psychomachic struggle between vanity (=taste) and prudence (=conservatism, distrust of self) it seems clear that the outcome is already decided, that personal taste (which I would extend to include "point of view," "ideology," or other determining mental structures on the part of the critic) will always prevail. Thus, from a modern perspective, the question is no longer how to go about eliminating subjective judgments but rather how to represent the effects and possible contradictions of subjectivity in all domains of humanistic or scientific research.

--David Hult, Speculum 61 (1986)

In Chapters Two and Three we looked in some detail at a generation of antiquarians and a generation of critical editors. Each might at first seem to be radically different from the other (i.e., refined hobbyists vs. professional scholars), but we saw that both generations shared the belief that medieval textual artifacts are by nature faulty and in need of some kind of mediation before they can be presented to their audiences. This fundamental belief links the two ages of philological activity: from the 1760's through the 1960's, editors universally took upon themselves the tasks of envisioning a textual originality and then of reconstructing one for their readers. The influence of this editorial function has sometimes been so great that, as we saw in Chapter Four in

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the striking case of the Auchinleck's Charlemagne poems, edited texts have effectively supplanted manuscript texts and have themselves become the subject of literary criticism.

One of the chief reasons for this "editorial tyranny" is that until about 1960 the plurality of informational loci in medieval manuscripts was not recognized by a substantial number of scholars of medieval literature. Codicological information existing between, around, and outside medieval poems cannot easily be represented in a critical edition format, and few editors have made earnest attempts to do so consistently. If textual in nature, such evidence has generally been considered nonliterary; if nontextual in nature, it has been considered only when it directly influences the condition of the literary text. Moreover, as I have suggested several times in this study, the principles of editing in Middle English simply have not been subjected to significant scrutiny, and therefore have not changed substantially, in the two hundred years we have surveyed.

But Middle English studies do evidence the first hints of such a self-examination after the Second World War. The series of articles by Loomis, Smyser, and Walpole mark an era during which the enthusiastic use of editions in textual proofs began to wane and the New Criticism began to be joined increasingly by critical approaches designed to be inclusive of wider cultural circumstances. The 1960's, -70's, and -80's might (if perspective on them is possible yet) be called a
period of introspection and retrospection, a time during which considerable editorial history has been written. This final chapter in my study of the Auchenleck’s editorial history turns to this period of introspection and to the veritable revolution in Middle English studies which we are witnessing at the present time. After so many decades, editors and editorial theorists have preferred to turn their energies toward the collection and management of codicological data (including, but not limited to, lines of text), and away from the print-prejudiced texturings with which we are now so familiar. Perhaps this means that compared to the antiquarian confectioner and scholarly surgeon the present generation of students of Middle English might best be called "shepherds," and we can hope that they bring an appropriate degree of pastoral contemplation and otium cum dignitate to this field.

To put it less bucolically, the current conditions in Middle English studies seem finally to be matching up with those which have long been agreed to be ideal circumstances for the prospering of philology in general: a willingness to view texts holistically, to spend time examining a verbal document without knowing precisely what one is looking for, and to express oneself on the public record as a part of an ongoing dialogue while avoiding the unhelpful, imperial oubliette of "there is no more to say".²

The consequences of this new spirit among Middle English editors will, however, be significant. It is possible that
the new conception of medieval textuality will be incompatible with most kinds of edition created in the past 200 years: whether or not this becomes the case, it is certainly likely that rising scholars will have little patience or willingness to work with the rows of books published by their forbears. The modicum of trust necessary to use effectively a critical edition has been seriously compromised; although such works will still be consulted, it will only be in tandem with other textual forms (i.e., facsimiles or other reproductions). New ideas of textuality have been vocalized at approximately the same time that new technologies with the potential to represent them have emerged. It is now twenty years since Paul Zumthor made *mouvance* a buzzword; it is at least a decade since paleography re-entered the vanguard of medieval English literary studies. The printed edition must one day become archaic, and no survey of it would be complete without at least a gesture in the direction of the developing technologies that may eventually replace it and represent the past in a fundamentally different manner.
i. Teaching Against the Artifact:
The Case of Pedagogical Anthologies

If this book succeeds in making the Middle Ages seem more attractive, more clearly related to modern times, or more profoundly suggestive, the editor will be satisfied.

--Albert Stanburrough Cook, 1915

Let us begin by turning our attention to the one kind of edited text so far ignored by this survey: the pedagogical anthology, wherein medieval literature is often presented at a far remove from its manuscript form. This is the form of edition we encounter most often in our careers as teachers of English, and my inventories show that it may be considered the most widely-disseminated form of edition currently being produced (see Table 2).

The student edition is also the most recent kind of Middle English edition to be developed. The medieval texts printed in such anthologies invariably end up being the most chimaerical creatures, often with manuscript features quite anaesthetized through editorial anticipation of the interests and ability levels of students. Classroom texts began to be published around the time of World War I, when the institutionalization of Middle English studies in universities was taking firm hold, and they gradually evolved from a language-based format (along the lines of Sweet’s Anglo-Saxon Primer, with readings offered to support a central linguistic purpose) to anthologies such as those of Garbáty and Dunn and Byrnes,
in which the Middle English language plays a rather secondary role.

The general practice in these publications has been to remove medieval texts as much as possible from their manuscript surroundings; the desire of their editors is to provide undergraduate and graduate students with clean, familiar-looking texts which represent medieval literature. Wide variation between versions, uncertainty in local readings, discord among authorities—these elements so common to medieval works generally have been textured out of the publication in favor of the appearance of a fixed, knowable, authorial text. The decision-making behind this texture is pragmatic: there are only so many hours in a semester, and there is always more than enough textual ground to cover. Given the sheer scope of many medieval English survey courses, the concept of textual uncertainty is simply a logistically difficult topic to introduce.

But the homogenizing of Middle English texts in classroom anthologies has unfavorable side effects. Undergraduate and graduate students who come to understand medieval literature through editions which actively suppress a good deal of manuscript evidence can develop routines of interpretation which are dramatically anachronistic. I do not mean to suggest that interpretations based on a perceived textual fixity have no value (quite the contrary), but it has been my experience that students who are not exposed to the fundamen-
tal differences between manuscript textuality and editorial texture usually lack the ability to incorporate into their work the meaningful insights and problems which indeterminacy can lead to. With the corollary neglect of paleography in graduate programs, it has been entirely possible in recent years for a university student to earn a Ph.D. in medieval English literature without ever once having looked at a copy of a manuscript page (except perhaps when passing a decorative frontispiece of Canterbury pilgrims).

A.S. Cook's *Literary Middle English Reader*, published in 1915, was one of the first such classroom publications. In his preface Cook shows that he is concerned with the relationship between scholarly critical editions such as the EETS volumes, on the one hand, and volumes around which a course could be taught, on the other; his allegiance, he emphasizes, is to the latter, and he offers justifications for devoting an entire reader to medieval English literature. He wonders out loud both whether the literature of this period is worth reading and whether it can be read without the extensive apparatus "so formidable as to constitute a serious deterrent."3 His book will be framed, he tells us, not in the interest of grammar, dialect, or lexicography, but of "literary enjoyment and profit," and he hopes that the texts ought not be harder to read than Elizabethan ones.

Since he is not presenting new scholarly notions about texts in his volume, Cook relies heavily upon previous
publications. Most of his brief introduction to Sir Orfeo, for example, is a quotation of Ker's work, and the text itself is a reproduction of Zielke's 1880 edition with the punctuation freely altered to make the syntax more approachable (88). Square brackets are not employed to signal departures from the base manuscript, though such departures are mentioned in the introduction if they involve a long passage. Stanza division likewise tends to be contrary to the manuscript indications, though (again) easier for a modern print-oriented user accustomed to distinct paragraphing. 4 Hard words are glossed on the page in order to make reading swifter and to avoid the student needing a separate dictionary.

We can recognize these as conventions which have survived into our own experience. But it is important to note that at this early date we find a strong impulse to discuss the edited text's differences from the manuscript. Cook tells us this about his general treatment of scribal evidence:

The editor has used his own judgment with respect to punctuation and capitalization, has normalized i and j, u and v, capitalized the first personal pronoun, and substituted "Jesu" for the ordinary "Jhesu"--which is due to a misapprehension. In the constitution of certain texts he has emended somewhat freely, but has always endeavored to supply the means of restoring the manuscript readings or the text of an earlier editor; where there is reason to suppose that the latter faithfully represents the manuscript, it has been referred to in the footnotes as "MS." (vi)

As we will see, this concern for "the means of restoring the manuscript readings" will gradually disappear from pedagogical editions over the course of the 20th century.
Kenneth Sisam's *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* (1921) is also the product of an editorial policy aware of a potential student/manuscript tension. It contains an apt and concise methodology for editing a school text:

A single manuscript is chosen as the basis of each text, and neither its readings nor its spellings are altered if they can reasonably be defended. Where correction involves substitution, the substituted letters are printed in italics, and the actual reading of the manuscript will be found in the Foot-notes (or occasionally in the Notes). Words or letters added to complete the manuscript are enclosed in caret brackets <>. Corrupt readings retained in the text are indicated by daggers † †. Paragraphing, punctuation, capitals, and the details of word division are modern, and contractions are expanded without notice, so that the reader shall not be distracted by difficulties that are purely palaeographical. A final e derived from OFr. é (e) or ie, OE. -ig, is printed é, to distinguish it from unaccented final e which is regularly lost in Modern English.

The extracts have been collated with the manuscripts, or with complete photographs, except nos. IV (Thornton MS.), VIIIB, XIa, and XVII, the manuscripts of which I have not been able to consult. The foot-notes as a rule take no account of conjectural emendations, variants from other manuscripts, or minutiae like erasures and corrections contemporary with the copy. (xlv, italics mine)

The features with which we are by now amply familiar—modern paragraphs, punctuation, capitals, word division, and expansion of abbreviation—are clearly not considered by the editor to have more than incidental effects on the reader. Sisam's conscientiousness on the subject of technical accuracy is very well taken, but also leads us to the understanding that students will not be asked to face paleographical challenges nor be subjected to the details of conjectural emendation—these are not considered by Sisam to be primary concerns for
students. Students can still be informed of these issues, of course, but the textbook gives the instructor no aid in this area.

As Middle English studies matured institutionally over the following decades, the anthology genre likewise matured enough to target particular levels of literature students. Two productions of the 1960's, the first edition of Volume One of the Norton Anthology of English Literature (1962) and J.A.W. Bennett and G.V. Smithers' Early Middle English Verse and Prose (1966), are sufficient to demonstrate the rich, student-based orientations which anthology publishers have developed.

The Norton, which has become easily the most influential literary textbook of the 20th century, is geared toward undergraduate (''novice'') readers, for whose benefit the editorial team has agreed to simplify textual problems. Since the Norton was originally, and remains, driven by the expressed needs and desiderata of teachers of English around the U.S., its editors have enjoyed an unusual wealth of input regarding content. (This accounts for the many items which have entered and exited the volume over the years, as well as for the wide appeal of the publication--the Norton is an institution because it is driven by institutional needs.)

While the choice of contents is expressly linked to the wishes of instructors in the introduction, and while the content changes of each new edition are advertised in bro-
chures and on the edition itself, the editors' style of presenting texts in the Middle English section has remained unchanged since 1962. Reading is made smooth, and impediments to swift consumption have been minimized. During subsequent revisions of the anthology (in 1968, 1974, 1979, 1985, and 1993), while no changes have been effected in the actual editorial texture, the general approach to the volume's use is stated more strongly and concisely: it is a guideline of the editors "that the student be provided the most reliable texts available, edited so as to expedite understanding, in a format inviting to the eye."  

The three pregnant phrases--"the most reliable texts available," "edited so as to expedite understanding," and "a format inviting to the eye"--are the leading forces in the Norton's textual presentation. They are mentioned solely because of the anticipated student audience, and thus these three qualities lead us to keep pedagogical anthologies distinct from antiquarian and scholarly editions. The concerns of the classroom have created the need for a completely different kind of edition, one which cannot be fairly judged according to any comparable scholarly standard. Utility, in the context of the Norton Anthology, is in part defined by the facility with which teachers can get their students to read the assignments and the facility with which the students can do the reading. The apparatus of the textbook is therefore as undistracting as possible, and its
student users are not exposed to problems of textual reliability—not because that exposure might thwart their appreciation of the literature, but because at the beginning level the need to attract and focus the attention of a general body of students overrides the more conservative impulses of scholarship.

The student anthology thus "looks" like a very different kind of medieval literature. As the preface to the Fourth Edition (1979) explains,

The works of Chaucer and other writers in Middle English that are not too difficult for the novice have also been left in the original language; each word, however, is consistently spelled in that form of its scribal variants which is closest to modern English. (xxxv-vi)

And in the introduction to the Chaucer selections of the same edition, we find:

The text here is from E.T. Donaldson's Chaucer's Poetry: An Anthology for the Modern Reader (1958, 1975) with some modifications. For The Canterbury Tales the Hengwrt Manuscript has provided the textual basis. The spelling has been altered to improve consistency and has been modernized in so far as is possible without distorting the phonological values of the Middle English. (97)

The fundamentally different purposes of the edition allow the editor to take substantial liberties in altering the text: he can essentially change whatever spelling he wishes, as long as the text he produces remains within the likely range of the London dialect. From the scholarly point of view, this is unacceptable (the edited text does not reflect an historically identifiable dialect of Middle English); but again the purpose
of the anthology considerably reduce the importance of scholarly accuracy in such matters.

That the volume makes concessions for the sake of classroom logistics there can be no doubt, and the scholarly temperament which refuses to admit the necessity of such concessions is being unnecessarily rigid. Still, there are legitimate grounds on which to criticize the editorial method of the Norton. Like the anthologies from the early part of the century, the Norton does not offer instructors help if they wish to work into their classes the issues of manuscript textuality: such issues, and the materials to support discussion of them, must still be generated by instructors and will inevitably chafe against the texture of the anthology. It is important to remember that the Norton's editorial policies (including those governing the medieval sections) come from 1962, when manuscript textuality was considered by many medieval scholars to be separable from literary interpretation. Perhaps in homage to E. Talbot Donaldson (who himself produced most of the selections in the Norton's medieval section), the method of presentation has not changed at all during the 30 years since its original appearance. Textuality has come to be conceived of in much more complex ways since 1962, and if we are to fault the Norton for any single aspect of its editorial policy it can surely concern the preservation of the standard "look" of the medieval selections.

J.A.W. Bennett and G.V. Smithers' Early Middle English
Verse and Prose, created within a few years of the Norton Anthology, takes a wholly different approach to presentation. Its target audience is graduate students who are experienced in Middle English, and thus the selections include substantially more information on manuscripts and editorial principles. A lengthy introduction gives a deep and wide course in Middle English pronunciation and dialectology; the editors then offer selections grouped by genre, prominently displaying the diversity of dialects.

The texts themselves are, unlike those in the Norton, unaccompanied by on-page glosses. Importantly, Bennett and Smithers have chosen to respect the integrity of a best text source: they choose one manuscript version of a work and offer it as representative of the genre. The selection from Floris and Blauncheflour, for example, has, like the rest of the included works, been newly edited for the anthology. The Auchinleck version has been selected for inclusion and its foliation is included in the margins to the text; paragraph breaks are also preserved at those locations where the manuscript contains rubricated paraph signals. In one instance (line 24), a line of text has been imported from a different manuscript version to complete a rhyme. This line is enclosed in parentheses and the importation is noted at the foot of the page; it is, however, distinguished from other textual notes by the use of italics. 6

The Bennett and Smithers volume is thus very demanding to
use: a student must seek out hard words in the appendixed glossary, and must deal with unregularized orthography and unconvenial dialect forms. The editors do import the two most entrenched forms of modern interpretive changes—punctuation and upper/lower case distinctions—but clearly the selections in this volume have been presented very nearly in the style of traditional critical editions.

The other major Middle English school texts since the 1960’s have followed closely one or the other of these two basic models. Dunn and Byrnes’ *Middle English Literature* (1973) is intended for undergraduates, and like the *Norton* it does not go deeply into editorial matters and contains considerable on-page helps. It does, however, contain several black-and-white plates of manuscript pages which allow teachers and students to see and discuss where the edited texts have come from (15-28)—in this material regard it earns high praise. The *Orfeo* text in the anthology contains the traditional introductory material imported from the Harley and Ashmole manuscripts, but, characteristically, does not distinguish the importation on the page and gives very little detail about the imports in the introduction.

Thomas J. Garbàty’s *Medieval English Literature* (1984) is used in both graduate and undergraduate Middle English courses. Like the *Norton* and the Dunn and Byrnes volumes it aims for user-friendliness; like the Dunn and Byrnes volume the texts it contains are re-freshenings of edited versions now in
the public domain (primarily 19th-century EETS editions). In neither case, though, do the editors give specific mention of where each text has come from. Garbáty's text of *Sir Orfeo* (350-64), for example, adopts the text of French and Hale (1930) in slightly altered form, but this is nowhere announced.7

Finally, J.A. Burrow and Thorlac Turville-Petre's *Book of Middle English* (1992) offers an updated form of the Bennett and Smithers anthology, and it is as well suited as the latter for use in advanced undergraduate or graduate courses. It distributes its energy between language (pages 1-70) and literature (72-260) and presents freshly-edited texts without on-page glosses. The editors announce clearly and conspicuously many of the changes they have made to the manuscript texts chosen as the basis for each entry.8

Based on the examples at hand, it is difficult to speculate on the future of classroom editions. On the one hand, we can be sure that more and more teachers will build into their syllabi a discussion of manuscript textuality as the materials and institutional precedents become more accessible. Work in the teaching of Chaucer with electronic texts by pioneers like Mary Wack and Peter Robinson may well set the standard for 21st-century Middle English classes. On the other hand, the *Norton Anthology* and other anthologies are familiar to most university teachers; for all the institutional challenges they present, familiarity and ease of use are
strong convincers.

If—and this is a strongly hypothetical "if"—the next generation of pedagogical anthologies is electronic in nature, it is possible that it may permanently close the gap between the two distinct kinds of publication I have described. Instead of a Norton-like publication with on-page glosses and indistinct relatedness to earlier editions and extant copies, or a more demanding Bennett-like publication which preserves significantly more manuscript information, a single hypertextual publication could allow users of all skill levels to define their own access to information according to their desires and motivations. The student, in the "driver's seat" of the hypertext, might be able to read from any of a number of base copies and use her computer's mouse to click up glosses of words, maps of cities, textual variants, translations, explanatory notes, songs, facsimiles, and so on—the possibilities are rich. We should not make the mistake of looking on such a device as a panacea, or a replacement for creative instructor guidance, but it would certainly enable greater flexibility and individual exploration in the medieval literature classroom.

Since these kinds of editions are still in the experimental phase it is only possible to touch on them here. Let us turn now to the final period of our survey and look at the revolution of the 1960's and -70's which has allowed us to see a difference between these two kinds of classroom texts, and
to want still more changes.
ii. Rediscovering Manuscript Context

We should not ignore things we're not sure about.

--Anthony Petti, respondent at the University of Leeds Colloquium, "The Drama of Medieval Europe" (1974), on the relevance of manuscript evidence to textual establishment.

Growing interest in the historical and physical contexts of Middle English writing is visible in scholarship, as I have noted, in the mid-1950's, and it suddenly increased two decades later. The reasons for this dramatic focusing of critical attention have not yet been fully explored, though the 1990 "New Philology" issue of *Speculum* sets up the 20th-century context of medieval studies in general in some detail; it is certainly true that a number of forces which continually influence medieval studies can claim some responsibility for it.

One of the most compelling interpretations is that of Anne Middleton, who views the post-War emergence of medieval studies (which she characterizes as, in its original vision, a "supra-disciplinary field") as the result of a unique combination of forces: invigorated young scholars, a marked increase in methodological explicitness, and an internalization of critical ambitions (16). Middleton refers to a "massive intellectual program of redefined solidarity" to a deep European past, which the resolution of the destruction of
the 1940's brought about.  

Though the intellectual fervor following World War II was deflated rather quickly (as all such energies must dissipate and then, unfortunately, be marginalized by a subsequent generation), according to Middleton a few important developments in the practice of medieval literary scholarship remained. The Middle Ages, for example, became in her opinion a more chronologically-defined period and less a geographically-defined one (22); in other words, the allegiances and outcomes of the War promoted more flexible and cooperative international research into literary phenomena, though paradoxically a decrease in literary theory by medieval specialists caused that research to exist in somewhat of a cultural vacuum.

Middleton's account, unfortunately, stops short of the crucial element. She points, as we might expect, to this aversion of specialists in Middle English to the use of literary theory and to share in the institutional advances of specialists in other related areas (discernible enough to have become the stereotype of the medieval "rut" by 1970) as a chief point of difference between the 1960's and the present (23). She also points to the proliferation of sub-specialties (paleography, codicology, liturgy) which have no institutionalized home in academic departments. But while she aligns this increase in specialization with the increased use by literary specialists of documentary forms (charters, wills,
chronicles, and other forms previously considered to be non- or semi-literary), and while she observes that the current generation of medieval literary scholars view texts much more actively and complexly than their antecedents did (26-27), Middleton does not explain why it is that she and many other influential writers believe that textuality itself should have become the fulcrum for the progress of the whole field.

Perhaps the answer is too obvious to need voice: when specialization and documentation coexist, the nature of verbal records is bound to be a common issue. But as we undertake an examination of a few important publications of this final period in our survey, we will find that the reasons textuality has become a leading conceptual issue have more to do with the temperaments, gifts, and ambitions of individual scholars and less to do with a kind of natural or inevitable progress of scholarship. We find evidence to support a dramatic change, and drama is created by the play of human motivations. Perhaps Middleton's view of the state of critical thinking in medieval studies, compelling as it is, overlooks in its breadth some very common and unpredictable elements which nonetheless have significant influence.

Another possible explanation for the current interest in the nature of medieval textuality is that it has been caused by the very resistance to critical theory mentioned by Middleton. If the stereotype of the traditional, old-fashioned, change-resistant medievalist is in fact reflective of a real
conservative impulse among a majority of those in the field (which it probably is), it is quite possible that radical interpretive approaches such as Deconstruction provoked medievalists to turn to the actual instability of manuscript texts as a stable footing. Though a seeming paradox, this interpretation does explain how medieval studies have managed to develop a vocabulary of textual instability which is based on the special conditions of manuscripts, as well as how medievalists have incorporated particular pieces of other interpretive approaches (among them New Historicism and Queer Theory) into their own New Philology.

Several publications in the field of Middle English studies symbolize the awareness in the 1960's of a need to pause and examine the materials at hand. A very visible example is the new series of fascicular handbooks based on John Edwin Wells' *Manual of the Writings in Middle English* (1916) which was begun in 1967 under the sponsorship of the Middle English group of the Modern Language Association of America. The intention of this new *Manual* was, and is, to offer exhaustive descriptions of all types of Middle English writing between 1050 and 1500; it is thus intensively bibliographic, with generally helpful inventories of manuscript versions. The fascicules of the revised *Manual* are standard reference works at the present time, even though the earliest ones are now almost 30 years old.

This *Manual* is especially noteworthy for two reasons.
First, as demonstrated by the first fascicule ("Romances," 1967), we see that while the nature of the volume as a reference work requires that each contributor record all the extant versions of a story, the rhetoric of many contributors continues the tradition of referring to them in the organic, "better/worse" language of the stemmaticist. This, combined with the impulse to judge works from a single strong point of view, leads many of the entries in these early volumes to be highly imperious in tone. Here, for example, are the remarks of Helaine Newstead on the Auchinleck text of Sir Tristrem:

The complicated and difficult stanza chosen by the author seems to have preoccupied his attention so that he sacrificed the story to the demands of meter and rime. The treatment of the narrative is perfunctory, the expression is undistinguished and clogged with rime tags, and the jerky meter must have been as distracting to the medieval listener as it is to the modern reader. The effort to conform to the conventions of monstrel technique, which accounts for the drastic condensation of the story and the elimination of the debates and soliloquies characteristic of the original, is easier to understand than the lack of response to the dramatic qualities of the narrative. Sir Tristrem is unfortunately a much coarsened version of its subtle and moving original, significant chiefly because it preserves, however inadequately, the lost episodes of its source.

(vol. 1, 78-79)

The prejudicial rhetoric and its implications are, I think, obvious: even though the Auchinleck text contains the only version of this story apart from Malory's, and even though Newstead does give much helpful bibliographic information on the poem, its editors, and its critics, the Manual tends to impart significantly more respect to lost, unexaminable Ur-
texts than to the extant artifacts of the period.

However much leeway we must grant a commentator in such a position (it is Newstead’s prerogative, after all, to voice opinions like this if she feels they are justified), it is also important that we realize how much power each contributor to these fascicules is actually wielding. This is the second reason the Manual must be considered one of the most important productions of the growing change in Middle English studies: in many ways it asks us to challenge our notions of trust and allegiance to the work of older scholars. The rhetoric in which Newstead’s analysis is couched is not particularly encouraging: a student reading it would not be likely to then seek out and read Sir Tristrem, and neither would she get a good sense of what might be a useful area of scholarly inquiry on the poem. The Manual, although produced during a time of change in Middle English studies, and although comprising a very useful tool for rising scholars, was compiled by established scholars whose methods and rhetoric were developed in the previous generation. The early volumes of the Manual, in other words, are works of transitional scholarship—they do not, for the most part, reflect the ideas of textuality and editorial procedure being vocalized by others at this time.10

Another publication of the late 1960’s does, however, give strong indications of the growing awareness of a need for manuscript-based work. Dieter Mehl’s Middle English Romances (1968) looks closely at the nature of romance collections such
as Auchinleck and Vernon, seeing them as examples of a type of manuscript which might have appealed to the educated middle class of the 14th century (6). His discussion of the Auchinleck is remarkable: while Loomis had offered a romantic vision of how the Auchinleck was put together, no one before Mehl—not even Walter Scott or David Laing— had offered any indication of who might have used the manuscript, or for what purpose. Mehl characterizes the original owners of the Auchinleck as an "urbane and bourgeois" family circle (11); he states that by characterizing the contents and the nature of the codex as a whole, literary historians should be able to offer more helpful suggestions about the genesis and original use of many English manuscripts.

This kind of observation has resulted in work of great profit. Mehl, and others of the same period who expressed similar notions of holistic investigation, may have set the scene for subsequent work on individual manuscripts. 11 Both the Manual and Mehl's book can thus be considered symbols of the period in which attention becomes fixed on textuality: the one is in many ways helpful, in many ways tyrannical; the other helped inspire a wholly different kind of textual inquiry. To these we may add a third and final figure to whose publications we can look for symbolic influence during this period: George Kane, whose work, both solo and in collaboration with the late E. Talbot Donaldson, is the most influential writing on the subject of medieval textual
criticism in the 20th century.

Much of Kane's editorial theory can be traced back to his reaction against what was, in his opinion, the chronic display of irrational and arbitrary conjectures by editors of classical texts in the early part of the century. He believed that this perceived "excessive subjectivity" was bound to discredit the act of conjectural emendation (1976, 211), and he characterized the subsequent refusal of conjectural emendation by editors as escapism--"a flight from judgment" (214). Kane's two chief publications--the editions of the A and B texts of *Piers Plowman*--may thus best be seen as his response to the changing world of textual criticism he was witnessing.¹²

His central view, that editorial emendation can be achieved through the rigor of a scientifically-applied method, has provoked both praise and blame, and has been more than adequately rehearsed by several noted writers (Patterson's article and chapter; Machan; McGann). For our purposes, it is crucial to note the interpersonal communication which pervades most of Kane's writing on the subject of editing: he is committed to the notion that the worthiness of any project of conjectural emendation depends on the competence of the person doing the emending. This has the effect, in my opinion, of reducing much of his argument to the level of a challenge or dare--he is inviting colleagues not only to study his method, but to understand and reproduce it before they can disagree with it.
This is the curious, paradoxical nature of Kane’s editorial work, and helps explain why so many scholars are fascinated with him. On the one hand, he is championing openness and forthrightness in method; he calls for full disclosure of editorial activity at several points, and this gives one the impression that his own concept of conjectural emendation (with which he and Donaldson are able to produce their B-text) is fully disclosed. But when we look, as we have done with so many editors in this survey, at the actual statements Kane makes and the rhetorical approach he takes in describing his own method, we find, surprisingly, that Kane is not telling us the most important elements of his textual establishment. The generally challenging tone of his work is mirrored by a lack of precise description of how conjectural emendation works, and this colors Kane’s method with that same shade of mystical inexplicability which inspires so much of the work of Karl Lachmann.13

Absent from the work of George Kane (and from that of his apologists, however elegant their statements) is the point now regularly made by theorists in the field: that subjectivity (or “intuitionism,” as Patterson calls it), when recognized as such and not under duress to pass itself off as objectivity, can be a healthy thing. The furious adherence to the manipulation of variants, and the life’s work of attempting to mediate between author, scribes, and manuscripts, is the result of an unhealthy scholarly world-view. The work of
George Kane may be discussed by the present generation of scholars, but it will not be taken up and continued.

While historians of the revolution in medieval literary studies almost universally point to Kane's work as the chief provocation of discussion in editorial matters, we should not forget that we are equally indebted to less raucous works like the *Manual of Writings in Middle English* and Mehl's survey of romances. Kane and Donaldson provide us with a fascinating refrain, but the melody of scholarship is continuing in manageable and thoughtful ways in the work of a new generation of writers on the Auchinleck. Much of this work has been done in the dissertation form: Robert Kelton (Ohio State University, 1974), Judith Mordkoff (University of Connecticut, 1980), Timothy Shonk (University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1982), and Jean H. Burrows (Washington University, 1984) have each written dissertations which seek to increase our understanding of the way in which the manuscript's contents are symbiotic with its creators—not "authors" or "poets," but scribes, whose actions 650 years ago are in many places as fresh and visible as if they were new.

All four focus their efforts on the principal scribe of the Auchinleck ("Scribe I"): Kelton's interest lies in Scribe I's management of the *Sir Tristrem* text, and he offers much valuable observation on the scribe's habits. Mordkoff sets out to challenge certain claims made for the Bookshop Theory by Loomis, and Shonk continues this work by re-defining the
Auchinleck's genesis along lines which are informed by actual experience of the manuscript, not from editions of its contents. Shonk provides what is in effect an early scribal profile (11ff), which is enlightening even when, as in the case of abbreviations, he finds certain actions of the scribe to be without recognizable pattern (20). Burrows also offers a substantial review of the Bookshop theory and its alternatives (3-5), and offers excellent fresh assessments of the textual and literary nature of all the major works used by Loomis in her articles 40 years before.

It is the individual work of these new voices and the many like them which made the publication of a critical edition in the 1980's and 1990's a courageous undertaking. Judith Perryman and Maldwyn Mills, two very rare examples of published editors from the 1980's, both edited Auchinleck texts as part of the Heidelberg Middle English Texts project. Both employ highly conscious editorial policies which are stated before the text. The policies include choosing a best text, with changes to it consisting of the following:

1. expansion of abbreviations and normalization of letter-forms (s and r);
2. capitals, punctuation, and stanza formation is modern; word division follows MED or OED guidance;
3. all letters or groups of letters added to the manuscript text are put in square brackets;
4. foliation is kept and line numbers are added.

None of these changes is new to us; they seem, though, to represent the approximate limit of conservatism that critical editing is able to reach in its present form. Still, the care
with which these elements are given to us is evidence of the editors' self-consciousness.

In the near future it will no longer be feasible—it will no longer be meaningful—to print textual variants in notational form. The partially successful "backtracking" exercise we examined in Chapter Two proved that the only data which such notation preserves are the data it is capable of preserving: alphanumerical characters. Such notation is incompatible with the idea of mouvance, which is defined by fluid integrity.

This may have the effect of chipping away at the heavy generic bias we have witnessed at all stages of our editorial survey: as paleographic features and scribal actions gain interpretive force among medievalists, works like the Battle Abbey Roll (Auchinleck Item 27), which is non-narrative and therefore (we must assume) uninteresting to literary specialists, gain a new draw. Hitherto ignored in this study, and edited and discussed only once in a literary study, the Roll was also the last item in the manuscript to be edited (Smyser 1948). Under the new priorities and precedents of textual criticism, it may turn out to be among the most revealing contents of the manuscript precisely because of its differences.
iii. New Technologies of Textual Representation

Have we reopened the biggest can of worms in medieval studies?

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Mon, 22 Mar 1993 09:52:00 CST

Medieval editions are inevitably moving away from the print medium. Within our lifetimes it will no longer be commonplace to reach onto the library's shelves to find Beves of Hamtoun; instead we will call facsimiles of any or all of the five versions up on a screen, with (perhaps) diplomatic transcription attending each copy and (perhaps) variorum annotation also within reach. The significant difference between this format and that of Eugen Kölbing (who, it will be remembered, in the 1880's saw critical editing breaking down within the radius of Beves of Hamtoun) will be that the enforced texturing of the printed format will be supplanted by a varying apparatus which can be present or not as the reader wishes.

Such hypertextual "editions" (should we use the same term?) could therefore be essentially the same for the novice undergraduate student and for the established specialist. Unlike current printed editions, the reader could be able to create her own personal experience with the text according to the dimensions she wishes it to contain. Despite the solid and self-conscious work of recent editors like Mills and
Perryman, then, I believe that until the current experiments with storage and display of manuscript texts in electronic media have calmed into stability the best use of our time is not to produce new critical editions of medieval texts for use above the undergraduate level. Instead, we should support projects designed to bring into existence more high-quality facsimiles of individual manuscripts (either in electronic or hard copy form), and we should financially support such projects by requesting our libraries to purchase all the ones that are published. In so doing, we will not only be establishing a valuable primary resource to supersede the now-antiquated microfilm technology, but we will be addressing the resource problem posed by the rows of old-style critical editions which we now find are less useful than we once thought.

Textual editing has always involved the importation of models: early critical editors like Madden and Laing borrowed their styles from the antiquarians, who in turn had "confected" theirs according to the dynamics of their literary audiences. Since it is clear that an electronic text cannot use the critical edition as its model, where do we look for a new one? Tim William Machan, in a recent study of the relationship between orality and textuality in later Middle English writing, affirms the major premise of this dissertation—that the traditional editorial method, which depends on a distinction between authors and scribes, is appropriate for
only a very small percentage of vernacular texts (241). He further points out that the traditional model is predicated on written, not spoken, language: "[it] views manuscript production as an (ineffective) prototype of text production in a print culture." As we saw with the Bookshop Theory, this retrospective, highly romanticizing view of manuscript production can lead to widespread misprision.

Machan finally offers a partial solution. Invoking such established spokespersons of oral-formulaic theory as Foley and Lord, Machan recommends that editors adopt a model of oral composition; since the song or poem as a performance achieves an aesthetic which transcends that of the singer/poet as an individual, it is cultural function, not compositional technique, which best determines the "fixity" of a text (243). Suzanne Fleischman's discussion of the discourse of medieval texts agrees that medieval linguistic structure is shaped by the pressures of discourse. Once we have recognized the situation of "mixed orality," she says, we should not simply abandon efforts to represent the oral elements; we should instead look to different levels--sentences, whole discourses--for the idiosyncrasies they exhibit (24-28). Fleischman stops short of mentioning "a new model," but such is obviously the direction of her thought.

As much as I like this idea, I cannot conceive of its shape (Machan, in neither his 1991 nor 1992 articles on the subject, mentions any specifics of the new model he proposes).
Can the hypertextual format, the most promising new form at present, be said to be oral in conception? It bestows upon a user the ability to access, almost simultaneously, any kind of information she wishes on the contents of any kind of basic textual form (from facsimile to translation). If the maxim to guide our search for a new model for editing is, as Machan puts it, "not what medieval audiences thought about texts, but what they thought texts were" (1992, 17), a hypertext could fit. Like the medieval conception of a vernacular text, a hypertext makes no issue of authority; it contains no intrinsic linguistic fixity, and certainly no intrinsic preferences based on authorship. Above all, a hypertext shares with a medieval English text the inability to contain the a priori assumption of permanence, since all of its strata of information at once exist and non-exist.

We are often reminded by people wiser than ourselves that such convenient devices as facsimiles and electronic textual media are no substitute for analysis, judgment, and hard work. I suspect, though, that in an age when Postmodernism and the New Philology are requiring new vocabularies, athletic maneuvers of paradigm, and endless self-evaluation, it is precisely through such media that an awareness of the true variance of textuality can best be appreciated. Limited funds in academic departments and the stationary nature of manuscript collections are conditions that are not likely to change within our lifetimes, except insofar as they can be
sidestepped by electronic communication. As I further internalize the New Philology in my own experience with medieval texts, it is likely that the present study will help me "recontextualize the texts as acts of communication" (in Fleischman's words) and lead me to build or adopt a more sophisticated vocabulary with which to define the "discourse" of the medieval document called Auchinleck.

I can say with certainty that the surest test for the retention of the now-fading paradigm of "Old Philology" is the presence of a simple appeal to originality, to authenticity, to organic wholeness; the rhetoric and the associated images are now as familiar as the arc of a clock's pendulum. Bédier and the other participants in the stemma wars never questioned authority; the struggle between best text and critical editing is--almost!--simple when compared to the challenges of orality, variation, informality, and restlessness of meaning.

I regret that I do not have an edition of an Auchinleck text which belongs to this new paradigm with which to end my study. Such work is only just beginning, and is (as we might expect) beginning with Chaucer; it will take years for it to reach Sir Orfeo and Roland and Vernagu. The mediated forms of these items may by that time no longer be called "editions," and so, with the discrete volumes of Mills and Perryman and the student anthology of Burrow and Turville-Petre, we may well have witnessed the last of a marvelous series of publications begun when Bishop Percy first received word of the
Auchinleck and dared to set rough meter before his gentle readers.
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| xxx   | Sir beues of hamtoun | Turnbull 1838 a  
|       |                        | Kölbing 1878 k  
|       |                        | Kölbing 1885, -86, -94 Σ  
| xxxi  | Of arthour & of merlin | Ellis 1805 ε  
|       |                        | Turnbull 1838 a  
|       |                        | Kölbing 1890  
|       |                        | Zupitza and Schipper 1931  
|       |                        | Macrae-Gibson 1973 Σ  
| [xxxii] | The wenche that [lou]ed [a k]ing | Kölbing 1884b  
| xxxiii | [A penni]worth [of wi]tte | Laing 1857 a  
|       |                        | Kölbing 1884a  
| xxxiii | Hou our leuedi saute was fersst founde | Laing 1857 a  
|       |                        | Horstmann 1881  
| xxxv  | Lay le freine | Ellis 1805 ε  
|       |                        | Weber 1810  
|       |                        | Varnhagen 1880  
|       |                        | Wattie 1929  
|       |                        | Rumble 1965 π  
| xxxvi  | (Roland and Vernagu) | Ellis 1805 ε  
|       |                        | Turnbull 1836 a  
|       |                        | Herrtage 1882 Σ  
|       |                        | Grant 1968 δ  

| xxxvii | Otuel a knight | Ellis 1805 ε  
|        |               | Turnbull 1836 α  
|        |               | Hererrtage 1882 Σ  
| xxxviii |               |  
| xxxix |               |  
| xl |               |  
| xli |               |  
| xlii |               |  
| xliii |               |  
| xliii | (Kyng Alisaunder) | Turnbull 1836 α  
|       |                 | Brandl & Zippel  
|       |                 | 1927 π, ε, k  
|       |                 | Smithers 1952 Σ  
| xlv | (The Thrush and the Nightingale) | Leyden 1801  
|     |                   | Laing 1857 α  
|     |                   | Varnhagen 1881  
| xlvii |               |  
| xlviii |               |  
| xlviii | (The Sayings of St. Bernard) | Laing 1857 α  
|       |                   | Varnhagen 1880  
|       |                   | Cross 1958  
|       |                   | Mondo 1968  
| l | Dauid the king | Laing 1857 α  
|     |                   | Kölbing 1886  

| l | (Sir Tristrem) | Scott 1804  
Lockhart 1833  
Mätzner 1878 ε  
Kölbing 1882  
Powell 1882 k  
Kölbing 1884b  
McNeill 1886  
Skeat 1908 k  
Kluge 1912 π,ε  
Holthausen 1916 k  
Swaen 1918 k  
Brandl & Zippel  
1927 π,ε  
Holthausen 1928 k  
Holthausen 1934 k  
Long 1963 δ  
Kelton 1974 δ |
| l i | (Sir Orfeo) | Laing 1822  
Házlitt 1865, -75  
Zielke 1880  
Small 1885  
Shackford 1913  
Cook 1915 π  
Sisam 1921 π  
French & Hale  
1930 π  
Bliss 1954, -66  
Gibbs 1966 π  
Garbáty 1984 π  
Dunn & Byrnes  
1990 π  
Burrow, 1992 π |
| l i i | (The Four Foes of Mankind) | Turnbull & Laing  
1837  
Kölbing 1886  
Brown 1924 |
| l i i i | Liber Regum Anglie | Carroll & Tuve  
1931  
Zettl 1935 Σ |
| l i i i i | Horn childe & maiden rimnild | Ritson 1802  
Michel 1845  
Caro 1889  
Hall 1901  
Rosser 1989 δ |
| lv      | (Alphabetical Praise of Women) | Leyden 1801  
|         |                               | Laing 1857 a  
|         |                               | Kölbng 1884a  
|         |                               | Holthausen 1917  
| lvi     | King Richard                  | Turnbull & Laing 1837  
|         |                               | Kölbng 1885  
|         |                               | Brunner 1913  
| lvii    |                               |  
| lviii   |                               |  
| lix     |                               |  
| ? lx-    | The Simonie                   | Wright 1839  
| lxviii  |                               | Brandl & Zippel 1927 π  
|         |                               | Ross 1966  

*a Error for xviii.

b The numeral xxvi is repeated in the Ms.
<table>
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| 1880 | Varnhagen, Lay le Freine  
Zielke, Sir Orfeo |
| 1881 | Horstmann: St. Margaret, St. Katherine,  
Clerk & Virgin, Oure leuedi saute |
| 1882 | Hertrage: Roland & Vernagu, Otuel a  
Knight  
Kölbing, Sir Tristrem  
Powell, Sir Tristrem k |
| 1883 | Kölbing, Seven Sages k  
Zupitza, Guy of Warwick Σ (-1887) |
| 1884 | Kölbing, Pope Gregory  
Kölbing, Adam & Eve  
Kölbing, St. Patrick’s Purg.  
Kölbing, Disputacioun  
Kölbing, Amis  
Kölbing, Wenche  
Kölbing, Penniworth  
Kölbing, Alphabetical Praise |
| 1885 | Swartz, Assumption  
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Kölbing, Beues of Hamtoun Σ (-1894)  
Kölbing, King Richard  
Small, Sir Orfeo |
| 1886 | Kölbing, Seven Sins  
Kölbing, Pater Noster  
Kölbing, Dauid the King  
Kölbing, Four Foes  
McNeill, Sir Tristrem |
| 1888 | Krause, King of Tars |
| 1889 | Linlow, Disputacioun  
Caro, Horn Childe |
<p>| 1890 | Kölbing, Arthur &amp; Merlin |
| 1891 | Zupitza, Reinbrun Σ |</p>
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| 1927 | Emerson, Adam & Eve \(\pi, \epsilon\)  
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       | Brandl & Zippel, Kyng Alisaunder \(\pi, \epsilon, k\)  
       | Brandl & Zippel, Sir Tristrem \(\pi, \epsilon\)  
       | Brandl & Zippel, Simonie \(\pi\) |
| 1928 | Holthausen, Sir Tristrem \(k\) |
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</code></pre>
<p>| 1931 | Carroll &amp; Tuve, Liber Regum Anglie |
| 1933 | Brunner, Seven Sages (\Sigma) |
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| 1935 | Zettl, Liber Regum Anglie (\Sigma) |
| 1937 | Leach, Amis (\Sigma) |
| 1940 | Geist, King of Tars (\delta) |
| 1948 | Smyser, Battle Abbey Roll |</p>
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<td>Burrow &amp; Turville-Petre, Sir Orfeo π</td>
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Dissertation on

The Marriage of Sir Gawaine.

The Original.
My father was an old knight,
And yet it chanced so,
That he married a young lady,
That brought me to this woe.
She witch'd me, being a faire young lady,
To the green forrest to dwell,
And there I must walk in womans clothes,
Most like a fiend of hell.

She witch'd my brother to a carthie boore,
[About nine stanzas wanting.]
SIR TRISTREM;

A

Metrical Romance

of

The Thirteenth Century;

BY

THOMAS OF ERCILDOUNE,

CALLED

THE RHYMER.

EDITED FROM THE AUCHINLECK MS.

BY

WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

ADVOCATE.

Now, hold your mouth, pour charitie,
Both Knight and Lady fra,
And herketh to my spell;
Of battaille and of chivalrie,
Of Ladies' love and druitie,
Anon I wol you tel.—CHAUCER.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by James Ballantyne,
FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH,
AND LONGMAN AND REES, LONDON.
1804.

Figure 2. Title page from Scott's edition of Sir Tristrem (1804)
So thai deden and foughten bothe,
The paiens thereof weren wrothe;
Tho com rideand a geaunt Y wis,
And smot to grounde Cleodalis,
THER he lay streight along.

LEODEGAN to him sfrong,
And him wered al about
Fram al that ich curfled route;
So long he fought he was weri,
And fel adoun wel dreri.
CLEODALIS tho vp made a flert,
As he were nought y-hert,
And with main fair and hende,
His lord king he gan defende.
Thus thai ferd oft when fel that on.

The other vp flert tho anon,
And him defended with alle his might;
Thus thai foughten til midnight,
Tho were thai wounded so sfrong,
That thai no might doure long.
To Cleodalis tho seyd Leodegan,
Help now the sefl gentil man,
For to lefe and winne al this lond,
Y no may lenger flond.
Often thai made doun falleing,

And when thai might vp rifeing,
And halp Cleodalis him to were and fight
Al so wele so he might.
The Romance of

Sir Beves of Hamtoun.

Figure 5. Pen and ink frontispiece to Beves of Hamtoun (Maitland Club, 1838), drawn by C.K. Sharpe
The Romance of

Arthour and Merlin

Figure 6. Pen and ink frontispiece to *Arthour and Merlin* (Abbotsford Club, 1838), drawn by C.K. Sharpe
Here ginneth Sir Gis.

His lord he servyd fretteliche
In al thing manchepeliche
Theor was non eri in Ingland
That to grines him durt stond
Bot gis he wold be with him at on
He wold to nimen him anon
And with strencthe him nim wold
Thei he to Scotland sutwe him scholde
His lordis honoure he hele worthechipeliche
And defended it wele and hardiliche
Theor was [no] kni[3]t in Ingionde
That with wrett the durt him astone
Thei a man bar an hundred pounde
Upon hym of gold p-grounde
The nas man in al this londe
That durt him do sene hame no schonde
That bireft him worth of a flo
So gode pais ther was tho

Figure 7. Representative text sample from Guy of Warwick, ed. Turnbull (Abbotsford Club, 1840)
4 LEGEND OF POPE GREGORY.

No man in lond child no wiif
Aflow art leuedi gent 't fre
That ich no here therof no striif
Of that thow schalt here 't fe
The leuedi him answerd fone
Jhū hir wele vnbinde
Alfo he made fonne 't mone
Blofme on brere lef on linde
Icham glad of hir coming
Sori that ich hir fike finde
Thurch the help of Heuen King
We schul ben hir wel kinde
Than the time ycomen was
The leuedi schuld deliuerd be
A fone fche hadde thurch Godes grace
Ycomen he was of kin fre

Figure 8. Representative text sample from Legendae Catholicae, ed. Turnbull (1840)
A Penni worthy of Witte.

An Eld man ther in fat
His wordes wele wndergast
And in his bert he thought anon
That sum thing ther was mishgun
The old man was wife of lore
And thought for to wite more
As thai dronken wint' ale
He gan reherse better her tale
Marchaunde feyd the old man par charite
Telle that ich aske now the

257. What wald thi wiif an y-bought
Say me fothe 't gabbe nought
And y schal felle the worth a pani
3If that thou wilt bigge ani
Sayd the Marchaunde sikicherle
Here schal rife a fair beuerege
Quath the Marchaunde bi Godes boke
Mi Wiif a pani me bi toke
To bigge ther with a pani worth Witt
And in min bert fast it knitt
Sche swore al fo God hir spede
Sche wald quite me mi mede
Marchaunde quath the old man bi thi liif
Haflow ani leman bot thi wiif
The Marchaunde answerd him aloude
For of his leman he was proude
3o he seyd fo met y thirse
On that is worth twische fiue
Oe quath the old man't lough
That ich over trowed wele enough

Figure 9. Representative text sample from David Laing’s Penni Worthe of Witte (1857)
Olibrious was lord, as we heren telle.
Of Anlage and Azie, to yeuen and to felle.
He serued his newt and day, he fosle fendas of helde.
Al bat leuel on Jhers Crist. Olibrious pougt to quelle.

45 Frum Anlage into Azie en miles ten & fve, fol. 17.
For to stru pe cristen folk [he hiede him bilue].
Fasi seye maidene Mergrete schape biforn hir drise:
Olibrious for hir frinesse schene hir to wisse.

He sayt to his knyghtes: «a fair maistren y se;
50 Kostes hir upon haws, and sche schal wende wiþ me.
And zij ich may enquere of kin jat sche he fre,
Of alle pe wimen jat y wol best hir schal he.

And for hir michel feithed, zij sche be born ofþ bral.
Hir marrage no tinep sche nougt al:

55 Wele y schal hir cloche in skelastoun and pal.
Sche schal he mi leeman and hase gold to wal.

Pe serinunce went, as he hem bad, to maiden Mergrete.
Per sche zemede hir norice schepe o dayes bi þe strene.
Michel it was þat þat hir hede, and more þat hir biheite;

60 Pe pougtes of hir hert wald sche nougt foulete.

Pe serinunce of her erand wald hir nougt biswike:
«Damisel, we say i þe fal wele may þe like.
Olibrious is louerd of Anlage riike,
He gernelp þe to wisse, he ni þe nougt biswikes.»

65 Pan maiden Mergrete, brigt so ani leuen,
Sche hem answerd wiþ fal miild steuen:
Ichauze yeuen mi maidenhe þe Jhersus Crist of heuen,
Zemene þi þif his willes is, for his name yeuen.

«Jhersus Crist mi lord, to þou y me rend;
70 In you was no bigning, no seuer schal ben ende;
Zif it be your wille, þour angel þe me sende;
Fram þis foule Sarazins y may me nougt defende.
Al mi kin ichauze forsake into mi neigl kne;
Jhersus Crist, mi lord, y toke me to þe;

75 Hellelique wyl y, for þi loue married to be.
Pis houndes me han bisset, þat i no may nougt fle;

Pe serinunce opgan went and told al her sawe.
«Lord, of þi pouste no yueþ sche nougt an hawe;
Sche takeþ hir to Jhersus Crist, þe worantise wil sche drawe;

80 Of al þat þe may hir do, no stoint hir non sawe.»

45 Ma. wulf, mit auspunkt. e. 46 Hick. he hiede him bilue; Ma. Auch. liest unfichtig: and wagen hem dune. 58 i. wille, namen.

Figure 10. Carl Horstmann’s Altenglische Legenden (1881), showing the text of Saint Margrete
4. Seynt Katerine.

a) Ms. Auchiin. fol. 21

Iccept vitæ s. Katerine virginis.

Iccept vitæ s. Katerine virginis.

Hic fat made bohe suone & mone
In boone & erpe for to schyne,
Brynyng vs to boone. wip hym to wone,
And schyrde vs from leolle pynne!

Whilom it hiid so:
In Greece it was an emperour;
He was king of mani palays,
Castels greet & mani a tour.

Pet trevilly trowed in Iehuu Crist:
Hir name was boten Katerine.

In Greece it was an emperour;
He was a kyng of landes moo,
Off casteles greet & many a tour.

Pete riche men off pat lord
Served him wip greet honoure,
Mansions was his ript name,
Man he was of greet faveour.

Mahoun he held for his god:
He trowed in pat fals lay:
On Iehuu Crist so leued he noug,
Pat lord is & god verry.

Sarraun he was ful strong,
Wip criestendom he syed lay,
For alle pat leued on Iehuu Crist
He stroyd hem bohe nig&t day.

When he haddde, XXXV. & þriti þeer
(Ben emperour & born þe crowne,
Ouer alle þe lord he sent his sond
Wip messangers from tow to tow;
To þe borwe of Alisander
He had þe folk schold he boun,
Riche & power, helte & lawe,
Wip her ofrend to seke Mahoun.

Incipit vita s. Katerine virginis.

He fat made bohe suone & mone
In boone & erpe for to schyne,
Brynyng vs to boone. wip hym to wone,
And schyrde vs from leolle pynne!

5 Ly-st wys, & I schal gow telle
Pet lyff off an holy virgyn,
Pet trevely Iehuu louede wel:
Hir name was callyd Katerine.

In Greece it was an emperour;
He was a kyng of landes moo,
Off casteles greet & many a tour.

Pete riche men off pat lord
Served him wip greet honoure,
Mansions was his ript name,
Man he was of greet faveour.

Mahoun he held for his god:
He trowed in pat fals lay:
On Iehuu Crist so leued he noug,
Pat lord is & god verry.

Sarraun he was ful strong,
Wip criestendom he syed lay,
For alle pat leued on Iehuu Crist
He stroyd hem bohe nig&t day.

When he haddde, XXXV. & þriti þeer
(Ben emperour & born þe crowne,
Ouer alle þe lord he sent his sond
Wip messangers from tow to tow;
To þe borwe of Alisander
He had þe folk schold he boun,
Riche & power, helte & lawe,
Wip her ofrend to seke Mahoun.

10 In Greece þær was an emperour;
He was kyng off landes moo,
Off casteles greet & many a tour.

Pet long he off þat land
Wip semyld hym wip mekyld honoure.

15 Mansones was his name hotand,
A man he was ful sterne & stour.

Mahoun heeld he for hys god:
He troyd in þe false lay:
On Iehuu Crist leuerie he not,

20 Pat lord is & god verry.
He was a vorgeryn ful vys,
Wip crystynedom he werredy ay,
For alle þat trowed on Iehuu Crist
He streyyd bohe he lety day.

25 Whenne (he) hadde fynse & lyffy þeer
Ben emperour & born þe crowne,
Porw þe land hys messange
He sente aboute, fro tow to tow;
To Alissander, he sente hys sawe

30 And had þo folk schold come wel sone,
Riche & þure, heyse & lawe,
Wip her ofrlyng to seke Mahune.

Figure 11. Carl Horstmann’s Alteenglische Legenden (1881), showing the text of Saint Katerine
305  In a woman were we bred
And born togidres bohe to,
And on a born forstered and fed,
Ay til you couporte spoke and go.
For love sothliche y ye led,
No dere y never do ye wo;
To lese ye y was fordred,
Ye nist where to gete wo.

306  Of a wyman born and brede,
Body, were we bohe tro,
Togidre fostred in thayre and fedde,
Til you couthste spoke and go.
Sotte ye for love i leddye,
No dorst i nevere do ye wo,
To lese ye so sore i dredde,
And wel i wiste to gete ou mo.

(22).

For me you woldest semwot do,
While you were soug a litle first,
For freuden eyghe hat ye stot to,
Ye wile you were brene and hirst;
Oe wane youg were briven and pro,
And kuenwe bonger, cold and virt,
And gwilk was eyse, rest and ro,
Al ye one wil you dist.

310  I seige ye fair of fleshe and blod,
Ai mi love ou ye cast;
Patow me brewe me youg and gode,
And les ye have ro and rest.
Pat made ye wel sterne of mod
And of dodes wel wonast;
To wer whi ye was me no bot,
Pou bar me opon ye brast.

315  Gluttonie and licerise,
Pride and bat and coweryse,
Niffe and odde and envye
Ogainen god and alle hise,
In pat laste for to lye,
Was pi won in al wise;
Pat achal y wel dere abye,
No wonder pi me sore agrisse.

320  I saue ye fair of fleshe and blod,
And ai mi love ou ye kast;
Pat pou brewe me powte good,
And let ye have ro and rest.
Pat made ye so sterne of mod,
And owerkse so wonast;
To fete with ye ou was ye no bot
Me pat joung bar eu breest.

325  Gluttonie and leckerise,
Prude and wike coweryse,
Niffe and onde and enyve
To god of hervene and alle hise,
And in saluest fer to lye,
Was te wasen in al wise;
That i achal neug ful dere abye,
A! wyle! sore may me grisse.

Figure 12. Wilhelm Linlow's Disputacioun Bitwen the Bodi and the Soule (1889)
HERCULUS IN GREAT DANGER.

Y-slawe he hap the Assimcmen; 2985
A strong knight he was & an Almen.
Wit he come for an amistie;
A servant of wicked red,
Dam Caster he hap y-slawes,
& gote Gilpin his fellows.
When Herculem put of sees me,
In his hert him was ful we;
An amistie he smote so,
Ded he feld him on hest! bo,
& manise anoyher be hap squall,
& adown feld in adown.
Some so Eshdale y-eyes bo,
To overtake ye amistie of him is;
To Herculem his was betelich,
& he his mist hastaclics;
Hastaclics be his smote legier bo,
Ps of his bone be fell an.
Sepper pui drew her brodies of steel,
& smote legier hard & wel,
To beve hander & schelihed also,
Goode hede pui be hoip in.
Of her helme pui fereon gin fye,
So hastaclics legier smote he,
Herculus gip him diwed fast,
His heved to smote of en hede.
As we gote accomo him oon yer,
An hundred Turkes & her power;
Herculem pui gin alle smote,
& neve hede eno smote in jai haste;
Ne hode Esh! pui gote y-eyes, pui was sorj;
Hastaclics be seen him to accomo;
His goode hede he drew he;
Ne heved a servant he ded of fye,
& anoyher he ded also;
Ne pride to dep he ded do.

CALEES BR.] BUT GUZ PROOCHED IN KIOTING HIM.

Thus this answer with gote pride [p. 88]
Many cruel knyghtes to dethe they laye saide. 2990
Whanne heresnes hath that sayth,
There is he was nothing saye;
To Anylodes he smote so,
That ded he falle to groundes tho.

Where Eshdale saw this,
To aventure Anylodes leaf him is;
To heresnes he smote hertly,
And he him mete boldely. 3000

So enys we heresnes to ake Eshdale;
That, or he was any-thing-well,
An hundred turkes that were note,
And heresnes all-mast they had note.

When Guy saw that, he was enys;
Hastely he gooth him to accomo true;
His good hede in hende he had;
The bedes of a Samay he ded of fye.

Figure 13. Julius Zupitza’s Guy of Warwick (EETS, 1883), pages 174-75
HERBERT MEETS WITH OUT. [ARCHERBIEF WA.

& wip him went ale je knipte,
Ambl. 1. make soon nyne,
Gij oun on a shyn from hunting,
Dul Amis, & Tiri pe jing,
& mo jen an hundred kniht,
Wij swacht biggirt, y pes plict.
Toward Gorneis jai hem y-go,
Hiden hem jai boke pe;
So mani kniptes jai seyse coming,
Of traken jai wey dreeler.

Yen says [of] jaiMountays Amis,
"A get fool y se, y-wa,
Y not what folk it be:
Hiderward jai com, as penkay ma.'

Open his gos eulde he wend
Wij swelt & eure in his bood.
Hiderward he is y-go,
To hem he com wel some pe,
Ho he gos hem com seye
Herband of Ateshe jai he seye.

He ord him whanne he cume.
"Where is Gil?" he seyed soon.
"Sii," quap he, "ichil je taleh,
& lade je te him wip gote-wille.
From dere hunting-omen he is:
Hundis peorts haich heim boke, y-wa.'
Quap Herband, 'Folowes, vil we go.'
Wij sparrne hit sinit in his stroke pe:
Rwaje jai riden wip gret by.
When jai says Gil & sir Tiri,
"God,' quap Gil, 'Herband y se
& alle min ferven, se penkay ma:
Jai ben out of peowen y-go.
Ope quin-delmed ichan.'

c. 1489.
To kissem Herband jai hem do,
Wij gret boe jai malle pe.

Figure 14. Zupitza's Guy of Warwick, pages 354-55


Figure 15. Julius Zupitza’s Guy of Warwick (1883), pages 492-93
THE SEVEN SAGES OF ROME

E = Egerton MS. 1995

This boke ys calyld the vij sages of Rome.

H erkenythhe lodynges curtseys and hende
Howe thys gentylie geste shalle ende.
Sum tyne there was an Emporeoure,
That ladde hys lyfe with moche honowre,
Hys name was Dioclician,
And was a wonder riche man,
And was Empereoure of Rome,
A nobyle man and a wyse of dome.
He hadde an Emporos to wyfe,

B = Balliol College MS. 354

f. 18a Here begynneth ye prologes of vij
sages or vij wise masters which were
named as here after followith.

Men wyse non fayrer on lyue.
A sone they hadde hym bytwyne,
No fayrer chylde ne myght bene.
But soone afyr thenne
The Emporos dyde and went henne
The chylde wax to vij yere olde,
Wyse of speche ande dedys bolde,
Florentyne hys name was,
Herkenythe nowe a wonder cas.
Hys Fadyr was olde and ganne to hooe,
His sone thoo he sette to lore,

And lette byfore hym com sone
The vij sages that were yn Rome.
To hem he thought his sone take
Perko knowe the letters blacke,
For they were wysest men leryde
That were Amonge alle mydylertes
The Empereoure sayde anon
To the mysteryes eurychone
"Whiche of you wille take my sone
To teche hym wysdome, as ye cone?"

B 10 The commne way of all men.
Tho was [t]he sone vij yere olde,
Wise, flayre, and eke bolde,
Florentyne his name was,
Herkeneth now a wondre cas.
The emperowe began to hore,

B 20 After you j haue sente,
For ye be ye wysest men leryd
That be in all medylere.
My son j will betake to you
To teche hym well for your prow.
Whiche of you shall j hym betake
To teche hym the letters blake?

In olde Days ther was a man,
His name was Dyoclesyan,
Of Rome and of all ye honowre
He was lorde and Emprowr.
An Empresse he had full gent,
That was called Mylycent.
A chylde they had between them two,
The flayrenst pat myghten erthe goo.
The Emperyse passed henne

He thought to sett his son to lore,
He lett call and before hym come
Seven ye wysest pat were in Rome,
He sayd to them "lordynges gent,

B 30 To teche hym well for your prow.
Whiche of you shall j hym betake
To teche hym the letters blake?"

Figure 16. Karl Brunner's Seven Sages of Rome (EETS, 1933), page 1
THE TEXTS OF SIR ORFEO

AUCHINLECK

[SIR ORFEO]

We rode at the larde, and joyned [y-wye; 1. 206]
And the clerkes wele it wrote,
Layen put ben in harping,
Ben y-brothes of ferl y-song,
Sum bape of wer & sum of woe,
& sum of lye & mirye shew,
& sum of oxenhe & of pyle,
Of old aventures put fel while,
& sum of bousers & nobby.

AUCHINLECK

Mrsa sone is Avenell,
Put fromew natour of our wil,
In felt & made dounes springe,
In grene wode loures springe;
Hong man waip wald,
& put bravely man & wald.

HARLEY 1410

We rode al & fende y-wye; 1. 10
As clerkes dian w-to write,
The layen that ben of harping,
Ben y-brothes of ferl thing;
Sum ben of woe, & sum of woe,
& sum of joy & mery shew;
Sum of bousers, & sum of nytel,
& sum of lye & mirye shew,
& sum of oxden & of pyle;
Of alle bale, ben y-yere;
Mans in towne, fowre, bye be,
In Brittan we layen y-yere,
Pone y-nytel & three ynyne.
Of aventures put fel by yere,
Whereof Brittan we bade they.
When pone myt othar barye
Of aventures put fel by yere.

THE TEXTS OF SIR ORFEO

AUCHINLECK

It maui per hev of faire;
Of al broth at man age;
Mans o loute, fer-age, pone hev.
Chin Bretiau put layen were wroth,
[First y-douses & ferl y-knyne,
Of aventures put fel by yere,
Whereof Brittan we bade they.
When kingis maui our y-yere;
Of an mercurials put pe were.

ASHMOL 41

Kynk Orfeo

May yeke sia in Avenell,
That mikel shevdows of many wynde;
In fare & wiste fordows spring;
In grene & wyte fordows spring;
There was yng men pilyfe,
And two pacyvel man & wynde.
The Brittan, sm boke sawe.
Of doute thynge put made per leyne;
Sone put made ol harping;
And sum of othe doute thynge;
Sum of warre & sum off woe;
Sum of mettyly & joy alu;
Sum of trenty & sum off gyle;
Sum of happye put taketh sum-wylde,
And sum be of nytel;
And sum of be off lary;
Of all plow yt yeke yer;
Of all ynterest & sum of ynyne;
Of all yeke, that in y-yeke;
First fowd & first horde.
Of aventures put fel sum-yere;
The doute thynge put made per leyne.
Of aventures put fel be-yere;
Whereof Brittan we bade they.

ASHMOL 41

3 frome[er] bares ME. 6 pandome[th] rowght ME. as trentyly breeuze edd.

Figure 18. A.J. Bliss’s Sir Orfeo (1954), pages 2-3
THE TEXTS OF SIR ORFEO

AUCHINLECK

Just token an harp in gle & game
& maken a lay & yet it name.
Now, of pis auncounte þat werent y-falle;
Y can tel sum, as moste alle:
As herke ye, lordises [yet help trewe,]
Ich thi you telte [Sir Orfeo].
Orfeo went of an þing
Laued þe gle of harping.

MARLEY 2810

Dry take her harpyes with game,
Medic laynes & yet it name.
Of aventures yet han be-falle
Y can none talke, but mostly all;
Herein, lordises yet ben trewe,
& y wel þou tellte of Syr Orfeo.
Orfeo was a large kying,
& in his cygne a green harping;
Full fast man, & large hearto,
& hands, curteis & hardly also.
His fader was comen of Syr Plaine,
& his moder com of Yvo,
That man cygne was goddesse holden.
For worldly þat þe lay layles & sidles.
Orfeo won of þe yong
Louvou lye gle of harpyng;
Syker was every gode harper
Of tome to have moche honoure.
Hym-self bound for-e harpes,
& bylye bres he wynt schappes;
He laide we, þat pleyng was
A better harper in no place.
[In þe world was never man born
As once Orfeo our blyth was:
[He spyn of þis harping laye]
— He schide piske þat þe wære
As sventiemen somer AIS.

THE TEXTS OF SIR ORFEO

AUCHINLECK

Siker was ever gode harpor
Of him to have moche honour.
Him-self he lerned for-e harp,
& layd þey on his wynt scharp;
He lerned we, þat mee-þing was
A better harper in no place.
In þe world was never man boren
As þe Orfeo our blyth was:
[He spyn of þis harping laye]
But he schold þencche þat þe wære
In þe world was never man boren
Swiche melody in his harping war.
Orfeo was a kinge,
In jugled an harpe lyng,
A stolowy man & hardi bo;
Large & curteis he was al-ye.
His fader was comen of King Plaine,
& his moder of King June.

ASHMOLE 61

They lete them wynt as it wære,
And þey amonge þe Orfeo.
He was, for-þat, a notable kying,
That most blyth ðe gle & harpynge;
Wæl swyft he was ever gode harper
To have oþer myghte honoure.
Hym-self he lerned for-e harpes,
And lyht þey þe wynt schappes;
He lerned we, þat pleyng was
A better harper in no place.
In þe world was never man boren
That had kying Orfeo our blyth:
But he schold þencche þat þe wære
A blisful-blyth 노oe of Powehy,
Swiche melody þey-cum war.

Figure 19. Bliss’s Sir Orfeo, pages 4-5
Collationen

Derartige Auslassungen können nur schädlich wirken; sie bestärken unsorgfältige Herausgeber in ihrer Flüchtigkeit und schwächen bei jüngeren Leuten die Achtung vor philosophischer Genauigkeit im kleinen ab.

I.


nr. 1041). Derartige Auslassungen können nur schädlich wirken; sie bestärken unsorgfältige Herausgeber in ihrer Flüchtigkeit und schwächen bei jüngeren Leuten die Achtung vor philosophischer Genauigkeit im kleinen ab.

Figure 20. Eugen Kölbing’s collation (1883) of Weber’s edition of The Seven Sages of Rome
I n þis warld falleþ mani cas
  gidi blis + schort solas
  þ pomodon + pallidamas
  & absalon þat so fair was
  þ alliueden here alitel ras
  a c sone for 3eten uch so was
  þ e leuedis schene al so þe glas
  & þes maidens wiþ rudi fas
  þ assep sone so flour in gras
  s o strong no fair ner non nas
  þ at he no schal passe wiþ allas
  a uentour so hæ þ turned his pas
  o 3aines þe king + rered mas
  þ at under stondeþ olimpias
  & sendep to alisaunder bi has
  þ at he hi war in al wise
  f ram antipat' his justise
  & antipater under stondeþ wel
  þe king is feloun + cruwel

Figure 21. Copy of Auchinleck f.278.r.b. (a portion of King Alisaunder), and accompanying diplomatic transcription
augmented, the uncommon popularity of this story is testified by the great number of MSS. and old prints of it, not less than by the considerable changes which the text has undergone since it was first printed in the beginning of the 13th century. The consequence is, that the editor of this romance meets with more than usual difficulties, some of which perhaps will never be overcome.

In order to treat of the mutual relation of the MSS. and the old print of *Sir Beves*, I shall first give the pedigree of them as I have tried to make it out with the help of the French original, and then add only the most important reasons for my arrangement.

![Stemma](image)

The MSS. and the oldest print of *Sir Beves* are to be divided into two principal classes, the first comprising M O M* E C O*1 (= y), the other comprising A S N (= x). E C l. 715 ff. = M O l. 583 ff. differ considerably from A S N l. 715 ff.—In Beves's fight with the foresters, y follows the French pretty exactly (cf. C l. 829 ff., M O l. 675 ff., and my notes, p. 259), while z introduces a steward of King Ermin's, who is not found in any other version (cf. A l. 837 ff.); observe, too, Jossian's account of that fact (C l. 937¹ ff. = M l. 724 ff. compared with A l. 937 ff.; see my notes, p. 263).—A S N l. 1469 ff. mention a magic ring, while C l. 1469¹ ff. = M l. 1395 ff. name a girdle instead, in accordance with the French; cf. my note, p. 289.—A S N l. 1709 ff. are shortened, compared with the MSS. of the y-class, which in this passage contain a fuller text, though differing very much even from each other (cf. the notes, p. 294).—A S N l. 2015-36 are neither in the French nor in M O E C, and are therefore to be considered as an addition made by the writer of z.—Besides, very often the two different branches of y agree with each other as to the wording, where A S N differ.

¹ For the meaning of M* and O* see below.

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**Figure 22. Eugen Kölbing's "restless" stemma from his edition of Sir Beves of Hamtoun (1894)**
The remonde [as I have seen this word] in part II.

After the scene of Sir Beves, the action proceeds as follows:

The scene changes to the castle of the Duke of Clarence. A group of nobles is gathered, including Sir Beves, Sir John, and Sir Walter. They are discussing the recent events and planning their next move.

Sir Beves: "We cannot allow this to continue. We must take action.

Sir John: "Agreed, but what will we do?

Sir Walter: "I propose that we send a message to the King, informing him of our intentions and asking for his support.

Sir Beves: "That is a good idea. Let us begin preparations immediately.

The scene ends with the group discussing their plans and the stage directions indicating their next moves.

Translation:

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The scene ends with the group discussing their plans and the stage directions indicating their next moves.
Figure 24. Laura Loomis' format for textual evidence to support the Bookshop Theory (1940)
Figure 25. Stemma necessary to produce the pre-history of the Auchinleck Charlemagne poems, according to the Bookshop Theory (based on Walpole and Smyser)
Figure 26. Stemma necessary to reflect the immediate provenance of the Auchinleck Charlemagne poems, according to the Bookshop Theory

Figure 27. Stemma reflective of the Auchinleck Charlemagne poems as a whole, according to the Bookshop Theory
NOTES

Introduction

1 Standard descriptions of the Auchinleck (pronounced either "ocean-leck" or "off-leck") may be found in Kölbng (1884), Bliss (1951), and Cunningham (1972). The best published account of the manuscript's production is that of Shonk (1985), but see also the dissertations of Mordkoff (1980), Shonk (1981), and Burrows (1984). The publication by Pearsall and Cunningham of the Auchinleck facsimile (1979) allows interested persons to gain an intimate familiarity with the manuscript. All references to the Auchinleck in the present study refer to this facsimile.

The manuscript is universally dated to near 1330, in part because of a reference to the death of Edward II (1327) and a prayer for young Edward III, both of which events appear in the English Metrical Chronicle (ed. Ewald Zettl, EETS o.s. 196, 1935, lines 2343-52 and 2361-64).

2 Each of these writers has produced work of merit and resonance. A.S.G. Edwards in particular has provided a meaningful foundation for this study with his essay "Notes on the History of Middle English Editing" in Pearsall’s collection Manuscripts and Texts. His twin approach is both to point out that no history of Middle English editing exists, and to provoke one by offering tantalizing preliminary observations based on his own broad experiences.

Tim William Machan is perhaps the most creative and energetic figure working to re-fashion editorial method with a renewed awareness of medieval orality. Kleinhenz’ collection of essays, though now nearly 20 years old, stands at the doorway of the new emphasis on paleographical studies. And the debate between David Hult and Karl Uitti in Speculum, arguing about interpretations of Chrétien first raised by Eugène Vinaver many decades ago, demonstrates that the manner in which textual criticism informs literary study can be the subject of fierce disagreement.
1 Aarsleff 73-113. It is Aarsleff's contention that the work of Horne Tooke has become relatively unknown today, which is my reason for including rather a lot of citation from his survey in the following pages.

Horne Tooke was born John Horne, and added the surname of his close personal friend William Tooke in 1782; he is therefore usually referred to as "Horne Tooke," both comprising his legal last name. The Purley mentioned in the title of his treatise was William Tooke's country home and the setting of the Socratic dialogue around which the Diversions is constructed.

2 Aarsleff mentions several ludicrous "etymologies" of Whiter's in particular (76-78), and says of Whiter's work in general, "One wonders how it ever found its way into print" (79).

3 Blackwood's Magazine, April 1840, quoted in Aarsleff (113).

4 Aarsleff 166, 205. In the same year, Grudtvig made public his plans for the long-term publication of Anglo-Saxon texts. The basis of Aarsleff's study, it should be noted, is Anglo-Saxon studies; Middle English is mentioned only three times in passing. It is of course a fact that investigation in Anglo-Saxon advanced much more quickly than in Middle English--readers in the former existed as early as 1840 (Thorpe) and 1876 (Sweet).

Simmons (180-82) records the science of linguistics as having been decisively imported to England by German scholar F. Max Müller as late as 1861; Aarsleff's findings would seem to suggest that developments in Anglo-Saxon studies before this date were readying English intellectuals for the dawn of linguistics. But in either case, the lull in England's active participation in linguistic study caused a kind of inferiority complex from which the country's scholars did not recover for several decades. By 1888, there were 35 professors of English philology at 21 different German universities but only 5 in England (Morris, Sweet, Skeat, Ellis, and Furnivall) (Aarsleff 181, n39). Many English reviewers during the 1860's, -70's, and -80's comment on the fact that the Germans had "annexed" Anglo-Saxon studies, publishing books more quickly and cheaply than the English could hope to; Simmons is therefore quite correct to perceive an envious desire among Englishmen of the period to be identified culturally with the Anglo-Saxons.
Additionally, the writings of antiquarians evidence an unrevised quality—as if the author, energized by his passions, chose not to move back through what he had written and to group his observations in a more linear manner. It might be said that "this is how you can tell you've got an antiquarian."

While it is not a topic entirely relevant to the present study, I believe that medievalists would profit by a closer examination of the rhetoric of such writing. Exploring the nature of antiquarian composition—as evidenced by notes, early drafts, or even from verbal patterns exhibited in the final products—might help us more clearly define the sometimes indistinct line between antiquarianism and the preferred scholarship. Might it be, for example, that what we sometimes loosely refer to as "antiquarian writing" is nothing more than a particularly undisciplined rhetorical approach to presenting information? If so, if there is no fundamental qualitative difference between antiquarianism and scholarship (certainly a great deal of unimportant and self-indulgent scholarship has been written, but is still called "scholarship"), but merely a quasi-temporal one, then the frequent dismissals of antiquarian work by scholars may be in part motivated by simple impatience.

For students of Middle English literature who do not make Chaucer their specialty, Ruggiers' volume nonetheless provides context—a background against which we may measure and compare our own findings, and against whose milestones we may mark the ones we uncover in our own researches. To follow in the footsteps of the Chaucerian paleographers and editor-biographers is not to rely upon them for data pertinent to the texts with which we work, but rather to rely on the "great tradition" of Chaucer editing to fill in stages of development during which our subject texts may not have been edited much (if at all).

Such is the case with the Auchinleck. There is no clear history of it between the time of its production in the 1330's and its acquisition by Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck in the 1740's. Several signatures and marginalia (dating as far back as the fourteenth century, but the majority of Renaissance or later date) are virtually all the useful internal physical evidence available to us for the interim period, and if the possessors of the book during those four hundred years have left any external record of their ownership or use of the volume it has yet to be discovered.

Edwards 35. It is interesting to note that the establishment of what might truly be called "antiquarianism" dates to the time of Speght's adulthood (1572), when a literary group hosted by Robert Cotton and including such
figures as Camden, Stowe, and Thynne, met regularly for discussions and exhibitions of old English history and artifacts. This informal "Cotton Club" continued to meet nearly without interruption until 1751, at which time, and in evidence of the growing interest in historical inquiry then clearly marked, it was officially dubbed the Society of Antiquaries. It is still in existence today.

8 Lachmann's work has been defended and attacked numerous times in this century. While Paul Maas' monograph Textual Criticism (originally published in German as Textkritik (1927); trans. Barbara Flower, Oxford: Clarendon, 1958) lays out the basic notions of recension, the best work on Lachmann himself is Sebastian Timpanaro's La genesi del metodo del Lachmann (Florence: Monnier, 1963).

Two comprehensive criticisms of Lachmannian stemmatics are those of Giorgio Pasquali, Storia della tradizione e critica del testo (Florence: Monnier, 1934) and Joseph Bédier, "La tradition manuscrite du Lai de l'Ombre: Réflexions sur l'art d'éditer les anciens texts," Romania 54 (1928), 161-96 and 321-56.

Lee Patterson offers interpretations of Lachmann based on Timpanaro's assessment in Chapter Three of Negotiating the Past (U of Wisconsin Press, 1987), esp. pages 105-110.

9 Representative examples of such presentations of stemma are those of Morrill (Speculum Gy de Warewyke, 1898, p.57), Brunner (Seven Sages of Rome, 1933, p.21), and Smithers (King Alisaunder, 1953, p.15).

10 Whitehead and Pickford 104. Lachmann's system, based as it was on a fundamental binarism (each reading is original or an error) could not admit the possibility of a three-branched stemma. It is therefore a system a priori designed to express only certain kinds of situations, and it must inevitably misrepresent all others. Whitehead & Pickford summarize it nicely: "A method which produces the same result time after time must, it would seem, be radically vicious." This is sometimes referred to as "Bédier's paradox," though it is more of an illogicality than a paradox.

Many later scholars, including the best in the field of textual criticism, have worked hard to come to terms with Lachmannian bifurcation. W.W. Greg considered the 2-branch stemma a natural consequence of decimation, saying that it therefore wasn't anything to be called remarkable (see "Recent Theories of Textual Criticism" in Modern Philology 28 (1930-31), 403). Fourquet tried to prove that a 2-branch stemma reflects the way in which a manuscript tradition normally grows (see "Le paradoxe de

Whitehead and Pickford are very insightful on the debate itself:

It is significant that the issue of the 'three branch' or 'two branch' stemma has been the really controversial one: the possibility of four branch stemmata is one that has been discounted in practice. (107)

They wryly observe that "a count of stemmata throws perhaps more light on the ways of critics and editors than it does on manuscript traditions!" (104, n1).

Part of Bédier's hatred of stemmatology has been linked to his scorn at Stengel's editions of the Chanson de Roland. Stengel had applied Lachmannian method to the manuscripts of the poem only to generate a conjectural text of the "original" poem which was far removed from the venerable Oxford manuscript; he committed an error of diplomacy by suggesting that the Oxford Roland was a mere corruption. This insulted Bédier's sensibilities as a Frenchman, and fueled his conviction that an edition of an Old French work need not necessarily be more aesthetically pleasing than any of the existing manuscripts. He therefore set out to show that medieval French textual critics were employing their skills in what could only be a self-frustrating task (see Whitehead & Pickford, 110-12).

The importance of this point reveals itself only slowly, I think, because it involves coming to terms with Bédier's multifaceted attitudes toward editing. For example, he felt that critical editing was generally to be avoided, but that it was an utterly pointless enterprise if it could be determined that more than one version of a text was authorized by an author. The tale of Jean Renart is a medieval example he uses, but he makes the point more dramatically when he asks "What would we say of an editor of Le Père Goriot who combined in a single monstrous text variants taken from the three editions O^1, O^2, and O^3, all of which were prepared by Balzac?" (353).

Stephen Nichols 3. Nichols includes Auerbach and Curtius alongside Spitzer, though their reliance on edited products is less profound. Nichols characterizes the whole generation of the 1940's though 1960's as having relatively little concern for the artifacts of manuscript culture--in fact, with the manuscript culture per se (7). The importance of this phenomenon for Auchinleck studies
is discussed in Chapter Four of the present study: the first published record of Laura Loomis' Bookshop Theory, a construct of printed editions, appeared in 1940.

The essay is an abridgement of a chapter from Diringer's 1953 *The Hand-Produced Book*. While Kleinhenz may have been motivated to emphasize the fundamentals of medieval writing ("This is what a codex is," etc.), we should note that Diringer did approve the form of the abridgement for Kleinhenz' volume (Kleinhenz 15). Moreover, the fact that Kleinhenz would choose such a general abridgement to begin his collection of essays is a statement about his perception of the needs of his readers. He begins, in 1976, with codicological remediation.
Chapter II

1 Davis 312 ff. The Reliques went through three editions in ten years, during which time it does not appear to have generated any significant negative reviews. On the contrary, the literary community in England put to rest Percy's nervous fears about the Reliques' appropriateness as an undertaking for a budding cleric by praising it abundantly.

The Lyrical Ballads, even in its title, displays a debt to Percy which is made quite explicit by Wordsworth in the introduction to the Ballads' second edition (1815): "I do not think that there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the 'Reliques'; I know that it is so with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own" (313).

2 Davis 74. The manuscript is thus referred to as "The Percy Folio"; its formal shelfmark is British Library Additional Ms. 27879.

3 As, for example, in printing two portions of The Legend of Pope Gregory as two separate unknown works. Without a first-hand examination of the manuscript's contents, Percy is also unable to make what he would certainly have considered to be more important revelations--such as the presence of Pope Gregory and Amis and Amiloun versions in the Auchinleck. Percy details these poems elsewhere in the Reliques when discussing versions from manuscripts he has seen, and would certainly have mentioned them in that context.

The practice of exchanging transcripts was a wide one--they seem at times to have been traded like baseball cards. And they were not regulated by any scholarly ideology. Frederick Hartshorne's 1829 volume of Ancient Metrical Tales includes an edition of Floris and Blauncheflor which is printed from a transcript lent to Hartshorne by the Scottish literary scholar David Laing, who had copied it from a transcript given to Walter Scott by a brother of a Doctor Leyden, who lived in Edinburgh. Though extreme, this example suggests the possible provenance of medieval material in a pre-published form. To my knowledge, the circulation of this form of medieval textuality has never been studied.

4 Bertram Davis, Percy's chief biographer, puts considerable emphasis on these advisors as having contributed to the Reliques' form. Percy does seem to have been
somewhat at sea over the social acceptability of the *Reliques* (unlike his earlier publications of Chinese and Icelandic poetry), and was influenced by other men at various points in its development.

The idea to print from the folio manuscript is attributed to Johnson (44); Shenstone, though, counseled Percy eagerly and often. He advised against the inclusion of notes at all (they are "the Rock that you may chance to split upon," 71), against a preference for the oldest materials (92), and so on. Davis observes, finally, that Percy "had scarcely made a decision" regarding the *Reliques* without consulting Shenstone (98).

The reasons for this predilection for romances remain unclear to me. Religious bigotry may play a role in excluding the didactic ("Catholic") pieces from frequent printing, and a case might be made for a developing canonicity of Auchinleck items based on secular aesthetics. Arthur Johnson notes (37) Samuel Johnson's preference for medieval romances, and his recommendation may be reflected in this traditional preference as well.

The re-writing must also be due, in part, to the poor condition of the ballad folio he inherited from Pitt, whose maids had been tearing out parts of leaves—-not just whole ones—-as kindling. The *Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, for example, is fragmentary in that halves of leaves (tops, bottoms, exterior sides) are gone. It would have been inconceivable for a lettered man of Percy's era to transcribe and print such a fragment, and so he improvised the missing portions.

Quoted in Davis 104. Dalrymple had published a small collection of ballads in 1755 in which obvious transformations had been effected.

Davis 148. Johnson's opinion on Ossian and MacPherson is recorded in Boswell's *Life*: when Hugh Blair (the same Hugh Blair who provided Percy with the first record of the Auchinleck) asked Johnson if any modern person could have written poems like *Fingal*, Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children" (Boswell, *Life*, vol. I, 548).

Ritson, cix. Ritson was about 25 years younger than Percy but his faculties had begun to decay before the turn of the century; he died in 1803, while Percy survived until 1811. The *Romancees* is Ritson's last published work; he broke down and died in a fit the same year it was published.

Ritson adopted a consciously eccentric style of spelling, chiefly marked by the addition of an umlauted
"e" to mark inflected form class words--"giveën," "lateër," etc. He also obviously was concerned about the silencing of the letter, as is evident in his spelling of "probably" and "honourably." He shies away from using medial double consonants ("hapen," "writen"), and preserves the archaic tall "s."

He was also subject to a collegiate paranoia which is quite disturbing: as early as page iii. of the introduction to the Romanceës he abandons all hope of the volume winning a good reception:

Brought to an end with much industry and more attention, in a continue'd state of ill-health, and low spirits, the editour abandons it to general censure, with cold indifference, expecting little favour, and less profit; but certain, at any rate, to be insulted by the malignant and calumnious personaliøys of a base and prostitute gang of lurking assassins, who stab in the dark, and whose poison'd daggers he has already experience'd.

This state of mind has not, to my judgement, affected the quality of his textual observations, but it certainly colors them.

10 He did not, however, have the inclination to challenge Ritson's attacks. The title page of the fourth edition of the Reliques--an edition which contains significant revision and correction--bears the name of Percy's nephew, though Percy himself made the revisions (Davis 285-86).

11 Oxford English Dictionary. The fact that the noun forms ("editor," "edition") are evidenced in our language some years before the verb form suggests that the operation was self-explanatory until the late 18th century.

Johnson's dictionary (1755) defines "edition" as "Publication of any thing, particularly of a book" and alternately "Republication; generally with some revisal or correcting." "Editor," moreover, is defined as "Publisher; he that revises or prepares any work for publication." The verb form is, of course, absent from Johnson's dictionary also.

12 It is also clear that Ritson associates genius with literacy, and the latter with authorship. Minstrels were less intelligent, common men:

It is no proof, because any metrical romanceës in English may not hapen to mention reading, they were not actually compose'd by writeërs at their desk. The minstrels were too ignorant, and too vulgar, to translate pieceës of several thousand lines; though such pieceës may have been translateëd or writen for them; as many a minstrel, no
doubt, could sing and play, what he had not the
genius to compose, nor even the capacity to write
or read. (cvi)
And when he goes on to point out the higher quality of
the Geste of Robyn Hode and the Tournament of Tottenham,
it is the high quality itself which makes him naturally
state that these were written by priests, not minstrels.

I am somewhat corroborated in this by two of Ritson's
personal letters, dated April 10 and June 10, 1802, both
addressed to Sir Walter Scott. In the first, Ritson (a
Londoner) thanks Scott for having sent him a transcript
of Sir Orfeo from the Auchenleck and displays unfami-
liarity with Auchenleck's contents by telling Scott that he
(Scott) had been in error when reporting that there was
only one version of Orfeo in the manuscript—"as at
Number xxxv. fol. 261, you might have found a fragment
intitled Lay le freine, which begins precisely in the
same manner as the copy from the Harleian library"
In the later letter, Ritson apologizes and admits
his misunderstanding:
You will admit that it was by no means unnatural
for me to imagine it the romance of Syr Orphewe,
which in the Harleian MS. (though not in yours)
begin with the same prologue. I am now satisfied,
by your obliging explanation, that it is the frag-
ment of or version from the French Lai du Fresne by
Marie de France, of which, when the Museum opens, I
shall finish my transcript: in the mean time, I
would be still further indebted to you for a copy
of it as it is, and, in return if you wish, you
shall have one from the French original. (Letters,
Ritson therefore appears to have seen an excerpt, or
partial transcript, of Lay le Freine before he wrote the
first letter, after which he gained access to a more
complete accounting of the text through Scott.
Resolution of this minor matter is made more
difficult by the remark of David Laing in his 1857
edition A Penni Worthe of Witte (page iii) that Ritson
"examined [the Auchinleck] carefully in 1792," and that
he made a table of contents of the manuscript at that
time. The anecdote is repeated by Kölbing (1884, 178).
I have not been able to substantiate this statement, but
Ritson's references to the manuscript in his letters do
not suggest a careful study of the volume; given what we
know of his mental health at the time he published the
Romanceés, though, it would be unwise to draw any adamant
conclusions.

This accounts for the adjectives "celebrated" and "well-known" which accompany even passing references to the Auchinleck as early as the 1830's. David Laing in 1857 is able to look back on the manuscript's history and state that the "chief fame of the volume" came in Scott's Sir Tristrem (iii.).

The nationalistic motivation of Scott's medieval work has been the focus of at least one study, Leith Davis' 1990 dissertation, Scotland and the Politics of Romanticism (U of California, Berkeley, 1990).

Cvii-cviii. The text actually reads "13th century," but this is certainly a misprint (in a particularly unfortunate spot) for "14th." In other areas of the introduction Scott affirms the latter century as being the probable date of this version.

The scribe who wrote down the Simonie, now generally referred to as Scribe II, wrote two other items in the manuscript including the lengthy Speculum Gy de Warewicke. It is possible that Scott may have looked more closely at the front and back of the manuscript than the middle, and thus was led to believe that the hand of Scribe II was unique to the Simonie.

Of the text itself little more need be mentioned here than that it is notoriously inaccurate, due to Scott's having hired a transcriber for the work. Later re-issues or collations of Scott's text (such as those of John Gibson Lockhart in 1833, and Eugen Kölbng in 1882) include corrections in nearly every stanza.

Pages 4-21 of the introduction are devoted to romanticizing Thomas, with such fictional specificity as: "In a tower at the western extremity of this village, the ruins of which are still shewn after the lapse of seven centuries, dwelt Thomas of Erceldoune, the earliest Scottish poet" (v). Thomas died near the end of the 13th century, and Scott is quick to assign the composition of an ur-Sir Tristrem to "the flower of his age," or about 1250 (ix)--an attribution made for no other evident reason than that a notable work by a great poet must surely come from his prime. Scott struggles to see in Thomas a cognoscensus and uses scant biographical evidence from Wallace, Wintoun, and Barbour to form a social connectedness.

Although, therefore, we may hesitate to affirm, with Dempster, that he was the chieftain of a most illustrious family, or with Nisbet, that he enjoyed the honour of knighthood, it would be absurd to deny, that Thomas of Erceldoune was a man of considerable rank, and honoured with the acquaintance
of the great and gallant of the time in which he lived. (xv)

Following this lengthy, breezy biography, the introduction turns to the pursuit of sources and analogues of the Tristan legend. This occupies Scott for some sixty pages, and is given great care because it is the second part of his "proof" (the first having been the exaltation of Thomas himself--now the tale is exalted beside the teller).

After drawing in much of the literary history of Europe through the door of the Arthurian legends, Scott suggests that a linguistic retardation took place in England in the later Middle Ages due to the heavy importation of foreign, mostly French, literary models. Scotland, he adds, was relatively immune to this retardation caused by Romance languages. By page 65, his rhetoric is foregrounded as he says "if the editor has been successful in his statement, two points have been established..."--these are 1) that minstrels in southern Scotland were the preservers of many Celtic legends and traditions, and 2) that they were much more likely than English counterparts to be using the English language in the mid-13th century. "By this system we may also account for the superiority of the early Scottish over the early English poets, excepting always the unrivalled Chaucer" (lxviii).

Page lv. The reasoning by age which led Weber to select the Auchinleck text of the Seven Sages did not, however, lead him to choose the Auchinleck Richard Coeur de Lion. Although he acknowledges it to be the oldest version, he judges against it because of its brevity--it omits the fabulous beginning contained in other versions ("a curious circumstance on the part of the scribe") and after a brief prologue proceeds immediately to the murder of Duke Renaud. This and other evidence caused Weber to decide that the Auchinleck fragment has much of the air of "a mere abridgment" (xlvii); accordingly, the text of Richard is not from Auchinleck.

Until the founding of the Camden Society in London in 1838, the north seems to have been the exclusive preserve of these organizations. Even well through the mid-century there is a noticeable concentration above the Humber.

Information on the foundation and sociopolitical nature of other English printing clubs (especially those concerned with archaeology and architecture) may be found in Phillipa Levine's good study The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886 (Cambridge UP,
1986). Levine offers several lists of clubs and societies in the appendices.

Foundation of societies devoted to Middle English in particular continued to the end of the century, of course; the Early English Text Society—still in operation and perhaps the best known of all the clubs—was founded in 1864 and will be discussed in the next chapter. One of its founders, F.J. Furnivall, was also instrumental in forming the original Chaucer Society (1868), a Ballad Society, and a reformed New Shakespeare Society. Furnivall's friend W.W. Skeat also founded clubs well past the mid-century point, such as his English Dialect Society (founded 1873: Benzie 112).

The Roxburghe and Hakluyt are still publishing regularly. Several other clubs came close to seeing 1900: the Camden Society (which boasted in 1862 that it had outlived the Aelfric, Shakespeare, Percy, and Parker societies: Nichols 1862, iv.) was taken over by the Royal Historical Society in 1897. The Chaucer Society closed its doors in 1892, though they were happily reopened 80 some years later by Paul Ruggiers and John Fisher as the New Chaucer Society.

William Turnbull, to whom we shall return presently, was throughout the 1830's the Secretary for both the Maitland and Abbotsford Clubs, and naturally it is his name which one most often finds "speaking" in the publications of those organizations.

The Dictionary of National Biography records the circumstances of Turnbull's departure from Scotland as unpleasant ones. A convert to Episcopalianism in the 1830's and then to Roman Catholicism in 1843, Turnbull may have left Edinburgh for London in 1852 because of mounting anti-Catholic sentiments. His employment by the Public Record Office (1859-61) was jeopardized when Protestant activists accused him of biased work (compiling calendars of state papers for the reigns of Edward VI and Mary) and of stealing state papers.

Turnbull died in 1863, a year before the founding of the Early English Text Society, in what the DNB attributes to "ill health and anxiety" that "broke down a frame that was naturally vigorous." The influence of his faith on his work, whatever its political consequences, resulted in Turnbull's volume Legendae Catholicae (1840), including several of the Auchinleck's shorter devotional items (Saint Margaret, Saint Katherine, etc.) which had never been edited before.

The only two exceptions are Thomas Wright's text of the Simonie in his Political Songs of England (1839) and
Francisque Michel's text of *Horn Childe* in Paris in 1845.

Perhaps the first was Benjamin Thorpe, the pioneer in Anglo-Saxon studies to whom Hans Aarsleff awards the prize for bringing New Philology to England in 1830 (98).

Printed by Laing in this volume are *A Penniworth of Wit, Floris and Blauncheflur, The Thrush and the Nightingale, Adam and Eve, David the King, On the Seven Deadly Sins, The Pater Noster, How Our Lady's Psalter Was First Found, The Alphabetical Praise of Women, and The Sayings of St. Bernard*. *Floris* had been printed once before, by Frederick Hartshorne, whose practice seems to have been to request transcripts and publish them without the permission of their donors (see above, n.4).

After this edition appeared, all but five items in the Auchenleck (*The Clerk Who Would See the Virgin, Speculum Gy de Warewycke, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, The Battle Abbey Roll*, and the *Liber Regum Angliae*) had been printed. [See Table 2.]
Chapter III

1 See especially his transcription of "The Wench that Loved a King" (187). The existence of this brief 24-line fragment, which had been partially erased, is here recorded for the first time.

2 It is interesting to note that the undertaking of the Early English Text Society (see below) was called antiquarian by some contemporary reviewers when it was first begun (see, for example, Edinburgh Review 1867, 221), but this appellation quickly fell into disuse and ceased being applied to philological inquiry altogether by the 1890's.

The Review goes on to state, though, that "it is true that such a standard of accuracy as we find recognised, for example, in these publications of the Early English Text Society is of recent adoption" (223); certainly the professional posture of the new editors was a conscious thing.

3 The first few EETS volumes were apparently issued in paperback, though I have never seen such a copy in its original form. All medievalists of the 20th century are familiar with the brown volumes lettered in gilt and bearing the emblem of the Alfred Jewel.

4 The steep decline in the yearly number of volumes published by the Society between its founding and 1880 alone suggests that it was being forced to readjust its vision of itself. If only enough subscribers could be found to support the industry it had brought into being! The Society published 23 texts in its first three years (1864-66), 16 in its next three (1867-69), and 13 in the next three (1870-72). It then published 9 volumes each in 1873-75 and 1876-78, before settling into the average of 2 publications per year which it has sustained for over a century. (The list of publications may be found in most EETS volumes, and is available from the current Secretary at its Oxford offices.)

5 It seems that, like the term "romance," which Lillian Hornstein defines as "a narrative about knightly prowess and adventure, in verse or in prose, intended primarily for the entertainment of a listening audience," (Severs, Vol.I, 11), "critical edition" must always be accompanied by a nod of exasperation.

6 A good example of this is the practice of line-matching. If two manuscript versions are printed on one page, the
editor may print the version in the left column as a running text, and add spacing in the right column so that the verbal similarities are more easily noticeable. All parallel-text editions do this to some degree.

It will be remembered that Joseph Ritson's ill-tempered exposé of Thomas Percy's Reliques employed the printing of passages from the original of "The Marriage of Sir Gawaine" in parallel with Percy's new and improved version (Ritson 1803, vol. i, cx-cxli), but the purposes for using the format are not the same in the two cases.

The parallel relationships change over the breadth of the edition, further complicating its use. They may be reduced as follows.
Lines 1-119: parallel texts of all versions except Auchinleck (whose text here is lost), "since none of these MSS. gives a more reliable text than another";
Lines 119-2741: Auchinleck becomes the base text, with variants from the four others;
Lines 2741 on: add variants from one more manuscript; parallel texts of all versions except Auchinleck, which is again lost.

A folio between extant folios 299 and 300 has been cut out, leaving only a marginal strip of vellum measuring roughly half an inch tucked down in the manuscript's binding. This strip, numbered "299a" in deference to its missing contents, once contained the conclusion to Sir Tristrem and the beginning of Sir Orfeo—the folio was undoubtedly removed for the sake of the illuminated scene from Sir Orfeo which it would have contained. The common assumption is that between 24 and 38 lines of that poem's introduction were on the verso of 299a, though there are no letter-forms extant on the stub to give any reference points.

Bliss xv: "The first thirty-eight lines of the A [Auchinleck] text are missing; but it is probable that they occupied the last column of a folio which has been lost from the manuscript. Each column of the manuscript contains forty-four lines, exactly enough for a title, a small illumination, and the missing lines. Of these thirty-eight lines the first twenty-four can be supplied with some certainty, for they reappear on folio 261a of the manuscript as a prologue to Lay le Freyne; [sic] the remaining fourteen must be reconstructed from H [Harley] and B [Ashmole]."

I must note that Bliss does refer at this point to an article of his in English and Germanic Studies (1953, pp.
7-14) which justifies his reconstruction of the lines as such. But this does not alter the fact that the edition itself denies the reader a full accounting of his activity.

11 The poem is found on pages 323-45 of Wright’s Political Songs of England from the Reign of John to that of Edward II and is titled "Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II."

12 Embree & Urquhart 52. The authors compare this with the three manuscripts of the first two passus of the Piers Plowman C-text, which agree 53% of the time.

13 Embree & Urquhart (58) make the quoted remark, which from context must refer to Ross. The text is not usable as a scholarly edition since the profound difficulty of the textual problems seems to have short-circuited any notion of method. Ross' publication might be considered a work of modern antiquarianism—especially since his impulse to publish the composite edition seems to have been spurred only by his discovery of the third Simonie manuscript three years earlier.

14 It should be theoretically possible to have a collation which offers variant readings of an unprinted manuscript version against a printed version. This "text" would have a peculiar bibliography, and it is interesting to think that there can be a published record of the differences between one manuscript version and another, while one of the versions itself may never in fact have been printed whole. I have found no such collations of Auchinleck items.
Kane and Donaldson’s famous dictum that any edition which stops short of a fully reconstructed original is "a poor-spirited and slothful undertaking" comes to mind. This interpretation of the nature of editorial work is (perhaps unnecessarily) echoed by Lee Patterson in "The Logic of Textual Criticism" when that writer sets up a false dichotomy between external and internal evidence and offers the judgment that "an uncritical reliance upon external evidence is itself a failure of scholarship" (67).

The article’s goal is to prove, not merely to suggest. Loomis is very clear on this point (see 137-38).

Were this a discussion of anonymous scribes, the term "convergent variation" would be appropriate: this refers to two persons of the same era sharing a verbal pattern. In a Lachmannian-style stemma, convergent variation is used to explain the position of shared features in manuscripts which cannot possibly be genetically related to one another. The scribes of both have introduced the same departure from their exemplars.

The modern bias in favor of Chaucer’s authority, perhaps, precludes Loomis’ use of the term here.

See Trounce’s articles in the premiere volumes of Medium AEvum (1932-34) for an old but still compelling indictment of the way in which Chaucer is used "as a stick with which to beat the tail-rhyme romances."

This matter strikes at the heart of the New Philology’s notion of variation—it butts the fixed-verbal against the dynamic-verbal. As we shall see, while a scholar of Loomis’ generation was prepared to conceive of unknowable dynamic forces being responsible for the inspiration of authors and geniuses (in the paradigm of the Romantic imagination), she was not prepared to extend the conception to the actual inscription of texts.

Loomis 1940, 132. Her references elsewhere to the Auchenleck miniatures are to reproductions in her husband R.S. Loomis’ article on Richard Coeur de Lion (1915) and again to the Maitland Club Beves of Hamtoun. In her 1942 article she refers to illuminations in Cotton Nero A.x. (the Pearl manuscript) via Israel Gollancz’ monochrome facsimile published by the EETS in 1932.

Following Kölbing, Loomis’ count of the scribes is in
error—there are six hands at work in the manuscript. (The miscount does not directly influence her arguments here.)

8 Judith Weiss (444-45) was the first person to dispel the romantic notions that particular volumes must have been sitting on the shelves of the Auchenleck Bookshop. The dissertation of Judith Mordkoff (University of Connecticut, 1980) is the best extant evaluation of the intricacies of Loomis' textual proofs. (See esp. Chapter III, page 31.) Mordkoff repeats and builds on Weiss' observation that Loomis based her arguments concerning the inscription of Guy of Warwick not on the most probable Anglo-Norman source, but on the manuscript which had been edited in full. Mordkoff then appropriately bases her critique of Loomis on the errors into which this choice of the more accessible manuscript led her.

9 It is an interesting coincidence that Roland and Vernagu and its companion Charlemagne poem Otuel a knight happen to have been the first poems from the Auchenleck edited by an antiquarian book club (ed. Turnbull, for the Abbotsford Club, 1836), and also the first Auchenleck items to have been edited by the EETS (ed. Herriage, 1882). The poems, while having no claims of innovation according to traditional measures, thus carry a curious retrospective eminence.

10 Paris' investigations into the English matière de France are unarguably dismissive. Witness, for example, his opinion of early Middle English literature in general: The first written works in English were naturally all made under the French influence: they were translations or imitations of the literature which alone was used by the highest classes. The best illustration representing this period won, from a contemporary French poet, the epithet that the work of contemporary criticism justifies more and more: "Great translator, noble Geoffrey Chaucer." For the rest, this literature of translation is poor, and moreover its activity was not well exercised on our Carolingian legend. (155-56)

11 Paris introduces "Charlemagne and Roland" to his readers as a fait accompli—as though he is only providing a name for a somewhat neglected, but definitely recognizable, work: "This is the title that I believe should be restored to a poem which has not yet been considered as it should be" (156). Saying further that the poem is "a type of résumé of Charlemagne's wars against the Saracens," he lists its parts as coming from three sources: the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, the Chanson d'Otinel, and
the Latin account of Charlemagne's journey to Jerusalem commonly referred to as the Descriptio. Paris believed that the poem was "a kind of cyclic work," somewhat similar to the German Karl Meinet and the Norse Karlamagnus saga (156).


First, O'Sullivan notes their common stanza form; second, their combined use of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, the voyage to Jerusalem commonly called the Pelerinage, and the French *Chanson d'Otinel* and *Chanson de Roland*; and third, various specific verbal similarities (lxiv-lxvii).

The first two of these groups do not, of course, constitute evidence of direct textual descent per se, though they can help express similarities between texts. *Otuel and Roland* is a paleographically unique work produced by three scribes who took up and left off writing at irregular intervals, bringing orthographic and dialectic peculiarities with them at each move. Single lines and even the greater parts of stanzas frequently seem to be missing, and often no attempt is made on the part of the scribes to adjust syntax or rhyme around these omissions—the result is a poem which is difficult to read, much less to draw conclusions from. Both it and *Roland and Vernagu* are in tail-rhyme stanzas, but the types of rhymes and meters used are different enough to preclude the possibility of a common origin for them as texts. *Otuel and Roland* generally rhymes aabaabcdcbdddb for the duration of lines 1-1697, with generally four-stress couplet lines and three-stress tail lines. At line 1698 the rhyme shifts to the less demanding pattern aabccbdbeeb, and the stresses in the couplet lines lose any kind of systematization.

This shift in rhyme takes place at the point where the Otuel story ends and the *Pseudo-Turpin*-based material begins, and is in part what led O'Sullivan to her conviction that the Otuel section was "foreign" to the rest of the work. According to the "Charlemagne and Roland" theory, the rhyme and meter of this second half of *Otuel and Roland* should match up with the rhyme and meter of *Roland and Vernagu*—this would show that they are indeed estranged halves of a single work. Roland and
Vernagu, however, does not compare even with the simple analysis provided above: its first 424 lines rhyme in the form aabccbddeeb with very regular four-stress couplets and three-stress tails; lines 425-879 are in the same rhyme scheme but demonstrate universal three-stress lines. The only technical similarity is that of the first half of Roland and Vernagu to occasional sections of the second half of Otuel and Roland, but this is insufficient to "prove" a common origin.

14 See, for example, Walpole 1945, 25; 1947, 261; 1951, 40; Smyser 1946, 275, 278, 287; Manual 88.

15 There are four distinct settings to which Walpole and Smyser point when they describe the textual prehistory of "Charlemagne and Roland." First, in the year 1206, Pierre de Beauvais translated into French the Latin Descriptio story and recommended it in an introduction as a neglected episode in the story of Charlemagne's Spanish campaigns. At the same time, a Latin C-text of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle was translated into French by a scribe identifying himself as one "Maitre Jehans"; this French Turpin version is thus deferentially called "the Johannes Turpin." Soon afterwards, an unknown scribe (possibly Pierre de Beauvais himself) copied these two prose texts back to back in one manuscript, with the French Descriptio followed immediately by French Johannes Turpin.

Second, soon after the above took place, a scribe working for Count Renaud de Boulogne "fused" the texts together—he copied them without distinguishing between Descriptio and Turpin—and shortened the Descriptio so as to make it a summary introduction to the more extensive Turpin material. The result is alternately called by Walpole a "redacted Johannes Descriptio-Turpin" or an "Estoire de Charlemagne," since it is in French and contains the journeys to both Jerusalem and Spain. Some 32 copies of the Johannes Turpin are presently known to exist, but the redaction which interested Walpole is BM Additional 40142, made in England around 1250.

The third setting for the textual history of "Charlemagne and Roland" is as follows: in the last years of the thirteenth century, slightly later than the activity already described, a French manuscript of the Chanson d'Otinel was translated into English couplets in the same London bookshop that was to have produced the Auchinleck manuscript—Loomis' bookshop. This couplet Otinel does not survive, but according to Smyser it must have been redacted twice: once in tail-rhyme form (which survives as the first half of the Fillingham Otuel and Roland) and once in couplet form (surviving as the Auchinleck Otuel Aknight).
Finally, Walpole believed that at about the same time (c1300), the Johannes Pseudo-Turpin contained in Add. 40142 was changed into English tail-rhyme verse in Loomis' bookshop as part of the Auchenleck project. The only surviving portion of this translation, he contends, is Roland and Vernagu, which he copiously demonstrates to have been directly copied—without any possibility of intermediate manuscripts—from BL Add. 40142. The contradictions inherent in this genealogy, especially the latter parts, is discussed in the main text. The textual history just described is condensed from Walpole 1944, 397–98, and utilizes the classification of Turpin manuscripts made by Cyril Meredith-Jones in his Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi, ou Chronique du Pseudo-Turpin (Paris, 1936). Walpole published an edition of the Johnannes Turpin in 1976, in the supplement to which he thoroughly describes 32 manuscripts of the Johannes text; BM Additional 40142 is referred to as "L3" (164–82). Walpole was aware of only 18 Johannes manuscripts at the time of his 1944 monograph (398), but his discovery of 14 more in subsequent years does not seem to have affected his conviction that Add. 40142 is the source of Roland and Vernagu (1965, 617–18; 1976 suppl. 169–70).

16 This approach is familiar to us now: it is the same textual circumstances which Sir Orfeo presents to its editors.

17 Judith Mordkoff's detailed destruction of Loomis' evidence (on much the same grounds as I have outlined with the Thopas article) displays some of the same impatience which the present study admittedly contains (see especially Mordkoff 52–59, where she must discuss Loomis' barrage of textual data systematically). The dangers of the Bookshop theory thus are as much in the expense of energy it demands of its detractors as they are in inherent qualities of the theory.
Chapter V

1 Thus the common division in many standard editions (e.g. the Riverside Chaucer) between explanatory notes (or "commentary") and textual notes. In the case of Auchinleck, such nontextual codicological evidence naturally consists of discussions of the mutilations and consequent lost passages of text. The introductions to most editions of Sir Orfeo from 1822 (Laing) through 1993 (Burrow and Turville-Petre), for example, contain mentions of the lost introduction and the editor's replacement of it with text from Lay le Freine or the Harley or Ashmole Orfeo versions.

2 Aarsleff (166ff) perceptively mentions that conditions of this kind existed among Anglo-Saxonists in the 1830's. The "Charlemagne and Roland" essays of Loomis, Smyser, and Walpole may be said to epitomize these qualities' antithesis.

3 Cook, page v. We can recall at this point the misgivings of Percy and his fellow antiquarians over the sensibilities of their audiences with respect to medieval poetry.

4 Cook also offers the Auchinleck text of Amis and Amiloun in the reader. He follows these same procedures with it, but this time does not announce where the text comes from (it is almost certainly Kölbings from 1884).

5 Though present in most of the later editions of the Norton, these lines may be found on page xxx of the preface in the Fourth (1979) edition.

6 Bennett and Smithers are extremely conscientious in this method: they draw the eye of the reader toward, not away from, the imported line by the use of italics. This is the only occurrence of importation in the selection from Floris, and importation is not a pervasive editorial practice in the volume as a whole (it is performed perhaps half a dozen times over the course of 19 edited texts).

7 This leads to the interesting question of who exactly has edited the texts which Garbáty prints. Garbáty has polished the texture of the previously edited works, but do we accurately refer to this as "editing"? There does not seem to be an applicable term for this action though it is relatively common in anthology-making, and I am not aware that these matters have been discussed in editorial histories to date.
The changes themselves, though, are always open to debate: Sir Orfeo once again receives an introduction imported from the Harley version, as well as various other lines imported from both Harley and Ashmole to help "improve" the Auchinleck base text. The note to lines 14-16 of Orfeo (page 112) reports that "These lines, omitted in the Auchinleck manuscript, are based on the Harley manuscript, with ybrojt from the Ashmole manuscript for the rhyme."

Middleton 22. R. Howard Bloch (40-46) attributes this same kind of impulse--of energetic scholars replacing "soft" theory with "rigorous" method--as having taken place around the turn of the century between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I.

This important point is often cloaked by the authoritative presentation of the fascicles. A further example from the same "Romances" volume is Hamilton Smyser's entry on Charlemagne legends which expresses the Bookshop Theory as unequivocally factual (see Chapter Four, section iii, above). (The practice of thus institutionalizing a theory is not common in the Manual, and may be ascribed to Smyser's personal participation in the series of articles which helped support the Bookshop Theory. Smyser was, until his death in the 1970's, a member of the Advisory Committee which oversees the publication of the Manual's fascicles.)

Such work includes that of Thomas Stemmler (who has studied B.L. Harley 2253) and Julia Boffey (who has studied several collections of lyrics, including Harley 2253, Harley 7333, and Cambridge Trinity R.3.20), and A.G. Rigg (whose study of the Cambridge Trinity 0.9.38 miscellany appeared not long after Mehl's book). Harriet Hudson, whose article "Middle English Popular Romances: The Manuscript Evidence" inherited from Mehl the inclination to observe similarities in the constructions and contents of medieval manuscripts in which romances tend to be contained.

Jean H. Burrows' 1984 dissertation on the Auchinleck also falls into this category: it is a work of literary interpretation based on a holistic vision of the manuscript. Burrows offers her conclusions on Auchinleck's purpose and audience on 219; they are echoed by Mordkoff and Shonk (q.v.).

Mehl's foundational work has also helped make possible the increased publication of studies of the complex manuscript relationships of multiple-attestation works such as Embree and Urquhart's work on The Simonie, Greetham's on the Regiment of Princes, and Hussey's on the Scale of Perfection.
In this passage from a 1969 essay on conjectural emenda-
tion, for example, Kane equivocates on where exactly
textual editing "is" in its development. The field
seems, as he puts it, "topsy-turvy":

As I understand editing an edited text has no
absolute authority; it is as sound or unsound as
the case the competent editor can make out for it.
An edition constitutes an attempt to account for
available phenomena in terms of what is known about
the circumstances which generated them. To that
extent it has the character of a scientific activi-
ty. It operates by advancing hypotheses to explain
data, and tests such hypotheses in terms of their
efficiency as explanations. Those which pass the
test it accepts as presumptively, not absolutely,
true; they remain subject to revision or rejection
if new data comes to light or more efficient hy-
potheses are devised. Its character implies an
editorial obligation to expose its procedures and
the precise extent to which their results are
speculative for scrutiny. In such a process con-
jectural emendation can represent itself as not
merely legitimate, but even on particular occasions
strongly indicated.... (221-22)

Lee Patterson, whose analysis of Kane and Donaldson's
method in Chapter 3 of Negotiating the Past is surely one
of the most thorough that has appeared, both acknowledges
and ignores this condition. While he notes that "the
editors' empirical desire to make their data avail-
able... is in sharp contrast to their unwillingness to
provide cross-references that would make the data
available in individual instances" (108), and that the
results of the editors' discrimination between author and
scribe are not verifiable (112); he also believes that
the method is not "ad hoc, capricious, arbitrary, or
intuitional" and that it is not the "disguised collabora-
tion between editor and author" (98) we have referred to
as "editorial texture" in this study.

The result is a tautology: Patterson defends the
merits of the Kane-Donaldson method because not to defend
them would be to deny that it has merits. Kane and
Donaldson have produced a "splendid" edition for no other
reason than that they have exercised editorial action.
(And what comprises editorial action? The absence of
"slothful" inaction.)

Patterson's defense works very much like the text he
is defending: he is precise in his statements, but his
statements contradict one another so completely as to
make the defense nearly invulnerable to rational cri-
tique. That does not mean that he is right; it just
means that he can't be proven wrong. (See also Machan 1992, page 11, for a similar view.)

Among those pointing directly to the B-text publication as the chief catalyst of the present movement are Patterson, Anne Middleton, Jerome McGann, and many of the contributors to the excellent *Crux and Controversy* volume which appeared in 1992 (notably Charlotte Brewer, Tim William Machan, and Anne Hudson).

Peter Salus, who reviewed Macrae-Gibson's edition of *Arthur and Merlin* for *English Studies* in 1974, lamented even then that there were too few editions being made of Auchinleck texts. He states further that:

This lack of editions means that there is little work done on the poems themselves. Thus, in the dozen years from 1960 through 1971 the PMLA Bibliography lists three items concerning "Amis and Amiloun," two concerning "Floris and Blancheflour," two relating to "Guy of Warwick," one about the "King of Tars," two to "Sir Degare," 19 to "Sir Orfeo," and two concerning "Sir Tristrem." None of the other items in the Auchinleck MS. is listed at all. We thus find 32 contributions (including text editions and doctoral dissertations!) over more than a decade.... (259)

It is interesting, though, that Salus in 1974 does not yet discuss why editions of Auchinleck items (and those of other Middle English manuscripts) are becoming less common.
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