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*Dreaming of authors, authoring dreams: Literary authorship in the framed first-person allegories of John Skelton, William Dunbar, Stephen Hawes, and Gavin Douglas*

ATKINSON, LAURIE, RAY

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**Laurie Atkinson, 'Dreaming of authors, authoring dreams: Literary authorship in the framed first-person allegories of John Skelton, William Dunbar, Stephen Hawes, and Gavin Douglas'**

This thesis investigates the distinctive conceptions of literary authorship of John Skelton, William Dunbar, Stephen Hawes, and Gavin Douglas by means of close and comparative readings of their utilisation of a particular form and mode: framed first-person allegory. Each of the poets examined makes claims for the textual authority of their writings—that is, those qualities which make a text worth reading and reproducing. For most, those claims are based on the attribution of the work to a human author, whose skill, learning, and morality add value to the text. Skelton's strategy for authorial self-promotion of this kind is to represent himself *as an author* within an allegorical dream poem, for which Chaucer provides the most important models in English. Yet for others, framed first-person allegory functions as a largely depersonalised form and mode, a compilation and negotiation of texts and tradition, or sometimes as a way to represent the kind of author that the poet is not. This thesis asks: *what kind* of authors are imagined in the framed first-person allegories of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century English and Scottish poets?; but also, when is self-representation-as-author *not* considered to be the most effective strategy for authorial self-promotion, and what are the alternatives? Responses to changing systems of patronage and publication, cognizance of certain humanist ideals, and intersection of what have been understood as 'medieval' and 'modern' attitudes to poetic predecessors, especially Chaucer, are considered in the works of four poets who have too often been consigned to the footnotes of larger diachronic surveys. The picture that emerges is of an interconnected but multifaceted array of literary authorships, responsive to, but not determined by, contemporary political, social, and technological factors, and which complicate accounts of 'the emergence of the English author' in late medieval and early modern England and Scotland.

Dreaming of authors, authoring dreams: Literary  
authorship in the framed first-person allegories of John  
Skelton, William Dunbar, Stephen Hawes, and Gavin  
Douglas

Laurie Atkinson

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	6
Abbreviations	7
Standard editions and conventions	10
Introduction	12
1. The literary author post-Caxton, ante-Thynne	23
1.1. 'The emergence of the English author' in late medieval and early modern England and Scotland	28
1.2. Framed first-person allegory as a vehicle for self-representation	45
2. John Skelton, William Dunbar, and authorial self-promotion at the courts of Henry VII and James IV	61
2.1. From satire to self-scrutiny: Skelton's <i>Bowge of Courte</i>	62
2.2. Dunbar's poetry of integration	84
2.3. From self-scrutiny to self-regard: Skelton's <i>Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell</i>	114
3. 'Obscure allegory' and reading 'by true experyence' in the framed first-person allegories of Stephen Hawes	143
3.1. Hawes's 'obscure allegory'	145
3.1.1. The court, Lydgate, and rhetoric	148
3.1.2. Justifying poetic fictions in the chamber of Rethoryke	160
3.2. Allegory turned inwards	169
3.2.1. Intratextual cross-reference in <i>The Pastime of Pleasure</i>	171
3.2.2. Reading <i>The Conforte of Louers</i> 'by true experyence'	191
3.3. Hawes, de Worde, and the improvisation of genre	210
4. 'Qu(o)d the compilar Gawin D': Gavin Douglas's implied authorship	238
4.1. <i>The Palice of Honour</i>	243
4.2. Text, sentence, and 'voice' in the <i>Eneados</i>	259
4.2.1. 'Virgill [...] by me now at this tyme': From <i>Aeneid</i> to <i>Eneados</i>	264
4.2.2. Aeneas, Virgil, Douglas: A hierarchy of 'voice'	276
4.3. 'Fenzeand' authors in the narrative Prologues	296

The seventh and twelfth Prologues	299
The eighth Prologue	306
The thirteenth Prologue	315
Conclusion	330
Bibliography	336
Appendix 1. Hawes's 'cloudy fygures' trope	373
Appendix 2. De Worde's Hawes editions	376
Appendix 3. Reuse of <i>Example</i> and <i>Pastime</i> woodcut illustrations in later de Worde publications	377

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## Abbreviations

### Anthologies and databases

<i>EEBO</i>	<i>Early English Books Online</i> , in <i>ProQuest</i> < <a href="http://proquest.com/eebo">http://proquest.com/eebo</a> >
<i>ERLC</i>	<i>English Renaissance Literary Criticism</i> , ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
<i>MLTC</i>	<i>Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-c. 1375: The Commentary Tradition</i> , ed. Alastair J. Minnis and A. B. Scott with David Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina [Patrologia Latina]</i> , ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 217 vols (Paris: Migne, 1844-55). Available as XML and TXT files at <i>Corpus Corporum: Repositorium operum Latinorum apud universitatem Turicensem</i> < <a href="http://mlat.uzh.ch/MLS">http://mlat.uzh.ch/MLS</a> >

### Catalogues, dictionaries, and indices

<i>DIMEV</i>	Linne R. Mooney et al., <i>The 'DIMEV': An Open-Access, Digital Edition of the 'Index of Middle English Verse'</i> < <a href="https://www.dimev.net">https://www.dimev.net</a> > [referenced by entry number]
<i>DOST</i>	<i>A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue</i> , ed. William A. Craigie et al., 12 vols (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1931-81; Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983-93; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994-2002). Incorporated into <i>Dictionaries of the Scottish Language</i> < <a href="https://dsl.ac.uk">https://dsl.ac.uk</a> >
<i>ESTC</i>	<i>English Short Title Catalogue</i> (British Library) < <a href="https://www.estc.bl.uk">https://www.estc.bl.uk</a> >
Hodnett	Edward Hodnett, <i>English Woodcuts, 1480-1535</i> , repr. with additions and corrections (London: Oxford University Press, 1975; first published 1935) [referenced by entry number]
Lewis and Short	Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, <i>A Latin Dictionary, Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879)
<i>MED</i>	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i> , ed. Robert E. Lewis et al. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952-2001). Online version included in <i>Middle English Compendium</i> < <a href="https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary">https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary</a> >
<i>OED</i>	<i>OED Online</i> (Oxford University Press) < <a href="https://www.oed.com">https://www.oed.com</a> >
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , gen. ed. Sir David Cannadine, 60 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Regularly updated online version at < <a href="https://www.oxforddnb.com">https://www.oxforddnb.com</a> >
<i>STC</i>	<i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, &amp; Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> rev. edn, ed. A. W. Pollard and G. W. Redgrave, rev. W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, 3 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976-91; first published 1926) [referenced by entry number]
<i>USTC</i>	<i>Universal Short Title Catalogue</i> (University of St Andrews) < <a href="https://www.ustc.ac.uk">https://www.ustc.ac.uk</a> >



## Book Series

EETS	Publications of the Early English Text Society
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
STS	Publications of the Scottish Text Society

## Journals

<i>Academy</i>	<i>The Academy</i>
<i>ANQ</i>	<i>American Notes and Queries</i>
<i>BLJ</i>	<i>British Library Journal</i>
<i>BRH</i>	<i>Bulletin of Research in the Humanities</i>
<i>ChauR</i>	<i>The Chaucer Review</i>
<i>CL</i>	<i>Comparative Literature</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CRJ</i>	<i>Classical Receptions Journal</i>
<i>DPhil</i>	<i>Digital Philology</i>
<i>EBST</i>	<i>Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions</i>
<i>EIC</i>	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>
<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>ELN</i>	<i>English Language Notes</i>
<i>ELR</i>	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
<i>EMLS</i>	<i>Early Modern Literary Studies</i>
<i>EMS</i>	<i>English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700</i>
<i>ES</i>	<i>Englische Studien</i>
<i>FCS</i>	<i>Fifteenth-Century Studies</i>
<i>GJ</i>	<i>Gutenberg-Jahrbuch</i>
<i>HLQ</i>	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
<i>ICS</i>	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
<i>InnR</i>	<i>The Innes Review</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>JMEMS</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>
<i>JMRS</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies</i>
<i>JWCI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>Library</i>	<i>The Library</i>
<i>LitComp</i>	<i>Literature Compass</i>
<i>MÆ</i>	<i>Medium Ævum</i>
<i>M&amp;H</i>	<i>Medievalia et Humanistica</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>MS</i>	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
<i>N&amp;Q</i>	<i>Notes and Queries, n. s.</i>
<i>NML</i>	<i>New Medieval Literatures</i>
<i>NMS</i>	<i>Nottingham Medieval Studies</i>
<i>PBSA</i>	<i>Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>RenP</i>	<i>Renaissance Papers</i>

<i>RenQ</i>	<i>Renaissance Quarterly</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>The Review of English Studies</i>
<i>Rhetorica</i>	<i>Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric</i>
<i>RMS</i>	<i>Reading Medieval Studies</i>
<i>RPL</i>	<i>Res Publica Litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Renaissance Studies</i>
<i>SCJ</i>	<i>Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
<i>SEL</i>	<i>Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900</i>
<i>SIcon</i>	<i>Studies in Iconography</i>
<i>SLI</i>	<i>Studies in the Literary Imagination</i>
<i>SLJ</i>	<i>Scottish Literary Journal</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
<i>SRen</i>	<i>Studies in the Renaissance</i>
<i>SMELL</i>	<i>Studies in Medieval English Language and Literature</i>
<i>SPELL</i>	<i>Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature</i>
<i>SSL</i>	<i>Studies in Scottish Literature</i>
<i>SSR</i>	<i>Scottish Studies Review</i>
<i>TC</i>	<i>Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation</i>
<i>TCBS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society</i>
<i>T&amp;L</i>	<i>Translation and Literature</i>
<i>UTQ</i>	<i>University of Toronto Quarterly</i>
<i>YES</i>	<i>The Yearbook of English Studies</i>

## Standard editions and conventions

All references to the works of Chaucer, Douglas, Dunbar, Hawes, and Skelton are to the editions below unless otherwise stated.

Chaucer, Geoffrey, *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, ed. Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; first published Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) [I give *The Canterbury Tales*, X.1081-92 the traditional title, the *Retraction*]

*The Complete English Poems of John Skelton*, rev. edn, ed. and rev. John Scattergood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; first published Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983)

Hawes, Stephen, *The Minor Poems*, ed. Florence W. Gluck and Alice B. Morgan, EETS, o. s., 271 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974)

— — *The Pastime of Pleasure*, ed. William Edward Mead, EETS, o. s., 173 (London: Oxford University Press, 1928)

‘The Latin Writings of John Skelton’, ed. David R. Carlson, *SP*, 88:4 (1991)

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

*The Shorter Poems of Gavin Douglas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt, STS, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., 2 (Chippenham: Anthony Rowe, 2003); first published STC, 4<sup>th</sup> ser., 3 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1967) [all references to the *Palice* are to the reprint of William Copland’s 1553 edition in this book (see justification in section 4.1)]

Skelton, John, *The Bibliotheca Historica of Diodorus Siculus*, ed. F. M. Salter and H. L. R. Edwards, 2 vols, EETS, o. s., 233, 239 (London: Oxford University Press, 1956-67) [a transcript of the single extant witness, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 357, referenced by folio number]

*Virgil’s Aeneid Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld*, ed. David F. C. Coldwell, 4 vols, STS, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 25, 27-28, 30 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1957-64)

Titles of primary texts are from the standard editions listed above and the editions indicated in footnotes. Titles for unpublished verse in manuscript are from *DIMEV*. Titles of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century printed texts are the uniform title from

*ESTC* (where available) and *USTC*; the printed title is also supplied (and in discussion substituted) if sufficiently different from the *ESTC* uniform title; if *ESTC* gives no uniform title, only the printed title is used. Exceptions are Appendices 2 and 3, where all titles are as printed (where extant). All dates of publication for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century printed texts are from *STC* (via *ESTC*) and *USTC*, except Wynkyn de Worde's editions of Stephen Hawes's poems (see Appendix 2); Thomas Feylde, *Here begynneth a lytel treatyse called the contrauerse bytwene a loue and a jaye lately compyled* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1529?]) *STC* 10838.7, dated [c. 1527] in *STC* (see chapter 3, n. 170); and Gavin Douglas, [*The place of honour*] ([Edinburgh: Thomas Davidson, c. 1530-40]) *STC* 7072.8, dated [c. 1525] in *STC* (see chapter 4, n. 9). In quotations of manuscript and early printed sources, italics mark expanded abbreviations. When quoting from modern editions, italics marking expanded abbreviations are silently changed to roman; all other editorial conventions are retained.

## Introduction

The *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell* of John Skelton ends on a note of poetic self-congratulation rarely sounded in fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century English poetry. Having appeared in a dream before the Quene of Fame in order to justify his place at her court, Skelton's poet-narrator reports the recital by Occupacyon of the list of his works recorded in her 'boke of remembrauns' (1149). Finally, after more than three hundred lines, and as many as fifty-one known, lost, and some possibly spurious works, Occupacyon makes mention of the present poem:

But when of the laurell she made rehersall,  
All orators and poetis, with other grete and smale,

A thowsand thowsand, I trow, to my dome,  
*Triumpha, triumph!* they cryd all aboute.  
Of trumpettis and clariouns the noyse went to Rome;  
The starry hevyn, me thought, shoke with the showte;  
The grownde gronid and tremblid, the noyse was so stowte.  
The Quene of Fame commaundid shett fast the book,  
And therwith, sodenly, out of my dreme I woke.

(*Garlande*, 1503-11)

There is much that is novel in Skelton's dream of fame, much else that is consciously antique. Skelton's textual double, Skelton Poeta, is honoured in a Roman-style triumph and welcomed into the company of the great poets of the past. His *Garlande* constitutes the capstone of a monumental poetic achievement which not even the capricious Fame can deny. In this, Skelton makes a marked departure from his foremost source: Geoffrey Chaucer's *House of Fame*. Line 1507

of the *Garlande* reimagines the description of Chaucer's Whirling Wicker, out of which

...com so gret a noyse  
That had it stand upon the Oyse,  
Men myghte hyt han herd esely  
To Rome, y trow sikerly.  
(*Fame*, 1924-30)

Where in *Fame*, the noise emitted from the Whirling Wicker is a cacophony of rumour, in the *Garlande*, the alarum of the assembled poets communicates a single affirmative message: the triumph of Skelton Poeta. Where *Fame*'s 'newe tydynges' (1886), having passed into the world, are propagated or dismissed according to the erratic judgement of Fame, in the *Garlande*, Skelton's poem has the immediate status of an *auctorite*,<sup>1</sup> inscribed as it is in Occupacyon's 'boke of remembrauns'. Skelton rejects Chaucer's contention that poetic fame is arbitrary and impermanent. His own dream of fame is a more confident assertion of vernacular textual authority, one in which a named, contemporary poet writes original, attributable, and highly esteemed English texts, and doesn't hesitate to tell his readers so.

The *Garlande* is far from typical as an early-sixteenth century statement of the role and status of vernacular poets and the textual authority of their writings—that is, those qualities which make a text worth reading and reproducing. It does, however, offer an ostentatious example of a newly heightened interest among English and Scottish poets in the concept of literary authorship as an intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> '[A]n authoritative book or writing; authoritative doctrine (as opposed to reason or experience); also, an author whose opinions or statements are regarded as correct'. *auctorite*, n., def. 4b, *MED*.

framework within which to make such claims. This thesis investigates the distinctive conceptions of literary authorship of John Skelton, William Dunbar, Stephen Hawes, and Gavin Douglas by means of close and comparative readings of their utilisation of a particular form and mode: framed first-person allegory. Each of the poets examined makes claims for the textual authority of their writings. For most, those claims are based on the attribution of the work to a human author—that is, the poet himself—whose skill, learning, and morality add value to the text. Skelton’s strategy for authorial self-promotion of this kind is to represent himself *as an author* within an allegorical dream poem, for which Chaucer provides the most important models in English. Yet for others, framed first-person allegory functions as a largely depersonalised form and mode, a compilation and negotiation of texts and tradition, or sometimes as a way to represent the kind of author that the poet is not. This thesis asks: *what kind* of authors are imagined in the framed first-person allegories of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century English and Scottish poets?; but also, when is self-representation-as-author *not* considered to be the most effective strategy for authorial self-promotion, and what are the alternatives?

First, it will be necessary here and in my first chapter to establish how ‘literary authorship’ pertains to writing and reading during the period in question, and the usefulness of diachronic accounts of the evolution of the concept of literary authorship to the study of the poetry of a particular moment. The late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries see the emergence in England and Scotland of theories and practices of textual production and authority which bear many of the features that scholars have come to associate with the ‘modern regime of authorship’: ‘our current notion of a clearly identified individual who is the sole creator of a text, has

exclusive rights over it, and can be held responsible for what it says'.<sup>2</sup> The 'death of the author' in late twentieth-century postmodern literary criticism<sup>3</sup> is a response to the model of authorship for which the advent of print and the Renaissance 'Development of the Individual' have been taken as inaugural moments.<sup>4</sup> In the last thirty years, technological determinism, Renaissance individualism, and their concomitant '(late) medieval' and '(early) modern' historical categories have been challenged as paradigms for describing cultural change.<sup>5</sup> There remains, however, an appreciable shift in attitudes towards artistic creation in thirteenth- to sixteenth-century Europe—a shift which, in the realm of literature, continues to inform the ways in which texts are conceived, promoted, and consumed today. With regards to literary composition, this is a twofold change in the perceived *quality* of textual production and the *status* of the makers of literary texts. Developments initiated in

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<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1999), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Most influentially in Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Aspen*, 5+6 (1967), item 3; Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967); and Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, 63:3 (1969), 73-104. The critical context for the present study is the formation of the 'modern regime of authorship' itself, rather than its inadequacies as a hermeneutic framework. My primary interest is in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century English and Scottish poets' strategies for authorial self-promotion and approaches to self-representation, rather than their later critical reception or explication in terms of contemporary literary theory.

<sup>4</sup> For the notion of print as a revolutionary agent in early modern society and culture, see especially Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), 115-35. The historiographical tradition that locates the birth of individualism and subjectivity in *trecento* Italy can be traced to Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (Basel: Picchioni, 1860).

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., the prioritising of the agencies of printers rather than print in Kathleen Ann Tonry, *Agency and Intention in English Print, 1476-1526* (Turnhout: Brepols: 2016), especially 211-14; the regularly cited corrective to medieval-to-Renaissance historiography of 'the subject', David Aers, 'A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists: Or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the "History of the Subject"', in *Culture and History, 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. id. (New York, NY: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 177-202 (though the dismantling of claims made in Burckhardt's *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* has a long critical history); and the reformulation of the English literary period 1350-1547 in terms of a revolutionary and reformist model of historical transmission in James R. Simpson, *The Oxford English Literary History: Volume I: 1350-1547: Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), discussed further in section 1.1.



the late medieval commentary tradition transformed the way in which a writer acted upon existing materials into a source of *auctorite* (cf. Latin *auctoritas*) in its own right (see section 1.1). One no longer had to be an originator in order to be a creator—the second aspect of the fourfold sense of the medieval Latin literary-critical term *auctor*<sup>6</sup>—or, put another way, the act of writing itself came to be understood as a species of creation. A corollary of this phenomenon was the imbuing of the text with the personality of its maker; the writer’s style and intention became the objects of scrutiny, and the literary work indissociable from his/her name. Again with antecedents in the late medieval commentary tradition, the quasi-historical life of the author took on increasing significance as a way of contextualising and interpreting the works of ‘modern’ as well as ancient writers—to the extent that, in the case of Skelton’s *Garlande*, the academic laureations received early in Skelton’s literary career provide the imaginative impetus for his poetic triumph before the court of Fame (see further section 2.3).

In scholarship of late medieval English literary authorship, these changes are typically viewed in relation to the evolving reception of England’s pre-eminent medieval author, Chaucer. Without treatises and commentaries on vernacular poetry like those written in *trecento* and *quattrocento* Italy, and before the advent of the ‘English Renaissance Literary Criticism’ epitomised by figures such as Sir Philip Sidney and George Puttenham, critics including A. C. Spearing, Seth Lerer, Kevin Pask, and Stephanie Trigg have taken the invention and reappropriation of

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<sup>6</sup> Someone who ‘performed the act of writing’ (from *agere*, ‘to act or perform’), who ‘brought something into being, caused it to “grow” (from *augere*, ‘to grow’), and who, in the case of poets, ‘had “tied” together their verses with feet and metres’ (from *auireo*, ‘to tie’). ‘To the ideas of achievement and growth was easily assimilated the idea of authenticity or ‘authoritativeness’ (from *autentim*, ‘authority’). Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984), 10.

Chaucer-as-author—not least by his foremost poetic follower, John Lydgate, as well as copyists and early printers—as the fulcrum for their accounts of the formation of an English ‘literature’ and ‘the emergence of the English author’.<sup>7</sup> Changing approaches to Chaucer’s writings and example have rightly been considered as a catalyst for the elevation of English as a literary language and the inception of an English literary history. There is a tendency, however, when moving from Chaucer’s self-professed poetic followers of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to the philological approach associated with William Caxton and the 1532 *Works* edited by William Thynne,<sup>8</sup> to pass over the somewhat obscure but, I argue, instructive literary careers of four English and Scots poets belonging to the intervening half-century: Skelton (c. 1460-1529), Dunbar (c. 1460-1513?), Hawes (c. 1474-before 1527), and Douglas (c. 1476-1522).

This thesis supplies an as yet unwritten chapter in the history of the English author. Its focus is the nascent literary authorship evidenced by the writings and early reception of the English and Scottish poets working in and around the courts of Kings Henry VII and James IV. My phrase ‘in and around the court’ takes into account the fluidity of the concept of the *court* and associated *courtly* culture in modern scholarship.<sup>9</sup> Courtly culture during this period cannot be confined to the

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<sup>7</sup> In Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Pask, *The Emergence of the English Author: Scripting the Life of the Poet in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *Works*, ed. Thynne (London: Thomas Godfray, 1532) STC 5068.

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the organisation of the late medieval English royal household, with special attention to the practical circumstances of literary composition, see Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 13-70; and for discussion of contemporary Scottish ‘court literature’, which before the 1490s ‘more often came to the court than from it’, Sally Mapstone, ‘Was there a Court Literature in Fifteenth-Century Scotland?’, *SSL*, 26 (1991), 410-22, 422 quoted; and ead. ‘Older Scots

immediate circle of the king; indeed, as will be seen, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century court poetry is as often composed by writers literally or figuratively 'out of court', whilst the advent of print and growth of the urban middle classes stimulated the production and reception of writings with recognisably courtly features outside of the tradition environments of the court. In the chapters that follow, my particular interest is in the responses to changing systems of patronage and publication, cognizance of certain humanist ideals, and intersection of what have been understood as 'medieval' and 'modern' attitudes to poetic predecessors, especially Chaucer, in the works of four English and Scottish poets who have too often been consigned to the footnotes of larger diachronic surveys.

As in the case of many earlier English and Scots literary texts, direct statements on the nature of poetry and the function of the poet are few and far between in the works of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas. For evidence of the literary authorship that they devised or, in some cases, refused for their works, it is instead necessary to examine the formal decisions that underpin their design. It is my contention, further elaborated in section 1.2, that the diverging strategies for authorial self-promotion of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas are especially in evidence in their deployment and handling of a particular poetic form and mode: framed first-person allegory, typically presented as a dream. This form, with its Middle French and Chaucerian antecedents, is used by Skelton in the *Garlande* and *The Bowge of Courte*, Dunbar in *The Goldyn Targe*, *The Thrissil and the Rois*, and his satirical and religious visions, Hawes in *The Example of Vertu*, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, and *The Conforte of Louers*, and Douglas in *The Palice of Honour* and

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Literature and the Court', in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Volume I: From Columba to the Union (until 1707)*, ed. Ian Brown et al. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 273-85.

seventh, eighth, twelfth, and thirteenth Prologues to his translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Its facility for authorial self-promotion rests in the opportunity, little exploited by Chaucer himself, to depict some fictional version of the historical poet and their literary activity—an opportunity, that is, for the poet to represent himself *as an author*. This is not straightforward autobiography. The poet-narrators of Skelton's, Dunbar's, Hawes's, and Douglas's framed first-person allegories range from such partial, idealised representations of the historical poet as Skelton Poeta, to the depersonalised, essentially rhetorical textual first person of the *Targe*. The works of Hawes and Douglas in particular demonstrate approaches to self-representation more oblique than those of Skelton and Dunbar: as will be seen, the willingness of these poets to highlight the artificiality and provisionality of their poet-narrators creates a space into which readers may insert their own ideas of the author.

Throughout my analysis, I use the compound term *poet-narrator* to designate the figure in framed first-person allegory who is presented as both a character in the story and also its narrator. The *poet* part of my formulation refers to the putative identity of this figure with the historical poet, an identity which is most apparent in those texts where the poet-narrator is assigned biographical details that they share with the historical individual who composed the poem (see further section 1.2). I use the term *poet* rather than *author* to refer to the historical poet and their textual double, since implicit in the term *author* are notions of originality, stylistic distinctiveness, and epistemological and/or ethical credibility to which the poets studied in this thesis do not uniformly lay claim. Of course, in the context of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century textual production, the terms *poet* and

*poetry* (or *poetrie*) themselves imply an evaluative and technical distinction to *maker* and *making*—the terms used by Chaucer to describe himself and his literary activity.<sup>10</sup> Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas employ a variety of terms to describe their literary activity and their usage is often strategic and localised. But for the sake of lucidity, I retain the form *poet-narrator* in my discussion of each of the framed first-person allegories examined (supplemented by *poet-translator* and *poet-commentator* in chapter 4), even though the term *poet* is not always an entirely accurate description of the role that they evoke. The *narrator* part of my *poet-narrator* formulation refers to the rhetorical function of this figure within the first-person narrative—that is, as the reporter of events that ostensibly took place in the poet-narrator’s past.

My first chapter traces the received account of ‘the emergence of the English author’ and points out the critical neglect of the key transitional period post-Caxton but ante-Thynne. I then detail my proposal of the special importance of framed first-person allegory—as innovated by Chaucer and significantly augmented by Lydgate—for late fifteenth- and early-sixteenth century authorial self-promotion. Chapter 2 is a comparative study of the framed first-person allegories of Skelton and Dunbar, poets closely linked to their respective royal courts, but whose diverging approaches to self-representation point to quite different conceptions of literary authorship. Recent criticism, notably Jane Griffiths’s *Skelton and Poetic Authority: Defining the Liberty to Speak*, has elucidated Skelton’s ‘internalization of poetic authority’ in the works written after his loss of royal favour in the late

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<sup>10</sup> See Glending Olson, ‘Making and Poetry in the Age of Chaucer’, *CL*, 31 (1979), 272-90, at 273-75; and Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 30-31.

1510s.<sup>11</sup> But examination of Skelton's earlier poems reveals a strategy for authorial self-promotion which derives much of its impetus from his reconfigurations of inherited poetic forms and professed affiliation to royal and aristocratic patrons. Dunbar, by contrast, is less interested in his personal status as a Scottish author than in his membership in a brotherhood of Scots *makaris*. His is a poetry of integration within the court of James IV: his wide-ranging canon propounds the integrity of the court as a socio-political grouping, its suitability as an object of display, and the constitutive role of its *makaris*. A comparable attitude appears in Hawes's first-person allegories, the subject of chapter 3. Unable to aspire to the institutionalised position of an *orator regis* or poet laureate, Hawes appropriates Lydgate's critical vocabulary of poets' *enlumining* of truth by means of their *eloquence* and *rethoryke*. He incorporates into Lydgate's ideal the tenets of Ciceronian rhetoric in order to lend poetic fictions a new weight of esoteric authority. His claim for the textual authority of his writings relies on their assimilation to a recognisable aesthetic associated with the court, rather than their attribution to a celebrated historical poet. Finally, in chapter 4, the framed first-person allegories of the Scottish nobleman Douglas offer another and, in certain respects, the most 'modern' strategy for authorial self-promotion examined in this thesis. The multiplicity of textual first persons in the *Eneados* reminds the reader of the necessary existence of an authorial agent prior and external to the text that they have before them, but who it is impossible to align with any one of its fictional speakers. The composite volume of the *Eneados* is attributed to a human author—

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<sup>11</sup> Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 158.

‘the compilar’—who cannot be identified with any single ‘voice’ in the poem but is instead responsible for them all.

At their boldest, the claims of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas for the textual authority of their writings include many of the elements of literary authorship indicated above: originality and its corollary, authorial possession of/responsibility for the literary work; stylistic distinctiveness and/or inimitability; and epistemological and/or ethical credibility. As significant, however, for the history of the English author, are the gestures in their framed first-person allegories towards alternative strategies for authorial self-promotion, ranging from the reduction of their authorship to a depersonalised function within a literary court culture, to Petrarchan and Ovidian vaunts of everlasting poetic fame. At times, the impetus for these departures is the very deficiency of Chaucerian framed first-person allegory when adapted to circumstances of textual production quite different from those in which it was conceived. What follows is a study of that highly conventional though still vital form and mode as a matrix for literary authorship—of the ways in which Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas reinvent their poetic inheritance to reflect changing realities and ideals of textual production and authority.

## 1. The literary author post-Caxton, ante-Thynne

William Caxton's literary criticism offers an unusually direct, if not always entirely ingenuous, account of theories and practices of textual production and authority during the final decades of the fifteenth century. The epilogue to Caxton's 1478 edition of Chaucer's *Boece* and the proem to his 1483 second edition of *The Canterbury Tales* are regularly quoted as evidence of changing attitudes towards Chaucer at the end of the English 'medieval' period and the inception of a 'modern' idea of English literary history.<sup>1</sup> Less frequently discussed, but demonstrating the plasticity of the concept of literary authorship in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, is the ending and epilogue to Caxton's 1483 edition of *The House of Fame*. As an example of the elements of continuity, as well as innovation, in conceptualisations of Chaucer-as-author, and of the narrative expectations that had become attached to the framed first-person form of Chaucer's dream poems, Caxton's ending and epilogue offer an illuminating introduction to the key literary-historical trends, and points of historiographical contention, reviewed in the present chapter.

The text of Caxton's 1483 *Fame* breaks off at line 2094, part-way through the description of the Whirling Wicker.<sup>2</sup> For Chaucer's account of the diverse 'tydynges' that multiply within, and the arrival of the enigmatic 'man of greet

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<sup>1</sup> Boethius, *De consolacione philosophiae*, trans. Geoffrey Chaucer ([Westminster: William Caxton, 1478]) STC 3199, fols 93<sup>r</sup>-94<sup>v</sup>; Chaucer, [*Canterbury Tales*] ([Westminster: William Caxton, 1483]) STC 5083, sig. A2<sup>r-v</sup>. Cf. the influential reading of Caxton's epilogue to *Boece* in Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 148, returned to below.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame* ([Westminster]: William Caxton, [1483]) STC 5087, sig. D4<sup>r</sup>.



auctoritee' with which *Fame* ends, Caxton substitutes the following ending and epilogue:<sup>3</sup>

And wyth the noyse of them wo  
I Sodeynly awoke anon tho  
And remembryd what I had seen  
And how hye and ferre I had been  
In my ghoost / and had grete wonder  
Of that the god of thonder  
Had lete me knowen / and began to wryte  
Lyke as ye haue herd me endyte  
Wherfor to studye and rede alway  
I purpose to doo day by day  
Thus in dremyng and in game  
Endeth thys lytyl book of Fame

## Explicit

I fynde nomore of this werke to fore sayd / For as fer as I can  
vnderstonde / This noble man Gefferey Chaucer fynysshyd at the  
sayd conclusion of the metyng of lesyng and sothsawe / where  
as yet they ben chekked and maye not departe / whyche werke as  
me semeth is craftyly made / and dygne to be wreton *and* knowen /  
For he towchyth in it ryght grete wysedom & subtyll vnderston  
dyng / And so in alle hys werkys he excellyth in myn oppyny  
on alle other wryters in our Englyssh / For he wrytteth no voy  
de wordes / but alle hys mater is ful of hye and quycke senten  
ce / to whom ought to be gyuen laude and preysynge for hys no  
ble making and wrytyng / For of hym alle other haue borrowed

<sup>3</sup> Norman F. Blake attributes the verse ending to Caxton himself, though it could have been composed by one of his associates or employees. Blake, *William Caxton and English Literary Culture* (London: Hambledon, 1991), 160. The ending is retained, without attribution to Caxton, in Geoffrey Chaucer, *House of Fame* (London: Richard Pynson, [1526?]) STC 5088, sig. C3<sup>r</sup>. An adapted version appears in Thynne's 1532 *Works* (fol. 324<sup>v</sup>) and in all subsequent editions of *Fame* until the nineteenth century. See John A. Burrow, 'Poems without Endings', *SAC*, 13 (1991), 17-37, at 22-23.

syth and taken / in alle theyr wel sayeng and wrytyng / And  
I humbly beseche & praye yow / emonge your prayers to remem  
bre hys soule / on whyche and on alle crysten soulis I beseche al  
myghty god to haue mercy Amen

Emprynted by Wylliam Caxton

(*Fame* [1483], sig. [D4<sup>r</sup>])

Caxton's ending and epilogue are a literary-critical wickerwork with almost as many strands as Chaucer's Whirling Wicker. The language of his commendation of '[t]his noble man Geffrey Chaucer' is drawn from the eulogistic idiom of Chaucer's fifteenth-century poetic followers.<sup>4</sup> He departs, however, from earlier admirers of Chaucer in the aspect of the poet's writing which he singles out for praise. Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate, in their eulogies of Chaucer in *The Regiment of Princes* (c. 1410-11) and *The Siege of Thebes* (1420-22), place greatest emphasis on Chaucer's linguistic virtuosity—'his achievement, in their view, is above all the transformation of his native tongue into a language suitable for poetry'.<sup>5</sup> Caxton, by contrast, repeatedly praises *Fame* for its *res* more than its *verba*. Chaucer's poem is made the object of study, not only of imitation: 'he towchyth in it ryght grete wysedom *and* subtyll vnderstandyng [...] For he wrytteth no voyde wordes / but alle hys mater is ful of hye and quykke sentence'.<sup>6</sup> Chaucer's received status as 'the worshipful fader *and* first founduer *and* enbelissher of ornate eloquence in our

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<sup>4</sup> See *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion (1357-1900)*, ed. Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), I, 14-65.

<sup>5</sup> Lois A. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 4.

<sup>6</sup> For an extension and modification of this point, that 'Caxton's privileging of *res* over *verba* shifts when applied to Chaucer, whose specific language is given the transferable quality and didactic value of an underlying *sentens*', see Lauren S. Mayer, *Words Made Flesh: Reading Medieval Manuscript Culture* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 111-15, 111 quoted.

englishsh' has not been forgotten here:<sup>7</sup> when Caxton remarks that 'of hym alle other haue borrowed syth and taken / in alle theyr wel sayeng and wrytyng', the phrase 'wel sayeng' seems to refer to later writers' emulation of Chaucer's eloquence, rather than their praise of his invented conceits. Elsewhere, however, Caxton's epilogue anticipates later sixteenth-century discourses concerning literary authorship, whilst also resonating with earlier, continental, vernacular and Latin literary theorising. Caxton's account of Chaucer's 'crafty' making, which 'towchyth ryght grete wysedom', comes close to the traditional defence of poetic fictions as concealing truths beneath an attractive covering (see further section 3.1)—a position adopted by Giovanni Boccaccio in *De genealogia deorum gentilium* (1350-60, revised 1371-74) and famously reprised in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* more than two hundred years later.<sup>8</sup> For the argument to be applied to an English poet, even Chaucer, is a significant step, though again not original to Caxton.<sup>9</sup> More striking is the printer's insistence on the distinctiveness of Chaucer's writings *to him*, that it is 'hys mater' which is 'ful of hys and quycke sentence' and 'of hym' that 'alle other haue borrowed syth and taken' (my emphases).<sup>10</sup> Chaucer has been transformed into an *auctor* in the medieval commentator's sense of the term: 'someone who was at once a writer and an authority, someone not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed', and someone whose writings 'contained, or possessed, *auctoritas* in the abstract sense of the term, with its

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<sup>7</sup> Chaucer, *Boece* ([1478]), fol. 93<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of classical to medieval to Renaissance justifications of fiction, see William Nelson, *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 1-55.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lydgate, *Siege*, 53-57.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Caxton's description of Chaucer as the 'first translatour of this sayde boke' in his epilogue to *Boece* ([1478], fol. 93<sup>v</sup>) and as the 'first auctour / and maker of thys booke' in his proem to the *Canterbury Tales* ([1484], sig. A2<sup>v</sup>).

strong connotations of veracity and sagacity'.<sup>11</sup> But more than this, Caxton's Chaucer is someone whose works derive their textual authority not only from the pre-existing truths which 'he towchyth' but also the excellence of his expression. This overlapping and reformulation of 'medieval' and 'modern' attitudes to textual production and authority helps to explain Caxton's apparently self-contradictory decision to supplement Chaucer's *Fame* with his own hackneyed conclusion. Here, narrative expectations meet humanist philology, as Caxton takes on the roles of both the continuator and preserver. He provides *Fame* with the narrative and formal closure that Chaucer's text lacks, not as an effacement of the English poet's authorship, but rather as an expression of his confidence that Chaucer's writings are 'dygne to be wreton *and* knowen' with those of the antique past.

The use of Caxton's literary criticism in scholarly accounts of 'the emergence of the English author' is returned to below; it is his ending and epilogue to *Fame*, however, which I think best demonstrates the multiple technological, intellectual, and social factors affecting contemporary experiments in literary authorship. Formal, exegetic, and commercial desiderata are ably interwoven in Caxton's ending and epilogue, yet not so seamlessly or without the occasional loose end to conceal the multiple elements out of which the notion of the English author is conceived. This first chapter surveys the exegetical and literary traditions that inform Caxton's and his near contemporaries' heterogeneous attitudes to textual production and authority. I challenge the still prevalent critical orthodoxy that places late fifteenth- and early sixteenth- century English and Scottish writers on either side of a late medieval-early modern divide. My objective is twofold: to

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<sup>11</sup> Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 10.

refocus attention on English and Scots court poetry of the turn of the sixteenth century as a site of experimentation in literary authorship; and to demonstrate the importance of framed first-person allegory as a form and mode in which fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century English and Scottish poets make some of their most innovative claims for the textual authority of their writings. I begin with a review of the received scholarly narrative for ‘the emergence of the English author’ in late medieval and early modern England and Scotland (section 1.1), before offering an account of the particular amenability of framed-first person allegory to authorial self-promotion (section 1.2).

### **1.1. ‘The emergence of the English author’ in late medieval and early modern England and Scotland**

Bonaventure’s fourfold *modus faciendi librum* (‘method of making a book’) is so well known to the study of medieval authorship as to almost obviate quotation.<sup>12</sup> I do so as a reminder of the medieval antecedents for the relationship between authorship and originality, as applied to Chaucer in the epilogue to Caxton’s 1483 *Fame* (‘of hym alle other haue borrowed syth and taken’), and which is instrumental to the strategies for authorial self-promotion examined in the chapters that follow. Bonaventure’s proem to his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* (c. 1150) must be approached with caution as an analogue to later statements on vernacular

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<sup>12</sup> See especially the discussions in Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 94-95; John A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work: Middle English Literature 1100-1500*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford University Press, 2008; first published 1982), 30-32; Robert R. Edwards, *Invention and Authorship in Medieval England* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017), xix-xx; and the critiques in Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate, and Their Books, 1473-1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11-16; and Tonry, *Agency and Intention*, 3-4.

literary composition.<sup>13</sup> The system of textual production which Bonaventure describes reflects thirteenth-century, scholastic literary attitudes; it remains instructive, however, as a corrective to the critical commonplace that ‘the Middle Ages did not value originality’.<sup>14</sup> In response to the question of whether Lombard should rightly be called the author of the *Sentences*, Bonaventure sets out a hierarchy of human agents who participate in the making of a book, each distinguished by the extent to which they bear responsibility for their materials. At the bottom of the hierarchy is the *scriptor* or scribe, who *scribit aliena, nihil addendo vel mutando* (‘writes out the words of other men without adding or changing anything’); next is the *compiler* or compiler, who *scribit aliena, addendo, sed non de suo* (‘writes the words of other men, putting together material, but not his own’); then comes the *commentator*, who *scribit et aliena et sua, sed aliena tamquam principalia, et sua tamquam annexa ad evidentiam* (‘writes the words of other men and also his own, but with those of other men comprising the principal part while his own are annexed merely to make clear the argument’); and finally there is the *auctor*, who *scribit et sua et aliena, sed sua tanquam principalia, aliena tamquam annexa ad confirmationem* (‘writes the words of other men and also of his own, but with his own forming the principal part and those of others being merely annexed by way of confirmation’).<sup>15</sup> Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. quote Bonaventure’s hierarchy as evidence for the contrast between ‘our current notion

<sup>13</sup> On the departures of ‘Middle English literary theory’, as articulated in late medieval English and Scots texts, from the authoritative models expounded in Latin, see *Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. Wogan-Browne et al., especially Ruth Evans et al., ‘The Notion of Vernacular Theory’, 314–30.

<sup>14</sup> Raymond Oliver, *Poems without Names: The English Lyric, 1200–1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 8.

<sup>15</sup> Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quattuor libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi: In librum I*, prooemium, qu. iv, concl., resp., in *Opera Omnia*, 10 vols (Quaracchi: Quaracchi Order of Friars, 1882–1902), I; translations from *MLTC*, 228–29.

of the author as a clearly identified individual who is the sole creator of a text, has exclusive rights over it, and can be held responsible for what it says' and the concept of authorship in the 'medieval' period, which was 'more likely to be understood as participation in an intellectually and morally authoritative tradition'.<sup>16</sup> This reading is not inaccurate, but is in danger of obscuring the more restricted, though nevertheless valued, aspect of originality pertaining to each of the roles in Bonaventure's hierarchy. As John A. Burrow observes, the distinction in Bonaventure's scheme between the opposite extremes of *scriptor* and *auctor* is not as absolute as one might assume: each acts upon existing words or texts; they differ rather in the extent to which they supplement their materials, whilst only the *commentator* and *auctor* produce texts of their own.<sup>17</sup> 'Rewriting', argues Douglas Kelly, 'is the sphere within which medieval writers in the scholastic tradition sought and achieved originality'.<sup>18</sup> As will be seen below, the element of originality that was increasingly perceived in the traditionally secondary literary activities of the *compiler* and *commentator* underpins many later vernacular writers' claims for the textual authority of their writings.

Bonaventure places the Lombard in his last category—as the *auctor* of the *Sentences*—but insists upon his subordinate status to the principal author of all knowledge: God.<sup>19</sup> Later Latin commentators display an increasing interest in the

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<sup>16</sup> *Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. Wogan-Browen et al., 15, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Burrow, *Medieval Writers*, 31. Burrow wonders if '[p]erhaps Bonaventure should have added the *translator*'; but as Minnis and Scott observe, '[o]ne of the stock late medieval definitions of *translatio* was [...] "the explanation of meaning (*expositio sententiae*) in another language"', and it may be that Bonaventure included translation within the literary activity of the commentator. *MLTC*, 374, quoting Hugutio of Pisa, *Magnae derivationes*, s.v. *glossa*, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 376, fol. 84<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion: Description, Rewriting, and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), xii.

<sup>19</sup> Bonaventure, *Commentaria*, prooemium, qu. iv, concl., 1.

role of the human *auctor* in textual production, a phenomenon which Alastair J. Minnis has influentially demonstrated in *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. Minnis's study offers a through line from the Latin commentary tradition of the late medieval schools and universities to the protohumanist ideas of vernacular textual authority associated with *trecento* Italian writers.<sup>20</sup> Taking as his point of departure the twelfth- and thirteenth- century academic prologue, Minnis traces the development of a critical idiom and literary-theoretical apparatus whereby commentators on the Bible—and soon after on the classical pagan *auctores*—could analyse the literary and moral activity of the human *auctor*.<sup>21</sup> This 'new interest in the integrity of the individual human *auctor*', argues Minnis, 'is manifested by two aspects of his individuality which late-medieval theologians sought to describe, the individual literary activity in which the *auctor* had engaged'—already distinguished from that of the *scriptor*, *compiler*, and *commentator*, but now examined with greater attention to the human *auctor*'s responsibility for the *littera* or 'literal sense' of the text—as well as to his 'individual moral activity'—not yet a literary biography in the modern sense, but an ethical intentionality which emphasised the *auctor*'s humanity.<sup>22</sup> Minnis's account presents a prefiguration in late medieval pedagogy and exegesis for a theory of textual authority based on the individual agency of the writer of literary texts—a theory, that is, of literary authorship.

This re-evaluation of the individual agency of the human author in the late medieval commentary tradition supplied writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and

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<sup>20</sup> Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, especially 73-159.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80. For a concise overview of this development, see *MLTC*, 1-11.

<sup>22</sup> Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 94.



Boccaccio with the critical justification for the promotion of imaginative writings in the vernacular—above all, poetry.<sup>23</sup> The claims of poetry’s status as a science (*scientia*) rather than a mere technical skill, of the analogy between the styles of poets and the inspired authors of Scripture, and of the inventive fervor (*fervor*) or mental energy (*vis mentis*) that distinguishes the poet from the mere poetaster, are integral to the concept of the *poeta theologus* presented in Book X of Petrarch’s *Epistolae familiares* (1325-66) and famously elaborated in Books XIV and XV of Boccaccio’s *De genealogia*.<sup>24</sup> Alongside these theoretical comparisons between poetry, philosophy, and theology, Dante in the *Vita nuova* (1292-95) and *Convivio* (1307-19) and Boccaccio in the Italian glosses to his *Teseida* (c. 1340-41) applied the textual apparatus of academic commentary to their own vernacular writings.<sup>25</sup>

‘Here’, write Minnis and A. B. Scott of the glosses to the *Teseida*, ‘techniques of exposition traditionally used in interpreting “ancient” and Latin authoritative texts are being used to indicate and announce the literary authority of a “modern” and vernacular work.’<sup>26</sup> This celebration of recently deceased and living poets slowly extended into the public and political spheres: Petrarch, in the oration given at his laureation in Rome in 1341, unabashedly describes the poetic vocation as arising from the *decore proprie glorie* (‘charm of personal glory’) and speaks of the *nominis*

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<sup>23</sup> See *ibid.*, 211-17; *MLTC*, 314-519; and Vincent Gillespie, ‘Authorship’, in *A Handbook of Middle English Studies*, ed. Marion Turner (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 138-54, at 143-44.

<sup>24</sup> See especially Boccaccio, *De Genealogia*, XIV.iv, vii, x, xxii, and XV.vi. In a letter to his brother Gherardo (*Familiars*, X.iv), Petrarch advances the claim of Aristotle in *Metaphysics* (982<sup>b</sup>) that the first theologians were poets. The statement is repeated in Boccaccio, *De genealogia*, XV.viii and *Tattatello in laude di Dante*, 155. Note, however, that despite Boccaccio’s and Petrarch’s definitions of poetry as a science directed towards knowledge of divine things and their descriptions of poetic *fervor* as an inborn God-given gift, for both writers, ‘[p]oetry [...] was generally sacral but not sacred [...]. This distinction is a crucial one because [...] neither of them believed that the poet operated under direct divine influence.’ *MLTC*, 390.

<sup>25</sup> *MLTC*, 374-75.

<sup>26</sup> *MLTC*, 375.

*imortalitas* ('immortality of one's name') that is the poet's reward, and which is bestowed upon those whom he venerates.<sup>27</sup> It was not until the second half of the following century, however, that 'poet laureates' began regularly to appear at European courts and universities.<sup>28</sup>

There will be reason to return to the humanist ideals of quasi-philosophical and -theological poetry, to the fame and stature accruing to the laureate poet, and to the self-commentary and autocitation practiced by vernacular poets. The belated significance of Petrarch's laureation for Skelton's adoption of the *laureate* cognomen some hundred and fifty years later, and of Boccaccio's defence of poetry for Hawes's and Douglas's justifications of poetic fictions in *The Pastime of Pleasure* and the *Eneados*, are treated in chapters 2, 3, and 4, respectively. But of more direct relevance to the strategies for authorial self-promotion developed by Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas are the series of named fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English and Scottish writers, many of them professed admirers of Chaucer, for whom declarations of modesty and denials of authorial responsibility are the more usual tactics for the legitimation of their writings.

Chaucer's own engagement with the literary theory of the late medieval commentary tradition and Italian humanists was highly sophisticated and

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<sup>27</sup> Petrarch, *Collatio laureationis: Orazione per la laurea*, v.7, vii.1, x.3, in *Opere latine*, ed. Antonietta Bufano, 2 vols (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1975), II; translations from 'Petrarch's Coronation Oration', trans. Ernest H. Wilkins, *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 1241-50, at 1244, 1245 and 1247. For the classical and literary antecedents for the poetic laureation, see J. B. Trapp, 'The Owl's Ivy and the Poet's Bays: An Enquiry into Poetic Garlands', *JWCI*, 21 (1958), 227-55.

<sup>28</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 161; see further section 2.3. I distinguish between the 'official' laureations of Petrarch in 1341 and Skelton in the 1480s and 1490s, and the laureate discourse developed by English and Scottish poets, especially Lydgate, during the fifteenth century (though as will be seen in subsequent chapters, it is the example of Lydgate before Petrarch which influences the poetics of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas).

productive, though difficult to reproduce.<sup>29</sup> In his longer works, Chaucer assumes the role of the ‘lewd compiler’, responsible, in Bonaventuran terms, only for the manner in which he has written the words of others. He expands upon the authorial possibilities of the *compiler* role in the narrative frame to *The Canterbury Tales* (c. 1388-1400), where ‘Chaucer treats his fictional characters with the respect that the Latin compilers had reserved for their *auctores*.’<sup>30</sup> In *Medieval Theory of Authorship* and elsewhere, Minnis draws attention to Jean de Meun’s continuation of *Le Roman de la Rose* (begun by Guillaume de Lorris 1225-40, completed c. 1270-77) as the virtuoso example of *compilatio* employed as the form, but also the justification, for an imaginative literary text in this way.<sup>31</sup> In Vincent Gillespie’s essay on late medieval concepts of authorship, Jean’s *Rose* is presented as an interface for the scholastic literary attitudes set out by Minnis and an Ovidian, Francophone tradition of secular poetics for which the *dits* of Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-77) and Jean Froissart (c. 1337-c. 1405) would have provided Chaucer’s more immediate examples.<sup>32</sup> Chaucer, it seems, was as interested in interrogating as he was in

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<sup>29</sup> Although, especially with regards to the commentary tradition, largely indirect. John Gower (c. 1330-1408) is perhaps the only pre-modern English poet to systematically appropriate the idioms and apparatus of the commentary tradition in the service of his own authorial project, though as Robert R. Edwards and other critics observe, the very magnitude of Gower’s achievement rendered it even harder to reproduce. See Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 177-90; Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 202-20; and Edwards, *Invention and Authorship*, 63-104.

<sup>30</sup> Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 203. On ‘Chaucer’s Role as “Lewd Compiler”’, see further *ibid.*, 190-210. ‘lewd compiler’ is from Chaucer, *A Treatise of the Astrolabe*, Prol., 61; cf. the explicit to the *Retraction* in San Marino, CA, Huntington Library, MS EL 26 C 9 (the Ellesmere Manuscript), fol. 232<sup>v</sup>, which appears in eight other *Canterbury Tales* manuscripts as well as the edition printed in Westminster by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 (STC 5085): ‘Heere is ended the book of the tales of Caunterbury, *complied* by Geffrey Chaucer, of whose soule Jhesus Crist have mercy. Amen’ (my emphasis). I owe this reference to Stephen Partridge, ‘“The Makere of this Boke”: Chaucer’s *Retraction* and the Author as Scribe and Compiler’, in *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, ed. id. and Erik Kwakkel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 106-53, at 150, nn. 82-84, discussed further in section 4.2.

<sup>31</sup> Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 197-98.

<sup>32</sup> Gillespie, ‘Authorship’, 144-45.

exploiting scholastic, but also protohumanist, literary discourses. A. C. Spearing identifies in Chaucer's poetry 'elements that can be appropriately associated with the Renaissance': the elevation of the vernacular to the status of a literary language, a newly sensitive historical consciousness, and the ennobling of the vernacular poet.<sup>33</sup> The most direct engagements with issues of authorship in Chaucer's poetry—*Fame* (1378-80), *Troilus and Criseyde* (1382-86), and *The Canterbury Tales*—do indeed demonstrate a clear cognizance of the thought and writings of the *trecentisti*.<sup>34</sup> Yet in almost all cases, Chaucer's claims to anything like the status of an originary *auctor* incur a refusal of the notions of vernacular textual authority and stable textual transmission upon which the role is predicated.<sup>35</sup> The evocation in Chaucer's *dit*-inspired first-person allegories of a 'self-ironizing authorial self-consciousness' is further investigated in section 1.2.<sup>36</sup> For the purposes of the present discussion, it is necessary only to acknowledge the ambitious though highly ambivalent conception of literary authorship realised in Chaucer's poetry—the 'disavowals and resistance' that allow him to expose, exploit, and ultimately supersede the inherent *instability* of textual authority, but

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<sup>33</sup> Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 22.

<sup>34</sup> The classic study remains *Chaucer and the Italian Trecento*, ed. Piero Boitani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For a recent, well-referenced discussion, which credits Chaucer with the recognition of two alternative models of poetic fame represented by Dante and Petrarch, see William T. Rossiter, 'Chaucer Joins the *Schiera*: *The House of Fame*, Italy, and the Determination of Posterity', in *Chaucer and Fame: Reputation and Reception*, ed. Isabel Davis and Catherine Nall (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 21-42.

<sup>35</sup> See the second invocation in *Fame* (1091-109); the 'Go, litel boke' envoy at the conclusion of *Troilus* (V. 1786-99); the 'Introduction to the Man of Law's Tale'; the *Retraction*; and *Chaucers Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn*. On Chaucer's resistance to the laureate model of authorship adumbrated by Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and, in their self-anthologising practices, Machaut and Chaucer's French close contemporary, Eustache Deschamps (1346-1406/07), see further Gillespie, 'Authorship', 145-52; and Edwards, *Invention and Authorship*, 105-46, where Edwards describes Chaucer's authorship as proceeding by 'imitation and refusal'.

<sup>36</sup> Gillespie, 'Authorship', 144.

which ‘create a form of authorship that remains finally unreproducible and only partly usable for later writers’.<sup>37</sup>

Of greater consequence for modern historiography of ‘the emergence of the English author’ than Chaucer’s poetry *per se* is the *idea* of Chaucer-as-author which is seen to have developed during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern*, Stephanie Trigg persuasively makes the case for ‘Chaucer’s status as an exemplary canonical author for English literary tradition’.<sup>38</sup> She takes the changing reception of Chaucer in manuscript and print as indicative of a larger cultural shift from a ‘medieval’ paradigm of authorship, for which the dominant discourse is ‘an author role that positively encourages the kind of rewriting, annotation, and supplementation we associate with the fifteenth-century manuscript tradition’ (cf. my discussion of Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship* above), to a ‘modern’ paradigm of authorship: ‘the “commonsense” modern conception of the text as bearer of authorial intention and propriety’.<sup>39</sup> The paradigm shift that Trigg describes pervades much recent scholarship of late medieval English authorship.<sup>40</sup> However, as in any *longue durée* account of changing cultural practices, inconsistencies arise when a simple diachrony is confronted by actual literary texts.<sup>41</sup> For the reasons outlined in the previous paragraph—to which can be added the different political and linguistic situations affecting literary composition in fifteenth-century England

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<sup>37</sup> Edwards, *Invention and Authorship*, 150.

<sup>38</sup> Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, xxii.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-73, 52 and 55 quoted.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Pask, *Emergence of the English Author*, especially 9-52; and Anthony Bale, ‘From Translator to Laureate: Imagining the Medieval Author’, *LitComp*, 5 (2008), 918-34. For a rebuttal of the received epistemological break between ‘medieval’ and ‘Renaissance’ modes of thinking in around 1500, see the discussion of Simpson’s work below.

<sup>41</sup> A point partially acknowledged in Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 54.

and Scotland<sup>42</sup>—Chaucer’s authorship was not easily reappropriable for assimilation and reproduction by his immediate poetic successors. Fifteenth-century English and Scottish poets responded to the challenge presented by Chaucer’s writings and example by reconstructing a ‘Chaucer’ that was useful to them, including the adaptation of the narrating personae of his framed first-person narratives to suit their own, often more pragmatic, purposes (see further section 1.2). So successful were these reconfigurations of Chaucer’s example and poetic forms towards the end of the ‘medieval’ period that they continued to inform the writings of late-fifteenth and early sixteenth-century poets more typically associated with the technological, intellectual, and social structures of modernity.

Scholarly accounts of the reception of Chaucer and, indeed, of literary authorship more broadly in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century England and Scotland are usually conceived as a prefiguration of the quite different cultural practices of the mid- to late sixteenth century, securely situated within what Trigg describes as the period of ‘modern’ authorship. Seth Lerer’s *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late Medieval England* remains one of the most influential studies of Chaucer’s early reception. Dovetailing with Spearing’s account in *Medieval to Renaissance in English Poetry* and elsewhere of the production of a ‘Father Chaucer’ as the progenitor of an English literary tradition,<sup>43</sup> *Chaucer and His Readers* ‘chronicles the self-consciousness invention of an author’ by Chaucer’s

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<sup>42</sup> On which, see especially Paul Strohm, *England’s Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Mapstone, ‘Court Literature’, ‘Older Scots Literature and the Court’; and Jenni Nuttall, *The Creation of Lancastrian Kingship: Literature, Language and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 92-110.

fifteenth-century scribes, readers, and poetic imitators.<sup>44</sup> Lerer's major insight is his suggestion that the terms of Chaucer's construction as an author—and, in particular, 'the fictional persona of the subjugated reader/imitator' that is so instrumental to his early reception—are already established in Chaucer's poetry.<sup>45</sup> 'Chaucerian' genres and forms such as the ballad, complaint, and, of special interest here, framed first-person allegory provided the themes and motifs, but also the 'vocabulary of patronage and dynamics of reader response', that underpin what Lerer describes as the "'literary system" for the age'.<sup>46</sup> For Lerer,

[t]he invention of literary authority after Chaucer may thus be theorized as the invention of a Chaucerian subject that included both a 'subject matter' for poetry and an authorial reading subject who defined its social purpose.<sup>47</sup>

Lerer's powerful thesis has exerted a clear influence on Robert Meyer-Lee's conception of fifteenth-century 'authorial self-representation' in terms of 'laureate self-construction' (see further section 1.2)<sup>48</sup> and, more recently, Robert R. Edwards's investigation of the 'simulating' of Chaucer's authorship in the revisionary works of Hoccleve and Lydgate.<sup>49</sup> Common to each of these studies is

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<sup>44</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 4. For resistance to this 'Chaucer-centered' approach to Middle English literary theory and composition, see *Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. Wogan-Browne et al., xvi and 321-29.

<sup>47</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), especially 1-12, 4 quoted.

<sup>49</sup> Edwards, *Invention and Authorship*, 149-96. Having been left, argues Edwards, with 'few direct options for advancing their own claims to authorship in either imagined or actual literary communities', the early fifteenth-century successors of William Langland, Gower, and Chaucer 'discover alternatives that simulate authorship. By that I mean they turn to their immediate vernacular forebears as an occasion rather than a determinate or directly available source for authorship' (149-50). Cf. David Lawton's account of 'the willed, self-conscious and ostensible dullness' professed by Hoccleve, Lydgate, Osborn Bokenham, and George Ashby before a claimed poetic master (usually Chaucer) or an implied or intended audience—a posture, argues Lawton, which proved integral to the consolidation of 'the public voice and role of English poetry' during the

the idea of an elegiac, deferential relationship between Chaucer and his fifteenth-century followers—of ‘Chaucer’s presence’, both intertextual and personal, ‘in late medieval visions of authority and authorship’.<sup>50</sup>

A marked change in the reception of Chaucer has been linked to the introduction of mechanical print, the influence of continental humanism, and the professionalisation of writing towards the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup> For Lerer, Caxton’s epilogue to the 1478 *Boece* epitomises ‘a new way of reading Chaucer’, what Lerer calls reading “‘like a laureate”, that is, as if one were the living the version of the politically sanctioned poet Chaucer was long imagined to have been’.<sup>52</sup> Lerer’s argument is premised on what he describes as a shift from the dominant fifteenth-century approach to Chaucer as a source for literary imitation—

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fifteenth century. Lawton, ‘Dullness and the Fifteenth Century’, *ELH*, 54 (1987), 761-99, 791 and 761 quoted. The analogy between poetic and political authority is carried into a later period in Anthony J. Hasler, *Court Poetry in Late Medieval England and Scotland: Allegories of Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Hasler’s and my own study examine many of the same texts; his synchronic approach to the poetry of Bernard André, Dunbar, Skelton, Alexander Barclay, Douglas, and Hawes makes *Court Poetry*, alongside Jon Robinson, *Court Politics, Culture and Literature in Scotland and England, 1500-1540* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), the first single-author book-length study to consider late medieval English and Scots material *together* since Gregory Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations, 1430-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). However, Hasler’s psychoanalytic approach has the tendency to obscure the distinctiveness of the experiments in literary authorship that so interests me here, and has been of limited usefulness to my research.

<sup>50</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 5. For comparable accounts of Chaucer’s fifteenth-century reception, see, e.g., James R. Simpson, ‘Chaucer’s Presence and Absence, 1400-1550’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Piero Boitani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 251-69, at 256-60; Helen Cooper, ‘Poetic Fame’, in *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*, ed. Brian Cummings and James R. Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 362-78, at 375-76; and on the situation in Scotland, Louise O. Fradenburg, ‘The Scottish Chaucer’, in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance)*, ed. Roderick J. Lyall and Felicity Riddy (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 1981), 177-90.

<sup>51</sup> See Simpson, ‘Presence and Absence’, 261-62. David R. Carlson identifies an ‘incipient professionalization of writing’ rather earlier in the fifteenth century, in the years immediately after Chaucer’s death, but agrees that it was the Italian humanists, through their mutually beneficial relationships with early English printers, who propagated solutions to the practical problem of ‘making writing pay’. Carlson, ‘Chaucer, Humanism, and Printing: Conditions of Authorship in Fifteenth-Century England’, *UTQ*, 64 (1995), 274-88, 276 quoted.

<sup>52</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 147-75, 149 quoted; cf. Carlson’s assessment of Caxton’s epilogue to *Boece* and ‘the commercialization of literary relations’ during the fifteenth-century. Carlson, ‘Chaucer, Humanism, Printing’, 282-83, 282 quoted.



the 'presence' relationship outlined above—to the quasi-humanist recovery of Chaucer's works and name as 'an exemplar of ancient practice, as a model for the pursuit of poetic fame, as a monument of literature'.<sup>53</sup> Working in a similar vein, James R. Simpson describes 'two decisive models by which Chaucer's death was received across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries':

by one model he lives on as a guiding personal presence, whereas by the other he is definitively absent, available only through archaeological remains in need of reconstruction. These two models exist side by side only in the last decades of the fifteenth, and the first decades of the sixteenth centuries, which were precisely the decades in which the 'presence' model gave way to the archaeological model.<sup>54</sup>

This changing reception of Chaucer—from 'a figure without precise delineation', whose 'texts are available as materials for new poetry', to a precisely delineated textual corpus indissociable from its named, biographised author<sup>55</sup>—is understood as part of a larger process: the accretion to imaginative, vernacular writings of a textual authority derived from the named individual who wrote them—the emergence, that is, of the English author.<sup>56</sup>

This is an attractive narrative, and one which aligns with the transition from a 'medieval' to a 'modern' paradigm of authorship sketched by Trigg. One would assume that the literary texts composed during those decades in which the rupture is supposed to have taken place might offer some insight into the change and its implications for conceptions of literary authorship. But quite a different situation

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<sup>53</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 150.

<sup>54</sup> Simpson, 'Presence and Absence', 251-52

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 254-55.

<sup>56</sup> See, e.g., Pask, *Emergence of the English Author*, 14-52; Tim William Machan, 'Textual Authority and the Works of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and Henryson', *Viator*, 23 (1992), 281-300; and Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 74-108.

prevails in modern pedagogy and criticism, in which the period's major English and Scottish poets, Skelton and Hawes, Dunbar and Douglas, usually receive only perfunctory treatment as transitional figures—Dunbar and Hawes as the representatives of a superannuated medieval past, the difficult Skelton as an anomaly in English literary history, and Douglas as the harbinger of a new 'Renaissance' outlook.<sup>57</sup> The issue here is largely one of forced diachronicity. The 1470s and 1480s, the decades of Caxton's publication of *Boece*, *Fame*, and his second edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, are routinely cited as a turning point in the reception of Chaucer, and as instigating a new role and status for the vernacular poet.<sup>58</sup> The consolation derived by the poet-narrator of Hawes's *Conforte of Louers* (1510/11), from 'bokes / made in antyquyte | By Gower and Chauncers' (282-83) and 'Letters for my lady [...] And letters for me' (291-92) inscribed on the walls of old buildings, does indeed suggest a monumentalisation of Chaucer-as-author which chimes with Lerer's reading of Caxton's epilogue to *Boece*. Yet it is important to remember that there are nearly four decades separating Caxton's *Boece* and the publication of Hawes's *Conforte*. Literary attitudes during the intervening years

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<sup>57</sup> 'Transitional' readings are especially pronounced in the cases of the under-studied Hawes and Douglas, who I have therefore chosen to discuss at greater length in chapters 3 and 4. During the last twenty years, Skelton has been the subject of three book-length studies: Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, the first since 1988; Douglas Gray, *The Phoenix and the Parrot: Skelton and the Language of Satire: A Revised and Expanded Version of the DeClare Lectures* (Dunedin: Department of English, Otago University, 2012); and John Scattergood, *John Skelton: The Career of an Early Tudor Poet* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), as well as *A Critical Companion to John Skelton*, ed. Sebastian Sobiecki and John Scattergood (Cambridge: Brewer, 2018). Dunbar has been the subject an edited volume: *William Dunbar, 'The Nobill Poyet': Essays in Honour of Priscilla Bawcutt*, ed. Sally Mapstone (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001); see also Priscilla Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Meanwhile, the only book-length study of Hawes published during the last fifty years remains A. S. G. Edwards, *Stephen Hawes* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), and of Douglas, Priscilla Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976); and Charles R. Blyth, *The Knychtlyke Stile: A Study of Gavin Douglas' Aeneid* (New York, NY: Garland, 1983).

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., Pask, *Emergence of the English Author*, 14-16; Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 115-19; and Mayer, *Words Made Flesh*, 108-38.

were not static, nor is it possible to plot a clear line of development for the concept of literary authorship at the accession of Henry VII and its appearance c. 1515. It is notable that Lerer's chapter on Caxton's critical assessments of Chaucer omits any discussion of the multifaceted attitude towards textual authority evidenced in his 1483 *Fame* (see above). Use of the 'medieval author'—principally Chaucer and Lydgate—as a way of ascribing cultural capital to literary texts is a feature of the very earliest English printed books,<sup>59</sup> though for Caxton and his contemporaries authorship remains a fluid concept. Simpson's essay, too, does not consider in any detail the extent to which the 'presence' and 'absence' models of Chaucerian reception compete or coexist within the works of individual writers.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, after Caxton, all of Simpson's examples of the archaeological 'absence' model are from the second quarter of the sixteenth century, looking forward towards the Reformation. For Simpson, William Thynne's 1532 edition of Chaucer's *Works* heralds the transformation of the status of Chaucer-as-author following the 1534 Act of Supremacy. In the decades that followed,

Chaucer [...] became the key literary counter in the radical reshaping of the English past necessitated by the English Reformation. In short, Chaucer became a Protestant and a champion of English insularity.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The thesis of Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*. Note, however, Gillespie's contention that the dissemination of English writers names with manuscripts of their works throughout the fifteenth century meant that the literary author 'was a fully realized historical entity when Caxton started printing in English in 1473-4' (3).

<sup>60</sup> Lerer proposes a similar reading of Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure* and *Conforte* and Skelton's *Phyllyp Sparowe* and *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*: in each, 'Chaucer functions in the invocations of his name rather than the evocations of his style. He is the object of citation rather than quotation, a figure whose works are not to be imitated in any wholesale or controlling way, but rather as a mine for tag lines, clichés, and allusions.' Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 19-21, 176-208, 20 quoted. Contrast my readings in sections 2.3 and 3.2.

<sup>61</sup> Simpson, 'Presence and Absence', 263; cf. the similar assessments of the canonisation of Chaucer in, e.g., Alice Miskimin, *The Renaissance Chaucer* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 240-47; Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*, 187-228; and Megan L. Cook, *The Poet and the*

Thus, the 'lewd compiler' became 'an exemplary canonical author for English literary tradition'. Yet accounts of the transition remain inadequately apprised of the literary careers that intersect it.

This thesis is an attempt to refocus attention on conceptions of literary authorship post-Caxton but ante-Thynne. My analytical chapters 2, 3, and 4 examine the authorial self-promotion of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas, without first attempting to assign them to one side or the other of a medieval-early modern divide. The remarks of Simpson above reflect the approach to cultural history adopted in his 2002 contribution to the *Oxford English Literary History* series: *Reform and Cultural Revolution*. Proceeding from the premise that 'in the first half of the sixteenth century, a culture that simplified and centralized jurisdiction aggressively displaced a culture of jurisdictional heterogeneity', Simpson reformulates the English literary period 1350-1547 in terms of a revolutionary and reformist model of historical transmission.<sup>62</sup> Yet even if one accepts Simpson's thesis of a shift from a 'medieval' set of cultural practices characterised by 'reform' to a contrasting 'revolutionary' situation in the 'early modern' period (and, given the evidence to the contrary supplied by Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas, I am disinclined to do so in the case of literary authorship), it is necessary to acknowledge that, in the period in question, the 'institutional simplifications and centralisations' to which Simpson alludes are still in their most nascent form and yet to produce the 'correlative simplifications and

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*Antiquaries: Chaucerian Scholarship and the Rise of Literary History, 1532-1635* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

<sup>62</sup> Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 1; cf. the challenge to cultural historiography conducted within periodic boundaries in Brian Cummings and James R. Simpson, 'Introduction', in *Cultural Reformations*, ed. Cummings and Simpson, 1-9.

narrowing in literature' that he describes.<sup>63</sup> Heterogeneity is still very much the order of the day (or rather, the lack of it) in the poetry of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas. Such heterogeneity also negates one of the more tacit assumptions of *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, shared by many earlier studies of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century poetry: that England and Scotland exist in a cultural asynchrony, with Scotland the more 'medieval' of the two, and each ruled by its own 'literary system'.<sup>64</sup> By my assessment, individual temperament and opportunity, rather than institutional pressures or any anachronistic notion of national literary tradition, are the more significant factors affecting the strategies for authorial self-promotion of poets in and around the courts of Henry VII and James IV. Indeed, one of the unexpected findings of my research is the number of *parallels* between the English and Scottish royal courts as centres of textual production at the turn of the sixteenth century: both evince a burgeoning interest in the intellectual trends of continental humanism, though with different consequences for cultural patronage; the new medium of mechanical print enabled the dissemination of the court poetry of Skelton and Hawes, but also Dunbar, to an enlarged, diversified audience; and, more striking still, common to both courts is a culture of spectacle and display deeply imbued with the 'learned chivalry' of Valois Burgundy—a source of inspiration, but also unease, for its native poets.

Once the temptation has been removed to categorise Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas as late medieval or early modern, or as belonging to a Scottish Middle Ages or English Renaissance, it becomes possible to discern unexpected similarities, as well as accentuated differences, between the literary attitudes

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<sup>63</sup> Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 6; cf. Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 5.

expressed in their poetry. The overview above has demonstrated how conceptions of literary authorship in this period conform to no homogeneous model—whether Bonaventuran or Boccaccian, ‘medieval’ or ‘modern’, of the tutelary poetic master or the archaeologically-recovered monument. Section 1.2 instead considers the facility of a particular form and mode—framed first-person allegory—as a vehicle for authorial self-promotion. Chaucer’s fifteenth-century followers adopt the form and many of the motifs that Chaucer had taken up from the Middle French *dits amoureux*, though rarely his pervasive scepticism toward vernacular textual authority and stable textual transmission. Chaucer departed from his Middle French models in emphasising the clerkly rather than the amorous aspects of his narrating personae, and in suggesting only a loose correspondence between the textual first person and historical poet. His early dream poems articulate in fiction the revalorisation of the agency of the vernacular writer described above. Yet of more immediate interest to Chaucer’s poetic followers was the opportunity afforded by the (dream-)framed first-person form to introduce some version of themselves into their allegorical narratives—a unique opportunity for authorial self-promotion which continued to be developed by English and Scottish writers throughout the fifteenth and into the sixteenth century.

### **1.2. Framed first-person allegory as a vehicle for self-representation**

The sheer volume of ‘dream poems’ composed and copied in late fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and early sixteenth-century England and Scotland—notable for the preponderance of courtly, allegorical visions written in what Spearing describes as the ‘Chaucerian Tradition’—bears testimony to the attractiveness, and utility, of

(dream-)framed narrative verse to late medieval poets and readers.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps the most obvious aspect of the dream poem's appeal was its facility for the writing of what is now understood as imaginative fiction. This presents a stark contrast to most other kinds of narrative verse composed in the period: reworkings of existing stories for the sake of entertainment and/or instruction, the authorities for which are named sources (often spurious) or tradition, and which are never presented as poetic invention—in the modern sense of the term—*ex nihilo*.<sup>66</sup> Spearing argues that framing a narrative as the report of 'life as experienced', rather than a rehearsal of an existing story, likely appealed to medieval poets because of 'the unique opportunity it offered for compositional freedom', as a 'means of escape from the requirement to follow a preconceived design'.<sup>67</sup> Narrative framed as a dream has another recommendation in this respect, for as well as suggesting a means by which poets might write works of imaginative fiction, the dream frame

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<sup>65</sup> See Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 171-218. Use of the term *Chaucerian* in relation to fifteenth- and early-sixteenth century writers of courtly narrative and lyric verse has become unfashionable because of its perpetuation of an inductive approach to the period's literature, with Chaucer as a hermeneutic touchstone. I follow Julia Boffey in retaining the Chaucerian rubric, useful for its suggestion that framed first-person allegories ranging from *The Kingis Quair* (c. 1424) of James I to Skelton's *Bowge of Courte* (before or in 1499) 'share a degree of self-conscious Chaucerian reference, and in certain ways explicitly announce their affiliation to (or in some instances their departures from) a particular tradition of writing with which they associate Chaucer's name'. *Fifteenth-Century English Dream Visions: An Anthology*, ed. Julia Boffey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6. On the contested issue of Chaucer's influence on fifteenth- and sixteenth- century Scots poetry, see Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams, 'Introduction: Poets "of this Natioun"', in *A Companion to Older Scots Poetry*, ed. ead. (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), 1-18, at 11-14. My study does not consider in detail the tradition of satirical dream poetry inaugurated by William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (c. 1360-99), in which quasi-autobiographical self-representation of the kind analysed below is not so ubiquitous a feature.

<sup>66</sup> See Nelson, *Fact or Fiction*, 8-9 and 22-33. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, the Latin term *inventio* or English *invention* does not have as its primary meaning '[t]he devising of a subject, idea, or method of treatment, by exercise of the intellect or imagination'. *invention*, n., def. 3b, *OED*. It more usually appears as the first operation of rhetoric (see section 3.1.1). Only in the hands of sixteenth-century commentators such as Sidney (1554-86) and Puttenham (c. 1528-90) does *invention*—with something closer to its modern sense—come to be understood as a distinctive feature of poetic composition, 'holpen by a clear and bright fantasy and imagination'. Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), in *ELRC*, 295.

<sup>67</sup> A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Autographies: The 'I' of the Text* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 120, 123; cf. the similar assessment in W. A. Davenport, *Medieval Narrative: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 192.

lent authority to narrative verse by claiming for it a significance other (and greater) than its literal meaning. Reinforcing this assumption of the valuable allegorical meaning to be derived from dreams was a formidable scriptural and literary tradition of revelatory visions. Though medieval physicians, natural philosophers, and the Church were typically ambivalent in their pronouncements on dreams as dreamed, late medieval poets could find ample justification for the significance (and imaginative potency) of visionary *texts* in biblical, classical, and earlier vernacular examples ranging from Joseph to John the Apostle, from Ulysses to Aeneas, from Cicero and Boethius to Guillaume de Lorris and Dante.<sup>68</sup> As Helen Phillips observes,

medieval dream poetry, which can tell us much about the history of human thinking on the mysterious structures of writing and reading [...], is of little interest in the history of ideas about dreaming. [...] The extraordinarily formal potential and virtuosity we see in dream poetry seems to have created a genre with its own absorbing dynamics, preoccupations, intellectual achievements and formation of traditions.<sup>69</sup>

Instrumental in propagating those dynamics and preoccupations in fifteenth-century England and Scotland were Chaucer's dream poems: *The Book of the Duchess* (1368-72), *Fame*, *The Parliament of Fowls* (1380-82), and the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* (c. 1386-88, revised 1394 or later).<sup>70</sup> It is here that

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<sup>68</sup> See Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 6-41. The best overview of late antique and medieval dream theory remains Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>69</sup> Phillips, 'Dream Poems', in *A Companion to Medieval Literature and Culture, c.1350-c.1500*, ed. Peter Brown (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 374-86, at 385.

<sup>70</sup> On the uncertain chronology of Chaucer's works, see Larry D. Benson, 'The Canon and Chronology of Chaucer's Works', in *Riverside*, ed. Benson, xxii-xxv, at xxiv-xxv. I follow the traditional order: *Duchess*, *Fame*, *Parliament*, (*Troilus*), F and G texts of the Prologue to the *Legend*. The only chronological assumption with a direct bearing on the discussion below is the dating of the F and G text of the Prologue to the *Legend* later than the earlier dream poems, all of which are referred to in Alceste's catalogue of Chaucer's writings (F.417-19; G.405-07).



Chaucer's debt to the *Rose* and its Middle French successors is most obviously apparent (see section 1.1), though the English poet is never content simply to imitate his models. His most significant borrowing, I suggest, for English and Scots courtly narrative verse of the following century, was the narrating persona of the Middle French *dits amoureux*. The broad appeal of framed first-person allegory may have resided in its compositional freedom and putative allegorical significance; but its most decisive feature for the history of the English author is the appearance there of a poet-narrator who is presented as the textual double of the individual who wrote the poem.

The poet-narrators that appear in the (dream-)framed first-person allegories of Chaucer and many of his fifteenth-century poetic successors conform to a recognisable type. It is a persona which is essentially derived from the Middle French *dits amoureux*, most notably the works of Machaut and Froissart, as well as their thirteenth-century predecessor, the *Rose*.<sup>71</sup> Integral to the narrative framing of the *dits amoureux*, whether presented as a dream or otherwise, is the introduction of a textual first person who is understood to be the narrator of, but also a character within, the account that follows—a clerk, but also a lover. This figure is only ever an imperfect, often ironic, representation of the historical poet. Their clerkly aspect suggests a level of correspondence between the fictional narrating persona and the human author for the work; their attributes as a lover,

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<sup>71</sup> See *Chaucer's Dream Poetry: Sources and Analogues*, trans. and ed. B. A. Windeatt (Cambridge: Brewer, 1982); James I. Wimsatt, *Chaucer and His French Contemporaries: Natural Music in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), especially 77-108; William Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994), especially 276-301; and, on the particular influence of the *Rose* on Chaucer's self-representation in the dream poems, Stephanie A. Viereck Gibbs Kamath, *Authorship and First-Person Allegory in Late Medieval France and England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), 59-102.

meanwhile, betray the influence of literary convention. At the opening of *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* (before 1342), Machaut's *je* describes his handsome costume of a lover: he is dressed *Coms cils qui tres parfaitement amay | D'amore seüre* ('In the fashion of a man who loved most perfectly | With a constant love' [11-12]).<sup>72</sup> Here, as in Machaut's *Dit de la Fonteinne Amoureuse* (1357), the poet-narrator is the reporter of others' experiences in love rather than his own; yet the poem ends with a reaffirmation of his vocation as a *Loiaus amis* ('true lover' [2069]). In the *Fonteinne Amoureuse*, Machaut's poet-narrator is identified at the outset of the poem as a sufferer in love. He claims to write

*Pour moy deduire et soulacier  
Et pour ma pensee lacier  
En loial amour qui me lace  
En ses las, ou point ne me lasse,  
Car jamais ne seroie las  
D'estre y...*

In order to give delight and consolation to myself, and to bind my thoughts to the true love that holds me in those bonds where I shall never tire of being

*(Fonteinne Amoureuse, 1-6)*<sup>73</sup>

Given this introduction, it comes as something of a surprise when the subject of the *Fonteinne Amoureuse* is revealed to be the sorrows in love expressed by a different, princely lover, diligently transcribed by the poet-narrator in his chamber as if he is serving as a clerk to that prince. At lines 45-51, the name of the historical poet,

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<sup>72</sup> In Machaut, *The Complete Poetry and Music: Volume I: The Debate Series*, trans. and ed. R. Barton Palmer with Domenic Leo and Uri Smilansky (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2016).

<sup>73</sup> In *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. Ernest Hœpffner (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1921); translations from *Chaucer's Dream Poetry*, trans. and ed. Windeatt.

Machaut, and that of his patron, John, duke of Berry, are revealed in a cryptogram; and soon afterwards, the poet-narrator realigns his identity to that of a *clers* | *Rudes, nices et malapers* ('ignorant, silly, impertinent clerk' [139-40]), sometime in the service of the king of Bohemia. Again, a simple correspondence between poet-narrator and historical poet is not long maintained: the amorous aspect of Machaut's textual first person is returned to the fore in the dream of Venus and the prince's lady that comprises the second half of the poem. But already, one sees the possibility for more sustained quasi-autobiographical self-representation of the kind developed by Chaucer and his poetic followers.

The textual first persons of the *dits amoureux* are only partially referential: their portraits are painted with varying levels of detail but are never meant as an exact likeness. The characterisation of the poems' poet-narrators inevitably influences the reader's conception of the 'implied author' for the work; yet they are too partial and too often undercut to be substituted for the more complex 'author-image' that is a combination of both the indexical signs that can be found in the text itself and the interpretation of those indexes by each individual reader.<sup>74</sup> The poet-narrator of the *dit* functions, in effect, as a narrative device whereby the historical poet may attempt to mediate the reception of his/her writings—projections, in poetry, of an idealised court society, from the perspective of one of its more peripheral, though largely sympathetic, members. So, in the *Fonteinne Amoureuse*, the poet-narrator claims that he is compelled to reveal his name by the

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<sup>74</sup> I take my definition of the 'implied author' from Wolf Schmid, 'Implied Author (revised version; uploaded 26 January 2013)', in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn et al. (Hamburg University Press) <<http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de>>. For the related phenomenon of 'pseudo-autobiography' in fourteenth-century poetry, see Lawrence de Looze, *Pseudo-Autobiography in the Fourteenth-Century: Juan Ruiz, Guillaume de Machaut, Jean Froissart and Geoffrey Chaucer* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997), especially 1-42.

personified *amours fine* ('Fine Loving' [37])—that is, the conventions of courtly love—rather than more material concerns. The allusion to the poet's service to the king of Bohemia foregrounds a clerkly occupation close to that of the historical Machaut; yet it also recalls the role of the poet-narrator of *Le Jugement dou Roy de Behaingne* (before 1342) as the mediator between the entirely fictional knight and lover of the first part of the *dit* and the textual double of the historical Machaut's lord and patron, John of Bohemia, at the castle of Durbuy, in the second.<sup>75</sup> Beyond Machaut's cryptograms, these poet-narrators are rarely made the explicit namesake of the historical poet; nevertheless, in their status as clerks and failed lovers, as hangers-on in court society who must observe rather than participate in the love affairs of others, they feature as an innocuous and often humorous proxy for the historical poets Machaut, Froissart, or, in his own experiments with the form, Chaucer, vis-à-vis an implied court audience.<sup>76</sup>

Chaucer's adoption, and reimagination, of the narrating persona of the *dits amoureux* in his dream poems of the 1370s and 1380s has far reaching implications for the development of his poetics and for those of his English and Scottish successors.<sup>77</sup> Most significant to the present discussion is Chaucer's emphasis on the clerkly rather than the amorous identity of his narrating personae, whilst at the

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<sup>75</sup> Durbuy, east of Namur in modern-day Belgium, was a castle of John the Blind (1296-1346), count of Luxembourg and King of Bohemia, who Machaut served from the 1320s.

<sup>76</sup> My use of the categories 'implied audience' and (in later chapters) 'intended audience' follows Paul Strohm, 'Chaucer's Audience(s): Fictional, Implied, Intended, Actual', *ChauR*, 18 (1983), 137-45, at 140-42, which draws upon reader-response criticism.

<sup>77</sup> On Chaucer's deployment and development of the first-person poet-narrator, see especially David Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985); A. C. Spearing, *Textual Subjectivity: The Encoding of Subjectivity in Medieval Narratives and Lyrics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 68-136; and Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, 65-98. Kratzmann draws attention to 'the strong sense of authorial presence' common to Chaucer's and much fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Scots poetry, especially that belonging to 'the genre of vision narrative'. Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, 229-38, 249 and 229 quoted.

same time diminishing the correspondence between his textual first person and himself.<sup>78</sup> As many critics have observed, Chaucer's poet-narrators are 'anxious about love rather than in love'.<sup>79</sup> The poet-narrator's professed study, but little experience, of love in the *Parliament* (8-9, 157-68) and *Fame* (627-40) foregrounds the clerkly character of Chaucer's narrating personae to an even greater extent than do Machaut and Froissart. Nevertheless, Chaucer's dream poems depart from the *dits amoureux* in their fairly limited interest in the self-promotion of the historical poet. There is a marked reluctance in the *Duchess*, the *Parliament*, and, to a lesser extent, *Fame*, to deploy the poet-narrator as a claimant to the poetic skill and existing bibliography of the person who was supposed to have composed the poem, whether that be the intradiegetic poet-narrator or the historical poet Chaucer.<sup>80</sup> The poet-narrator in these early dream poems is clearly a writer of poetry—he has taken it upon himself to put into verse the report now being read—but he is not yet presented as a recognisable poet with an established reputation like, for instance, the poet-narrator in Machaut's *Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* (1349), who is tried before a court of love for having spoken ill of ladies in the *Roy*

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<sup>78</sup> The similarities and differences between the known biography of the historical poet and the depiction of his poet-narrator is a recurrent issue throughout this study. Unsurprisingly, none of the framed first-person allegories discussed here or in subsequent chapters lend themselves to a straight autobiographical reading. It is not my intention to suggest that the narration of framed first-person allegory might instead represent 'the utterance of a fictional speaker distinguishable from the author'—a fallacy for which E. Talbot Donaldson's 'Chaucer the Pilgrim' is often cited as the *fons et origo* in Middle English studies, and which Spearing among others has gone to some length to debunk. See Donaldson, 'Chaucer the Pilgrim', *PMLA*, 69 (1954), 928-36; Spearing, *Textual Subjectivity and Medieval Autographies*, 2 quoted; and for an earlier corrective to 'dramatic' readings of Chaucer, Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*. The textual first person of framed first-person allegory is neither the straightforward projection of the historical poet nor the expression of a fictional consciousness; it *does*, however, convey a poetic subject or 'voice' which evokes generic and narrative expectations, and is associated with particular kinds of literary activity. In the formulation of this last point, I am indebted to David Lawton, *Voice in Later Medieval English Literature: Public Interiorities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), discussed further in chapter 4.

<sup>79</sup> Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, 38.

<sup>80</sup> See Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 82-83; and Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, 52-53.

*de Behaingne*.<sup>81</sup> One purpose of the historical poet's textual double in Machaut's *dits* is to serve as a record of his literary career. Machaut's poet-narrators refer to (and are held accountable for) earlier works written by the historical poet Machaut. The situation in the *Roy de Navarre* is analogous to the Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend*, in which Chaucer's textual double is himself brought to account for his supposedly antifeminist writings (F.308-579, see further below). By contrast, the books that are encountered by Chaucer's poet-narrators in the *Duchess*, *Fame*, and the *Parliament* are the works of classical *auctores* and continental poets: the story of Ceyx and Alcyone as it appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XI.411-748),<sup>82</sup> the *Aeneid* (inscribed on a brass tablet in the temple of Venus), and Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*. In each of the three early dream poems, Chaucer's clerkly poet-narrators are not only inept lovers, but also as yet unproven as poets.

Chaucer's presentation of his textual doubles in this way seems connected to the subject matter of the early dream poems. The *Duchess*, the *Parliament*, and, most overtly, *Fame* are concerned with the maturation of their poet-narrators—their acquisition of the poetic skill and/or the material for subsequent compositions which will see them transformed into something like the implied author for the work after awaking from the dream.<sup>83</sup> Whereas Chaucer may not promote his name

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<sup>81</sup> Note the relative paucity of self-naming in Chaucer's poetry: Jupiter's eagle addresses 'Geffrey' by name only once in *Fame* (729); the only other instance is in the Introduction to 'The Man of Law's Tale', where the Man of Law complains of the difficulty of telling a 'thrifty tale' that 'Chaucer' has not already rhymed in English (II.46-50, 46 and 47 quoted). For the suggestion that the 'Englyssh Gaufride' (1470) seen atop one of the pillars in the house of Fame is a reference to Chaucer himself, rather than to Geoffrey of Monmouth as is usually assumed, see Helen Cooper, 'The Four Last Things in Dante and Chaucer: Ugolino in the House of Rumour', *NNL*, 3 (1999), 39-66, at 58-60.

<sup>82</sup> Or perhaps Machaut's *Fonteinne Amoureuse* (544-698).

<sup>83</sup> This transformation is most fully realised in the conclusion to the *Duchess*: the poem's last line, 'This was my sweven; now hit is doon' (1334), 'bring us', remarks Lawton, 'for the first time to the poet's present [...]. Only in this closing section [...] is the narrator-persona fully reconciled with the figure of the poet.' Lawton, *Chaucer's Narrators*, 54.

as explicitly as Machaut and Froissart, he certainly adopts the ironic distance that they establish between the poet-narrator and implied author.<sup>84</sup> By highlighting the difference between the blinkered view of the poet-narrator *within* the text and the critical—though still hardly omniscient—perspective of the implied author (and audience) outside it, whilst stripping that poet-narrator of almost any biographical detail or bibliographical attribution that might identify them with the historical poet, Chaucer effaces nearly all evidence of his own life and works from his early dream poems. His textual first person instead becomes the vehicle for more speculative reflections on poetic composition.<sup>85</sup>

This changes in Chaucer's final dream poem, the Prologue to the *Legend*. Here, in a departure from the book-induced dreams of the *Duchess*, *Fame*, and the *Parliament*, Chaucer (or rather Alceste) names his own works—*Troilus* and his translation of the *Rose* (F.328-34)—as the books for which his textual double is brought to trial before the god of Love. The poet-narrator is still placed at an ironic distance from the implied author: he fails to recognise Alceste as the Daisy to whom he had earlier directed his devotions (F.499-551); nor is he able to defend himself against the charges of Love.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, the poet-narrator has for the first time been elevated to the status of an established poet with an extant bibliography. Chaucer's textual first person remains unnamed in the Prologue to the *Legend*; the presentation of the poet-narrator as a devotee to the daisy who makes verses in honour of the flower owes more to the poetry of the *marguerite*

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<sup>84</sup> See Calin, *French Tradition*, 285.

<sup>85</sup> The thesis of Robert R. Edwards, *The Dream of Chaucer: Representation and Reflection in the Early Narratives* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989); cf. Robert O. Payne, *The Key of Remembrance: A Study of Chaucer's Poetics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 91-146.

<sup>86</sup> See Calin, *French Tradition*, 292-93.

tradition than to any autobiographical impulse. Yet something *has* changed in Chaucer's final dream poem. Alceste's catalogue of Chaucer's works introduces the idea of a historically specific individual who makes books for eminent patrons. The previously anonymous and essentially rhetorical textual first person is transformed into a site for quasi-autobiographical self-representation, of the kind that has more usually been suggested (and resisted) for Chaucer's textual double in *The Canterbury Tales*.<sup>87</sup> It is to *The Canterbury Tales* that critics (rightly) look for the maturation of Chaucer's authorship—the culmination of what Robert R. Edwards describes as a progression 'from revisionary poetics [in the courtly poems] to self-sustaining fiction [in *The Canterbury Tales*]'.<sup>88</sup> However, it is the formal and dramatic features of the Prologue to the *Legend* that were more readily assimilated by English and Scottish poets of the proceeding century. The 'Chaucerian subject', 'presented as a compiler, translator, narrator, humble servant to a patron, or obeyer of a friend's or superior's wishes',<sup>89</sup> reappears in myriad configurations in the poetry of Hoccleve and Lydgate, *The Kingis Quair* (c. 1424), Robert Henryson, and into the sixteenth century in Skelton's *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell* and Douglas's *Palice of Honour*. The reappropriation of the narrating persona of

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<sup>87</sup> Famously rejected in Donaldson, 'Chaucer the Pilgrim', though Donaldson's approach has facilitated equally problematic 'dramatic' readings of *The Canterbury Tales* (see n. 78). An assumed equivalence between the textual first person of *The Canterbury Tales* and the 'auctor' of the work is arguably a feature of the *ordinatio* of some of its fifteenth-century manuscripts, notably Ellesmere. See Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, 'Professional Readers at Work: Annotators, Editors and Correctors in Middle English Literary Texts', in *Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches*, ed. ead., Maidie Hilmo, and Linda Olson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 207-44, at 212; and for a counter-reading, Trigg, *Congenial Souls*, 78-81.

<sup>88</sup> Edwards, *Invention and Authorship*, xxx. Note, however, Viereck Gibbs Kamath's suggestion that Chaucer 'continues his service to the allegorical tradition' in *The Canterbury Tales*. She admits that 'the *Canterbury Tales* as whole is not best described as an allegory', but argues—I believe accurately—that 'the strategies of authorial representation made popular by the *Rose*, and employed by Chaucer in his dream visions, remain absolutely essential'. Viereck Gibbs Kamath, *Authorship and First-Person Allegory*, 98-102, 98 quoted.

<sup>89</sup> *Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. Wogan-Browne et al., 9.



Chaucer's dream poems allowed his English and Scottish followers to harness the quasi-autobiographical potential of the form; their framed first-person allegories explore new concerns about the authoring of vernacular poetry raised by their own distinctive circumstances.

The example of John Lydgate offers an instructive approach to the fifteenth-century evolution of framed first-person allegory, both for the variety of literary projects to which he adapted the form and the influential formulation of the nature of poetry and the function of the poet for which his own literary career supplied the epitome. Lydgate's techniques for self-representation provide a formal and conceptual link between the Ricardian poetry of Chaucer and the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century authorial self-promotion which is the subject of this thesis.<sup>90</sup> His writings are instrumental to what Meyer-Lee describes as among fifteenth-century poets' 'most important—and least recognized—contributions to English literary history': 'in the course of the fifteenth century the representation of the *author* as both first-person *speaker* and authoritative, historically specific *person* becomes a normative formal feature'.<sup>91</sup> Focusing on the poetry produced in and around the Lancastrian court, Meyer-Lee posits two distinctive authorial poses arising out of fifteenth-century responses to poetic and political authority: the

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<sup>90</sup> I follow Simpson in resisting the critical tendency to dismiss Lydgate as 'irredeemably "medieval"'—a poet 'massively dependent on, yet strangely ignorant of, the "true" [i.e. the 'Renaissance'] Chaucer'. Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Reformations*, 67. For a concise survey of Lydgate's critical reception from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first, see Larry Scanlon and James R. Simpson, 'Introduction', in *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England*, ed. id. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 1-11.

<sup>91</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 3 (original emphasis). For a summary of the limited critical notices of Lydgate's influence on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scottish writers, and the argument that his poetical influence has been greatly underestimated, see W. H. E. Sweet, 'The Scottish Lydgateans', in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations*, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010), 28-45.

laureate mode developed by Lydgate;<sup>92</sup> and an alternative ‘beggar laureate’ pose adopted by Hoccleve.<sup>93</sup> Both ‘involve strategic conflation of poetic subject positions—that is, in either case the poet appears as his concrete extraliterary self’.<sup>94</sup> In poems such as the *Regiment*, *Troy Book* (1412-20), and *The Fall of Princes* (1431-38), Hoccleve and Lydgate exploit the possibilities for quasi-autobiographical self-representation suggested by Chaucer’s framed first-person narratives in order to present an image of the author more cogent and strategic than anything found in Chaucer (and long anterior to the late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century ‘self-crowned laureates’ posited by Richard Helgerson).<sup>95</sup> Lydgate’s ‘laureate pose’ in particular provides an important intertext for the authorial self-promotion of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas; and one of my aims in the chapters that follow is to elaborate, and in places challenge, Meyer-Lee’s proposal that the literary tradition to which these poets belong is as Lydgatean as it is Chaucerian.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> The view of Lydgate as ‘in fact if not in name, official court-poet’ to the Lancastrian regime—its putative poet laureate—between c. 1422/23 and 1433/34 receives scholarly affirmation in Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), especially 160-91 (‘Laureate Lydgate’). Strohm takes a similar view of Lydgate as a Lancastrian propagandist in *England’s Empty Throne*. Meyer-Lee, whilst reluctant to credit Lydgate with an ‘official’ status within the Lancastrian regime, agrees that the epithet “‘Laureate Lydgate” [...] is no anachronism’ when applied to Lydgate’s literary activities in the 1420s and 1430s. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 49-87, 50 quoted.

<sup>93</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 88-124; cf. Rory G. Critten’s account of writers’ such as Hoccleve, Margery Kempe, John Audelay and Charles d’Orléans elaboration of a ‘self-publishing pose’, in contradistinction to Lydgate’s ‘laureate pose’, in *Author, Scribe, and Book in Late Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2018).

<sup>94</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 4.

<sup>95</sup> Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). By contrast, Lydgate’s framed first allegories most obviously modeled on Chaucer’s dream poems—*The Temple of Glas* and *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, usually dated to early in Lydgate’s career—demonstrate little of the innovative self-representation of his later works. See further Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 171-76; and Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, 84-97, 105-15.

<sup>96</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 6-7. Extending his thesis to encompass early Tudor court poetry, Meyer-Lee argues that Hawes, Barclay, and Skelton began their careers self-consciously within the Lydgatean tradition of laureate poetics, but that the politico-cultural contradictions brought about by the institutionalisation of laureateship at the court of Henry VII confounded their attempts to recoup Lydgate’s laureate pose (174-219). I challenge this interpretation in sections 2.3 and 3.1,

Examples of Lydgate's authorship would almost certainly have been available to each of these poets: his major works had gone through multiple London editions before the publication of Hawes's *Conforte* in around 1515;<sup>97</sup> and *The Complaint of the Black Knight* is one among ten literary texts printed at Edinburgh by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar in around 1508.<sup>98</sup> Dunbar's *Goldyn Targe*, Skelton's *Garland*, Hawes's *Pastime*, and Douglas's *Eneados* evidence an intelligent mediation of Lydgateanism—proof of these poets' capacity to synthesise and augment their diverse poetic inheritance. Aspects of Lydgate's authorship serve them as perennial topics for invention: Skelton's laureate self-representation is as indebted to the *Fall* as to Petrarch (section 2.3); Dunbar incorporates Lydgatean epideixis into his 'great repertory of styles' (section 2.2); Hawes, despite his professed deference to Lydgate, wilfully conflates his statements on poetry with the tenets of Ciceronian rhetoric (section 3.1); and Douglas, in the *Eneados*, expands on the idea of the vernacular translator straddling multiple texts in order to foreground 'the compilar' as the implied author for the poem (section 4.2). It would be inaccurate, however, to characterise the authorial self-promotion of any of these poets as primarily in imitation of Lydgate. The literary career of Lydgate demonstrates, and to some extent enabled, the realisation of the quasi-autobiographical and metapoetic potentialities of Chaucer's framed first-person form, but did not delimit its application by the English and Scottish poets who followed.

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arguing that both Skelton and Hawes are more revisionary in their approach to Lydgate and laureateship than intimated by Meyer-Lee.

<sup>97</sup> For a handlist of Chaucer and Lydgate editions printed between 1473 and 1557, see Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*, 266-71.

<sup>98</sup> Spuriously attributed to Chaucer under the title *Here begynns the mayng or disport of chaucer* (STC 17014.3). On Chepman and Myllar, see further section 2.2.

This thesis reads through the framed first-person allegories of Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas onto the distinctive conceptions of literary authorship which informed their design. Their works evidence the enduring appeal of allegory framed as a dream or otherwise to conservative literary tastes at court, its amenability to burgeoning print markets, and use for expressing personal poetic ambitions. The facility of the form for self-representation is especially applicable to the culture of display associated with the early modern court (see further sections 2.2 and 3.1.1). In what follows, my chief aim is to offer an interpretation of authorial self-promotion in the period's poetry without having recourse to existing (new) historicist models, or to a 'medieval' to 'modern' account of literary authorship (see section 1.1). Subsequent chapters will introduce as appropriate the myriad texts and traditions negotiated and revised by Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas: court satire, laureate poetics, the 'learned chivalry' of Valois Burgundy, and the Virgilian commentary tradition, to name but a few. Recognition of the interests and obligations that these poets share, as well as those that they do not, enables a more sophisticated evaluation of their literary careers than the prevailing 'transitional' accounts, or their relative position north or south of the Anglo-Scottish border. The picture that emerges is of an interconnected but multifaceted array of literary authorships, responsive to, but not determined by, contemporary political, social, and technological factors. I begin with a comparative reading of the framed first-person allegories of Skelton and Dunbar, two poets whose apparent similarities might have encouraged parallel strategies for authorial self-promotion, but whose very different temperaments and relationships with the court place

them at opposite ends of the broad spectrum of the period's conceptions of literary authorship.

## 2. John Skelton, William Dunbar, and authorial self-promotion at the courts of Henry VII and James IV

Despite what are in certain respects quite similar literary careers, the attitudes towards textual production and authority represented by John Skelton and William Dunbar resist close association. Very rarely have the two been studied together.<sup>1</sup> And yet, their position as the vernacular poets most obviously affiliated with the English and Scottish royal courts,<sup>2</sup> as well as the broad similarities between those courts as centres of textual production, invites comparison of their diverging claims for the textual authority of their writings.

Skelton, in *The Bowge of Courte*, transforms satire of the court into a satire of the poet (section 2.1). His depiction of his textual double Drede seems an unlikely strategy for authorial self-promotion; yet it is not too great a leap from self-scrutiny to self-regard, and the *Bowge* shares with Skelton's *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell* an interest in the nature of poetry and the function of the poet expressed through framed first-person allegory. The outcome of the *Bowge* is apparently to deny the ability of poetry to convey pre-existing truths; however, Skelton's decision to make the poet himself into an object of scrutiny demonstrates his willingness to break down in order to rebuild the concept of authorship, in particular, *his* authorship, which is given permanent inscription in the *Garlande's* Skelton Poeta (section 2.3). Dunbar, though working in superficially similar circumstances and—in

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, 129-68; and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Dunbar, Skelton and the Nature of Court Culture in the Early Sixteenth Century', in *Vernacular Literature and Current Affairs in the Early Sixteenth Century: France, England, and Scotland*, ed. Jennifer and Richard Britnell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 120-34.

<sup>2</sup> On the superficial similarities between Skelton and Dunbar as 'court poets', see further Edwards, 'Dunbar, Skelton, Court Culture', 120.

*The Goldyn Targe* at least—the same ‘Chaucerian Tradition’, has a quite different use for framed first-person allegory. Dunbar, unlike Skelton, seems less concerned with his personal status as a Scottish author than in his place among a brotherhood of Scots *makaris* (section 2.2). His allegorical dream poems evoke a lively, literary court culture, of which Dunbar is but one valuable exponent, rather than, as will be seen in Skelton and the *Garlande*, a biographically specific, self-justifying authorship dissociated from any single, external source of poetic legitimation.

Neither poet’s strategy was entirely successful in promoting their name and writings: Dunbar’s transmission relies on continued interest in the court culture that he represents, whilst Skelton’s somewhat convoluted authorship did not long outlive its conception. Both, however, demonstrate how vernacular poets invested in traditional forms of authority were able to devise for their writings claims to originality and/or stylistic distinctiveness with instructive parallels to the modern notion of authorship. A reappraisal of their framed first-person allegories as experiments in literary authorship helps to overcome certain of the difficulties presented by their heterogeneous canons, and suggests transnational connections between the English and Scottish poets working in and around the courts of Henry VII and James IV.

### **2.1. From satire to self-scrutiny: Skelton’s *Bowge of Courte***

From before his death in 1529, and throughout much of the sixteenth century, Skelton’s reputation is as a virulent satirist and ‘libertine eccentric’—a poet, writes the sixteenth-century historian John Bale, *facetiis in quotidiana ineuntione plurimum deditus fuit* (‘much given to the daily invention of satires’), and a popular figure in

sixteenth-century jestbooks.<sup>3</sup> Much of this reputation was based on the works and apocryphal stories associated with Skelton's rectorship at Diss, Norfolk, between around 1503 and 1512, and his supposed enmity with Cardinal Thomas Wolsey during the early 1520s. In fact, the periods c. 1496-c. 1502 and c. 1512-c. 1514 demonstrate Skelton's desire for a close affiliation to the Tudor regime, and the importance of the royal court as a source of patronage and approbation. Skelton may have entered Tudor royal service in October or November 1488, the start-date for the private system of chronology by which he dated some of his poems.<sup>4</sup> His first known work, a translation of the *The Bibliotheca Historica of Didorus Siculus*, was probably completed in 1488. By 1493, he had received laureations from the universities of Oxford, Louvain, and Cambridge;<sup>5</sup> and he is commended in the preface to William Caxton's 1490 *Eneydos* as a 'poete laureate' worthy to 'ouersee and correcte this sayd booke'.<sup>6</sup> Skelton's own valuation of this academic title may have exceeded its actual prestige (see further section 2.3); nevertheless, by around

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<sup>3</sup> Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytanniae, quam nunc Angliam & Scotiam vocant catalogus...* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, [1557]) *USTC* 692634, p. 651; text and translation from Skelton: *The Critical Heritage*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 54-55. For a recent account of Skelton's sixteenth-century literary reputation, see Helen Cooper, 'Reception and Afterlife', in *Companion to Skelton*, ed. Sobecki and Scattergood, 194-204, especially 200-03. Skelton's first known jestbook appearance was in his own lifetime: *A, C, mery talys* (London: [John Rastell for Peter Treveris], 1526) *STC* 23663, no. 41.

<sup>4</sup> John Scattergood, 'John Skelton (?1460-1529): A Life in Writing', in *Companion to Skelton*, ed. Sobecki and Scattergood, 5-26, at 8. Alternatively, the start-date for Skelton's private calendar may coincide with his first laureation at Oxford (see below). William Nelson, *John Skelton: Laureate* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1939), 161-65.

<sup>5</sup> No record of Skelton's Oxford or Louvain laureations survive; but the record for his laureation by the University of Cambridge in 1493 mentions that *Conceditur Johanni Skelton poete in partibus transmarinis atque oxonie laurea ornato ut apud nos eadem decoraretur* ('John Skelton, poet, having been crowned with laurel in parts beyond the sea and at Oxford, shall receive the same decoration from ourselves'). *Grace-Book B: Containing the Proctors' Accounts and Other Records of the University of Cambridge for the Years 1488-1511*, ed. Mary Bateson, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), I, 54. In his *In clarissimi Scheltonis Louaniensis poeta: laudes epigramma*, the grammarian Robert Whittinton (c. 1480-c. 1553) attests that Skelton was laureated by the University of Louvain. Whittinton, *Libellus epygrammaton* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1519) *STC* 25540.5, sigs C4<sup>v</sup>-[C8<sup>r</sup>].

<sup>6</sup> Scattergood, 'Skelton: A Life', 7. *Boke of Eneydos*, trans. Caxton (London: William Caxton, 1490) *STC* 24796, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.



1496, he was of sufficient reputation as a scholar and rhetorician to be appointed tutor to the young Prince Henry.<sup>7</sup> Skelton's literary output during this first period at court presents a striking contrast to his better-known satirical poems of the 1520s. As tutor to the prince, he composed a number of pedagogical works, notably the prose *Speculum Principis* (completed in August 1501), and panegyrics such as the epigram written in celebration of Henry's creation as duke of York in 1494.<sup>8</sup> There is no clear evidence that any of these works were written to commission; yet as will be seen, the framed first-person allegories composed during this period leave little doubt as to Skelton's self-conception as a royally mandated poet laureate. Following the death of Prince Arthur Tudor in 1502, Skelton was replaced as Prince Henry's tutor.<sup>9</sup> Not until 1512, after a temporary retirement to his rectory at Diss, did Skelton return to court, where he was granted the title *orator regius* ('orator of the king') by his former student, Henry VIII.<sup>10</sup> The exact duties of the *orator regius* are difficult to define and were not exclusively oratorical.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, from around 1512 to 1514, Skelton seems to have performed a role approximating an official spokesperson of the king. Belonging to this period are the English and Latin verses celebrating Henry VIII's victories in France and at Flodden, one of which, A

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<sup>7</sup> Scattergood, 'Skelton: A Life', 8. For evidence of Skelton's reputation as a scholar and rhetorician in the 1490s and 1500s, see *Skelton: Critical Heritage*, ed. Edwards, 2-4, 43-46; and David R. Carlson, 'Royal Tutors in the Reign of Henry VII', *SCJ*, 22 (1991), 253-79, at 269-70.

<sup>8</sup> 'Latin Writings', ed. Carlson, VIII, IX. 'Prince Arthuris Creacyon', mentioned in the *Garlande* (1178) but no longer extant, may have been a similar epigram written for the creation of Prince Arthur (1486-1502) as Prince of Wales in 1489.

<sup>9</sup> Scattergood, 'Skelton: A Life', 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-14. The title was also held by: Bernard André (c. 1450-1522), 'poet laureate' at the courts of Henry VII and Henry VIII and tutor to Prince Arthur from 1496; Giovanni Gigli (1434-98), an ambassador to the papal curia; and Jean Mallard, French Secretary to Henry VIII from 1539. Nelson, *John Skelton*, 123; Gordon Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1977), 19-20.

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, throughout the fifteenth century, the term *orator*, in Latin or English, could also mean simply 'ambassador', 'bedesman', or 'plaintiff'. On the origins and development of the *orator regius*, see Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 172-76; and my section 3.1.1.

*Ballade of the Scottyssh Kynge*, was immediately printed by the London printer Richard Faques (STC 22593).<sup>12</sup> Probably in 1512 or 1513, Skelton wrote an English and Latin poem in which he justifies his adoption of a gown embroidered with the word 'Calliope', a deliberate conflation of his material conditions as *orator regius* and supposed poetic prerogative as the 'serviture' of 'my soverayne' (20, 23)—the epic muse in tandem with the English king.<sup>13</sup>

In reality, Skelton's position at court was rather less assured. '[W]ith the return of peace', notes Greg Walker, 'royal interest in Skelton's work seems to have waned'.<sup>14</sup> Skelton claims to have written his invective verses *Agensst Garnesche* (1513-19) 'By the kyngs most noble commandement' (explicit to i, ii, iii, and iv); and a date as late as 1519 has been proposed for his court morality play, *Magnyfycence*.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of the decade, Skelton had become estranged from the system of royal patronage by which he had until that time defined his literary activities.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the reason or exact date for Skelton's loss of royal favour, his English poetry of the later 1510s until his death has been understood as representing a distinct new phase in his literary career. Jane Griffiths, in *Skelton and Poetic Authority: Defining the Liberty to Speak*, presents a

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<sup>12</sup> See John Scattergood, 'A Defining Moment: The Battle of Flodden and English Poetry', in *Vernacular Literature and Current Affairs*, ed. Britnell and Britnell, 62-79, at 71-76.

<sup>13</sup> On this gown, possibly the same 'habyte' that Skelton claims to have received from 'A kynge' (presumably Henry VII) at his Oxford laureation (*Agensst Garnesche*, v.80; see section 2.3), see *The Poetical Works of John Skelton*, ed. Alexander Dyce, 2 vols (London: Rodd, 1843), I, xx-xxi; and the counter-argument in Maurice Pollet, *John Skelton: Poet of Tudor England*, trans. John Warrington (London: Dent, 1971), 66.

<sup>14</sup> Walker, 'John Skelton and the Royal Court', in *John Skelton and Early Modern Culture: Papers Honoring Robert S. Kinsman*, ed. David R. Carlson (Tempe: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 3-18, at 12.

<sup>15</sup> Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 61-72. Scattergood adopts the same dating in *John Skelton*, 233-59 and 'Skelton: A Life'. Griffiths prefers the date 1516 in *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 56, n. 1.

<sup>16</sup> See Walker, *Skelton and Politics*, 35-52, 100-23; and for a speculative account of Skelton's loss of royal favour following an ill-advised attack on Wolsey in 1516, Alistair Fox, *Politics and Literature in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 143-47.

convincing reappraisal of these later works as instances of Skelton's 'internalization of poetic authority', a discovery of the originary power of writing which 'remarkably anticipates that which we find in Sidney and Puttenham'.<sup>17</sup> Griffiths goes further, arguing that Skelton's interest in the 'authorization' of his poetry 'also appears as a playful and parodic counter to that position, manifested in the incorporation of multiple voices that question the very possibility of circumscribing a work's meaning'.<sup>18</sup> Griffiths's Skelton is a poet of paradoxical, almost postmodern tendencies: an *orator regis* whose works exhibit an uncontrollable multiplication of voices; a *vates* preoccupied by 'the freedom and unpredictability of thought itself'; and a poet laureate whose disavowals of textual, political, and divine forms of authority challenge the reader 'to undertake reading as a kind of leap of faith, a process of invention, rather than the passive reception of precept'.<sup>19</sup> Like Griffiths, I identify the 'authorization' of poetry as a key concern in Skelton, 'most in evidence in the serious attempt to locate the poet as the driving force at the centre of his work'.<sup>20</sup> However, where Griffiths's focus on *Speke Parott* (1521), the *Garlande* (published 1523, but begun much earlier [see section 2.3]), and *A Replycacyon Agaynst Certayne Yong Scolers Abjured of Late* (1528) reinforces the idea of Skelton's fragmented, irrecoverable authorship, more sustained analysis of the earlier poems—works more obviously invested in the relation of the poet to literary tradition and institutional centres of power—reveals an approach to authorial self-promotion that derives much of its impetus from Skelton's reconfigurations of inherited poetic forms and professed affiliation to royal and aristocratic patrons.

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<sup>17</sup> Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 158.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 6, 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

Skelton's *Bowge of Courte* belongs to his first period at court, as tutor to Prince Henry from around 1496 to 1502. Its date of composition is the subject of ongoing scholarly debate; but it seems likely that Skelton wrote the poem not long before its publication by Wynkyn de Worde in perhaps 1499 (*STC* 22597).<sup>21</sup> This historical and material context for the *Bowge* presents a number of critical difficulties. Skelton's nightmarish satire of the court seems oddly out of kilter with what was then his relatively secure position in the Tudor household and his pedagogic and encomiastic writings contemporary to the *Bowge*. This is by far the earliest of Skelton's works to be printed (the next is *Scottyshe Kynge* in 1513)<sup>22</sup> and, almost uniquely, in both de Worde's 1499? edition and his reprint of perhaps 1506 (*STC* 22597.5), the poem appears without attribution (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).<sup>23</sup> The satirical approach and anonymous publication of the *Bowge* has led to readings of the poem as a prefiguration early in Skelton's career of the rejection of delegated forms of poetic authority and emphasis on the reader as a maker of

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<sup>21</sup> I follow Scattergood in assuming a date of composition for the *Bowge* close to de Worde's publication of the poem, as proposed in Helen Stearns Sale, 'The Date of Skelton's *Bowge of Court*', *MLN*, 52 (1937), 572-74; cf. *Complete English Poems*, ed. Scattergood, 352. F. W. Brownlow and Melvin J. Tucker use the astrological description in lines 1-7 to suggest dates of composition c. 1480 and 1482, respectively. Tucker, 'Setting in Skelton's *Bowge of Court*: A Speculation', *ELN*, 7 (1970), 168-75; Brownlow, 'The Date of the *Bowge* and Skelton's Authorship of "A Lamentable of King Edward the III"', *ELN*, 22 (1984), 12-20. So early a date seems unlikely: Drede's reputation for 'connyng' and 'lytterkture' (see further below) seems inappropriate for a man in his very early twenties. Given that Skelton probably entered royal service only in the late 1480s, Scattergood seems justified in his contention that '[i]t is hard to know why Skelton should write a satire about disenchantment with the court before he had been at court'.

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, de Worde's 'publication of Skelton's *Bouge of Court*, c. 1499, marks the first appearance in print of any substantial poem by a living English poet'. A. S. G. Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print: Wynkyn de Worde and the Printing of Contemporary Poetry', *GJ*, 66 (1991), 143-48. The only other of Skelton's works known to have been printed by de Worde (or perhaps Henry Pepwell) is the comic *Tunnyng of Elynour Rummyng* ([1521?], *STC* 22611.5). Note, however, that the poems included in *Agaynste a Comely Coystrowne* and *Dyvers Balettys and Dyties Solacyous*, printed probably in London by John Rastell in perhaps 1527 and 1528, respectively (*STC* 22611, 22604), are likely to have been composed before Skelton's retirement to Diss. *Complete English Poems*, ed. Scattergood, 347, 350.

<sup>23</sup> The only other of Skelton's works known to have been published without attribution are *Scottyshe Kynge* and perhaps *Elynour Rummyng* (no titlepage survives for the 1521? edition).

Here begynneth a lytell treatyse  
named the bowge of courte.



A 1

Figure 2.1. [John Skelton], *The Bowge of Courte* (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, [1499?])  
STC 22597, titlepage. Reproduced from EEBO.

In euery poynte to be indyfferente  
Syn all in substaunce of flibynge doth procede  
I wpll not saye it is mater in dede  
But yet of tyme luche diemes be founde trewe  
Now conskrewe ye what is the respdewe

¶ Thus endeth the Bowge of courte.  
Enprynted at westmynster By me  
Wynkyn the worde.

Figure 2.2. [John Skelton], *The Bowge of Courte* (Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, [1499?])  
STC 22597, sig. [B6<sup>v</sup>], showing colophon. Reproduced from EEBO.

meaning associated with his poetry of 1520s (see below). By this assessment, Skelton's *Bowge* seems to debunk rather than to promote the concept of literary authorship—for what place is there for authors in a world without truth, where all meaning is partial and contingent? Yet self-representation remains a fundamental concern in the *Bowge*, as indicated by Skelton's deployment of the framed first-person form. Skelton's decision to present his satire as an allegorical dream, and to introduce his textual double, Drede, as its poet-narrator, betrays an anxiety about poetic as well as courtly feigning. The allegory calls into question the reliability of poetic representation as a means of conveying truth, making Drede himself into an object of scrutiny. Skelton's interest in the *Bowge* is in poets as much the court; his attitude may be sceptical, but it is of the same order as his more expansive vision of literary authorship in the *Garlande*.

The role and status of the poet are at issue from the outset of the *Bowge*. Skelton takes as his starting point a traditional conception of poetry as a medium for disseminating truths beneath 'coverte termes' (10)—to be challenged, but never entirely dismissed, in the dream that follows. The opening stanzas signal Skelton's engagement with a 'Chaucerian Tradition' (see section 1.2) of framed first-person allegory:

In autumpne, whan the sonne in Vyrgyne  
By radyante hete enryped hath our corne;  
Whan Luna, full of mutabylye,  
As emperes the dyademe hath worne  
Of our pole artyke, smyllynge halfe in scorene  
At our folly and our unstedfastnesse:

The tyme whan Mars to werre hym dyd dres;  
(*Bowge*, 1-7)

The verse form, rhyme royal, is almost ubiquitous to self-consciously Chaucerian poetry of the fifteenth century, and a hallmark of the English and Scottish high style often termed 'aureate'.<sup>24</sup> Skelton's astrological setting reconfigures the opening of 'The General Prologue' to *The Canterbury Tales*: 'Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote | The droghte of March hath perced to the roote...' (l.1-2). The month is September rather than April or May—a suitably melancholic season for the disturbed dream that follows<sup>25</sup>—and recalls the winter settings of Chaucer's *House of Fame*, Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*, and the 'doolie sessoun' of the narrative frame in Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (1).<sup>26</sup> As in Henryson's poem, this gloomy opening precipitates a meditation on poetic making. Skelton's poet-narrator calls to mind

...the great auctoryte  
Of poetes olde, whyche, full craftely,  
Under as coverte termes as coude be,  
Can touche a troughte and cloke it subtylly

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<sup>24</sup> See Nicholas Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', in *Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. Wogan-Browne et al., 331-52, at 347-49. I refrain in this study from use of the conceptually vague and critically charged (especially in relation to Dunbar) term *aureate* (except in quotation). For discussion of its connotations, see especially John Lydgate, *Poems*, ed. John Norton-Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 192-95.

<sup>25</sup> On Skelton's deliberate presentation of the *Bowge*'s dream as an *insomnium* or *somnium animale*, which may or may not contain truths, see Arthur Ray Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 31-33.

<sup>26</sup> In *The Complete Works*, ed. David J. Parkinson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010). All references to Henryson's poems are to this edition. Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* opens in mid-March rather than Autumn and is not followed by a dream; nevertheless, the notion that 'Ane doolie sessoun to ane cairfull dyte | Suld correspond and be equivalent' (1-2, i.e. that the poem's setting and the poet-narrator's statement of mind should correspond) and motifs such as the taking up of 'ane quair' (41) seem intended to evoke the generic expectations of the dream poem. See Kathryn L. Lynch, 'Robert Henryson's "Doolie Dreame" and the Late Medieval Dream Vision Tradition', *JEGP*, 109 (2010), 177-97.



Wyth fresshe utteraunce full sentencyously;  
Dyverse in style, some spared not vyce to wrythe,  
Some of moralyte nobly dyde endyte;

Wherby I rede theyr renome and theyr fame  
Maye never dye, bute evermore endure.

(*Bowge*, 8-16)

This statement of the nature of poetry (allegorical), the function of the poet (as moralist and educator), and the fame that is their reward, condenses many of the ideas underpinning the claims to textual authority in the chapters that follow. The justification of poetry as a 'cloke' for sententious teachings is as old as Augustine; it recalls Lydgate's praise of fabulists in, for example, *Isopes Fabules* ('...out of fables gret wisdom men may take' [28])<sup>27</sup> and will be discussed at greater length in relation to Hawes's legitimization of his 'obscure allegories' in chapter 3. The contested location of 'auctoryte'—either in the poet's matter or in the 'termes' in which it is conveyed—is at issue in Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (the translator, writes Lydgate, may 'Out of old chaff trie out ful cleene corn' [I.24])<sup>28</sup> and is a recurrent topic in the Prologues to Douglas's *Eneados* (see chapter 4). In Lydgate, Hawes, and Douglas, the practices of 'poetes olde', whilst inimitable, form the basis of a theory of licit poetic making. In the *Bowge*, however, Skelton evokes this ideal apparently only to confound it. His idiom is Lydgatean, yet as the dream begins, it is the spectre of Chaucer's *Fame* which haunts Skelton's vision of the poet's art.

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<sup>27</sup> John Lydgate, *Isopes Fabules*, ed. Edward Wheatley (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013). All references to *Isopes Fabules* are to this edition.

<sup>28</sup> John Lydgate, *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, ed. Henry Bergen, 4 vols, EETS, e. s., 121-24 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924-27). All references to the *Fall* are to this edition.

What remains of the *Bowge*'s opening frame before the onset of the dream<sup>29</sup> establishes the desire of the poet-narrator to participate in this tradition of poetic making, but also his apparent inability to so 'nobly [...] endyte'. Following his evocation of the authority of 'poetes olde', Skelton has his poet-narrator make a bolder declaration than anything in Lydgate of his intention to emulate their example: 'I was sore moved to aforce the same' (12). Such ambition cannot go unchecked in the work of a poet for whom the self-denigration of Chaucer's Franklin—rehearsed and re-rehearsed by his ostensibly 'dull' poetic followers<sup>30</sup>—is, in this poem at least, still a vital topos. A personified 'Ignorance' descends upon the poet-narrator to remind him of his folly:

But Ignorance full soone dyde me dyscure  
 And shewed that in this arte I was not sure;  
 For to illumyne, she sayde, I was to dulle,  
 Avysynge me my penne awaye to pulle

And not to wrythe, for he so wyll atteyne,  
 Excedyne ferther than his connyng is,  
 His hede maye be harde, but feble is his brayne!

(*Bowge*, 18-24)

Having reached an apparent impasse, and exhausted by further musings on his stunted vocation, the poet-narrator puts himself to bed 'At Harwyche Porte, slumbrynge as I laye, | In myne hostes house called Powers Keye' (34-35). The implications of this possibly autobiographical reference are discussed by Walker:

Lord John Howard, later created duke of Norfolk, owned a house on the quay at

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<sup>29</sup> Note that, in de Worde's 1499? and 1506? editions, the 'prologue' only ends after the poet-narrator's receipt of favour on board the *Bowge of Courte* (sigs A4<sup>r</sup> and A3<sup>v</sup>, respectively).

<sup>30</sup> See Lawton, 'Dullness'.

Harwich in 1481, where he had dealings with a certain John Power.<sup>31</sup> M. J. Tucker uses the reference, combined with his proposed c. 1480 date for the composition for the *Bowge* (see n. 21 above), as evidence for early Howard patronage.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the only clear indication of an association between Skelton and the Howards is the appearance in the *Garlande* of Lord Howard's daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Howard, née Tylney, countess of Surrey.<sup>33</sup> Walker doubts the identification between the house owned by Lord Howard and Skelton's 'Powers Keye', which may refer to an inn in Harwich kept by Power. In light of the dream of frustrated courtly ambition that follows, an allegorical reading of 'the key to power' seems just as viable an interpretation for the house in which Skelton's poet-narrator falls asleep.

The *Bowge's* allegory is a court satire in the tradition of the *Le Curial* (before 1430) of Alain Chartier and the *De curialium miseriis* (1444) of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, though with an important formal difference: Skelton's satire is framed as a dream, and the satirist himself is included among the objects of attack. The dream begins with the appearance of a ship, the 'Bowge of Courte' (49); the 'awner therof' is a 'lady of estate', 'Dame Suance-Pere' (50-51), and its steerswoman is Fortune. The poet-narrator joins the crowd of 'martchauntes' (120) who have boarded the Bowge in pursuit of F/fortune: 'Of Bowge of Court she asketh what we wold have, | And we asked favoure, and favour she us gave' (125-26). The primary meaning of *bouge* here is 'an allowance of food and drink granted by a king or nobleman to a member of his household', derived from the Old French *bouche à*

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<sup>31</sup> Walker, *Skelton and Politics*, 9-15.

<sup>32</sup> Tucker, 'Setting', 173.

<sup>33</sup> Despite the claims made in Fox, *Politics and Literature*, 191-205.

*court* (literally ‘mouth at court’).<sup>34</sup> The poet-narrator’s boarding of the ship—coming after his recollection of ‘the great auctoryte | Of poetes olde’—can thus be understood as an allegory for the would-be-poet’s aspiration to seek reward and recognition at court. Skelton’s *Bowge* demonstrates the folly of such ambition. The ship’s passengers are seven ‘subtyll persones’ (133), representing the seven vices endemic to court life: Favell, Suspycyon, Hervy Hafter,<sup>35</sup> Dysdayne, Ryote, Dyssymulation, and Disceyte. They flatter, coerce, and disorientate the poet-narrator, who is about to jump overboard, when he awakes from the dream ‘and wroth this lytell boke’ (532).

The setting and characters of Skelton’s allegory have analogues in earlier and contemporary court satires.<sup>36</sup> Alexander Barclay’s *Eclogues I-III* (1509-c. 1513), a reworking of Piccolomini’s *De curialium miseriis*, recast in a pastoral milieu the typical situation of the disillusioned courtier (here the shepherd Cornix) advising an inexperienced charge (Coridon) against a life at court. Caxton’s 1483 translation of Chartier’s *Curial*, presented as a letter written to Chartier’s nephew, warns of ‘deceyuyng by fayr langage’ (cf. Disceyte), ‘blandysshyng by flaterers’ (cf. Favell), and how ‘they that conne dyssymyle ben preysed’ (cf. Dyssymulation). In an image which is eerily prescient of the climax of the *Bowge*, the epistolist exhorts the reader to

...beholde vs drowne by our agreement / And mes  
pryse our blyndenes / that may ne wysse knowe our proper mes

<sup>34</sup> *bouche*, n.<sup>1</sup>, def. 1, *MED*; cf. *bouge*, n.<sup>2</sup>, *OED*. Other possible meanings given by the *OED* include ‘a leather bag’. *bouche*, n.<sup>2</sup>, def. 1a; and ‘[t]o stave in a ship’s bottom or sides, cause her to spring a leak’. *bowge*, v..

<sup>35</sup> ‘A caviller, wrangler, haggler, dodger.’ *hafter*, n.<sup>2</sup>, *OED*.

<sup>36</sup> For a detailed account of Skelton’s handling of the conventions of medieval court satire in the *Bowge*, see Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 14-65.

chyef / For lyke as the folysshe maronnens / whyche somtyme  
cause them self to be drowned / by theyr dyspourueyed aduyse  
ment / In lyke wyse the courte draweth to hym and deceyueth  
the simple men / and maketh them to desire and coueyte it[.]<sup>37</sup>

In the *Curial*, as in the *Bowge*, foolishness rather than wickedness is the condition of the aspiring courtier. Skelton may have derived the idea of a 'ship of fools' from Sebastian Brant's hugely popular satirical allegory, *Das Narrenschiff*;<sup>38</sup> indeed, an association with Brant's work might begin to explain de Worde's decision to print the *Bowge* in the late 1490s.<sup>39</sup> The themes of deception and foolhardy ambition seem also to have suggested motifs from Chaucer's allegorical dream poems. The 'precyous jewell [...] *Bone aventure*', which ensures that Skelton's poet-narrator 'shall stonde in favoure and in grace' with Fortune (97-98, 105), transposes to a nautical setting the spiritual or romantic quest motif; it has a verbal analogue in the double-sided inscription above the entrance to the pleasant garden in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* ('This is the wey to al good aventure' [131]).<sup>40</sup> The description of capricious Fortune at lines 106-19 resonates with the complaint of the Black Knight in *The Book of the Duchesse* (620-49),<sup>41</sup> whilst the merchants' petitions on

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<sup>37</sup> Alain Chartier, *Curial*, trans. William Caxton ([Westminster: William Caxton, 1483]) STC 5057, fol. 5<sup>v</sup>; cf. the earlier admonition not to 'drowne thy self in the see of peryl and myserye' by entering the court (fol. 1<sup>v</sup>). For the suggestion that Caxton's diction may have suggested some of the characters and incident in Skelton's allegory, see Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 40-42.

<sup>38</sup> See Heiserman, *Skelton and Satire*, 22, 27, 60-62. Brant's *Narrenschiff* was published in Basel by Johann Bergmann von Olpe in 1494 (USTC 73644); it owed much of its European fame to Jacob Locher's Latin version, *Stultifera navis*, published in Basel by Bergmann in 1497 (USTC 743657).

<sup>39</sup> De Worde went on to print Henry Watson's English prose translation of Jean Drouyn's French verse version of *Das Narrenschiff* in London in 1509 (STC 3547), shortly before his second edition of the *Bowge*, and probably in the same year as the fool-satire *Cocke Lorelles bote* (STC 5456.3). Also in London in 1509, Richard Pynson printed Barclay's verse translation of Locher's *Stultifera navis* (STC 3545).

<sup>40</sup> The bonaventure mizzen was the fourth mast on larger sixteenth-century galleons. In *Cocke Lorelles bote*, among the many tasks performed by the fools on Cocke Lorell's ship, 'Some pulled vp the bonaventure'. [*Cocke Lorelles bote*] (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1518?]) STC 5456, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>. *bonaventure*, n., def. 2, OED.

<sup>41</sup> *Complete English Poems*, ed. Scattergood, 354.

board the anchored *Bowge* are reminiscent of the series of no less misguided appeals made to Fortune's sister-deity in *Fame* (1520-868).

Skelton's innovation in the *Bowge* is to evoke the conventions of court satire and Chaucerian dream poetry but with a marked shift in perspective. Whereas in Barclay's *Eclogues*, Chartier's *Curial*, Brant's *Narrenschiff*, and Chaucer's dream poems, the shepherd, satirist, and poet-narrator occupies a position of critical detachment from the object of attack—whether the abuses at court or man's broader follies—Skelton's poet-narrator is to some extent complicit with the *Bowge's* allegorical vices. From the moment that he joins the merchants on board the *Bowge* of Courte ('I thought I wolde not dwell dehynde; | Amonge all other I put myselfe in prece' [43-44]), the poet-narrator is equally enamored of its 'royall marchaundyse' (41)—the rewards and pleasures of the court. The identity is made explicit when Saunce-Pere's chief gentlewoman, 'Daunger' (69), asks the poet-narrator his name and purpose:

Than asked she me, 'Syr, so God the spede,  
What is thy name?' and I sayde it was Drede.

'What movyd the', quod she, 'hydder to come?'  
'Forsoth', quod I, 'to bye some of youre ware.'

(*Bowge*, 76-79)

With this gesture, Skelton's textual double is subsumed into the *Bowge's* allegorical scheme. The poet-narrator is reduced to a topos of court satire: the 'drede and fear' of the honest courtier beset by 'enuyous' men;<sup>42</sup> or the 'fear & drede'

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<sup>42</sup> Chartier, *Curial*, trans. Caxton ([1483]), fol. 4<sup>v</sup>.

reported by Coridon during his dream of the court in Barclay's *Eclogue III* (21).<sup>43</sup> The appellation does not have the same uniformly negative connotations as those of the *Bowge's* seven vices. James R. Simpson remarks that '[i]n the traditions of classical and medieval satire within which Skelton is writing, dread is often presented as the experience of the satirist'<sup>44</sup>—indeed, it is one of the principal justifications for the satirist's allegorical mode.<sup>45</sup> Yet the 'experience' of Skelton's Drede is not only of abhorrence; he is a perpetrator and not only the victim of the abuses at court. Simpson and more recently Jason Crawford observe the ways in which the *Bowge's* vices 'insinuate' themselves into 'Drede's consciousness'.<sup>46</sup> In Favell's and later Hervy Hafter's and Dyssimulation's praise of Drede's 'connynge' and 'lytterkture' (149, 153, 260-66, 445-55),

we recognize the vocabulary of an earlier discourse: that of Ignorance [and his admonition against the poet-narrator's 'Excedynge ferther than his connynge is'] [...] [H]is [i.e. Favell's] flatteries intimate that he is the uncanny ventriloquist of Dread's fantasies and fears.<sup>47</sup>

Hervy Hafter makes explicit reference to Drede's poetic pretensions in lines 244-45:

'Tell me your mynde, me thynke ye make a verse, | I coude it skan and ye wolde it rehearse'; and as Simpson remarks, 'in each case where he [i.e. Drede] is so

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<sup>43</sup> In Alexander Barclay, *The Eclogues*, ed. Beatrice White, EETS, o. s., 175 (London: Oxford University Press, 1928). All references to Barclay's *Eclogues* are to this edition.

<sup>44</sup> Simpson, 'Killing Authors. Skelton's Dreadful *Bowge of Courte*', in *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Kathleen Tonry and Shannon Gayk (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 180-96, at 186.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., the contention of Skelton's truth-telling Parott 'that *metaphora, alegoria* withall, | Shall be his protecyon, his pavys and his wall' (*Speke Parott*, 202-03); and the claim in Hawes's *Conforte of Louers* that 'I durst not speke vnto her [i.e. his lady] of my loue', for fear of persecution by his enemies at court, 'Yet vnder coloure I dyuers bokes dyde make' (92-93; cf. section 3.2.2).

<sup>46</sup> Simpson, 'Killing Authors', 186-90; Crawford, 'The *Bowge of Courte* and the Afterlives of Allegory', *JMEMS*, 41 (2011), 369-91, 375 quoted.

<sup>47</sup> Crawford, 'Afterlives of Allegory', 375.

characterized, the characterization is made by figures who wish to undermine, rather than bolster, the narrator's confidence as a poet'.<sup>48</sup> These 'subtlyll persones in nombre foure and thre' (132) raise the unsettling possibility that the 'craft' of 'poetes olde' is not as trustworthy as it first appeared. From Favell, with his 'cloke | That lined was with doubtfull doublenes' (177-78), to Disceyte's threatening allusions to 'the subtylte and the crafte' of Drede's enemies (519), the vices' appearance and speech echoes and distorts the idea of poetry with which the poem began. Drede says little in response to the babble of competing voices; yet one is left with the impression not of a taciturn, critical observer, but of another empty mouth at court.

The dual referentiality of Skelton's poet-narrator—as a satirist, but also the object of satire, as a poet, but also a poetic fiction—presents the reader with a hermeneutical problem: if Drede, like the other vices, is to be mistrusted as one of the 'folysshe maronnens' on board the *Bowge of Courte*, is his belief in the veracity of poetic representation—that poets can 'touche a troughte and cloke it subtylly'—also to be doubted? This internal dilemma has led to readings of the *Bowge* as a critique of allegory itself, as a poem in which courtly feigning and poetic feigning become blurred and the role of the poet as an arbiter of meaning is subverted.<sup>49</sup> For Griffiths, the problem is encapsulated in the oppositional interpretations available for the enigmatic phrase written on Dyssimulation's sleeve: '*A false abstracte cometh from a fals concrete*' (439):

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<sup>48</sup> Simpson, 'Killing Authors', 189.

<sup>49</sup> See especially Stephen Russell, 'Skelton's *Bowge of Court*: A Nominalist Allegory', *RenP*, 2 (1980), 1-9; Helen Cooney, 'Skelton's *Bowge of Court* and the Crisis of Allegory in Late-Medieval England', in *Nation, Court and Culture: New Essays on Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. ead. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 153-67; and Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 56-79.



For Drede it is the truth, while for the vices it is just a ‘supposition’. Such a reversal of the allegorical understanding of the world renders impossible Drede’s ambition at the outset of the poem; to write allegory is not an option if ‘truth’ is a mere form of words. [...] If words do not reflect but reconstitute reality, the poet’s writing is as much a fiction as the inventions of the vices are.<sup>50</sup>

Drede’s dream has all but invalidated the allegorical truth-telling of ‘poetes olde’.<sup>51</sup>

The poem ends as it began, with recourse to the motifs of Chaucerian dream poetry—not the ornamental astrological setting that precedes an enigmatic but meaningful dream, but what Mishtooni Bose describes as ‘the acts of epistemological terrorism’ imagined in Chaucer’s *Fame* and *Parliament*.<sup>52</sup> *Fame* is an especially powerful intertext for the *Bowge*’s realisation of the deceptive but also creative power of language, and the apparent futility of authorial intention. That poem too ends with the poet-narrator Geoffrey’s confrontation with a bewildering array of embodied voices (see my introduction), so numerous,

That al the folk that ys alive  
Ne han the kunnyng to discryve  
The things that I herde there.  
(*Fame*, 2055-57)

Such speech is uncensored and uncontrollable, so that ‘fals and soth compounded | Togeder fle for oo tydynge’ (2108-09), subject to no corrective authority except the

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<sup>50</sup> Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 63.

<sup>51</sup> On the ‘sceptical treatment of the problem of honest counsel in *Bowge*’, see further Helen Barr and Kate Ward-Perkins, ‘Spekyng for One’s Sustenance: The Rhetoric of Counsel in *Mum and the Sothsegger*, Skelton’s *Bowge of Court*, and Elyot’s *Pasquil the Playne*’, in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 249-72, 251 quoted. For a reading of the destabilising of allegory in the *Bowge* as an indication of the decline of the dream poem genre, see Lynch, ‘Henryson’s “Doolie Dream”’, 195.

<sup>52</sup> Bose, ‘Useless Mouths: Reformist Poetics in Audelay and Skelton’, in *Form and Reform*, ed. Tonry and Gayk, 159-79, at 179.

arbitrary workings of Fame. This explosion of the notion that linguistic representation is premised on pre-existing truths, or that diverse opinion can be brought to heel by human authors, brings about *Fame's* poetic collapse—the poem breaks off before 'A man of greet auctoritee' can impose any sort of order upon its epistemological chaos. The conclusion of the *Bowge* might be understood as a similar abnegation of authorial control. Awakening from his dream, the poet-narrator reports how he 'wroth this lytell boke', but beseeches his readers

In every poynte to be indyfferente,  
Syth all in substaunce of slumbrynge doth procede.  
I wyll not saye it is mater in dede,  
But yet oftyme suche dremes be founde trewe.  
Now constrewe ye what is the resydewe.

(*Bowge*, 535-39)

Dreams, like poetry, have no guarantee to their veracity. Without attribution or moral, Skelton's *Bowge* makes no claim to textual authority. There is no authorial pronouncement on the significance of the preceding fiction—it is up to the reader to 'constrewe [...] the reseydewe'.

Or so Skelton would have one believe; yet the ending of the *Bowge* does not entirely eschew the theory of poetic making evoked at the beginning of the poem. The final, Chaucerian disclaimer—that dreams, like poetic fictions, are of doubtful significance—is for Skelton no concession.<sup>53</sup> He leaves his readers with the tantalising possibility that 'oftyme such dremes be founde trewe'. This position may

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Chaucer, *The Romaunt of the Rose*, 1-20, 'The Nun's Priest Tale', *Canterbury Tales*, VII.3086-671, and *Fame*, 1-65. Of course, doubts concerning the veracity of dreams are not exclusive to Chaucer. On '[t]he pervasive ambivalence encountered in descriptions of the dream from the Bible and Plato onwards', see Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, especially 123-49, 124 quoted.

seem dangerously ambivalent in comparison to Skelton's later, more confident affirmations of his laureate, even inspired, poetic art—of the 'hevenly inspyracion | In laureate creacyon' (*Replycacion*, 372-73).<sup>54</sup> But in comparison to the poetic breakdown in *Fame*, Skelton's conclusion is a bold move indeed. Skelton, in the *Bowge*, invites scrutiny of the poet and his medium, whilst never losing control of his poetic form. By formally closing the *Bowge*'s narrative frame, Skelton avoids the dramatic discontinuity which Caxton found problematic in *Fame* (see chapter 1). What is more, the claim that Skelton's textual double 'wroth this lytell boke' subtly overturns Ignorance's assertion at the beginning of the poem that the poet-narrator is 'to dulle' to emulate the example of 'poetes olde'. The 'coverte termes' of the poets of the past may have no greater claim to truth than do Favell's 'fables false' (*Bowge*, 135); yet there is nothing in the *Bowge* to contradict the contention that 'theyr renome and theyr fame | Maye never dye'. Skelton's allegory transforms satire into self-scrutiny; and it is not too great a leap from self-scrutiny to self-regard. A move which at first seems paradoxical—why would Skelton want to bring his own writing into disrepute?—is in fact highly strategic, for by turning his criticism onto the role of the poet, Skelton is allowed to dictate the terms of that role. It is a strategy which Skelton takes to its extreme in the *Garlande*, where a more overtly quasi-autobiographical poet-narrator serves to epitomise his idealised literary authorship.

Recognised as a poem of self-scrutiny moving towards self-regard, the *Bowge* emerges as an important piece in the puzzle of Skelton's literary career.

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<sup>54</sup> For an overview of Skelton's conception of poetry as inspired, see Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 243-47; and at greater length, Vincent Gillespie, 'Justification by Faith: Skelton's *Replycacion*', in *Long Fifteenth Century*, ed. Cooper and Mapstone, 273-311.

Griffiths understands the *Bowge* as anticipating the alternative forms of poetic authority elaborated in Skelton's later works:

the breakdown of allegory in *The Bowge* is the natural concomitant of the emergence of a new poetic identity, as the poet turns his own uncertainties into the means of renegotiating the relationship between writer and reader. [...] [T]he poet's fulfilment of his educative responsibilities need not necessarily depend on truthful representations, but may consist in stimulating readers to pursue the truth for themselves.<sup>55</sup>

This demand for interpretation, for the active participation of the reader in the creation of meaning, is, according to Griffiths, the challenge posed by Skelton in the *Garlande*, the *Replycacyon*, and especially *Speke Parott*. Yet as intimated above, the idea of the radical Skelton of the 1520s does not tell the whole story of his multifaceted approach to authorial self-promotion. The enigmatic and anonymously published *Bowge* may seem an unlikely place to begin, but as a satire of the court turned satire of the poet, it demonstrates Skelton's transformation of a traditional form and genre in order to write about what would become his favourite subject: himself. The ability of poetry to convey pre-existing truths is shown to be dubious, even downright fallacious; yet the alternative, that poetry, whilst ostensibly mimetic, is at least partly creative,<sup>56</sup> seems to have suggested to Skelton a means to devise his own literary authorship, as he would go on to most fully achieve in the *Garlande*.

The distance between the *Bowge* and the *Garlande* is great, even if much of the latter poem may also originally have been composed in the 1490s (see section

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<sup>55</sup> Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 64-65.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 62.

2.3). To scrutinise the poet is not necessarily to make a spectacle of him, nor need the writer apprised of poetry's creative faculty look automatically to re-create himself. The poetry of Dunbar demonstrates a different direction taken by a court poet also intensely interested in the application of his art, but who is unable, or unwilling, to conceive of an authorship dissociated from his position at the Scottish court. Dunbar, like Skelton, sees an analogy between courtly and poetic feigning. He also sees poetry's potential to create as well to represent, and in his framed first-person allegories, envisages a literary court culture which may have had little existence outside of his poems. It is a vision designed to please the Scottish king, but also to promote the place at his court of vernacular poets like Dunbar. This is authorial self-promotion based on integration, as Dunbar skillfully positions the Scots *makar* as an integral part of Scottish court life.

## 2.2. Dunbar's poetry of integration

Turning from Skelton to Dunbar requires a brief reappraisal of the English and Scottish courts at the turn of the sixteenth century and their relation to the diverging claims to textual authority made by the period's poets.

Henry VII and James IV both understood the importance of cultural patronage and display in consolidating their position at home and abroad.<sup>57</sup> Both kings came to the throne following the violent death of their predecessors in battle:

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<sup>57</sup> On Henry VII's patronage of 'magnificent visual display and political eulogy', though not, it should be noted, to the same extravagant extent as his son, see Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 8-123; Gordon Kipling, 'Henry VII and the Origins of Tudor Patronage', in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 117-64, 164 quoted; and at greater length, Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*. On the 'taste for visual splendour of a particular kind: for flamboyant, expensive, and carefully orchestrated court revelry' under James IV, see especially Louise O. Fradenburg, *City, Marriage, Tournament: Arts of Rule in Late Medieval Scotland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 172-91, 173 quoted.

Henry, of his Yorkist rival Richard III at Bosworth; James, not the head of a rival dynasty, but his father James III at Sauchieburn.<sup>58</sup> The parricide Stewart, no less than the Tudor usurper, thus began his reign at the centre of a government upheaval in which his royal authority was far from secure. The early years of both reigns were blighted by rebellion, intensified in Scotland by factional rivalry at court and in the Isles during James's minority. Henry and James would continue to face external and internal challenges to their rule until their deaths in 1509 and 1513, respectively. Even so, by the end of the 1490s, both regimes can be seen as entering a period of relative stability, consolidated by the signing of a Treaty of Perpetual Peace between them in 1502. The terms of that treaty included the betrothal of Henry's daughter, Margaret Tudor, to James. The lavish wedding that followed ushered in a period of newly confident cultural patronage in Scotland—as exemplified in Dunbar's allegorical dream poem composed to celebrate the union, 'In May as that Aurora did vpspring' (*The Thrissil and the Rois*).<sup>59</sup> The cultural patronage of Henry VII is more sustained throughout his reign. The literary tastes of the king and his court followed continental fashions: poet-rhetoricians or 'poet laureates' such as Bernard André and Pietro Carmeliano were quickly employed in order to lend legitimacy to the regime;<sup>60</sup> and from 1492, the keeper of the newly created Royal Library, Quentin Poulet, provided the king with

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<sup>58</sup> The definitive account of the reign of James IV is Norman Macdougall, *James IV* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989); see also the synoptic view offered by Jane E. A. Dawson, *Scotland Re-Formed, 1488-1587* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007). A lucid introduction to the reign of Henry VII is Thomas Penn, *Winter King: Henry VII and the Dawn of Tudor England* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> For an account and analysis of the wedding, see Fradenburg, *Marriage, City, Tournament*, 91-122.

<sup>60</sup> On the appearance and activities of 'the so-called laureates of Henry's household', especially André, see Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, 16-21 and 'Origins of Tudor Patronage', 131-33, 131 quoted; Fox, *Politics and Literature*, 16-18; and Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 19-31.

that mixture of histories, romances, and poetry—heavily chivalric in emphasis and composed in copious, aureate prose—that was so popular at the French and Burgundian courts in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries.<sup>61</sup>

The challenge posed to English poets like Hawes to claim some measure of textual authority for their writings when set against these fashionable continental texts is discussed in chapter 3; their influence north of the border is indicated by Douglas's *Palice of Honour* (see section 4.1), though in general the literary texts appearing at the court of James IV are written in Scots.<sup>62</sup> In this, the role of English and Scottish courts as centres of vernacular textual production is markedly different. Historians of early Tudor England have frequently remarked upon Henry VII's attempts to 'centralise sovereign power in the figure of the king and his court', accompanied by 'a diminution in the influence of the great nobles and their independent courts', with the result that '[c]ourt life during the early sixteenth century assumed far greater importance than ever before as more and more the activities of the nation centred around and emanated from it'.<sup>63</sup> By contrast, the challenging terrain and idiosyncratic regional power structures of early modern Scotland led James IV to adopt a policy of placation rather than pacification towards his magnates.<sup>64</sup> The Scottish king displayed remarkable energy in his travels around his kingdom, distributing largesse, dispensing justice, and personally leading armies against his enemies, and the royal court remained more peripatetic and familiar as a result.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Kipling, 'Origins of Tudor Patronage', 124.

<sup>62</sup> Possibly a continuation from the reign of James III, as suggested by Roderick J. Lyall, 'The Court as a Cultural Centre', *HT*, 34 (1984), 27-33; and modified by Mapstone, 'Court Literature'.

<sup>63</sup> Robinson, *Court Politics, Culture, Literature*, 25; cf. David Starkey, 'Intimacy and Innovation: The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547', in *The English Court: From the Wars of The Roses to the Civil War*, ed. id. (London: Longman, 1987), 71-118.

<sup>64</sup> Dawson, *Scotland Re-Formed*, 53, 74-75.

<sup>65</sup> Robinson, *Court Politics, Culture, Literature*, 29.

Even so, whether to inspire personal loyalty, awe, or dread, common to both monarchs is an interest in spectacle and display which profoundly influenced courtly culture. Buildings and ships, tournaments and disguisings, tapestry, apparel, and reading matter all became sites for stylised and carefully directed display—by the monarch towards his subjects, by the subject towards their monarch, and between subject and subject. For contemporary poets, this emphasis on outwardness and appearances is a source of artistic direction but also unease.<sup>66</sup> The latter posture is exemplified in Skelton's Drede: at once the victim and perpetrator of a courtly disregard for truth. Dunbar's framed first-person allegories have a different impetus: recognising, like Skelton, that 'words do not reflect but reconstitute reality', Dunbar's is a poetry of lustrous, sometimes tarnished surfaces, in which the king and court might see a recognisable image of themselves. His subject is all court life, not only its rarefied ideals; his wide-ranging canon propounds the integrity of the court as an object of display, but also the constitutive role of its *makaris* in making that court. By celebrating the high and the low, the fantastic and the mundane, and by blurring the distinctions between them, Dunbar evokes a literary court culture which has continued to inform perceptions of James IV into the twenty-first century. Dunbar's strategy for authorial self-promotion, if one can continue accurately to use the phrase, is a projection of, and onto, a courtly milieu, from which the *makar*—if not Dunbar the *makar*—emerges as a significant personage.

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<sup>66</sup> See Colin Burrow, 'The Experience of Exclusion: Literature and Politics in the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 793-820.



More than any other poet examined in this thesis, Dunbar is a poet of the court. Having become a bachelor at the University of St Andrews in 1477, where he graduated as a 'licentiate' or master in 1479,<sup>67</sup> the documentary evidence for Dunbar's biography is almost exclusively in relation to his service at the court of James IV. The royal pension of £10 that he received in 1500 was doubled to £20 in November 1507 and quadrupled to £80 in August 1510;<sup>68</sup> the final recorded payment was made on 14 May 1513, after which date, Dunbar disappears from the historical record.<sup>69</sup> It is unclear whether Dunbar's pension was a reward for his literary activities—he may also have served as a clerk or even a chaplain in the royal household.<sup>70</sup> Mentions of his 'making' and 'ballattis breif' appear in the petitionary poems 'Schir, I complane of iniuris' (2), 'Sanct saluator, send siluer sorrow!' (6), and 'Schir, zet remember as befoir' (48). Yet as Sally Mapstone observes, 'though Dunbar spent much of his adult life as a "servitor" in James's household, the payments he received are more likely to have been for clerical work than poetry'.<sup>71</sup> Priscilla Bawcutt draws attention to the reference to Dunbar's 'vrytting' in 'Complane I wald, wist I quhome till' (73), which 'may refer to Dunbar's verse', but

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<sup>67</sup> *Acta facultatis artium Universitatis Sanctiandree: 1413-1588*, ed. Annie I. Dunlop, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Constable, 1964), I, 199, 206. Note, however, that '[i]t is not definitely established that the William Dunbar, student at St. Andrews, was the later poet' (I, lxxxvi, n. 1).

<sup>68</sup> *Registrum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, ed. Matthew Livingstone et al., 8 vols (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1908-82), I, 80, 323. For a summary of the recorded payments made to Dunbar by the Treasurer between 1501 and 1513, calendared in *Compota Thesaurariorum Regum Scotorum*, ed. Thomas Dickinson et al., 13 vols (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1877-78), II-IV, see Douglas Gray, *William Dunbar* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 4, nn. 13-14.

<sup>69</sup> *Compota Thesaurariorum*, ed. Dickinson et al., IV, 442. Note, however, that the Treasurer's accounts for August 1513 to June 1515 have not survived.

<sup>70</sup> Dunbar was ordained a priest shortly before celebrating his first mass before James IV on 17 March 1504. *Compota Thesaurariorum*, ed. Dickinson et al., II, 258. He is referred to as a chaplain in a deed of 13 March 1509, edited in *The Protocol Book of John Foular, 1503-1513: Volume I* [continued], ed. Margaret Wood (Edinburgh: Skinner, 1941), no. 543.

<sup>71</sup> Mapstone, 'Older Scots Literature and the Court', 279.

could just as easily denote ‘his work as a professional writer or clerk’.<sup>72</sup> What is certain, in either case, is the centrality of the Scottish court—its customs, characters, and occasions—to Dunbar’s literary career. It provided him with his primary audience<sup>73</sup> and served as the imaginative stimulus for his most consummate exercise in poetic display: ‘Ryght as the stern of day begouth to schyne’ (*The Goldyn Targe*).

Opinion is divided as to the *Targe*’s date of composition: Bawcutt, detecting the influence of the *Targe* on Douglas’s *Palice*, written in around 1501 (see section 4.1), dates the poem to the 1490s;<sup>74</sup> Roderick J. Lyall argues for an opposite direction of influence and a *terminus ante quem* of 1508, when the *Targe* was printed by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar (see further below).<sup>75</sup> It is tempting to follow John A. Burrow in his assessment of the *Targe* as ‘a “masterwork”, in the old sense of the term, that piece of work by which a craftsman gained the recognized rank of “master”’,<sup>76</sup> and thus to date the poem, like Skelton’s *Bowge*, relatively early in Dunbar’s literary career. The *Targe* itself, however, provides no such biographical clues. The poet’s craft, rather than his name and biography, is in the foreground of the poem and there is little attempt to develop the textual first

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<sup>72</sup> *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, I, 2; II, 309. For Dunbar’s usage of the term *writing* with the sense ‘A written command or instruction’, see ‘Schir, lat it neuer in toune be tald’, 69 (‘[*Responcio regis*:] Efter our wrettingis, thesaurer’) and ‘The wardraipper of Wenus boure’, 9 (‘Quhen that I schawe to him 3our [i.e. the queen’s] wrtyin’). *writin(g)*, *wryt(t)in(g)*, *wreit(e)ing*, vbl. n., def. 7b., *DOST*.

<sup>73</sup> Including readers and, quite probably, auditors. For discussion of the possible performance contexts for Dunbar’s verse, see R. D. S. Jack, ‘The Dramatic Voice of William Dunbar’, in *The Best Pairt of Our Play: Essays Presented to John J. Gavin: Part I*, ed. Sarah Carpenter et al. (Cambridge: Brewer, 2015), 73–89.

<sup>74</sup> *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 414.

<sup>75</sup> Lyall, ‘The Stylistic Relationship between Dunbar and Douglas’, in ‘*Nobill Poyet*’, ed. Mapstone, 69–84, at 70.

<sup>76</sup> Burrow, ‘William Dunbar’, in *A Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt and Janet Hadley Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 133–48, at 137, quoting *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 414.

person beyond its basic rhetorical function as a point of view for the scene that unfolds.<sup>77</sup>

Dunbar's matter is drawn from what A. C. Spearing describes as the 'Chaucerian Tradition' of medieval dream poetry (see section 1.2): the *Targe's* allegory, observes William Calin, is 'derived from, and influenced the most by, *Le Roman de la Rose*';<sup>78</sup> its nine-line stanza first appears in Chaucer's *Anelida and Arcite*; and there are numerous verbal and thematic echoes of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Chaucer's dream poems, Lydgate's *Complaint of the Black Knight* and *Reason and Sensuallyte* (both early fifteenth-century), and *The Kingis Quair*.<sup>79</sup> The action of the *Targe* can be summarised briefly. An unnamed poet-narrator falls asleep in a 'rosy garth' (40), where he dreams of a ship with a white sail approaching land. A company of goddesses led by Nature and Venus disembark and 'Enterit within this park of most plesere, | Quhare that I lay, ourhelit with leuis ronk' (92-93). There, the goddesses are met by Cupid and a retinue of gods, with whom they 'sang ballettis' (129), play instruments, and dance. Suddenly, Venus spies the concealed poet-narrator and 'bad hir archearis kene | Go me arrest' (138-39). He is shielded from their arrows by Reson with his 'goldyn targe' (157), until at lines 203-04, the lady 'Plesence kest a pulder in his [i.e. Reson's] ene, | And than as drunkyn man he all forvayit'. Unprotected, the poet-narrator is wounded by the archers' arrows 'And yoldyn as a woful prisonnere | To lady Beautee' (209-10). This imprisonment is

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<sup>77</sup> Anthony J. Hasler understands the 'I' of the *Targe*, like all of Dunbar's textual first persons, 'as above all a rhetorical figure, a troping pronoun mediating text to audience but retaining in the process an essential multiplicity and openness'. Hasler, 'William Dunbar: The Elusive Subject', in *Bryght Lanternis: Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. J. Derrick McClure and Michael R. G. Spiller (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 194-208, at 195.

<sup>78</sup> Calin, *The Lily and the Thistle: The French Tradition and the Older Literature of Scotland: Essays in Criticism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 54.

<sup>79</sup> See the notes in *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 413-21.

short-lived, for upon delivery of the poet-narrator by the lady 'Departing' unto 'Hevyness' (226-27), the god Eolus blows his trumpet 'And sudaynly in the space of a luke | All was hyne went, thare was bot wildernes' (232-33). The gods and goddesses return to the ship, it fires its cannon, the earth shakes, and 'For rede it semyt that the rainbow brak' (241). The poet-narrator awakes and the poem ends with a eulogy for Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, followed by a final envoy addressed to 'Thou lytill quair' (271).

The artificiality and conventionality of the *Targe* has drawn a mixed critical response—part of a larger complex of difficulties surrounding Dunbar's canon. It is no longer usual to see the *Targe* dismissed as, in the words of C. S. Lewis, 'allegorical form adapted to the purposes of pure decoration'—a virtuoso performance in the 'aureate' style, for which the limited action is imported wholesale from the *dits amoureux*.<sup>80</sup> Critics such as Lyall and Bawcutt argue that the defence of Reson against the archers of Venus may convey a more pointed Christian allegory than has previously been assumed.<sup>81</sup> Other readings, building on Denton Fox's influential assessment of the *Targe* as 'a poem about poetry', have emphasised its metapoetic aspects—most notably, the imagery of illumination and eulogy of the English literary triumvirate (discussed further below).<sup>82</sup> But it has remained difficult to reconcile the supposed reflexivity of Dunbar's *Targe* to the

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<sup>80</sup> Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 252, though Lewis is here defending the *Targe*'s 'aureate' style: 'when the thing is well done, it gives a kind of pleasure that could be given in no other way'. For a forceful attack on the *Targe*'s 'idle verbiage', see John Speirs, *The Scots Literary Tradition: An Essay in Criticism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1940), 37-40, 37 quoted.

<sup>81</sup> Roderick J. Lyall, 'Moral Allegory in Dunbar's *Golden Targe*', *SSL*, 11 (1973), 47-65; Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 92-103, 310.

<sup>82</sup> Fox, 'Dunbar's *The Golden Targe*', *ELH*, 26 (1959), 311-34, 331 quoted; cf. Lois A. Ebin, 'The Theme of Poetry in Dunbar's *Goldyn Targe*', *ChauR*, 7 (1972), 147-59; Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar Vates*, 74-89; A. C. Spearing, *The Medieval Poet as Voyeur* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 240-48; and Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 33-38.

occasional, conventional character of poems such as the *Thrissil*, ‘Blyth Aberdeane, thow beriall of all tounis’, and his paeon for the Virgin, ‘Hale, sterne superne, hale, in eterne’ (*Ane Ballat of Our Lady*), or to square its ‘grand manner’ with the satires and admonitions, complaints and petitions which constitute much of Dunbar’s output.<sup>83</sup> His authorship, viewed synoptically, is typically described in terms of its ‘variety’—a ‘poetry of craftsmanship’ written in ‘a great repertory of styles’—but rarely as an object of scrutiny.<sup>84</sup>

There are good reasons for this: the anonymity of Dunbar’s textual first persons seems to preclude direct self-representation; his statements on the poet’s art, meanwhile, rarely extend beyond assertions of the relative importance of *makaris* among the king’s ‘mony seruitouris’ (‘Schir, 3e haue mony seruitouris’, 1). The first point can be illustrated by comparison between the openings of the *Targe* and Skelton’s *Bowge*. The *Targe*’s first six stanzas constitute a masterful amplification of the dream poem’s astrological setting. The effect of the passage is very different to its equivalent in the *Bowge*, for rather than establishing a specific time and place for the ensuing vision, or any particulars concerning the poet-narrator, its focus is the ‘stern of day’ announced in the opening line (and again at lines 4 and 7) and the illumination of the scene below. A textual first person is

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<sup>83</sup> See Jonathan A. Glenn, ‘Classifying Dunbar: Modes, Manners, and Styles’, in ‘*Nobill Poyet*’, ed. Mapstone, 167-82, at 180-81. J. A. Aitken’s influential characterisation of Older Scots ‘courtly verse in the grand manner’ appears in ‘The Language of Older Scots Poetry’, in *Scotland and the Lowland Tongue: Studies in the Language and Literature of Lowland Scotland in Honour of David D. Murison*, ed. J. Derrick McClure (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983), 18-49, at 21-23.

<sup>84</sup> Gray, *William Dunbar*, 1; Denton Fox, ‘The Scottish Chaucerians’, in *Chaucer and Chaucerians: Critical Studies in Middle English Literature*, ed. Derek Brewer (London: Nelson, 1966), 164-200, at 200 and 180. For the division of Dunbar’s corpus between a ‘high’, ‘low’, and, in many cases, a ‘middle’ or ‘plain’ style, see John Leyerle, ‘The Two Voices of William Dunbar’, *UTQ*, 31 (1961-62), 316-38 (Leyerle distinguishes Dunbar’s ‘aureate’ and ‘eldritch’ voices); and the complicating of this approach in Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 381-82; and Glenn, ‘Classifying Dunbar’, 181-82.

introduced in line 3—‘I raise and by a rosere did me rest’—but is quickly forgotten, lost amidst a dazzling landscape ‘anamalit’ (13), ‘ourgilt’ (27) and ‘enlumynit’ (45) by solar special effects. It was noted in section 2.1 that the ‘Powers Keye’ at which Skelton’s poet-narrator falls asleep is as likely to have an allegorical as a biographical significance; but there is nevertheless an interest from the outset of the *Bowge* to identify the textual first person as a poet (though ‘in this arte I was not sure’ [19]) locatable within the real world of early Tudor London. The *Bowge* itself, though passengered by allegorical personages, is an essentially terrestrial vessel: ‘I sawe a shyppe, goodly of sayle, [...] She kyste an anker, and there she laye at rode’ (36, 39). In the *Targe*, by contrast, the arrival of the goddesses’ ship is figured as another aerial emanation of Dunbar’s *locus amoenus*. Its description is the first of many deft rearrangements of the imagery of the *Targe*’s opening scene. Like a second sun, the ship approaches ‘agayn the orient sky [...] With merse of gold brycht as the stern of day’ (50, 52; cf. 1 [‘stern of day’] and 38 [‘The ruby skyes of the orient’]). The goddesses who disembark, dressed in green, and ‘Als fresch as flouris that in May vp spreadis’ (59), are the embodiment of the preceding set-piece description. An inexpressibility topos in lines 64-72—‘Discriue I wald, bot quho coud wele endyte...’ (64)—briefly returns attention to the poet-narrator as the reporter of the dream, and the mention of ‘My lady Cleo, that help of makaris bene’ (77), specifically to his status as a *makar*. However, throughout much of the rest of the narrative, the primary function of the *Targe*’s poet-narrator is that of an observer—as signaled by the repeated phrase ‘Thare saw I...’ (73, 82, 87, 109, 112, 114, 160 [‘I saw cum’], 223 [‘I saw hir nevire mare’], 224)—until his wounding, imprisonment, and awaking from the dream in lines 208-46. There is no attempt in the final

stanzas to include some internal account for the composition of the poem (cf. *Bowge*, 531-32); and without any narrative link between the awaking of the poet-narrator and the eulogy and envoy that follow, it becomes incidental as to whether or not the final apostrophes are spoken by the fictional reporter of the dream.

This compression of the narrative apparatus of the framed first-person form is a recurrent feature in Dunbar's canon. Another of his 'aureate' dream poems, the *Thrissil*, begins with the sudden appearance of 'fresche May' (15) to the poet-narrator in bed. After some initial resistance (on account of the inclement weather), he obeys May's command to 'Awalk [...] And in my honour sume thing go wryt' (22-23)—specifically, an allegorical account of the royal nuptials. The description that follows of the crowning by Dame Nature of the lion, eagle, and thistle—King James's heraldic symbols—and finally, 'the fresche Rose of cullor reid and quhyt' (142)—that is, the Tudor Rose of Queen Margaret—is ostensibly reported by the poet-narrator from his position in the 'lusty gairding gent' (44). But having established a vantage, Dunbar devotes no further attention to his textual double; the reader is reminded of his presence only in the final stanza:

Than all the birdis song with sic a schout  
That I annone awoilk quhair that I lay,  
And with a braid I turnyt me about  
To se this court, bot all wer went away.  
Than vp I lenyt halflingis in affray,  
And thus I wret, as 3e haif hard toforrow,  
Off lusty May vpon the nynt morrow.

(*Thrissil*, 183-89)

Even this represents a greater development of the textual first person than is usual in Dunbar. The opening frames of his satirical and amatory visions, notably 'Apon the Midsummer Ewin, mirriest of nichtis' (*The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*)<sup>85</sup> and his vision of the Passion, 'Amang the freiris within ane cloister' (*Ane Ballat of the Passioun*), do not exceed two stanzas (sixteen alliterative lines in the case of the *Tretis*) and can sometimes consist of as little as a first line.

Perspective rather than self-representation is at issue here. In each poem, a poet-narrator is introduced as the observer of the scene, usually in a pose which is appropriate to his subject: lying 'in till a trance' ('Off Februar the fyiftene nycht', 3); concealed within a garden (e.g. *Tretis*, 13-16); or at prayer 'Amang the freiris'.

These opening frames establish a point of view, but do not develop the poet-narrator beyond his essentials as a generic type. A closing frame, if included at all, is similarly brief and non-specific. Not infrequently, a textual first person refers to the inscription of the preceding account, as in the *Thrissil*, quoted above, or in the *Tretis*: 'And I all prevely past to a plesand arber, | And with my pen did report ther pastance most mery' (525-26). Yet the purpose of the device is to reaffirm the internal dramatic structure of the poem rather than to point out its human author.

The same is true of Dunbar's abbot of Tongland poems. The subject of 'As zung Awrora with cristall haile' and 'Lucina schyning in silence of the nycht' is the ill-fated flight of one John Damian, abbot of Tongland 1504-09. Between 1503 and 1509, Damian enjoyed lavish royal subsidy for his alchemical experiments,<sup>86</sup> the 'seir fassionis' ('As zung Awrora', 57) satirised by Dunbar. But besides these references

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<sup>85</sup> Not a dream poem, but framed as a bawdy love debate overheard by a poet-narrator in a pleasant garden.

<sup>86</sup> John Read, 'Alchemy under James IV of Scotland', *Ambix*, 2 (1938-46), 60-67, at 61-62.



to Dunbar's contemporary at court, neither poem betrays much biographising detail. In structure and theme, the diabolical visions recall Dunbar's 'Off Februar', 'This nycht before the dawing cleir' (*How Dunbar wes Desyrd to be ane Freir*), and 'This nycht in my sleip I wes agast'. Conventional too is the satirical account in 'As zung Awrora' of doctors 'fenyt' and 'nevir [...] put to preif' (17, 45),<sup>87</sup> the feathered abbot's mobbing by birds (69-128),<sup>88</sup> and in 'Lucina schyning', the appearance of 'dame Fortoun with fremmit cheer' (11) and her pronouncements on worldly mutability. The argument of the latter poem concerns Dunbar's favourite topic: his desired benefice. Fortoun predicts that, until an abbot flies 'among the crennys' (24), meets a dragon, begets the Antichrist, 'And than it salbe near the warldis end' (38), the poet-narrator will never be granted promotion. The poet-narrator's delight when, upon awaking from his dream, he learns that 'Fle wald an abbot up into the sky | And all his fedrem maid wes at device' (44-45) recalls the ironic self-deprecation of Chaucer's dream poems: just as in *Fame*, Geoffrey's claimed reluctance to receive further instruction from the Eagle, 'For y am now to old' (995), seems designed to amuse a contemporary audience familiar with the historical Chaucer, so in 'Lucina schyning', Dunbar's textual double is presented as blithely unconcerned that his grant of a benefice will coincide with the end of the world!<sup>89</sup> The few biographical details inserted into each poet's framed first-person allegories work to create an ironic distance rather than a presumed equivalence between the historical poet and his textual double: they are alike in their occupation and

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. the dismissal of alchemical practices in Douglas, *Eneados*, VIII Prol., 94-95, discussed in section 4.3.

<sup>88</sup> See David J. Parkinson, 'Mobbing Scenes in Middle Scots Verse: Holland, Douglas, Dunbar', *JEGP*, 85 (1986), 494-509.

<sup>89</sup> On the 'comic ironies' of 'As zung Awrora', see further Bryan S. Hay, 'William Dunbar's Flying Abbot: Apocalypse Made to Order', *SSL*, 11 (1974), 217-25, 220 quoted.

putative desires; but there is little danger of mistaking the poet-narrator of the dream for the historical poet at court.

This is not to say that Dunbar is uninterested in authorial self-promotion. He and his contemporaries were aware of, and attracted by, certain aspects of the concept of literary authorship, as indicated, sporadically, both by his own poems and the early publication of his name and writings. The best known of Dunbar's reflections on the capabilities of his art is the eulogy for Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate at the end of the *Targe*:

O reuerend Chaucere, rose of rethoris all  
(As in oure tong ane floure imperiall)  
That raise in Britane ewir, quho redis rycht,  
Thou beris of makaris the triumph riall,  
Thy fresch anamalit termes celicall  
This mater coud illumynit haue full brycht.  
Was thou nocht of oure Inglisch all the lycht,  
Surmounting ewiry tong terrestriall,  
Alls fer as Mayes morrow dois mydnycht?

O morall Gower and Ludgate laureate,  
Your sugurit lippis and tongis aureate  
Bene to oure eris cause of grete delyte.  
Your angel mouthis most mellifulate  
Oure rude langage has clere illuminate  
And fair ourgilt oure speech, that imperfyte  
Stude or your goldyn pennies schupe to write.  
This ile before was bare and desolate  
Off rethorike or lusty fresch endyte.

(*Targe*, 253-70)

Bawcutt rightly judges the eulogy as ‘one of Dunbar’s most important statements about poetry’: the English literary triumvirate are cited as ‘a standard of literary excellence, familiar yet not oppressively close’ (cf. 64-73, where ‘Omer’ [Homer] and ‘Tullius’ [Cicero] are cited as types of poetic and rhetorical achievement); ‘Dunbar distinguishes a poem’s *mater*, or subject, from its decorative expression’; and it is this expression—the ‘fresch anamalit termes celicall’ of Chaucer in particular—to which the Scottish poet attributes Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate’s ‘triumph riall’ among Britain’s (and not only England’s) ‘makaris’.<sup>90</sup> It is a triumph which Dunbar seems to want to emulate. The affected humility here and in the envoy to the ‘lytill quair’ hardly conceals Dunbar’s desire for an association between his no less ‘anamalit’ *Targe* and the rhetorically skilled making of the most famed poets in English. Lois A. Ebin extends Dunbar’s analogy ‘between the sun and the poet, the natural landscape and the rhetorical’,<sup>91</sup> in order to attribute to Dunbar ‘a view of poetry as a process of illuminating and enameling’ and a conception of the poet ‘not only as an illuminator but more precisely as an enameller’.<sup>92</sup> It would be a mistake, however, to read the highly conventional ending of the *Targe* as Dunbar’s poetic manifesto—it is just one possible manifestation of his poetic skill. The eulogy for Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate is a topos of English and Scots poetry almost as old as the poets themselves.<sup>93</sup> Dunbar’s language of praise is shot

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<sup>90</sup> Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 22-23.

<sup>91</sup> Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 76.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>93</sup> For the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century tradition of eulogies for Chaucer, see chapter 1, n. 4. The earliest known Scottish example is *Kingis Quair*, 1373-79 (a eulogy for Chaucer and Gower). The only fifteenth-century eulogies for Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate are Osbern Bokenam (1392/93-before 1464), *Life of St Margaret* (begun 7 September 1443), 174-80 (where Lydgate is described as still living); and George Ashby (before 1385?-1475), *Active Policy of a Prince* (1463?), 1-28. ‘It becomes a cliché only with its repeated instances in the poems of Hawes and Skelton in the early

through with Chaucerian diction: the terms ‘illumyt’, ‘laureate’, and the figure of ‘sugurit’ speech recall Chaucer’s praise of Petrarch in ‘The Clerk’s Prologue’ (*Canterbury Tales*, IV.31-33), whilst nearly every image also has an analogue in Lydgate’s poetic eulogies, often of Chaucer.<sup>94</sup> Such high-blown epideixis is one of many modes in which Dunbar is expert. As Bawcutt remarks, though the *Targe* itself ‘brilliantly embodies the concept of poetry which this passage articulates’, the eulogy ‘adumbrat[es] a poetic ideal, to which he [i.e. Dunbar] aspires in some but not all of his poems’.<sup>95</sup>

The issue of poetry’s durability and the possibility of lasting poetic fame receive especially variable treatment by Dunbar. In his literary *Danse Macabre*, ‘I that in heill wes and gladnes’ (*The Lament of the Makars*), Dunbar recognises that ‘No stait in erd’—poets included—‘heir standis sicker. [...] On to the ded gois all estatis’ (13). Having dispatched princes and prelates, lords and ladies, and students of the various arts, Dunbar turns his attention to the members of his own ‘faculte’, ‘makaris’:

I se that makaris, among the laif,  
 Playis heir ther padzanis, syne gois to graif.  
 Spirit is nought ther faculte:  
*Timor mortis conturbat me.*<sup>96</sup>

(*Lament*, 45-47)

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sixteenth century, and, in Scotland, in the works of William Dunbar and Gavin Douglas.’ Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 128.

<sup>94</sup> On the language of Lydgate’s eulogies for Chaucer, see further P. M. Kean, *Chaucer and the Making of English Poetry*, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), II, 210-39; and Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 19-48.

<sup>95</sup> Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 24.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Fear of death disturbs me.’

Dunbar's refrain, drawn from the Third Nocturn of the Office of the Dead,<sup>97</sup> takes on a personal significance in relation to the demise of 'my brether' (93): not only 'Chaucer [...] The monk of Bery [i.e. Lydgate] and Gower' (50-51) but also a series of Scottish poets, some recently deceased,<sup>98</sup> and one, 'Gud maister Walter Kennedy', who 'In poynt of dede lyis verily' (89-90).<sup>99</sup> That earthly 'padzanis' are but passing trifles and 'Best is that we for dede dispone' (*Lament*, 98) is a common sentiment in Dunbar's meditations on mutability—notably, *Memento, homo, quod cinis es* and 'Off Lentren in the first mornynge' (with the refrain 'All erdly ioy returnis in pane'). But in addition to evoking a fear of death, the *Lament* also has the function of establishing Dunbar's membership in a brotherhood of 'makaris'. '[M]aking' (59) cannot stave off death, 'Sen for ded remeid is none' (97). Yet by virtue of his inclusion within a continuing vernacular literary tradition, the poet can be hopeful of some posthumous memorial for his name.<sup>100</sup>

Elsewhere, by contrast, Dunbar's poetry casts doubts over the valuation of his vocation. The characterisation of his literary activity as *making* rather than *poetry* in the *Lament* and various of the petitionary poems need not, as Bawcutt

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<sup>97</sup> *Peccantem me quotidie et non poenitentem timor mortis conturbat me. Brevarium ad usum insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. F. Proctor and C. Wordsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1879-86), II, 278. I owe this reference to *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 334.

<sup>98</sup> 'blind Hary' (69): author of *The Wallace* (c. 1475-78) and at court during the 1490s; 'Stobo' (86): John Reid (d. before 15 July 1505), for whom no poems survive; 'Quintyne Schaw' (86): dead before July 1504, and for whom a single poem survives in Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2553 (Maitland Folio), pp. 320-21. *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 336-37.

<sup>99</sup> A younger son of Gilbert Kennedy of Dundure (1405-89), 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Kennedy, author of the religious poems 'Be Passioun of Crist' and 'Ane Ballat of Our Lady', three other short poems, and Dunbar's antagonist in *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie* (written before July 1505, see below). Kennedy probably outlived Dunbar; his son, another Walter Kennedy, did not inherit his father's estates until 18 June 1518. Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Kennedy, Walter (1455?-1518?)', *ODNB*.

<sup>100</sup> Note, however, that, beyond the reference to 'this gray hors, auld Dunbar' in the *Responsio regis* appended to 'Schir, lat it neuer' (70, see below) and Kennedy's disparaging references to 'Dunbar' in the *Flyting*, the only instance of *self*-naming in Dunbar's poetry is 'Sir Ihon Sinclair begowthe to dance': 'Than cam in Dunbar the mackar: | Of all the flare thair was nan frackar | And thair he dancet the dirrye dantoun' (22-24).

observes, ‘suggest a disclaimer of its [i.e. *poetry*’s] more lofty connotations’.<sup>101</sup> But there is little evidence outside of the *Targe* and the *Lament* for Dunbar’s aspiration to the ‘great auctoryte | Of poetes olde’ in the manner of Skelton’s poet-narrator in the *Bowge*. In the satire-cum-petitionary poem, ‘Schir, ze haue’, Dunbar distinguishes his service to the king from that of the ‘rethoris and philosophouris, [...] artistis and oratouris, [...] Musicians, menstralis and mirrie singaris’ at court (5, 6, 9). Following a disingenuous gesture of deference to the king—‘And thocht I amang the laif | Vnworthy be ane place to haue’ (25-26)—Dunbar affirms the endurance of ‘my work’, which ‘lang in mynd [...] sall hald, [...] But wering or consumptioun, | Roust, canker or corruptioun’ (28, 31-33).<sup>102</sup> Yet as the poem proceeds, Dunbar’s *making* is revealed also to include less noble compositions. ‘Schir, ze haue’ goes on to intimate a more frivolous aspect of Dunbar’s poetry: complaining that ‘vther fulis nyce [...] Ar all rewardit and nocht I’ (65, 67), Dunbar threatens that ‘My mind so fer is set to flyt | That of nocht ellis I can endyt’ (79-80)—an allusion to the kind of vituperative flyting of which the outstanding example is ‘Schir lohine the Ros, ane thing thair is compild’ (*The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie*). A proclivity to invective is another point of similarity between Dunbar and Skelton; however, where Skelton’s attacks in poems such as *Agens* *Garnesche* insist on his intellectual and technical superiority over his opponents (see section 2.3), the picture which emerges from Dunbar and Kennedy’s *Flyting* is of a college of rival poets, none of whom can claim absolute preeminence at court.

<sup>101</sup> Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 19. On the evaluative usage of the terms *poetry* and *making* by Chaucer and his followers, see further my introduction; and on the related issue of Dunbar’s typical use of the term *ballattis* in reference to his verse, Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 29-33.

<sup>102</sup> A further indication of Dunbar’s ‘great pride not only in his craftsmanship but in his “name”’ is ‘Schir, I complane’, Dunbar’s petition for redress from an otherwise unknown poet—‘A refing sonne off rakyng Muris’ (2)—who has mutilated one of his poems. *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 426.

The *Flyting* belongs to a cosmopolitan and long-lived literary tradition; it remained popular throughout the sixteenth century and was taken up by some of Scotland's most celebrated poets.<sup>103</sup> Yet telling with regards to Dunbar's status as a *makar* is the contrast made in Kennedy's invective between his own poetic and aristocratic pedigree and the ignorance and indigence of 'Dirtin Dumbar' (25). It would be unfair, of course, to take Kennedy's slanders at face value: hyperbole is endemic to the 'ritualized, literary game' of flyting, and Dunbar makes his own attacks on Kennedy's 'rebal rymyng' (68) based on his putative identity as a Gaelic bard.<sup>104</sup> But it is notable that it is Kennedy, not Dunbar, who repeatedly insists upon the sophistication of his 'laureat lettres' (28).<sup>105</sup> Dunbar, by his own admission, is not a bookish poet; he distances himself from 'rethoris' and 'oratouris' in 'Schir, ze haue' and prefers allusions to his vernacular near-contemporaries than to Homer and Cicero. In the *Flyting*, juxtaposition with Kennedy sees the benefice-seeking Dunbar 'ranked not with poets of the loftiest kind but with popular entertainers'.<sup>106</sup> Early in his invective, in a reconfiguration of the Chaucerian (and ultimately classical)

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<sup>103</sup> Notably in *The Answer to the Kingis Flyting* (c. 1535-36) of Sir David Lyndsay (c. 1490-c. 1555); 'The Flyting betwixt the soutar and the tailyeour', attributed to 'stewart' (perhaps William Stewart [c. 1476-c. 1548]), and extant, with Dunbar and Kennedy's *Flyting*, in Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 1.1.6 (Bannatyne Manuscript), fols 136<sup>v</sup>-41<sup>r</sup> and 147<sup>r</sup>-54<sup>r</sup>, respectively; and *The Flyting betwixt Montgomery and Polwart* (c. 1580) of Alexander Montgomerie (c. 1550?-98) and Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth and Redbraes (c. 1550-1609). On the evidence for the wide dissemination of Dunbar and Kennedy's *Flyting* in sixteenth-century Scotland, see Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 222, and for discussion of the 'real-life' and possible Gaelic, Latin, and English literary antecedents and analogues for the Scots flyting, 223-24 and 236-39.

<sup>104</sup> Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 226; on *bard* as a term of abuse in the *Flyting*, see *ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>105</sup> A claim for which he is mocked by Dunbar: 'Thow callis thee rethore with thy goldin lippis. | Na, glowrand gaipand fule, thow art begyld' (97-98); but cf. *Flyting*, 500, where Kennedy asserts his poetic skill in terms almost identical to those used in the *Targe* in praise of Chaucer: 'Rymis thou of me, of rethory the rose?'

<sup>106</sup> Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 37.

modesty topos of the inspiration of the poet atop Mount Parnassus, Kennedy  
boasts that<sup>107</sup>

I perambalit of Pernaso the montayn,  
Enspirit wyth Mercury fra his goldyn spere  
And dulcely drank of eloquence the fontayne  
Quhen it was purifit wyth frost and flowit clere.

Dunbar, by contrast, comes to Parnassus

...in Marche or Februer  
Thare till a pule and drank the padok rod  
That gerris the ryme into thy termes glod<sup>108</sup>  
And blaberis that noyis mennis eris to here.

(*Flyting*, 337-44)

It is worth reiterating that these are Kennedy's words, not Dunbar's; it seems significant, however, that nowhere in his poetry does Dunbar make a claim (even ironically) to inspired poetic skill comparable to Kennedy's. In poems such as the *Tretis* and 'As zung Awrora', Dunbar revels in the scurrility of his 'termes glod'. Such compositions are not out of place in the repertoire of a court *makar*, but their position in Dunbar's canon alongside poems written in the high style seems to have produced in the sixteenth century, as it has in the twenty-first, an ambivalent attitude towards his literary authorship.

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. Chaucer's 'I sleep nevere on the Mount of Pernaso' ('The Franklin's Prologue', *Canterbury Tales*, V.721). On 'The Franklin's Prologue' as the English *locus classicus* for the 'I never dwelled with the muses' topos, see Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 133-34.

<sup>108</sup> 'The precise sense of the epithet "glod" is unknown, but, like "blaberis", it is undoubtedly pejorative.' Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 37.



The sixteenth-century publication of Dunbar's name and writings evidence the perceived limitations of his authorial credentials. 'Dunbar' is one of only three Scottish poets named among Caliope's 'court rethorick' in Douglas's *Palice*, alongside 'Kennedy' and 'Quynntyne' (923-24).<sup>109</sup> A generation later, Sir David Lyndsay, the foremost poet at the court of James IV's son, James V, writes admiringly in *The Testament and Complaynt of Our Soverane Lordis Papyngo* (1530) of 'Dunbar, quhilk language had at large, | As maye be sene in tyll his *Goldin Targe*' (17-18).<sup>110</sup> By now, however, Dunbar's reputation is clearly inferior to Douglas's, who is praised by Lyndsay over two stanzas as 'in our Inglis rethorick, the rose' and 'Abufe vulgare poetis prerogatyve' (24, 29; cf. introduction to chapter 4).<sup>111</sup> Many of Lyndsay's poems evince the influence of Dunbar; yet as Janet Hadley Williams observes, 'Lyndsay followed the senior poet with discretion, using mode, style, and verbal echoes in ways that were not simply imitative but adaptive and redefining.'<sup>112</sup> With Kennedy, Dunbar is unique among Scottish poets of the first quarter of the sixteenth-century to have had his name and writings published in print. The *Targe* is one of three of Dunbar's poems printed by Scotland's first printers, Chepman and Myllar, in around 1508 (STC 7349; the others are 'Renownit, ryall, right reuerend and serene' [*The Ballade of...Barnard Stewart*] [STC 7347] and the *Flying* [STC 7348]).<sup>113</sup> Together with an earlier edition of Dunbar's *Tretis*,

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<sup>109</sup> Perhaps the same as the 'Quintyne Schaw' mentioned in Dunbar's *Lament* (see n. 98).

<sup>110</sup> In Sir David Lyndsay, *Selected Poems*, ed. Janet Hadley Williams (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2000). All references to Lyndsay's poems are to this edition.

<sup>111</sup> On the limited evidence for direct poetic imitation of Dunbar during his lifetime or immediately following his death, see Janet Hadley Williams, 'Dunbar and His Immediate Heirs', in *'Nobill Poyet'*, ed. Mapstone, 85-107.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>113</sup> On 15 September 1507, James IV granted to the Edinburgh merchant and notary public Walter Chepman (1471-1528) and bookseller Andrew Myllar (d. 1508) a patent for the importing of 'ane prent [i.e. a printing press] with al stuf belangand therto and expert men to use the samyne'.

*Lament*, ‘I maister Andro Kennedy’, and the anonymous ‘My gudame wes a gay wife bot scho wes ryght gendand’ (STC 7350),<sup>114</sup> the prints function ‘like a miniature showcase of the remarkable variation in Dunbar’s poetic talent’ and indicate the transmission of his poetry beyond court circles.<sup>115</sup> On the title page of the single extant copy of Chepman and Myllar’s *Targe* (Figure 2.3) appears an ownership inscription made by the Fife assize officer Florentine Martin (active during the 1520s and 1530s), ‘evidence of how Scottish literature of this ilk was reaching a non-courtly community in the first half of the sixteenth century’.<sup>116</sup> Further evidence is provided by the preservation of certain of Dunbar’s poems in the near contemporary Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS 16500 (Asloan Manuscript), a prose and verse miscellany compiled by the public notary John Asloan, probably between 1515 and 1525, though now badly mutilated.<sup>117</sup> The contemporary attention afforded to Dunbar’s poetry may underlie his claim in ‘Schir, 3e haue’ that ‘lang in mynd my work sall hald’. Yet his later sixteenth- and seventeenth- century transmission betrays a different fate. After the Chepman and Myllar prints, Dunbar’s next extant print witness is *The ever green, being a*

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*Registrum Secreti Sigilli*, ed. Livingstone et al., I, 223-24. The single extant copies of nine editions published from their premises at Southgait, now Cowgate, Edinburgh, in around 1508 are collected in a single quarto volume, now Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Sa.6 (1)-(11), together with STC 7350 (see below) and an edition of the Middle English *Robin Hood* printed in Antwerp by Jan van Doesborch between perhaps 1510 and 1515 (STC 13689.5). Sally Mapstone, ‘Introduction’, in *The Chepman and Myllar Prints: Scotland’s First Printed Texts: Digitised Facsimiles with Introduction, Headnotes, and Transcription*, gen. ed. ead. (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society and National Library of Scotland, 2008), 2-10 [on DVD].

<sup>114</sup> Which ‘may have been made for or by Myllar before his collaboration with Chepman began’, possibly at Rouen. Joanna Martin, headnote to ‘William Dunbar, *The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*’, in *Chepman and Myllar Prints*, gen. ed. Mapstone, 177.

<sup>115</sup> Mapstone, ‘Introduction’, 4.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>117</sup> Extant portions contain ‘Off Februar’, 121-28 (i.e. the ‘turnament [...] Beuix a telzour and ane sowtar’ [fols 210<sup>r</sup>-11<sup>v</sup>]); ‘As zung Awrora’, 1-69 (fols 211<sup>v</sup>-12<sup>v</sup> [end lost]); the *Passioun* (fols 290<sup>v</sup>-92<sup>r</sup>); and *Our Lady* (fols 303<sup>r</sup>-04<sup>v</sup>, the unique witness). A table of contents at the front of the manuscript indicates that it originally also contained Dunbar’s *Thrissil* (twice), the *Targe*, and the *Flying*.

Here begynnys ane litil tretie intitult the goldyn  
targe compilat be Maister Wilyam dunbar

*Libro fororum m... bonif...*



Figure 2.3. William Dunbar, *The Goldyn Targe* ([Edinburgh: Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar, c. 1508]) STC 7349, titlepage. Reproduced from *Chepman and Myllar Prints*, gen. ed. Mapstone.

*collection of Scots poems, wrote by the ingenious before 1600*, published by Allan Ramsay in 1724. The major poetic anthologies which are the earliest extant witnesses for many of Dunbar's poems belong to the last third of the sixteenth century: one, the Bannatyne Manuscript, was compiled by the Edinburgh merchant George Bannatyne between around 1565 and 1568; another, the Maitland Folio, was compiled by or for Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington and Thirlstane between around 1570 and 1586. In each, Dunbar's name appears as one among many Scottish poets collected in the volume, rather than the emblem of an authorial canon like Skelton Poeta in the *Garlande* (see section 2.3). The Maitland Folio seems to have 'originated in family piety' and was 'designed in the first place to preserve Sir Richard's poems'.<sup>118</sup> The Bannatyne Manuscript, meanwhile, represents an early attempt at a generic arrangement of its materials;<sup>119</sup> like the Maitland Folio, it contains a large number of poems by Dunbar, but it does not afford him any special status among its 'divers new and ancient poetiis'.<sup>120</sup> Dunbar's poetry, whilst admired, seems chiefly to have been valued in relation to other literary, courtly, and familial investments. This is a poor legacy, though arguably no more than Dunbar could have expected. As will be seen, the very topicality which may have limited Dunbar's appeal in the later sixteenth century seems to have provided him with a competitive advantage at the court of James IV.

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<sup>118</sup> Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Manuscript Miscellanies in Scotland from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century', in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Sally Mapstone (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), 189-210, at 196-97; cf. Julia Boffey, 'The Maitland Folio as a Verse Anthology', in *'Nobill Poyet'*, ed. Mapstone, 40-50, at 41; and Alasdair A. MacDonald, 'Sir Richard Maitland and William Dunbar: Textual Symbiosis and Poetic Individuality', in *ibid.*, 134-49.

<sup>119</sup> See Bawcutt, 'Manuscript Miscellanies', 204-08.

<sup>120</sup> Bannatyne, fol. 211<sup>r</sup>.

Dunbar's poetry betrays little interest in the representation of an authorial persona which might be adopted by, or identified with, the historical poet. His preoccupation, certainly in the *Targe*, but also, though exhibiting fewer features of a high style, the satirical and petitionary pieces, is rather the courtly milieu within which he writes. The ostensible subjects of Dunbar's poems—a conflict between reason and desire, the king, queen, or the divine, the court and its servants, even Dunbar's desired benefice—are not necessarily their *raison d'être*. They are essentially spectacular pieces: literary looking glasses which offer a decorous, often delightful, but always recognisable view of Scottish court life.<sup>121</sup> His poetry has a mimetic but also a creative function, for there is a discernible effort to suggest felicitous or at times startling parallels between his poems—to develop networks of imagery and overlapping poetic techniques which transcend any particular mode or manner but provide the outline of a distinct court culture. Dunbar's authorship embraces the full heterogeneity of Scottish court life and reinscribes it as a variegated poetic corpus. If Skelton's is a poetry of self-scrutiny and self-regard, Dunbar's is a poetry of integration: it is informed by, and gives form to, a literary court culture, in which the *makar* plays a constitutive role.

This point can be illustrated by one of the most generically diverse, and least studied, of Dunbar's framed first-person allegories: 'This hinder nycht, halff sleiping as I lay'. The poem is another satirical piece on the subject of Dunbar's desired benefice; however, unusually among the satires and petitionary poems, 'This hinder

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<sup>121</sup> Cf. Joanne S. Norman's contention, in one of a series of essays dealing with the problem of recovering 'the real, the true William Dunbar' from the diverse modes and manners exhibited in his verse, that '[t]he character of Dunbar as revealed/concealed in his poems [...] is not [...] the extension of an individual but the representative voice of a function or culture'. Norman, 'Dunbar: Grand Rhetoricien', in *Bryght Lanternis*, ed. McClure and Spiller, 179-93, at 189.

nycht' has the form of a framed first-person allegory. The poem's opening frame, in which the poet-narrator lies half-sleeping in his chamber—luxuriously decorated 'in ane new aray' (2)—recalls the opening of the *Thrissil* (quoted above) as well as the transformed bedchamber of Chaucer's *Duchess* (321-36). Dunbar's meter—stanzas of five five-stress lines rhyming *aabba*—has specific associations with the love complaint,<sup>122</sup> as does the poet-narrator's melancholic sickness, personified in the allegorical figures Distres, Hiwines (cf. the *Targe's* Hevynesse), and Langour. Dunbar has not forgotten the petitionary purpose of the poem. The themes of unrequited love and unrewarded service are highly compatible: Discretioun's appeal to Nobilnes (the personification of kingly virtue) that the poet-narrator 'hes lang maid seruice thair [i.e. at court] in vane' [53]), the melancholy which excludes him from its revels, and the issue of the unequal distribution of patronage—satirised in the figure of Schir Iohne Kirkpakar—are each familiar from Dunbar's other, non-narrative petitionary poems.<sup>123</sup> This is just one example of the generic cross-reference and blurring of allegorical significations at play, and sometimes at odds, in 'This hinder nycht'. At the mid-point of the poem, the allegorical figure Ressoun appears as the 'constant wycht' (60) who can apparently obtain justice for Dunbar's textual double. An audience familiar with the *Targe* might recall the failure of another personification of reason to defend that poem's poet-narrator from the arrows of desire, whilst elsewhere, in Dunbar's short devotional piece, 'Saluiour,

<sup>122</sup> Cf. *The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse* (in which the purse is addressed as 'my lady dere' [2]); Sir John Clanvowe (c. 1341-91), *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale* (c. 1386?-1391); and Dunbar's 'Sweit rois of vertew and of gentilnes'. I owe these references to *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 353. Note, however, Dunbar's further use of the metre in the diabolical visions 'Lucina schyning' and *How Dumbar wes Desyrd*, apparently confirming the poet-narrator's suspicion in 'This hinder nycht' that his disturbed dream is a 'fary' or illusion (111, cf. 11).

<sup>123</sup> Notably 'Off benefice, sir, at everie feist', 'Schir, at this feist of benefice', and 'This waverand warldis wretchidnes'.

suppois my sensualite', 'ressoun' appears as the moral faculty that 'biddis my rys' (4) and renounce sensual desires.<sup>124</sup> Further imaginative associations are suggested by Dunbar's reprising of a further *Targe* motif, the awaking of the poet-narrator by a shot fired from a cannon:

Than as ane fary thai to duir did frak,  
And schot ane gone that did so ruidlie rak  
Quhill all the aird did raird the ranebow vnder.  
On Leith sandis me thocht scho brak in sounder,  
And I anon did walkin with the crak.  
(*'This hinder nycht'*, 111-15)

The apocalyptic overtones resonate with another of Dunbar's religious poems, the *Passioun*, in which at the end of the vision,

For grit terrour of Chrystis deid  
The erde did trymmil quhair I lay,  
Quhairthrow I waiknit in that steid,  
With spreit halflingis in effray.  
(*Passioun*, 137-40)

One need not attempt to synthesise these various intertexts for *'This hinder nycht'*; what is important to recognise is the potential of Dunbar's poetry to move from the secular to sacred, from eulogy to eschatology, whilst never exceeding the bounds of contemporary court culture. Discretioun's mention of *'New 3ear'* (55) as the occasion for royal gift giving is corroborated by the Treasurer's accounts; the *'lordis at the Cessioun [Lords of Session]'* (74, cf. 62) to which *Ressoun* is recommended

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<sup>124</sup> As with most of Dunbar's poems, the order of composition for the *Targe* and *'This hynder nicht'* is uncertain, though an early 1507 date is proposed for the latter on the basis of a possible reference to an event of July 1506 in lines 111-15 (see below). *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 467.

was the distinctive judicial arm of the king's council; and the intriguing allusion at the end poem to the firing of a cannon 'On Leith sandis' may refer to a real event of July 1506.

James IV's enthusiasm for ships and guns is well attested: his great warships, *Margaret* and *Michael*, were built and armed at Leith between late 1502 and early 1512;<sup>125</sup> the port was also the site of the 'Kingis Werk' or arsenal where the king stored his cannon.<sup>126</sup> The Treasurer's accounts for 9 July 1506 record a payment of 9s. 8d. 'to the pynouris of Leith quhilk carrying the irn gun to the sandis shut hir their before the King', and of 20d. 'to tua men that helpit schut the samyn'.<sup>127</sup> Bawcutt suggests that lines 111-15 of 'This hinder nycht' may recall the incident and that 'line [114] might imply that it [i.e. the cannon] exploded'.<sup>128</sup> Without further documentary evidence, Bawcutt's suggestion must remain conjecture; it is equally possible that line 114 refers to the breaking of the 'ranebow' rather than the 'gone' (see below). Yet no definite connection is required between 'This hinder nycht' and a particular court occasion to note the poem's participation in current events. James's interest in artillery is also thought to have informed the explosive ending of Dunbar's *Targe*,<sup>129</sup> where, back on the ship, the gods and goddesses

...fyrte gunnis with powder violent,  
Till that the reke raise to the firmament.  
The rochis all resownyt with the rak,  
For rede it semyt that the rainbow brak.

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<sup>125</sup> Dawson, *Scotland Re-Formed*, 76-77.

<sup>126</sup> *Compota Thesaurariorum*, ed. Dickinson et al., I, ccxx.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 203-04.

<sup>128</sup> *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 469.

<sup>129</sup> Frank Shuttleton, 'An Imperial Flower: Dunbar's *The Goldyn Targe* and the Court Life of James IV of Scotland', *SP*, 72 (1975), 193-207, at 200-01.



Here, in a cataclysmic finale, Dunbar evokes and exceeds even the most ambitious spectacles prepared by the king's gunners—a celebration and also amplification of artillery salutes like that mentioned in 'Blyth Aberdeane' (15). Extending the historical cross-reference, Pamela M. King adopts a 'metaphoric view of the poem as masque, tournament or disguising', in which the ship can be compared to the pageant cars seen at contemporary court entertainments, and Dunbar's 'emblematic arrangement' of the gods and goddesses to the quasi-dramatic tableaux devised for tournaments and royal entries.<sup>130</sup> Frank Shuffleton goes further still, arguing that the probable occasion for the composition of the *Targe* was the tournament of the 'Black Lady' held at Edinburgh in May 1508—in which the king himself seems to have participated—and that Dunbar's poem 'might quite likely have been one of the banquet entertainments'.<sup>131</sup> Shuffleton's suggestion is not generally accepted; but again, the association of the *Targe* to a particular court occasion is of less immediate importance than its reflection, and consolidation, of a multifaceted court culture. The Scottish king seems to have actively encouraged this easy assimilation of the formal, informal, and imaginary aspects of court life. Dunbar's mock-eulogy for 'My ladye with the mekle lippis' ('Lang heff I maid of ladyes quhytt') has been interpreted as a response to the king's assumption of the role of the Black Knight at the 1508 tournament.<sup>132</sup> 'Schir, lat it neuer in toune be

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<sup>130</sup> King, 'Dunbar's *The Golden Targe*: A Chaucerian Masque', *SSL*, 19 (1984), 115-31, at 116, 118, and 122-25; cf. Jack, 'Dunbar's Dramatic Voice', 82-85.

<sup>131</sup> Shuffleton, 'Imperial Flower', 203; cf. King, 'Chaucerian Masque', 121, though King dates the *Targe* somewhat earlier.

<sup>132</sup> *Poetry of the Stewart Court*, ed. Joan Hughes and W. S. Ramson (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), 8; Bawcutt, *Dunbar the Makar*, 249-52.

tald' meanwhile—a petition for seasonal livery in which the indigent poet adopts the persona of 'ane 3owllis 3ald'—is followed in its unique manuscript witness by a stanza with the heading *Reponsio regis*, whereby the king instructs his 'thesaurer' to 'Tak in this gray hors, auld Dumbar' (71-70).<sup>133</sup> The court *makar* is the poetic as well as the financial beneficiary of this playful intermingling of art and life, for just as Dunbar's *making* justifies James's pageants and patronage as the pursuit of a literary ideal, so Scottish court life—whether at its most spectacular or more mundane—animates and integrates Dunbar's poetry.

This idea of a poetry of integration helps to resolve some of the difficulties presented by Dunbar's heterogeneous canon. One might think of Dunbar as writing across multiple spectrums of formality, morality, eloquence, and self-reference—variously calibrated according to the purpose and audience of a particular work and liable to further adjustments within any single poem. His poetry celebrates and gives form to the whole gamut of Scottish court life: not only its spectacles and great personages—subjects fitted to a high style—but its rivalries and religion, its pastimes and professed morals—all worthy objects of display. Recurrent forms and images help to root Dunbar's writings in a recognisable, historically specific, literary culture; they may be manipulated and reimagined in individual poems but retain their potency as imaginative nexuses between art and life, and between Dunbar's various compositions. Prominent among those forms is framed, first-person

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<sup>133</sup> Cambridge University Library, MS Ll.5.10 (Reidpeth Manuscript, compiled c. 1622-23), fol. 1<sup>v</sup>. Lines 1-32 are also extant in Maitland Folio, p. 18 (originally a complete copy); and Reidpeth, fol. 14<sup>r-v</sup>. I owe these references to *Poems of Dunbar*, ed. Bawcutt, II, 446-47. Possible evidence for the granting of the petition appears in the Treasurer's accounts: an entry dated 27 January 1506 records a payment of £5 made to Dunbar 'for caus he wantit his gown at 3ule'. *Compota Thesaurariorum*, ed. Dickson et al., III, 187.

allegory, deployed by Dunbar for the representation of a particular court, rather than a quasi-autobiographical textual double. Dunbar's claim for the textual authority of his writings is based not on a name, but in a time, place, and patron. A similar claim appears, though in an oblique form, in Hawes's first-person allegories. Its antithesis is Skelton's *Garlande*.

### **2.3. From self-scrutiny to self-regard: Skelton's *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell***

In his most magisterial work, *The Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*, Skelton is concerned with the creation of an author. His ostensible intention: to invest his textual double with a poetic authority and bibliography that are a projection, but also an extension, of his own. Skelton's dramatic departure from the more subtle strategies for authorial self-promotion adopted by the other poets examined in this thesis can be linked to his apparent dissatisfaction with the contingent forms of authority underpinning vernacular poetry at court. Where Dunbar and, as will be seen in chapter 3, Hawes view close association with centres of political power as an effective way of adding value to their writings, Skelton, in the *Garlande*, instead draws attention to the constraints placed upon the laureate poet by political obedience and obsequiousness to one's patrons. His solution is to envisage a literary authorship that is a unique and harmonious alignment of the diverse sources of poetic legitimation to which he might lay claim—academic reputation, political affiliation, and native and continental literary tradition—dramatised in the figure of Skelton Poeta. That figure has been taken to epitomise the 'internalization of poetic authority' associated with the Skelton of the 1520s (see section 2.1); what

critics have understood as the foregrounding of Skelton's poetic and personal identity in the *Garlande* has led to its adducing as evidence of an 'early modern' self-consciousness late in his literary career.<sup>134</sup> What follows is a modification of this view: a reappraisal of the history of composition and literary antecedents for the *Garlande* which reveals a less obviously radical, but nonetheless innovative, approach to literary authorship. Skelton's vision, I suggest, is of a reconfiguration rather than a rejection of literary tradition and institutional power; his innovation is to posit their perfect realisation in his own putative biography. His Skelton Poeta is a figure whose learned and aristocratically endorsed poetic labours—situated on an imagined literary continuum with the works of Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate—have assured him of his place in the court of Fame. In the garland-weaving episode and autobibliography at the end of the poem, Skelton cites his writings as the products of that labour, thus raising them to the status of authorial works. The name Skelton is no longer simply a means of attribution; it now imbues the historical poet's writings with the idealised poetic labour envisaged in the *Garlande*. This is self-representation-as-author at its most overt and far-reaching, though ultimately its most abstruse. For rather than providing a model for later English poets to imitate or refuse, Skelton's deliberately complex, sometimes unabashedly sophistic authorship proved not only to be irreproducible but, finally, incomprehensible to his sixteenth-century successors.

Considered primarily as a work of around 1495 rather than early 1523, the *Garlande* demonstrates an acute concern for self-representation early in Skelton's

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<sup>134</sup> For an overview of criticism of the *Garlande* that focuses on 'Skelton's concern with laureation, fame, and identity' as evidence for his 'early modern' status, see Dan Breen 'Laureation and Identity: Rewriting Literary History in John Skelton's *Garland of Laurel*', *JMEMS*, 40 (2010), 347-71, at 348-50.

career, and with it a more conservative attitude towards poetic authority and publication in the framed first-person allegories of the 1490s than that which is associated with the later Wolsey satires and *Replaycacyon* (see section 2.1). The *Garlande* is usually regarded as one of Skelton's final works—a 'self-celebration' of a literary career spanning more than three decades.<sup>135</sup> The earliest complete text is the edition printed in London by Richard Faques on 3 October 1523 (STC 22610).<sup>136</sup> In this version, a narrative frame set at Sheriff Hutton Castle, North Yorkshire, encloses a dream in which the poet-narrator, 'Skelton Poeta',<sup>137</sup> is made to justify his enrolment 'With laureate tryumphe in the courte of Fame' (63). The dream begins with a debate between the Quene of Fame and Dame Pallas, in which the former demands 'good recorde [...] why Skelton sholde be crowned [with the laurel]' (215, 217). Pallas obliges and, at her command, Skelton Poeta is conveyed by the poets Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate to Fame's registrar, Occupacyon. She leads him to a walled field with a thousand gates bearing the name of every nation (561-643); next, to a garden of poetry, where the Muses dance around a laurel tree (644-765); and finally, 'by a postern gate' (766) to the chamber of 'the noble Cowntes of Surrey' (769), who has devised for Skelton 'A cronell of lawrell' (776) in reward for his services as her 'clerke' (777). The countess commands her gentlewomen to set about weaving the garland (773-807) and Skelton Poeta composes a series of lyrics in their honour. When the narrative resumes, the

<sup>135</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 215; cf. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 211-18; Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 182-87; and Vincent Gillespie, 'Justification by Good Works: Skelton's *The Garland of Laurel*', *RMS*, 7 (1981), 19-31.

<sup>136</sup> A possibly earlier, incomplete text is London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius E.x, fols 208<sup>r</sup>-25<sup>v</sup>. Quires A, D, and E contain lines 1-245 and 721-1141. At least three further quires are lost. The only other extant sixteenth-century witness is the edition of Skelton's *Works* published by Thomas Marsh in 1568 (STC 22608, sigs A1<sup>r</sup>-[D6<sup>v</sup>]). For physical descriptions, see John Skelton, *The Book of the Laurel*, ed. F. W. Brownlow (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 17-30.

<sup>137</sup> From the headings in Cotton Vitellius E.x and Faques's edition.

garland is completed and Skelton Poeta proceeds to Fame's court. There, Occupacyon recites from her 'boke of remembrauns [...] What Skelton hath compiled and wrtyon in dede' (1149, 1151); 'But when of the laurel she [i.e. Occupacyon] made rehersall' (1503), the court erupts into cries of '*Triumph, triumph!*' (1504; cf. my introduction), Occupacyon is commanded by Fame to 'shett fast the boke' (1510), and Skelton Poeta awakes from the dream.

It seems likely that Skelton's composition of the *Garlande's* framed first-person narrative was instigated by one (or all) of his historical laureations at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Louvain between 1488 and 1493.<sup>138</sup> On internal evidence, the narrative can be dated to around 1495: Tucker identifies the countess of Surrey who devises the poet-narrator's garland with Elizabeth Howard, neé Tylney, resident at Sheriff Hutton between 1489 and 1497;<sup>139</sup> elsewhere, Tucker and Owen Gingerich associate the astrological description at lines 1-7 with a date in May 1495,<sup>140</sup> soon after the ostensible occasion for the narrative and probably around the time of its composition.<sup>141</sup> Five more of the countess's ladies can be confidently identified with female members of the Howard household of the early 1490s, placing the composition of the *Garlande's* lyrics probably earlier still.<sup>142</sup> Indeed, the only part of the poem which seems likely to have been composed soon

<sup>138</sup> See Skelton, *Laurel*, ed. Brownlow, 30-36; and 'Latin Writings', ed. Carlson, 102-09. Earlier critics proposing a date of composition close to Faques's publication of the *Garlande* in 1523 include *Poetical Works of Skelton*, ed. Dyce, II, 317; Helen Stearns Sale, 'The Date of the *Garlande of Laurell*', *MLN*, 43 (1928), 314-16; and H. L. R. Edwards and William Nelson, 'The Dating of Skelton's Later Poems', *PMLA*, 53 (1938), 601-22, at 608-10.

<sup>139</sup> M. J. Tucker, 'Skelton and Sheriff Hutton', *ELN*, 4 (1967), 254-59. This need not be taken as evidence for a long-standing connection between Skelton and the Howards (see section 2.1).

<sup>140</sup> Gingerich and M. J. Tucker, 'The Astrological Dating of Skelton's *Garland of Laurell*', *HLQ*, 32 (1969), 207-20.

<sup>141</sup> It is unlikely that the narrative was composed after 1498 as it 'makes no mention of any other such titles or honors that subsequently came to Skelton': his ordination in 1498 or the granting of his title *orator regius* in around 1512. 'Latin Writings', ed. Carlson, 105.

<sup>142</sup> M. J. Tucker, 'The Ladies in Skelton's *Garland of Laurell*', *RenQ*, 22 (1969), 333-45; cf. Skelton, *Laurel*, ed. Brownlow, 32-33; and 'Latin Writings', ed. Carlson, 103-06.

before the publication of Faques's edition is the autobibliography at lines 1170-476—which includes works written after 1495—though even this may be a revision of an earlier catalogue (see further below).<sup>143</sup>

A closer date of composition for the *Bowge* and much of the *Garlande* than is usually assumed supports my proposition of a similar line of thought running through both poems regarding the role of the vernacular court poet in relation to literary tradition and institutional power. In certain respects, the *Garlande's* dream picks up where the *Bowge's* leaves off: the Whirling Wicker-like breakdown of referentiality on board the *Bowge* dovetails with the depiction of an irascible and capricious Fame at the beginning of the *Garlande*. But where in the *Bowge*, the damning association between the makers of allegorical poetry and its dissimulating vices remains unresolved in the poem's enigmatic final line—'Now constrewe ye what is the resydewe'—in the *Garlande*, authorial self-scrutiny is transformed into authorial self-regard, as Skelton lays claim to a textual authority for his writings far in excess of any English conceptualisation of literary authorship to have gone before.

The articulation of that authority, and Skelton's literary authorship, is precipitated by the challenge posed by Fame at the beginning of the *Garlande*—that is, whether or not Skelton Poeta is worthy to enter her court:

[']Not unremembered it is unto your grace [i.e. Pallas],  
How you gave me ryall commaundement  
That in my courte Skelton shulde have a place,

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<sup>143</sup> A second Latin and English envoy addressed to Henry VIII and Wolsey, printed with the *Garlande* in Marsh's *Works* but not in Faques's edition, must also postdate Skelton's reconciliation with the cardinal, probably in early 1523. 'Latin Writings', ed. Carlson, 108.

Bycause that he his tyme studiously hath spent  
In your service; and, to the accomplysshement  
Of your request, registred is his name  
With laureate tryumphe in the courte of Fame

But, good madame, the accustome and usage  
Of auncient poetis, ye wote full wele, hath bene  
Them selfe to embesy with all there holl corage,  
So that there workis might famously be sene,  
In figure wherof they were the laurel grene.  
But, how it is, Skelton is wonder slake,  
And, as we dare, we fynde in hym grete lake

For, ne were onely he hath your promocyon,  
Out of my bokis full sone I shulde hym rase;  
But sith he hath tastid of the sugred pocioun  
Of Elyconis well, refresshid with your grace,  
And wyll not endeavour hymselfe to purchase  
The favour of ladys with wordis electe,  
It is sittynge that ye hym must correct.'

(*Garlande*, 57-77)

The idea of eternal fame—signified by the laurel—as both the stimulus and reward for the poetic vocation draws upon the laureate ideology elaborated by the Italian *trecentisti*, most notably Petrarch in his 1341 laureation oration (see section 1.1), and reappropriated in English by Chaucer and Lydgate (see below). Throughout his career, Skelton encouraged an association between his own literary activities and the inspired, culturally affirming poetics which had been given historical specificity in the person of Petrarch and had a literary genealogy stretching back to Augustan



Rome.<sup>144</sup> The laureate title granted to Skelton at Oxford, Louvain, and Cambridge was an academic rather than a poetic award.<sup>145</sup> Even so, Skelton did not hesitate to exploit the broader connotations of the title, most overtly in the Latin materials framing his English poems (e.g. the Latin verse following *Phyllyp Sparowe*, 1-825: *Per me laurigerum | Britonum Skeltonida vatem* [‘Through me, Skelton, the laureate poet of Britain’ (834-35)]) and as a topic for invention in the *Garlande*.<sup>146</sup> Skelton’s conflation of the academic, Petrarchan, and political aspects of his protean laureate status is neatly summarised in the final of his invective verses written *Agensst Garnesche*.<sup>147</sup> There, Skelton makes reference to his laureation at Oxford, adding the intriguing though somewhat vague detail that ‘A kynge to me myn habyte gave’ (v.80).<sup>148</sup> He goes on to cite the literary antecedents of the title—‘Of the Musys nyne, Calliope | Hath pointyd me to rayle on the’ (87-88)—and, as royal tutor, his role as the learned mediator between classical antiquity and the Tudor regime:

The honor of Englund I lernyd to spelle

In dygnyte roiall that doth excelle

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<sup>144</sup> On the significance and usage of Skelton’s poet laureate title, and its relation to the titles *orator regius* and *vates*, see Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 18-37. On Skelton’s ‘thoroughgoing self-advertisement as poet laureate’, see further Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 205-18, 205 quoted.

<sup>145</sup> The only similar grants made by Oxford were to the rhetorician John Bulman in 1511 and Robert Whittington in 1513. Nelson, *John Skelton*, 43. No laureations other than Skelton’s are known to have taken place at Cambridge. The only writer in England before Skelton to be attributed the title ‘poete lawreate’ is John Kay, on the first page of his prose translation of Guillaume Caoursin’s *Obsidionis Rhodie urbis description*, dedicated to Edward IV in around 1482 (STC 1482). There is no other certain biographical information for Kay. Douglas Gray, ‘Kay [Caius], John (fl. c. 1482)’, *ODNB*.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. the Latin verse following ‘The Commendations’ (*Phyllyp Sparowe*, 1260-67) and the Latin explicit to the *Lawde and Prayse*. By Stephen Dickey’s estimation, of Skelton’s thirty-seven known works, ‘[o]nly nine [...] are allowed by Skelton (or his early printers) into the world without reference to his name or the wreath upon his brow’. Dickey, ‘Seven Come Eleven: Gambling for the Laurel in *The Bowge of Courte*’, *YES*, 22 (1992), 238-54, at 238. But see Jane Griffiths’s contention that Skelton was more reserved in his usage of poetic titles than is usually assumed, in ‘What’s In a Name? The Transmission of “John Skelton, Laureate” in Manuscript and Print’, *HLQ*, 67 (2004), 215-35.

<sup>147</sup> I.e. Sir Christopher Garnesche (d. 1534), knighted at Tournai in 1513 (a creation which Skelton repeatedly mocks) and appointed chief porter of Calais in 1519 (the verses’ probable *terminus ante quem*). *Complete English Poems*, ed. Scattergood, 389-90.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. n. 13.

I yave hym drynke of the sugryd welle  
Of Eliconys waters crystalline,

Aqueintyng hym with the Musys nyne.

(*Agensst Garnesche*, v.95-100)

Here, Skelton's former position as royal tutor, the compliment made by Caxton and others that 'he hath dronken of Elycons well', and his imagined service to the muse Calliope (cf. *Calliope*, quoted in section 2.1) are aligned in an irresistible claim to poetic authority—even if only against the upstart knight Garnesche. Each of these topics also appears in Skelton's more sustained statement of his idealised literary authorship in the *Garlande*. Gone is the timorousness of *Bowge's* Drede, as Skelton affirms that his poet-narrator's and thus *his* name is 'regestred [...] With laureate tryumphe in the courte of Fame'. The point of contention, whether Skelton Poeta merits such an honour—'With laureate triumph *why* Skelton shold be crownde' (217, my emphasis)—becomes a moot point; for as will be seen below, the evocation of a Chaucerian House of Fame with which the *Garlande* begins is quickly replaced by a more assured Lydgatean conception of the eternal fame deserved by 'auncient poetis'. Skelton goes further still, claiming not only that the labours of laureate poets obtain eternal fame, but that he—in the guise Skelton Poeta—is just such a poet.

At first, the situation in the *Garlande* looks like a reprisal of Chaucer's sceptical attitude towards laureate poetics in *Fame*. Yet on closer inspection, it is a concern with poetic labour, rather than the arbitrariness of fame, which emerges as the grounds, but also the solution, for the challenge to Skelton Poeta's laureate status posed at the beginning of the dream. Fame's reluctance to accept Skelton

Poeta to her court, as well as the arrival at Pallas's pavillion, following Eolus's blowing of his trumpet, of a great throng of petitioners to Fame (246-78), recalls the rejection of deserving and undeserving supplicants alike by the capricious deity of Chaucer's *Fame* (1520-867).<sup>149</sup> However, beyond these broad dramatic similarities, the claim to fame at the beginning of the *Garlande* is quite different to those depicted by Chaucer. The Fame of the *Garlande*, whilst recalcitrant, remains reasonable in her complaint: Skelton Poeta has failed to follow the example 'Of auncient poetis' and to produce 'workis' that 'myght famously be sene'. In particular, he has neglected to write verses 'to purchase | The favour of ladys'—a charge which has another Chaucerian analogue in the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*. This less obvious literary antecedent conveys an attitude towards poetic labour and its reward far closer to Skelton's *Garlande* than has previously been acknowledged.<sup>150</sup> The poet-narrator of the *Legend* is brought to account for his apparent antifeminism in *Troilus* and his translation of the *Rose* (Prol. F.328-34)—a misinterpretation of his writings by the impressionable God of Love. For both Skelton Poeta and the poet-narrator of the *Legend*, the most effective means of answering the accusations made against them is further poetic labour, though only if undertaken on behalf of a receptive patron. In the *Legend*, this is the 'glorious legend | Of goode wymmen' (F.483-84) commissioned by Alceste as a

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<sup>149</sup> Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 213-14. On Skelton's engagement with Chaucer's *Fame* in the *Garlande*, see further John Scattergood, 'Skelton's *Garlande of Laurell* and the Chaucerian Tradition', in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 122-38, especially 124-25 on Eolus's trumpets of 'Clere Laude' and 'Sklaundre' (*Fame*, 1575, 1580).

<sup>150</sup> It is not known whether Skelton knew the *Legend* directly. A. S. G. Edwards notes that '[t]he *Legend* was not printed until Thynne's 1532 edition of Chaucer's *Works*. It is, of course, possible that Skelton could have had access to a manuscript, but there is no evidence that he did in those that survive.' Edwards, 'Skelton's English Canon', in *Companion to Skelton*, ed. Sobecki and Scattergood, 180-93, at 181, n. 3.

‘penance’ (F.479, 495 [‘penaunce’], 501) for the poet-narrator’s ‘trespas’ (F.480). Similarly in the *Garlande*, Pallas accedes to Fame’s condition that if Skelton Poeta ‘to the ample increase of his name | Can lay any werkis he hath complyld’ (222-23) he may remain at her court. Skelton comes closer to the Chaucer of the *Legend* than of *Fame* in affirming that poetic labour, when validated by an external authority, *will* be properly rewarded. But the *Garlande* is unlike either poem in its suggestion that poetic labour propagates a personal fame that transcends patronage and contemporary networks of readers. For this idea, Skelton seems to have drawn upon the laureate discourse which had grown out of Chaucer’s writings during the subsequent century—most notably in the works of Lydgate. The monk of Bury’s stabilisation and amplification of Chaucerian themes held especial appeal to Skelton, who dares lay claim to the laureate fame that Lydgate only attributes to his poetic predecessors.

Chaucer’s fifteenth-century followers envisaged a more stable relationship between poetic labour and its reward than that depicted in *Fame* or even the Prologue to the *Legend*. Their favourite candidate for posthumous laureation was Chaucer himself (cf. Dunbar’s eulogy in the *Targe*, quoted in section 2.2). Though ‘Chaucer never claims the laurel, and expresses no pretensions to fame through laureation’, his fifteenth-century followers ‘repeatedly suggest that he ought to have been invested with the honour’.<sup>151</sup> Lydgate is foremost among the fifteenth-century propagators of this English laureate discourse.<sup>152</sup> One of the most explicit

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<sup>151</sup> Scattergood, ‘Chaucerian Tradition’, 125; see, e.g., Lydgate, *Troy Book*, III.4534-63; *Kingis Quair*, 1374-77; and Caxton’s proem to the 1483 *Canterbury Tales*.

<sup>152</sup> On Lydgate’s elaboration of a laureate discourse draw from classical and continental traditions, not least in his projection of a laureate identity onto Chaucer, see especially Ebin, *Illuminator*, *Makar*, *Vates*, 1-48; Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 22-56; Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 45-87; and

and widely available examples, and a potential intertext for some of the Chaucerian motifs in the *Garlande*, is his great memorialising compendium, *The Fall of Princes*.<sup>153</sup> Neither the monk of Bury nor any later English fifteenth-century writer claim for their *own* writings the recognition and fame deserved by celebrated writers of the past, though Lydgate comes close in the narrative prologues to the *Fall*. The poet-narrator is a fictionalised version of Lydgate's 'aucthour', Bochas (the voice of the translator appears only intermittently, in the prologue to each Book and the moralising envoys attached to the tragedies), though this does not prevent Lydgate from 'voicing his own laureate ambitions through his predecessor's literary avatar'.<sup>154</sup> The most extensive narrative prologues are to Books VI (1-518) and VIII (1-203), which describe Bochas's encounters with Fortune and Petrarch, respectively. Both episodes are narrated in the third person and have analogues in Lydgate's direct source, Laurent de Premierfait's *Des Cas des Nobles Hommes et Femmes*.<sup>155</sup> Lydgate's reworkings of *Des Cas* emphasise the expediency of good works to laureate fame. In the Prologue to Book VI, Fortune pours scorn on Bochas's attempt to resist her mutability through his writings: 'All thi labour thou spillest in veyn [...] Bi thi writing to fynde a remedie' (150, 152). This Boccaccian-Lydgatean figure, proprietor of a 'Hous called the Hous of Fame' (109), is clearly

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Mary C. Flannery, *John Lydgate and the Poetics of Fame* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 105-28.

<sup>153</sup> On the popularity and influence of the *Fall* (extant in thirty-nine originally complete manuscripts, with selections appearing in nearly forty more), see A. S. G. Edwards, 'The Influence of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* c. 1440-1559: A Survey', *MS*, 39 (1977), 424-39. The *Fall* was printed in London by Pynson in 1494 (STC 3175) and again in 1527 (STC 3176); extracts also appear in *The proverbes of Lydgate* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510?]) STC 17026, reprinted in perhaps 1520 (STC 17027).

<sup>154</sup> Flannery, *Poetics of Fame*, 139. For a discussion of Lydgate's narratorial strategy in the *Fall*, with particular attention to the concept of authorship, see Viereck Gibbs Kamath, *Authorship and First-Person Allegory*, 164-72. On 'voice' in translation, see my section 4.2.

<sup>155</sup> Premierfait's *Des Cas* (1409) is a French prose version of Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355-60, revised up to 1374). Passages corresponding to Lydgate, *Fall*, VI.1-518 and VIII.1-203 are printed in *Lydgate's Fall*, ed. Bergen, IV, 246-51 and 290-96, though the prologue to Book VIII 'as it stands in the *Fall of Princes* is for the most part Lydgate's own' (IV, 296).

related to Chaucer's Fame (and the *Bowge's* Fortune).<sup>156</sup> The Fortune of the *Fall*, however, is a more complaisant deity, and unable to deny the great deeds of noble personages. Bochas, whilst admitting that 'Al worldi thyngis be double & chaungable' (221), intends to complete his book:

...lest my labour nat deie nor [a]palle,  
Of this book the title for to saue,  
Among myn other litil werkis alle,  
With lettes large aboue vpon my graue  
This bookis name shal in ston be graue,  
How I, Iohn Bochas, in especiall  
Of worldi princis writyn haue the fall  
(*Fall*, VI.225-31)

Bochas's confidence in his ability to ensure other's and his own posterity is apparently confirmed when, at the end of the prologue, Fortune, despite having accused the poet-narrator of slandering her name, agrees to support him,

That thi name and also this surname,  
With poetis & notable old auctours,  
May be registrid in the Hous off Fame  
(*Fall*, VI.512-14)

A similar situation appears in reverse in the prologue to Book VIII. There, an aged Bochas, hesitating before embarking upon his eighth Book, is visited by his poetic mentor, Petrak (Petrarch). Speaking in terms that will reappear in the *Garlande*, Lydgate's Petrak exhorts Bochas to eschew 'Idilenesse' and pursue 'Occupacioun' (121),

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<sup>156</sup> On Lydgate's redeployment of imagery from *Fame* in the *Fall*, see Flannery, *Poetics of Fame*, 132-34.

...for to make our names perduable,  
 And our merites to putten in memorie,  
 Vices teshewe, in vertu to be stable,  
 That laboure may of slouthe hath the victorie,  
 To cleyne a see in the heuenli consistorie  
 (Fall, VI.176-81)

Petrak's account of poetic labour comes close to religious vocation; and it is probably no coincidence that it is at the end of this prologue that the monk Lydgate makes his most explicit association between Boccaccio's occupation and his own.

Just as Bochas 'ouercame thymptent feeblesse | Of crokid age [...] For tacomplisshe up his eihte book' (187-89), so Lydgate's textual first person, 'Mor than thre score yeeris set my date', comes 'folwyng aftir' (190-91). Lydgate goes no further: he does not presume that he too, 'born in Lidgate, | Wher Bachus licour doth ful scarsli fleete' (195-96), is worthy of enrollment in the house of Fame. Nevertheless, common to both prologues is an influential laureate ideology in which poetic labour—as one of the virtuous forms of 'Occupacioun'—attracts fame.

Lydgatean laureate discourse exerts a clear influence on Skelton's early prose and poetry, augmented by ideas suggested by his own laureations. Notable instances include the opening of the *Bowge* discussed above ('theyr [i.e. 'poetes olde'] fame | Maye never dye'), *Upon the Dolorus Dethe and Muche Lamentable Chaunce of the Mooste Honorable Erle of Northumberlande* (1489) ('What nedethe me for to extol his fame [...] Whos noble actis shew worsheply his name' [141, 143]), and in Skelton's earliest known work, the *Bibliotheca Historica*, the self-

denigrating comparisons of the writer's little learning to the great deeds of antiquity:

And moche remorded ar we with grete abasshement to prosecute his [here Hercules's] famous glorye of knightly prowess with the groos termes of our homely vtteraunce, rudely beten out of rusty stythe, enkankred with the foggy mystis of clowdy ignoraunce, consyderynge how *his ryall enterprizes of laureate tryumphe be matriculate in the heuenly courte of inmortalityte, meritoriously recompensyd with deuyne reuerence of stellyfyed glorye.*

(*Bibliotheca Historica*, fol. 239<sup>r</sup>, my emphasis)

In the *Bibliotheca Historica*, Skelton, following his source,<sup>157</sup> though with considerable amplification, assumes, like Lydgate, that laureate fame belongs to a distant literary past. It is suggestive, however, that at moments such as the apotheosis of the Libyan Ammon and Dionysius, who at their deaths 'were out of this temporal lyf translated vnto the celestial court of endeles pleasure emonge the heuenly senatours in the cyte of fame, as pryncis matriculate' (fol. 227<sup>v</sup>), Skelton employs terms that he later uses in reference to his own laureations: 'By hole consent of thyr [i.e the University of Oxford's] senate, | I was made poete lawreate' (*Agensst Garnesche*, v.83-84); 'The fame matriculate | Of poetes laureate' (*Replycacion*, 357-58).<sup>158</sup> Already, at the beginning of Skelton's literary career, there is emerging a vision of laureate fame mediated through his own biography. In the *Garlande*, Skelton takes what might be considered as the inevitable next step: by

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<sup>157</sup> Not Diodorus Siculus's first century BC text but the Latin translation of Books I-V produced by the Florentine Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) in 1449. Skelton, *Bibliotheca Historica*, ed. Salter and Edwards, II, xx-xxii.

<sup>158</sup> The only attestation for *matriculate* in English before Skelton is in a letter of Henry VII to the University of Oxford dated 1487. *matriculate*, adj. and n., *OED*. Skelton also uses the term in *Phyllyp Sparowe* (1288), in reference to the worthiness of Jane Scrope to be commemorated 'With ladyes of estate' (1290).



extending to his textual double the Lydgatean belief that good works merit eternal fame (if Skelton Poeta 'Can lay any werkis that he hath compyld', Fame is 'content that he be not exylide' [223-24]), Skelton sets in motion the allegorical narrative that will culminate in Skelton Poeta's and, by association, the historical poet Skelton's 'laureate tryumphe'.

Crucial to this extension of Lydgatean laureate discourse in the *Garlande* is the allegorical figure Occupacyon. From her first appearance, bearing a large book, and promising the poet-narrator that 'I shall aquyte your hyre, | Your name recountynge' (550-51), to her presentation of Skelton Poeta before the countess of Surrey and recital of the poet's works in the court of Fame, Skelton's Occupacyon consolidates the connection between poetic labour and its reward, though now with specific reference to the name and writings of the historical poet Skelton. Where in the prologue to Book VI of the *Fall* and elsewhere, the personified 'Occupacioun' serves as little more than the virtuous antithesis to sinful 'Idilenesse',<sup>159</sup> the Occupacyon of the *Garlande* has a more instrumental role as both the advocate and auditor of Skelton Poeta/Skelton's fame. Following the debate between Fame and Pallas, Skelton Poeta is conveyed to Occupacyon by the figures Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, the last of the host of 'poetis laureate of many diverse nacyons' (324) summoned by Fame, but who conspicuously lack laurel crowns ('Thei wanted nothyng but the laurel' [397]). Skelton's presentation of the English literary triumvirate has been read as 'a not very subtle attempt on Skelton's part to enhance his own reputation, because he had been laureated, at

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. in the Middle English translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's revision of *La pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (1355), usually attributed to Lydgate, the pilgrim's encounter with the personified 'Labour & Occupacion' (11532). John Lydgate, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, 3 vols, EETS, e. s., 77, 83, 92 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899-1904).

the expense of theirs'.<sup>160</sup> But in light of the argument developed above, that the justification of Skelton Poeta's laureate fame constitutes a reconfiguration rather than a rejection of fifteenth-century English laureate discourse, the real import of the scene may come closer to Scattergood's assessment: 'that because of the nature and importance of their achievements in poetry these English poets ought to have been awarded the laurel, but had not been'.<sup>161</sup> No reason is given for their want of the laurel; however, Lydgate's caution to Skelton Poeta that, though he and his companions 'so gloriously [...] have enroll'd | My name',<sup>162</sup> unless 'my warkes therto be agreeable, | I am ells rebukyd of that I intende' (439-40) suggests that, as in the Prologue to the *Legend*, the issue may be one of reception: though the English literary triumvirate 'garnissed' and 'ennewed' (387-89) the English language during their lifetimes, 'The brutid Britons of Brutus Albion', concedes Gower, 'welny was loste when that we were gone' (405-06).<sup>163</sup> A similar downturn in Skelton Poeta's literary fortunes is intimated by Occupacyon's greeting in lines 540-43:

[']Of your acquaintance I was in tymes past,  
Of studyous doctryne when at the port salu  
Ye first aryvyd; whan broken was your mast  
Of worldly trust, then did I you rescu;[']

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<sup>160</sup> Scattergood, 'Chaucerian Tradition', 126; see, e.g., Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 214; and Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 207.

<sup>161</sup> Scattergood, 'Chaucerian Tradition', 126.

<sup>162</sup> Each of the triumvirate states Skelton Poeta's desert of a place in Fame's court, with Lydgate recommending him 'to be prothonotary [chief clerk] | of Fames court, by all our holl assent | Avaunced by Pallas to laurel preferment' (432-34).

<sup>163</sup> Cf. the assessment of the English literary triumvirate in *Phyllyp Sparowe*: Jane Scrope professes that, though 'Gowers Englysh is olde | And of no value told; | His mater is worth gold, | And worthy to be enroll'd' (784-87); similarly, though 'now men wold have amended' Chaucer's English, Jane insists that 'His termes were not darke, | But pleasaunt, easy and playne; | Ne worde he wrote in vaye' (788-803, 797 and 801-03 quoted); Lydgate, however, 'Wryteth after an hyer rate' so that 'It is diffuse to fynde | The sentence of his mynde' (803-12, 805-07 quoted). On the increasing difficulty of Chaucer's language for sixteenth-century readers, see Cook, *The Poet and the Antiquaries*, 111-15.

The image of Skelton's poet-narrator arriving safely 'at the port salu' stands in suggestive opposition to Drede's jumping ship at the end of the *Bowge*. This nautical metaphor usually appears in reference to the completion of a literary composition;<sup>164</sup> it is thus ironically appropriate that the highly equivocal ending of the *Bowge* offers no such reprieve. By contrast, the lines in the *Garlande* hint at poetic labours already completed, though with a loss of 'worldly trust'—perhaps the support of the poet's patrons and/or peers. Skelton Poeta has been preserved by 'studious doctryne'—the learned application, or even academic training, represented by Occupacyon. Such study comes with its reward, for, says Occupacyon, if Skelton Poeta

...[']spare neyther pen nor ynke;  
 Be well assured I shall aquyte your hyre,  
 Your name recountynge beyond the lande of Tyre,  
 From Sydony to the mount Olympyan,  
 Frome Babill towre to the hillis Caspian.'  
 (*Garlande*, 549-53)

Occupacyon's request, as something like a surrogate patron, that Skelton Poeta 'for my sake spare neyther pen nor ynke' seems at first like work for work's sake. Yet the implication that Skelton Poeta's writings are themselves sufficient—without any further legitimization—to ensure the dissemination of his name arguably represents a quite remarkable claim to self-constituting poetic authority. By personifying the poet's occupation, Skelton has transformed poetry—or rather, *his* poetry—into both the justification and also the mechanism for enrollment in the court of Fame.

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<sup>164</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. William R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 128-30; cf. Skelton, *Collyn Clout*, 1251-65 (where the 'porte salue' is Christ); Hawes, *Pastime*, 4487-93; and Douglas, *Eneados*, Exclamation, 1-5.

Under the tutelage of *Occupacyon*, Skelton's disparate writings are given new coherence as the products of a unique and compelling authorship. In the garland-weaving scene and autobibliography that follow, the academic, political, and literary credentials of Skelton Poeta/Skelton are made cogent and significant in relation to a unified authorial canon.

I pass briefly over the first two stages of *Occupacyon* and Skelton Poeta's progress towards the court of Fame—dramatic equivalents to the issues of unpredictable reception and contingent forms of authority raised in the debate between Pallas and Fame discussed above, which reiterate the expediency of the renewed poetic labour proffered by *Occupacyon*. The walled field with a thousand gates at which 'Innumerable people' (603) press for entry gives national specificity to the crowd of petitioners glimpsed in Pallas's pavilion. The gate marked 'A' for 'Anglea'—England—holds special appeal for a poet-narrator tipped for international renown, whilst the repulsion of those without—'haskardis and rebawdis', 'Furdrrers of love', 'blenkardis', 'ypocrytis', and 'flaterers' (607, 609, 610, 612, 618)—indicates the unabashed elitism that distinguishes the utterances of Skelton Poeta from those of less remarkable aspirants to fame. This laureate exceptionality is further developed in the vision of the garden of poetry that follows—complete with laurel, Muses, and regenerating phoenix. 'Nowhere else in his work', remarks Spearing, 'does Skelton offer so noble an image of what poetry might be';<sup>165</sup> yet the rarefied atmosphere of the paradisaal garden is not entirely unsullied. The appearance there of a 'blunderar [...] that playth didil diddil' (740)—

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<sup>165</sup> Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 246.

one 'Envyous Rancour' who 'can never leve warke whylis it is wele' (753, 763)<sup>166</sup>—recalls the backbiting vices of the *Bowge* and reaffirms the need of Skelton Poeta for some unassailable poetic monument.

That monument—the 'garlande of laurell' of the poem's title—will be set on unlikely foundations, for upon leaving the garden of poetry, rather than beginning on some poetic masterwork commissioned by a mythological personage (cf. Alceste) or resurrected *auctor* (cf. Petrak), Skelton Poeta is made the client of a female coterie headed by the countess of Surrey. There is reason for these ostensibly workaday antecedents for the 'lawrell' that will so 'delyht' Fame's court (1105, 1110); it is the domestic, quasi-autobiographical specificity of the garland-weaving scene which gives it its metapoetic import. By demonstrating the potential for the poet's most ephemeral compositions to be reconfigured—by reference to his progress towards laureate fame—as an authorial work, Skelton enacts in miniature the self-canonisation that will be performed at a far larger scale in the autobibliography that follows. The arrival of Occupacyon and Skelton Poeta in 'a goodly chaumber of astate, | Where the noble Cowntes of Surrey in a chayre | Sat honorably' (768-70) seems to signal a temporary hiatus in the *Garlande's* allegorical narrative.<sup>167</sup> Contrary to Fame's earlier accusation, that Skelton Poeta 'wyll not endeavour hymselfe to purchase | The favor of ladys with wordis electe' (75-76), the countess praises Skelton Poeta, 'my clerk' (777),

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<sup>166</sup> Or 'Rogerus Stathum', according to the number code that follows the *Interpolata que industriusum postulat interpretem, satira in vatis adversarium* ('An interpolated satire on the poet's adversary, which demands an industrious interpreter' [742-51]). Henry Bradley, 'Two Puzzles in Skelton', *Academy*, 50 (1896), 83. Stathum is unidentified but may be the man married by Gertrude Statham, née Anstey (the addressee of lines 1038-42), in 1482, perhaps after she had rejected Skelton. Edwards, *Skelton*, 236-38; Tucker, 'Ladies in the *Garland*', 339-40.

<sup>167</sup> Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 216.

[']For of all ladyes he hath the library,  
 Ther names recountyng in the court of Fame;  
 Of all gentlywomen he hath the scruteny,  
 In Fames court reporting the same[']  
 (*Garlande*, 780-83)

The contradiction seems implausible, unless one assumes that when the countess refers to 'the court of Fame' it is meant figuratively—an allusion, perhaps, to some unspecified compositions then in circulation, but for which the Skelton Poeta of the *Garlande* has not yet been recognised.<sup>168</sup> This slippage between apparently circumstantial detail and the *Garlande*'s allegorical scheme continues in the garland-lyric exchange that follows. The industrious needlework of the countess's ladies is at a far remove from the caroling Muses in the garden of poetry—Virgilian allusion is replaced by Tudor home economics as the ladies produce an object which can more accurately be described as an elaborately embroidered chaplet than a garland of laurel.<sup>169</sup> Skelton Poeta, having been instructed by Occupacyon that, in recompense for the ladies' labour, 'ye must call | In goodly words pleasantly comprysid, | That for them some goodly conseyt be devysid' (812-14), describes his 'tremlyng fist' (828) and redeploys the nautical metaphor of lines 540-46, as if about to begin a laudatory verse like those embedded in certain *dits amoureux*.<sup>170</sup> Yet as noted above, most of the *Garlande* lyrics probably predate the framed first-

<sup>168</sup> A real danger of manuscript transmission, as evidenced by the precarious survival of Skelton's lyrics and shorter poems. See Julia Boffey, 'Lyrics and Shorter Poems', in *Companion to Skelton*, ed. Sobecki and Scattergood, 102-13. On the likely courtly milieu for Skelton's lyrics written in the 1490s, see further Carol M. Meale, 'Skelton's English Works in Manuscripts and Print', in *ibid.*, 163-79, at 166-67.

<sup>169</sup> See Maura Tarnoff, 'Sewing Authorship in John Skelton's *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*', *ELH*, 75 (2008), 415-38, at 418-23.

<sup>170</sup> Tarnoff compares the garland-lyric exchange in the *Garlande* lyrics to the composition by the poet-narrator of Froissart's *Paradis d'amour* of a balade for *Bel Accueil*, for which she rewards him with a chaplet of daisies (1472-695). Tarnoff, 'Sewing Authorship', 426.

person narrative and may have been composed separately over several years.<sup>171</sup>

Only 'To maystres Jane Blenner-Haiset' (954-72), 'To mastres Geretrude Statham' (1038-61), and 'To maystres Isabell Knyght' (1062-81) make direct reference to the weaving of the garland.<sup>172</sup> Otherwise, the *terminus a quo* for the lyrics is around 1492, when Anne Bouchier became Lady Anne Dacre of the South (addressed in lines 892-905); their *terminus ante quem* is 22 October 1494, when Margery Wentworth (addressed in lines 905-25) married Sir John Seymour.<sup>173</sup> It is thus quite possible that the claim that Skelton Poeta 'of all ladyes [...] hath the library' is a reference to the very same lyrics—earlier compositions by the historical poet Skelton—that in the *Garlande* are presented as a new work worthy of the laurel.

The uncertain narrative and textual status of the *Garland's* lyrics—commendatory or commended, a new poem or an anthology of earlier compositions?—is reflected in the multiple possible significations for Skelton Poeta's garland of laurel. Various critics have remarked upon the ambiguous literary-sartorial status of the 'lawrell' borne by Skelton Poeta to the court of Fame: Spearing notes how, when the assembled poets begin to praise the work as 'the goodlyest | That ever they saw, and wrought it was the best' (1113-14), 'one begins

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<sup>171</sup> Brownlow refutes the notion that the lyrics may have been composed separately: their formal intricacy, he contends, 'shows that they were carefully conceived as a set'. Skelton, *Laurel*, ed. Brownlow, 187. Yet Skelton's choice of verse forms—rhyme royal for the countess and her three daughters and 'less exalted measures' (190) for the other ladies—is appropriate even without reference to an internal hierarchical scheme, and Brownlow's incorporation of the lyrics into a detailed numerological analysis of the *Garlande* (64-66) is unconvincing. On Skelton's habit on incorporating lyrics into longer works, as in the *Garlande*, or connecting them together in series, as in *Agenyst Garneshe*, see Boffey, 'Lyrics and Short Poems', 102-03.

<sup>172</sup> 'mistres Jane Haiset | Smale flowers helpt to sett | In my goodly chapelet' (968-70); 'Partly by your councell, | Garnissed with lawrell | Was my fresshe coronell' (1054-55); 'which glad was to devyse | The menes to fynde | To please my mynde, | In helping to warke my laurel grene | With sylke and golde' (1071-75).

<sup>173</sup> Or, if the Margaret Hussey addressed in lines 1004-37 is identified with Margaret Blount, wife of Sir John Hussey (1465/66-1536-37), perhaps as early as July/August 1492, when she died. All identifications are from Tucker, 'Ladies in the *Garland*'.

to suspect that “the laurel” has come to refer not just to the garland Skelton as dreamer is wearing but also to the poem called after it which Skelton as poet is writing’.<sup>174</sup> I would go further, and suggest that the ladies’ garland and the lyric anthology are interwoven from the moment of their conception. The ladies’ work—one of salvage and revaluation, as from ‘broken warkis’ they ‘wrought many a goodle thyng’ (801)—is the exact narrative analogue for the re-presentation of Skelton’s earlier lyrics by his laureate textual double. The reader is left uncertain as to exactly who or what is finished when Occupacyon commands Skelton Poeta to ‘Withdrawe your hande, the tyme is fast. | Set on your hed this laurel which is wrought’ (1086-87). By making the completion of the ladies’ garland coterminous with the lyrics, Skelton assimilates both—the patron’s rewarding of the poet and the poet’s honouring of his patron—to the laureate literary authorship envisaged in the *Garlande*. Leaving the chamber, Skelton Poeta sees one ‘maister Newton [...] Dyvysynge in picture, by his industrious wit, | Of my laurel the proces every whitte’ (1096, 1098-99);<sup>175</sup> and here, the ambiguous term *process* (‘an account’ of the weaving of the garland, the composition/compilation of the lyrics, or a wider-ranging narrative of Skelton Poeta’s ‘progress’ resembling the *Garlande* itself?) subsumes the whole exchange beneath Skelton Poeta’s irresistible rise to fame.<sup>176</sup> The heterogeneous garland of laurel is the all-encompassing emblem for that rise; it works at multiple narrative and epistemological levels to confirm Skelton/Skelton Poeta as a laureate poet whose labours are meaningful because performed by his hand and generate a renown that is indissociable from his name. In the garland-

<sup>174</sup> Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 217; cf. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 216.

<sup>175</sup> Walker identifies ‘maister Newton’ with one John Newton employed in the Howard household during the 1480s. Walker, *Skelton and Politics*, 20.

<sup>176</sup> *process*, n., defs 4 and 11, *OED*.



weaving scene, the lyrics addressed to the countess and her ladies are woven into a single work (the lady's garland and Skelton/Skelton Poeta's lyric anthology), which at the level of the diegesis, at once recognises and recompenses Skelton Poeta for his clerkly service and, at a more ambiguous narrative/epistemological level, supplies both poet-narrator and historical poet with the laureate regalia/literary work (the garland/lyrics) that will justify his place in the court of Fame. Only his enrollment remains.

The autobibliography which concludes the *Garlande* reprises the garland-weaving scene's transformation of poetic compositions into enduring authorial works, though now with a vantage over an entire literary career. Just as in the earlier scene, a series of ephemeral lyrics are made an object of acclaim by reference to the self-justifying poetic labour of Skelton's laureate textual double, so the autobibliography—recited by the personification of that labour, Occupacyon—re-presents the disparate, possibly even spurious, products of a literary career as items in a unified authorial canon. The length and specificity of the autobibliography is without parallel in earlier English poetry. The closest analogue is Alceste's account of Chaucer's works in the Prologue to the *Legend*;<sup>177</sup> however, where in Chaucer's poem, the decision to leave the poet-narrator unnamed forgoes

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<sup>177</sup> Cf. 'The Introduction to the Man of Law's Tale' and the *Retraction*. In the former, the Man of Law specifically names 'Chaucer' (*Canterbury Tales*, II.47) as the poet who has already told all the best stories; however, his list of Chaucer's works is limited to material included in the *Duchess* ('In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcione' [II.57]) and the *Legend* ('his large volume [...] Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupide' [II.60-61]) and serves to distance the poet-narrator who is reporting the pilgrims' tales from the historical poet, who is apparently absent from the scene. The *Retraction* includes a longer list of Chaucer's works: 'the book of Troilus; the book also of Fame; the book of the XXV. Ladies [i.e. the *Legend*]; the book of the Duchesse; the book of Saint Valenynes day of the Parlement of Briddes; the tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sownen into synee; | the book of the Leoun [not extant]; and many other book' (X.1085-86); but these are described as 'my translacions and enditynges of | worldly vanities, the which I revoke in my retracciouns' (X.1084), and as in the Prologue to the *Legend*, the 'Geffrey Chaucer' referred to in the explicit (see chapter 1, n. 30) is not named in the text.

any explicit attribution of the writings listed by Alceste to the historical poet Chaucer, in the *Garlande*, 'Skelton' is repeatedly named as the author of the works recorded in Occupacyon's book of remembrance. The reader is left in little doubt as to the dual narrative and personal significance of the scene. Standing before Fame, Skelton Poeta confidently affirms that

...[']I trust to make myne excuse  
Of what charge so ever ye lay ageinst me;  
For of my bokis parte ye shall se,  
Whiche in your recordes, I know well, be enrolde,  
And so Occupacyon, your regester, me told.'

(*Garlande*, 1139-41)

Still sceptical, Fame commands Occupacyon:

'Yowre boke of remembrauns we will now that ye rede;  
If ony recordis in noumbyr can be founde,  
What Skelton hath compiled and wryton in dede[']

(*Garlande*, 1149-51)

And the recital begins with the incipit-like lines:

'Of your oratour and poete laureate  
Of Englande, his workis here they begynne[']

(*Garlande*, 1170-71)

By the conclusion of the autobibliography some three hundred lines later, when Occupacyon 'of the laurel [...] made rehearsall', the identity between Skelton Poeta and the historical poet Skelton has been made complete: they share a name, titles, and a body of works, which now includes the earlier lyric anthology and, it seems,

the completed *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*. The idealised laureateship of Skelton Poeta and real literary activity of the historical poet Skelton blur and coalesce with one another. Skelton Poeta is justified by Skelton's writings; Skelton's writings are made authoritative by their attribution to his textual double. His achievement is vaunted in the Latin envoy addressed to the book (1521-32), in which *Skeltonis* [...] *vester Adonis* [...] *Skeltonis* [...] *vester Homerus* ('Skelton [...] your Adonis [...] Skelton [...] your Homer') is presented as a virtuoso, national poet working in a tradition of Latin *auctores*. The name Skelton/*Skeltonis* has become what readers post-Foucault will recognise as an 'author function': 'a constant level of value', 'a field of conceptual or theoretical coherence', 'a stylistic unity', and 'a definite historical figure at the crossroads of a certain number of events'.<sup>178</sup> It is the marker of a literary authorship not dependent on any single external authority, but rather their amalgamation in the name Skelton.

Skelton's overt self-representation-as-author in the *Garlande* is unprecedented in English poetry. It need not, however, be understood as quite so radical a departure from tradition as critics have typically assumed, or as the discovery of an 'internaliz[ed]' poetic authority towards the end of Skelton's literary career. I have argued throughout this section that the *Garlande* is primarily a work of around 1495 rather than early 1523. Even the autobibliography—the only part of the poem to mention works known to have been written by Skelton after 1495—may be a revision of an earlier catalogue. The post-1495 works are clustered in lines 1183-375: the 'Bowche of Courte' (1183); 'the Poppingay [i.e. *Speke Parott*]' (1188);

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<sup>178</sup> Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', trans. Josué V. Harari, in *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984: Volume II: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York, NY: The New Press, 1999), 205-22, at 216.

‘Magnyfycence’ (1192); ‘*Speculum Principis*’ (1231); ‘the Tunnyng of Elinour Rummyng’ (1233);<sup>179</sup> ‘Colyn Clowt’ (1234);<sup>180</sup> ‘Of one Adame [...] an Epitaphe [i.e. the *Epitaphe* for Adam Uddersall]’ (1247, 1249);<sup>181</sup> and ‘Phillip Sparow’ (1254).<sup>182</sup> The works listed in lines 1376-476 are no longer extant and may well belong to an earlier period, if they ever existed.<sup>183</sup> Indeed, it seems entirely possible that the idea to include a record of his works as the ultimate ‘memoryall’ whereby Skelton Poeta ‘myght have a name inmortal’ (118-19) occurred to Skelton during the original composition of the *Garlande*’s framed person-narrative in around 1495 and not, as has elsewhere been suggested, as a response to the personal and political dilemmas posed in the Wolsey satires<sup>184</sup> or, alternatively, as a prefiguration of the vision of inspired poetry in the *Replycaclon*.<sup>185</sup> Other critics have looked to explain the autobibliography in relation to sixteenth-century print culture, ‘an attempt’ suggests Julia Boffey,

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<sup>179</sup> Written in perhaps May 1517. *Complete English Poems*, ed. Scattergood, 429.

<sup>180</sup> Believed to have been written between mid-1521 and mid-1523. *Ibid.*, 439.

<sup>181</sup> Written in perhaps 1506. *Ibid.*, 380.

<sup>182</sup> Written in perhaps 1505. *Garlande*, 261-375 repeats *Phyllyp Sparowe*, 1268-382, written during or after 1509. *Ibid.*, 366. Carlson argues that only lines 1212-375 include references to Skelton’s later writings; but this is based on a dating of the *Bowge* to 1480-85 and *Magnyfycence* before 1498. ‘Latin Writings’, ed. Carlson, 107-08. Brownlow, adopting later dates for the *Bowge* and *Magnyfycence*, makes a similar case for lines 1191-375; but again, this argument relies on the unconvincing suggestion that ‘the Poppingay’ (1188), which Brownlow identifies with *Speke Parott*, was originally composed before c. 1495. Skelton, *Laurel*, ed. Brownlow, 34-36, 194. Given the possible allusion to Skelton’s title *orator regius* in lines 1170-71 (quoted above), it may in fact be the case that all of *Occupacyon*’s recital up to the end of the repetition of *Phyllyp Sparowe* was composed later than the narrative, perhaps soon before the publication of Faques’s edition, and that only lines 1376-476 and the conclusion of the narrative belong to earlier periods.

<sup>183</sup> The idea that Skelton may have ‘invented his own “lost” works’ is suggested, though not developed, in Scattergood, *John Skelton*, 371; and noted, but refuted, in Edwards, ‘English Canon’, 185.

<sup>184</sup> Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 182-87; Fox, *Politics and Literature*, 191-200.

<sup>185</sup> Spearing, *Medieval and Renaissance*, 245-46; cf., though with a greater emphasis on Skelton’s formulation of ‘an alternative to the secular source of authority provided by the title *orator regius*’, Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 25-37, 31 quoted.

to define and circumscribe a canon, in a relatively precise and almost tangible way, which is unusual in relation to those who envisaged the preservation of their writing solely in manuscripts [...] and anticipates the activities of editors like Thynne or Stow.<sup>186</sup>

The precision of the *Garlande's* autobibliography is indeed without parallel in the works of earlier English writers. Even so, the publication of Chaucer's and later Skelton's complete *Works* can serve only as an analogue, not as a model, for Skelton's formal listing of his writings some ten or even twenty-seven years earlier. Skelton would already have been familiar with the idea of an authorial canon from the printed *operae* of classical *auctores* which were entering England from the continent during the last quarter of the fifteenth century,<sup>187</sup> and perhaps also the self-anthologising tendencies of certain fifteenth-century French writers.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, the sense of tangibility created by Occupcayon's deluxe manuscript book—'illumynid' (1157), 'enpicturid' (1158), 'garnysshyd and bounde' (1160)—belongs to a manuscript rather than a print culture. Seth Lerer's reading of Skelton's 'laureate [...] conception of the English writer' is of relevance here: his argument that, for Skelton, 'poetic authority rests with continuities of manuscript culture, with the representations of the writing, and rewriting, self and with the ideals of a

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<sup>186</sup> Boffey, 'Lyrics of *The Garland*', 146. Boffey goes on to suggest Skelton's autobibliographising in the *Garlande* as an analogue (and perhaps even the inspiration) for John Rastell's publication of small collections of Skelton's poems in the late 1520s (cf. n. 22), though the extent to which Skelton was involved in their preparation is unknown.

<sup>187</sup> On the importation of continental (principally Venetian) editions of the classics into England from 1470 to 1500, see Margaret Lane Ford, 'Importation of Printed Books into England and Scotland', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume III: 1400-1557*, ed. Lotte Hellinga and J. P. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 179-202, at 182-84 and 190-91.

<sup>188</sup> Notably Christine de Pizan (1364-c. 1430), who produced the deluxe manuscript compilation of her works London, British Library, MS Harley 4431, and Jean Gerson (1363-1429), who towards the end of his life helped to organise his writings into the form in which they were transmitted after his death. See Sandra Hindman, 'The Composition of the Manuscript of Christine de Pizan's Collected Works in the British Library: A Reassessment', *BLJ*, 9 (1983), 93-123; and Daniel Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity Before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 82, 87, 206-08.

coterie circulation for individual works'.<sup>189</sup> For 'representations of the self', I would substitute 'representations of an author';<sup>190</sup> but it is true that, ultimately, Skelton's claims to vernacular textual authority are based on academic, political, and literary credentials, which separately would have been meaningful only to certain isolated networks of readers—at court, in university circles, and attached to aristocratic households such as the Howards'. Skelton's innovation in the *Garlande* is to insist on the unique alignment of these qualities in the figure of Skelton Poeta, an authorial avatar with a far broader appeal. As Skelton's textual double, but also his textual ideal, Skelton Poeta provides an organising principle for the diverse writings and connections that Skelton had already made, or claimed to have made, at this relatively early stage in his literary career.

The *Garlande's* vision of authorship is an anomaly in late-fifteenth/early sixteenth-century English poetry—an instance of the quasi-autobiographical potential of framed first-person allegory taken to its self-regarding extreme. For the poets examined in the second half of this thesis, Stephen Hawes and Gavin Douglas, self-representation-as-author seems to have been considered an undesirable, even dangerous strategy for legitimating their writings. Instead, their framed first-person allegories work to create a distance between the poet-narrator and historical poet, such that any 'author function' that they evoke has no explicit textual representation in their poems. Hawes, the other major proponent of the framed

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<sup>189</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 20, cf. 202-08.

<sup>190</sup> Skelton, according to Lerer, finds textual authority 'in his living person. [...] A writer of books posing as a performer; a maker of epitaphs who celebrates the living; a praiser of dead poets who revives them—in these, and many other ways, Skelton establishes uniquely his relations to the poets and traditions of the English language'. Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 194, 207. I prefer to think of Skelton as deploying his textual double, Skelton Poeta, as the focus for a reconfiguration of external sources of poetic legitimation—an invented literary author with whom the historical poet Skelton is associated by a common nomenclature.

first-person form at the courts of Henry VII and Henry VIII, and the subject of the following chapter, writes allegories that are in certain respects closer to Dunbar's *Targe* than Skelton's *Garlande*. His poems are made pleasureable and instructive by their exemplification of the artistic and intellectual fashions of the court. The textual first person, rather than providing a site for quasi-autobiographical self-representation, becomes an interface for imaginative cross-reference between and within texts, almost entirely detached from the historical poet, but which still asks to be read.

### 3. 'Obscure allegory' and reading 'by true experience' in the framed first-person allegories of Stephen Hawes

Stephen Hawes, when considered at all by literary critics, is generally studied as a foil to Skelton.<sup>1</sup> Hawes's period of activity at the early Tudor court between around 1503 and 1511 coincides with Skelton's removal to Diss, and there are other ways too in which one poet can be seen almost as the inverted image of the other. Each draws upon the forms and idiom of Chaucer and his poetic successors, especially Lydgate; they differ, however, in their rehabilitation of tradition to the new technologies, learning, and shifting systems of patronage affecting realities and ideals of textual production and authority in early Tudor England. Where Skelton has been seen as intelligently alive to the 'conflicting energies embodied in his work',<sup>2</sup> even the most generous assessments of Hawes judge him rather as 'a "potential poet", one whose conceptions are not generally matched by his execution', and who remained 'resolutely parochial at a time when more astute and gifted writers were already sniffing the winds of change'.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I argue that Hawes and his poetry warrant study in their own right, and have much to tell about the claims to textual authority made by poets without Skelton's laureate aspirations, but with an interest in authorial self-promotion nonetheless.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 224-77; Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 176-208; and Burrow, 'Experience of Exclusion', 795-801.

<sup>2</sup> Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 225.

<sup>3</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 103, 107. Other standard formulations of this view include Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 279-87; and Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan, xxiii-xxvii; but contrast those accounts that consider Hawes's use of the dream poem as a means of personal expression, a move that anticipates a 'Renaissance' interest in individuality and inwardness: Fox, *Politics and Literature*, 56-72; Burrows, 'Experience of Exclusion', 795-97; Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 178-90.



Five of Hawes's poems survive: the short *Conuercyon of Swerers* (written before or in April 1509), comprising an attack on the blaspheming stereotypical of the court; *A loyfull Medytacyon* (c. June 1509), written in celebration of the coronation of King Henry VIII; and three first-person allegories framed as dreams, *The Example of Vertu* (1503/04), *The Pastime of Pleasure* (1505/06), and *The Conforte of Louers* (1510/11). Hawes cannot boast the poetic ingenuity of Skelton, the virtuosity of Dunbar, nor, as will be seen, the humanist ambitions of Douglas. Nevertheless, as a late example of framed first-person allegory utilised for commentary on the poet's art, Hawes's poetry provides a valuable insight into conceptions of literary authorship between the 1480s and 1530s. As in Skelton's *Bowge* (see section 2.1), the veracity of poetic representation is perennially at issue in Hawes's first-person allegories of the court. But unlike Skelton, Hawes insists that poetic fictions *do* convey pre-existing truths, even if his readers lack the understanding to appreciate them. It is my contention that, by selective reading and interpretation of Chaucer's, Lydgate's, and pseudo-Lydgatean allegorical poetry and statements on rhetoric and poetic fictions, Hawes develops a theory of 'obscure allegory'<sup>4</sup>—a *circulus in probando* whereby the significance of the poet's writings is evidenced by their impenetrability to all but the initiated. In what follows, section 3.1 traces Hawes's elaboration of a literary authorship in which poetry, allegory, and rhetoric are made almost indistinguishable, and the role of the poet becomes less to enlighten or even to entertain his readers than to persuade them of the profitability of his 'poetycall scryptures'. Section 3.2 examines the practical application of Hawes's 'obscure allegory' in the *Pastime* and the

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<sup>4</sup> I owe the phrase 'obscure allegory' to Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 252.

*Conforte*—allegorical narratives which seem deliberately detached from any fixed referents in the real world, but have countless analogues in the textual and visual arts of the early Tudor court. The effect, I propose, is of allegory turning in on itself, frequently disorientating, ultimately frustrating, but which seems to have represented a ‘pastime of pleasure’ for readers with pretensions to the requisite *experience*—as attested by the contemporary print publication of Hawes’s poems, discussed in section 3.3. As a strategy for authorial self-promotion, Hawes’s ‘obscure allegory’ seems ineffective, even self-negating—a far cry from Skelton’s *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell*. Yet in view of Hawes’s low status at court and limited access to patronage, his poetry, whilst less assertive than Skelton’s, can be seen as the realisation of a no less distinctive literary authorship—a claim to textual authority based on the assimilation of his writings to a recognisable aesthetic associated with the court, rather than their attribution to a historical poet.

### 3.1. Hawes’s ‘obscure allegory’

The recurrent metaphor for poetry in Hawes’s poems is the veiling of ‘trouth’ under ‘cloudy fygures’ (see Appendix 1).<sup>5</sup> It is an ancient trope, famously transmitted through Augustine and Macrobius, the ‘School of Chartres’, Boccaccio,<sup>6</sup> and later Hawes’s claimed poetic master, Lydgate. For these writers, poetry is essentially allegorical; it is the chaff, the colours, or cloak beneath which natural and moral

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<sup>5</sup> Note the distinction between the *figurae* or ‘figures’ analysed by medieval exegetes as a feature of allegorical writing and the tropes and figures treated in medieval and Renaissance rhetorical and poetic treatises. As will be seen below, Hawes’s use of *figures* and its related terms draws upon both traditions.

<sup>6</sup> See *MLTC*, especially 65-164 and 382-87; and Jeremy Tambling, *Allegory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 19-39.

truths are preserved and disseminated.<sup>7</sup> Thus, writes Hawes, in the proem to the *Conforte*,

The gentyll poetes / vnder cloudy fygures  
Do touche a trouth / and cloke it subtylly  
Harde is to construe poetycall scryptures  
They are so fayned / & made sentencyously  
For som do wrtye of loue by fables pryuely  
Some do endyte / vpon good moralyte  
Of chyualrous actes / done in antyqute

Whose fables and storyes ben pastymes pleasaunt  
To lordes and ladyes / as is theyr lykyng  
Dyuers to moralyte / ben oft attendaunt  
And many delyte to rede of louyng  
Youth loueth aduenture / pleasure and lykyng  
Aege foloweth polycy / sadnesse and prudence  
Thus they do dyffre / eche in experyence

(*Conforte*, 1-14)

The *Conforte*, a quasi-autobiographical account of the poet-narrator Amour's illicit love for the aristocratic lady Pucell, positions Hawes as a court poet who writes 'of loue by fables pryuely'. The historical referents or 'trouth' of the allegory are now impossible to recover—they were probably always meant to be obscure (see section 3.2.2). There are verbal similarities between the proem to the *Conforte* and the opening of Skelton's *Bowge*, quoted in section 2.1.<sup>8</sup> Yet where Skelton makes

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<sup>7</sup> The proem to the commentary on the Song of Songs attributed to Gregory the Great (c. 540-604 AD) is regarded as the *locus classicus* for the image of a text's *verba* ('words') and *sensus* ('meaning') as the chaff covering the grain. Gregory the Great, *Expositio super Cantica canticorum*, PL, LXXIX, 398-99; cf. Lydgate, *Troy Book*, Prol. 150-51, quoted below.

<sup>8</sup> A work which Hawes may have known directly. On the textual evidence for a possible poetic rivalry between Hawes and Skelton, in which their contemporary Alexander Barclay and the printer Wynkyn de Worde also seem to have participated, see Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan,

reference to the allegorical significance of poetry apparently only to confound it, Hawes's poem seems entirely to subscribe to the idea—probably found in Lydgate—that poetic fictions convey pre-existing truths. In the *Conforte*, as in each of his framed first-person allegories, Hawes presents allegorical poetry as an authoritative and versatile mode which is eminently suited to the 'lordes and ladyes' of his implied audience. Such writings convey 'moralyte' and instruction, but also furnish readers with 'pastymes pleasaunt' which divert idleness—what in Horace's dictum is described as the object of the poet: *prodesse* ('to benefit'), *delectare* ('to amuse'), or ideally, *simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae* ('to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life').<sup>9</sup> In the current section, I show how Hawes appropriates the critical vocabulary of poets' *enlumyning* of truth by means of their *eloquence* and *rethorik* which so proliferates in Lydgate and redeploys it in his framed first-person allegories of the lettered court of Henry VII. Drawing upon the tenets of Ciceronian rhetoric, he effects an unlikely conflation of poetry, rhetoric, and allegory (see section 3.1.2). By aligning poetry with the beneficiary effects of rational speech, Hawes invests his allegories with a moral and also a political significance; yet by emphasising the necessary difficulty of poetic fictions, he obviates the need to make them mean much at all. The poet, he insists, should be judged on his ability to devise pleasing fictions, for to write under 'cloudy fygures' implies the concealment of pre-existing truths. If these truths remain obscure (and they always do), it is the fault of the reader rather than the poet—

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160-62; Edwards, *Stephen Hawes* 81-82; Fox, *Politics and Literature*, 42-45; Seth Lerer, 'The Wiles of a Woodcut: Wynkyn de Worde and the Early Tudor Reader', *HLQ*, 59 (1996), 381-403, at 387-90; and, on a possible allusion to Skelton in Hawes's *Conforte*, section 3.2.2.

<sup>9</sup> Horace, *Ars poetica*, 333-34, in *Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry*, rev. edn, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, LCL 194 (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1929; first published 1926).

evidence of their ignorance of the ‘experyence’ or understanding belonging to the lifestyle, pedagogy, and literary preferences of the multi-generational court.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1.1. The court, Lydgate, and rhetoric

The little reliable biographical information for Hawes is summed up by the colophons in Wynkyn de Worde’s near contemporary editions of his poems (listed in Appendix 2).<sup>11</sup> In each, Hawes is described as ‘Stephen hawes one of the gromes of the most honorable chambre of our souerayne lorde kynge Henry the seueth’ or, on the titlepage of the *Conforte*, written perhaps eighteen months after Henry’s death in April 1509, ‘somtyme grome’ of the Chamber and presumably seeking employment.<sup>12</sup> The receipt of a mourning allowance of black cloth on the occasion of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth of York in February 1503 confirms Hawes’s status as a member of Henry’s retinue by that time,<sup>13</sup> though his precise duties as a groom of the Chamber remain unclear. In England, by the second half of the fifteen century, the *camera regis* or King’s Chamber had developed into ‘a kind of household within the household, [...] a privileged elite around which the social life

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<sup>10</sup> On Hawes’s use of the term *experience*, see introduction to section 3.2.

<sup>11</sup> There are no complete manuscript witnesses for Hawes’s poems. A quarto manuscript of some version of the *Pastime* is listed among the contents of the library of Sir Henry Savile (1549-1622) but is no longer extant. A. G. Watson, *The Manuscripts of Henry Savile of Banke* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 64. Extracts from the *Pastime*, the *Conuercyon*, and the *Conforte* appear in Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 230, fol. 246<sup>v</sup>; London, British Library, MS Harley 4294, fol. 80<sup>r</sup>; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.813, discussed in section 3.2.1.

<sup>12</sup> *Pastime* (1517), sig. A2<sup>v</sup>; cf. *Example* ([1506?]), sig. A3<sup>r</sup>; *Conuercyon* (1509), sig. [A8<sup>r</sup>]; and *loyfull Medytacyon* ([1510?]), sig. [A4<sup>v</sup>]. *Conforte* ([c. 1515]), titlepage. Hawes seems to have died before 1529, the conjectured date of publication of Thomas Feylde’s *Lytel treatyse called the contraverse bytwene a louer and a jaye* (see section 3.3), where Hawes is mentioned as deceased (sig. [A1<sup>v</sup>], l. 23).

<sup>13</sup> [Anon.], ‘Hawes, Stephen (d. 1523?)’, in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, 63 vols with supplement (3 vols), index and epitome, errata, and second supplement (4 vols) (London: Smith, Elder, 1885-1913), XXV, 188-90, at 188; cf. Kew, The National Archives, LC2/1.

of the court revolved'.<sup>14</sup> Under Henry VII, the Secret or Privy Chamber was formally separated from the apartments of the Great and Presence Chambers and given its own staff, an important move towards what David Starkey describes as the 'politics of intimacy' that characterised English government for much of the sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Whether Hawes was a member of the Privy Chamber or only the less exclusive 'chambre of the kynge' is not specified by de Worde. John Bale's claim that Hawes was called *ad aulam* ('to the court') of Henry VII and soon advanced *ad interiorem cameram, & ad secretum cubiculum tandem, sola virtutis commendatione* ('to the inner chamber, and finally to the secret chamber [or 'bedchamber'], by the sole recommendation of his virtue') is unsubstantiated.<sup>16</sup> It seems likely that Hawes enjoyed a proximity, though probably not an intimacy, with the king that would have been unusual for a man without aristocratic standing. At the very least, his works bear out a familiarity with the malicious gossip and jostling for position at court so powerfully rendered in Skelton's figure of Drede, and which is the object of criticism in Alexander Barclay's 1508 translation of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* and *Eclogues I-III* (see section 2.1).

Hawes may have found himself temporarily near the centre of Henry VII's increasingly closed day-to-day government; never, however, does he seem to have been confident of his place within the early Tudor literary establishment. If, as A. S. G. Edwards suggests, Hawes's role at court was likely 'connected with his poetic activities', there is nevertheless almost no evidence for the formal patronage of his

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<sup>14</sup> Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Starkey, 'Intimacy and Innovation', 71; cf. my section 2.2.

<sup>16</sup> Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytanniae*, 632, my translation.

writing.<sup>17</sup> A payment of 10s. made to Hawes ‘for a balett that he gaue to the kinges grace in Rewarde’ appears in the King’s Book of Payments for January 1506.<sup>18</sup> (This, incidentally, is the last record of payment made to Hawes. He is not included among the officers who received a mourning allowance for Henry VII’s funeral in May 1509.)<sup>19</sup> The didactic *Conuercyon* and epideictic *loyfull Medytacyon* may have been written with similar remuneration in mind; but Hawes never attained the poet laureate or *orator regis* status of writers such as Bernard André, Pietro Carmeliano, or Skelton (see sections 2.1 and 2.3). Neither title seems to have particularly appealed to Hawes: he describes himself in the proem to the *Conforte* as ‘none hystoryagraffe / nor poete laureate’ (20); and there is little evidence in his poetry of the commemoration of national events or affirmation of royal policy which one might expect of a self-appointed spokesperson of the king. Richard Firth Green characterises the *oratores regii* of the second half of the fifteenth century as

professional literary men whose duties were to make formal speeches in honour of the occasion and to trumpet their master’s praises in a fashionably pompous manner.<sup>20</sup>

For an English court poet to gain reward for his writing required a confidence and linguistic virtuosity that few possessed. In general, writes Green,

the only writers to have benefited directly [from the institution of the *orator regius*] would have been the polished Latinists, Italian and French humanists [...] favoured by the new fashion; vernacular authors would only have gained materially

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<sup>17</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Kew, The National Archives, E36/214, fol. 14<sup>v</sup>; transcribed in *Tudor Chamber Books: Kingship, Court and Society: The Chamber Books of Henry VII and Henry VIII, 1485-1521* (University of Winchester, The National Archives, and the Digital Humanities Institute, University of Sheffield) <[https://www.dhi.ac.uk/chamber-books/folio/E36\\_214\\_fo\\_014v.xml](https://www.dhi.ac.uk/chamber-books/folio/E36_214_fo_014v.xml)>.

<sup>19</sup> [Anon.], ‘Hawes, Stephen’, 188; cf. Kew, The National Archives, LC2/1.

<sup>20</sup> Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, 174.

if, like Skelton, they were also capable of turning their hand to pompous Latin oratory.<sup>21</sup>

Such poet-rhetoricians were instrumental exponents of what Gordon Kipling describes as the 'Burgundian aureate style' in vogue at the court of Henry VII.<sup>22</sup> This 'tradition of learned chivalry' associated with the *Grands Rhétoriciens* of the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Burgundian and French courts has early Tudor specimens in André's *Douze triomphes de Henry VII* (1497), Skelton's *Speculum principis*, and, less overtly, the *Garlande*.<sup>23</sup> Kipling classes Hawes as one among the 'mediocre poets' active at court, whose attempts to emulate the encomiastic allegories of the *Grands Rhétoriciens* resulted only in 'uninspired English imitation' unlikely to attract patronage.<sup>24</sup> To judge Hawes's poetry as lacking inspiration is not entirely unjustified; it is inaccurate, however, to suggest that Hawes, facing a competition for literary patronage in which he did not have the poetic resources to compete, was so devoid of ingenuity as to content himself with inadequate reproductions of fashionable continental texts. Lacking the academic credentials of the poet laureate and the polished Latinate rhetoric befitting an 'orator of the king', Hawes yokes the 'learned chivalry' of the *Grands Rhétoriciens* to a Chaucerian-Lydgatean tradition of framed first-person allegory in order to claim an alternative, more enigmatic textual authority for the writings of the English court poet.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>22</sup> Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 13 and passim.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 11. Kipling draws attention to Barclay's 'Towre of Vertue and Honoure' in *Eclogue IV* (1513-14), derived from Jean Lemaire de Belges's *Temple d'Honneur et de Vertus* (1503) (22-23), and Hawes's *Example* and *Pastime*, which Kipling compares to the personification allegories of Olivier de la Marche (1425-1502) (25).



Hawes's own comments recommend that analysis of his literary attitudes begins with an examination of the influence of his claimed poetic master, Lydgate. Each of Hawes's poems includes a eulogy for 'my mayster Lydgate' (*Pastime*, 48), sometimes appearing alongside the other two members of the English literary triumvirate, Gower and Chaucer (cf. Dunbar, *Targe*, 253-70), though usually receiving the longest treatment. The terms of Hawes's praise for Lydgate remain relatively consistent throughout his career and his eulogies constitute some of his most explicit statements on the nature of poetry and the role of the poet. Notable in this respect is the divergence between Hawes's stated critical ideals and the comparable comments (and practice) of Lydgate himself. Where Lydgate asserts the power of poetry to illuminate historical and moral truths, Hawes turns the conceit on its head, suggesting instead that the hallmark of good poetry is the *veiling* of truths that are too sensitive or *recherché* for open publication.

In the opening of the *Pastime*, Lydgate seems to represent all that Hawes—and perhaps also the young Tudor dynasty which he served—aspired to be. In the address to Henry VII at the beginning of the poem, Lydgate is described as the poet *par excellence* of Lancastrian orthodoxy and success, a chronicler and counsellor, and the beneficiary of royal patronage:<sup>25</sup>

...the monke of Bury / floure of eloquence  
Which was in time / of grete excellence

Of your predecessour / the .v. kynge henry  
Vnto whose grace / he did present

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<sup>25</sup> On the scholarly debate regarding Lydgate's putative status as the quasi-official poet of the Lancastrian regime, see chapter 1, n. 92.

Ryght famous bokes / of parfyte memory  
 Of his faynyng with termes eloquent  
 Whose fatall fyccyons / are yet permanent  
 Grounded on reason / with cloudy fygures  
 He cloked the trouthe / of all his scryptures  
 (*Pastime*, 26-35)

Hawes despairs that 'The light of trouthe / I lacke the connynge to cloke' (35) but, undeterred, resolves to proceed with his allegorical poem:

Yet as I maye / I shall blowe out a fume  
 To hyde my mynde / vnderneath a fable  
 By conuert colour / well and probable  
 (*Pastime*, 40-42)

The opening of the *Pastime* follows with little variation the formula repeated in the prologues to each of Hawes's poems. The *Pastime*'s address to the monarch is usually replaced by an encomium for the poets of antiquity, who led readers to knowledge and virtue by means of their eloquent accounts of the deeds of noble men.<sup>26</sup> Next comes the eulogy for Lydgate—accompanied by Gower and Chaucer in the *Example* and the *Conforte*—as more recent exemplars of such profitable writing.<sup>27</sup> There follows the familiar modesty topos, in which the poet apologises for his 'rudenes' and lack of 'connynge'.<sup>28</sup> But finally, he is always overcome by a moral duty to 'eschewe ydlenesse' and resolves to 'folowe the trace' of his esteemed predecessors.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Example*, 1-7; *Pastime*, 50-54; *Conuercyon*, 1-14; *loyfull Medytacyon*, 1-7; *Conforte*, 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> *Example*, 22-28; *Pastime*, 26-35; *Conuercyon*, 22-28; *loyfull Medytacyon*, 8-14; *Conforte*, 22-28.

<sup>28</sup> And in the *Conuercyon*, 'my youth' (37). *Example*, 8-21; *Conuercyon*, 36-56; *loyfull Medytacyon*, 15-28; *Pastime*, 36-56; *Conforte*, 15-21.

<sup>29</sup> *Pastime*, 36-48, 1395-96, 5812, 5814-15; *Conuercyon*, 6, 46-47, 366; *Conforte*, 15-16, 21.

Skelton and Dunbar have demonstrated the unreliability of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century modesty topoi (sections 2.1 and 2.2); Hawes's hackneyed claim to 'folowe the trace [...] of my mayster Lydgate' (*Pastime*, 47-48) is no exception. A. S. G. Edwards and Robert Meyer-Lee note that Hawes's poetic mode and style are in fact quite different from Lydgate's.<sup>30</sup> Given his apparently low estimation of his own poetic resources, it comes as little surprise that Hawes rarely should have reached towards the high style of Lydgate's 'Balade at the Reverence of Our Lady' or 'On Gloucester's Approaching Marriage', just as he distanced himself from the 'hystoryagraffe[s]' and 'poete[s] laureate' at court. More telling in relation to Hawes's understanding of the nature of poetry and the role of the poet is his apparent disinclination towards openly epideictic writing altogether.<sup>31</sup> The catalogue of Lydgate's 'bokes' towards the end of the exposition on rhetoric in the *Pastime* (1338-65; see section 3.1.2) is a fairly representative overview of his major works. Hawes's inclusion of the 'temple of glasse' (1365) in addition to the spuriously attributed *Court of Sapience* (1357) and *The Assembly of Gods* (1362-63) displays an obvious bias for dream poetry. But the list also includes: a hagiography, *The Life of St Edmund* (1344); a pseudo-history, *Troy Book* (1358-61); a fable, *The Churl and the Bird* (1352-56); the encyclopaedic *Fall of Princes* (1345-51); and Lydgate's immensely popular 'compendium of Mariolatry', *The Life of Our Lady* (1347).<sup>32</sup> There is an obvious disparity here between Hawes's ideal role for the poet—of which Lydgate is the epitome—and the poems that Lydgate actually

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<sup>30</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 12-20; Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 180-84.

<sup>31</sup> With the exceptions of the short *Conuercyon*, *loyfull Medytacyon*, and the obligatory encomia of Henry VII and the Tudor dynasty at the end of the *Example* (2046-101) and beginning of the *Pastime* (1-21).

<sup>32</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate*, 286. The *Life* is extant in forty-two manuscripts, of which thirty-seven are essentially complete.

wrote. For Hawes, writes Edwards, Lydgate is the exemplar of the industrious and didactic poet whose writings engendered social and political harmony; 'it seems that he [i.e. Hawes] saw his role as being like that of Lydgate—as a didactic advisor and counselor of those who commissioned his writings'.<sup>33</sup> Incumbent on this role was 'a responsibility to afford such an audience with *moral* instruction rather than propaganda, satire, or entertainment'.<sup>34</sup> For Hawes, the most effective medium for conveying that *moral*ite was the fable or allegorical narrative—'poetycall scriptures [...] made sentencyously'. He differs here from Lydgate, for as Meyer-Lee observes, 'a relatively small fraction of the monk's work makes use of the fabular/allegorical method that characterizes the blend of romance and moral allegory of Hawes's own poems'.<sup>35</sup> If, then, Lydgate is most important to Hawes 'as a model for what a poet and his poetry should be', it is only after his writings have been subjected to a considerable shift in emphasis.<sup>36</sup>

Lydgate's *Troy Book* (1412-20)—cited by Hawes in the *Pastime* and probably known by him directly<sup>37</sup>—provides a suggestive point of comparison between Lydgate's and Hawes's diverging poetic practice, notwithstanding the similarities in their critical vocabulary. In the Prologue to the work, Lydgate calls upon Mars,

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<sup>33</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>35</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 183.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>37</sup> As suggested by the verbal echoes of the Prologue in Hawes's statements on poets and poetry, and also his many allusions to the Troy story. *Troy Book* was printed in London by Richard Pynson in 1513 (STC 5579), later than the composition of the *Pastime*. But evidence for Hawes's knowledge of Lydgate's poem includes the painting of 'The grete dystruccyon of the cyte of troye' on the walls of the temple of Mars (3026; Hawes gives *Troy Book* the same title at 1359-60) and the depiction of the 'syge of Troye' (5235) on the walls of the hall of Bell Pucell's silver tower, followed by a description of the 'golden aras | Which treated well of the syge of Thebes' (5250-51; Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes* was printed in Westminster by de Worde in around 1494 [STC 17031]).

Othea, Cleo, and Calliope for assistance in the translator's task (1-68);<sup>38</sup> he advertises his royal commission from 'the worthy prynce of Walys' (102),<sup>39</sup> then establishes the credentials of his source, the 'Troye Boke' of Guido delle Colonne,<sup>40</sup>

Wher was remembrid of auctours us befor  
Of the dede the verrie trewe corn  
So as it fil severed from the chaf  
(*Troy Book*, Prol. 148-51)

The remainder of the Prologue (152-384) comprises a lengthy commendation of the chroniclers of Troy, those 'clerkis' who

...in memorie  
Han trewly set thorough diligent labour  
And enlumyned with many corious flour  
Of rethorik, to make us comprehende  
The trouth of al, as it was in kende  
(*Troy Book*, Prol. 216-20)

The premium placed on 'trouth', and the role of *rethorik* and *eloquence* in the preservation and *enlumyning* of historical and moral truths, is common to both Lydgate and Hawes.<sup>41</sup> Somewhat surprising, then, given Hawes's praise of Lydgate's

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<sup>38</sup> John Lydgate, *Troy Book: Selections*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998). All references to *Troy Book* are to this edition.

<sup>39</sup> The future King Henry V (1386-1422, r. 1413-22). *Troy Book* is the only instance of Lydgate's direct patronage by Henry V, as claimed by Hawes in the *Pastime* and *loyfull Medytacyon*.

<sup>40</sup> I.e. *Historia destructionis Troiae* (1287).

<sup>41</sup> *Enlumyne* is one of a group of terms described by Lois A. Ebin as embodying Lydgate's critical ideals: '[h]e envisions the poet as an illuminator who uses the power of language to shed light on the poet's matter and make it more significant and effective'; poets are rhetoricians 'who lead mortals to truth by means of their heightened language and amplification'; and their writings, which promote harmony and order, are beneficial to the well-being of the state. Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 19, 48. Lydgate's use of *enlumyne* evokes the art of manuscript illumination—it is a material analogue for the 'corious flour | Of rethorik' with which poets ornament their writings. The term also draws upon the Augustinian concept of spiritual illumination, for poets are endowed with their

‘fatall fyccyons’ in the *Pastime*, is the appearance in *Troy Book* of a vitriolic attack on poets and poetry. Some ‘clerkys’, writes Lydgate, when treating the matter of Troy,

...han the trouthe spared  
In her writyng and pleylnly not declared  
So as it was nor tolde out feithfully  
But it transformed in her poysy  
Thorough veyn fables, whiche of entencioun  
They han contrevyed by false transumpcioun  
To hyde trouthe falsely under cloude,  
And the sothe of malys for to schroude  
(*Troy Book*, Prol. 259-66)

In the lines that follow, Homer is criticised for his bias towards the Greeks:

And in his dities that wer so fresche and gay  
With sugred wordes under hony soote  
His galle is hidde lowe by the rote  
That it may nought outewarde ben espied.  
(*Troy Book*, Prol. 276-78)<sup>42</sup>

Next, Ovid is indicted, who

...also poetycally hath closyd  
Falshede with trouthe...  
[...]

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rhetorical skill through God’s grace and, by extension, their eloquent writings serve to enlighten their readers. Ebin’s discussion of the shift in perspective evidenced in Hawes’s poems, especially the *Conforte*, ‘from the notion of the poet as an “enluminer” [...] to a vision of the poet as “vates” or prophet’ (134) is considered in section 3.2.2.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. the criticism of Homer’s partisanship in Chaucer, *House of Fame*, 1477-80; and the late fourteenth-century Middle English translation of Guido’s *Historia*, *The Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy*, 37-46.

His mysty speche so hard is to unfolde  
That it entriketh rederis that it se  
(*Troy Book*, Prol. 299-303)

And even Virgil, though his account in the *Aeneid* is mostly faithful, is accused of veering into fable when he 'lyst som whyle | The tracys folwe of Omeris stile' (307-08).<sup>43</sup> Here, poets' 'cloudy fygures'—what Boccaccio in *De genealogia deorum gentilium* describes as the capacity of poetry *velamento fabuloso atque decenti veritatem contegere* ('to conceal truth [beneath] a fictitious yet fitting covering' [XIV.vii, my translation])<sup>44</sup>—are castigated as false and deceptive. Paradoxically, however, it is in precisely such terms of artifice and concealment—in particular, the cloaking of truth under a 'cloude' of language—that Hawes repeatedly describes the activity that is proper to poets. A degree of verbal borrowing seems likely; yet as will be seen, for Hawes, there is nothing contradictory about *rethorik* and *fables*.

Lydgate's comments on poetic fictions and poets, even pagan poets, are far from uniformly negative; he maintains, nevertheless, an implicit distinction between the illuminatory power of well-fitted language on the one hand and the obscurity of allegory on the other which is not seen in Hawes. In 'A Chapitle of men doing Such thing as þey be dispo[s]ed to' (*Fall*, III.3781-836), Lydgate affirms that the 'cheef labour' of poets 'is vicis to repreve | With a maner couert symylitude' (III.3830-31). The opening of Lydgate's *Isopes Fabules* recasts the Phrygian Aesop in just such a role, as a philosopher and 'poete laureate' (8) of Rome. Aesop's fables

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<sup>43</sup> In these passages, Lydgate follows Guido's attack on the classical poets of Troy in the prologue to the *Historia*. C. David Benson, *The History of Troy in Middle English Literature: Guido delle Colonne's 'Historia Destructionis Troiae' in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1980). But cf. Benson's discussion of Lydgate's efforts elsewhere in the Prologue to rehabilitate poetry as a medium for history (35-41).

<sup>44</sup> In *Opere in versi*. Corbaccio. *Trattatello in laude di Dante*. *Prose latine*. *Epistole*, ed. Pier Giorgio Ricci (Milan: Ricciardi, 1965).

taken from nature ‘includyd gret prudence | And moralytees full notable of sentence’ (20-21), writes Lydgate, and a distinctly Boccaccian dichotomy is drawn between the fabulist’s ‘exsample pleyne’ (16) and the prized wisdom within:

Vnder blak erpe byn precious stones founde,  
Ryche saphyres & charbuncles full ryall,  
And, who þat myneþ downe lowe in þe grounde,  
Of gold & syluer groweþ þe mynerall;  
Perlys whyte, clere & oriental  
Ben oft founde in muscle shellys blake,  
And out of fables gret wysdom men may take.

(*Isopes Fabules*, 22-28)<sup>45</sup>

Closer still to Boccaccio’s defence of poetry is the opening of Lydgate’s *Churl and the Bird*, where an analogy is made between the ‘Problemys, liknessis & ffigures’ (1) of the Bible and the ‘dirk parables’ of ‘poetes laureate’ (15-16):

Poetes write wondirful liknessis,  
And vndir covert kepte hem self ful cloos;  
Bestis thei take, & fowlis to witnessis,  
Of whoos feynyng fables first arroos

(*Churl and the Bird*, 29-32)<sup>46</sup>

Significantly, in neither poem does Lydgate’s description of the composition of fables include an explicit commendation of the *rethorik* or *eloquence* of their makers.<sup>47</sup> It is here, I suggest, in their interpretation of the relationship between

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Boccaccio, *De Genealogia*, XIV.xviii.

<sup>46</sup> In *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate: Part II: Secular Poems*, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS, o. s., 192 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

<sup>47</sup> But cf., in different contexts, Lydgate’s praise of Chaucer for his ‘excellence | In rethorike and in eloquence’, even though his *Canterbury Tales* contains ‘Feyned talis’ as well as ‘thing historial’; and the description of Aristotle as ‘ffadir and ffoundour / of the sciencys sevene’ and as having drunk ‘at



rhetoric, allegory, and poetry, that Hawes and Lydgate most appreciably diverge. Hawes comes closest to Lydgate's ideal of poetry's *enlumyning* of universal truths in the prologue to his earliest known work, the *Example*. There, 'poetes eloquent' are described as exercising their faculties 'Bokes to contryue [...] For the profyte of humanyte' (2-7) without any *cloudes* or *fygures* encroaching on their writing. But turning to the *Pastime*, one encounters Hawes's first, fullest expression of the unusual conviction that the purpose of poetry is to conceal as much as it is to illuminate truths. He blithely ignores Lydgate's indictment of poets' 'veyn fables' and adopts the same reverential attitude towards 'the great auctoryte | Of poetes olde' as the opening of Skelton's *Bowge* (section 2.1). At first, Hawes's obscure allegorical mode seems like a rejection of his supposed poetic tutelage. Yet as I demonstrate in section 3.1.2, Hawes's approach can be better understood as a creative expansion of another of Lydgate's favourite critical terms, *rethorik*, as part of a larger justification of the profitability of poetic fictions.

### 3.1.2. Justifying poetic fictions in the chamber of Rethoryke

In the *Pastime*, Hawes appropriates a Ciceronian model of rhetoric in order to claim a rational, moral basis for allegorical poetry. The poem is ostensibly concerned with the knightly education of the poet-narrator, Graunde Amoure, in his pursuit of the aristocratic lady, Bell Pucell; however, included in his instruction is a lengthy interview with the allegorical figure Dame Rethoryke, in which Hawes takes the

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Ellyconys wele'. John Lydgate, *The Siege of Thebes*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), ll. 41-42, 49; Lydgate and Benedict Burgh, *Lydgate and Burgh's Secrees of Old Philisoffres*, ed. Robert Steele, EETS, e. s., 66 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Trübner, 1894), ll. 704, 722. Inconsistencies such as these may have further enabled Hawes's reappropriation of Lydgate's critical vocabulary.

opportunity to elaborate the idea of poetry as veiling 'trouth' under 'cloudy fygures' that is outlined in miniature in the proem to the *Conforte*.

Following the address to Henry VII, the *Pastime* proper begins with the poet-narrator walking out on a midsummer's day. He encounters a statue pointing out two ways, one of 'contemplacyon' (85) and the other of 'the actyfe lyfe', which leads 'Vnto labell pucell / the fayre lady excellent' (94, 96). The poet-narrator takes the active way, an inversion of the traditional hierarchy of the *vita contemplativa* over the *vita activa*, but which follows the pattern of such fifteenth-century French allegorical quests as René of Anjou's *Livre du cuer d'amour espris* (1457-77).<sup>48</sup> As night falls, the poet-narrator reaches a second image, a waymarker on the path 'Vnto the toure / of famous doctryne' (136). Only now does he set himself down to sleep, before awaking to the sight of the personified 'Fame' (191), 'enuronned aboute | With tongues of fyre' (156-57), as strikingly illustrated by a three-quarter page woodcut in de Worde's 1517 edition (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>; Hodnett 1008).<sup>49</sup> The poet-narrator tells Fame his name, Graunde Amoure, and learns of the peerless beauty of the lady Bel Pucell (183-294). Fame advises Graunde Amoure that he will only attain Pucell after he has received tuition in the seven liberal arts at the tower of Doctryne (295-315).<sup>50</sup> Arriving at the tower, he is received by Doctryne and requests instruction from her seven daughters: Gramer, Logyke, Rethoryke, Arysmetryke, Musyke, Geometry, and Astronomy. He moves through the chambers

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<sup>48</sup> Where 'the "knight" functions essentially as a representative of the *vita activa* more generally and therefore easily becomes the perfect figure of the layman's entanglement with worldly contingency'. Marco Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests from Deguileville to Spenser* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), 4-5. For Hawes's secularised re-imaginings of the 'Pilgrimage of Life' genre, see section 3.2.1.

<sup>49</sup> Not extant in the imperfect copy of de Worde's 1509 edition.

<sup>50</sup> On the origins and development of the seven liberal arts, see James A. Weisheipl, 'The Nature, Scope, and Classification of the Sciences', in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. David C. Lindberg (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 461-82.

of Dame Gramer and Dame Logyke, before ascending a stair to the chamber of Rethoryke (484-651), where

With humble eeres / of parfyte audyence  
To my request / she dyde than enclyne  
Sayenge she wolde / in her goodly scyence  
In short space / me so well indoctryne  
That my dull mynde / it shoulde enlumyne  
With golden beames / for euer to opresse  
My rude langage / and all my symplenesse

I thanked her / of her grete gentlnes  
And axed her / after this questyon  
Madame I sayde / I welde knowe doubtles  
What rethoryke is / without abusyon  
Rethoryke she sayde / was founde by reason  
Man for to gouerne / well and prudently  
His wordes to order / his speche to purify  
(*Pastime*, 680-93)

An extensive discourse on the art of rhetoric follows. Hawes devotes six hundred lines to Rethoryke's 'doctryne' (652-1295), a ninth of the *Pastime's* total length and more than six times longer than any other of the chapters on the liberal arts (the next longest, on grammar, is ninety-seven lines [512-609]).<sup>51</sup> The likely source for the broad schema of the tower of Doctryne episode is the treatment of the seven liberal arts in Gregor Reisch's *Margarita Philosophica*, published in 1503. The copying of three woodcuts from the *Margarita* for the frontispiece of the

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<sup>51</sup> This treatment of rhetoric contains over half the instances of the 'cloudy fygures' trope listed in Appendix 1.

*Pastime* (Hodnett 1007) and to illustrate the chambers of Geometry (sig. l1<sup>v</sup>; Hodnett 1010) and Astronomy (sig. l4<sup>r</sup>; Hodnett 987) indicates an effort by Hawes's printer, de Worde, to advertise a connection between Reisch's encyclopaedia and Hawes's poem.<sup>52</sup> Less convincing is the claim of the *Pastime*'s early twentieth-century editor, William Edward Mead, that 'Hawes had diligently studied the *Margarita Philosophica*' for his didactic material in the *Pastime*.<sup>53</sup> The loose parallels between the two expositions of the seven liberal arts are likely accidental and Reisch pays no special attention to rhetoric.<sup>54</sup> Structural similarities also exist between the *Pastime*'s tower of Doctryne episode and the exposition of the seven liberal arts in the pseudo-Lydgatean *Court of Sapience* (1499-2205), composed in perhaps the second half of the fifteenth-century and published by Caxton in 1483 (STC 17015), and Caxton's translation of the cosmographical treatise, *Image du monde*, published in 1481 (STC 24762). Again, both works contain only a perfunctory treatment of rhetoric and are unlikely to be direct sources for the *Pastime*.<sup>55</sup> Hawes follows the Ciceronian division of rhetoric into five operations or 'partes': 'inuencyon' or invention (701-91);<sup>56</sup> 'dysposycyon' or arrangement (820-

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. Gregor Reisch, *Margarita Philosophica* (Freiburg: Johann Schott, 1503) USTC 675099, fols 1<sup>r</sup>, 122<sup>r</sup>, and 126<sup>v</sup>. De Worde's use of woodcuts to suggest visual analogies between publications is discussed in section 3.3.

<sup>53</sup> Hawes, *Pastime*, ed. Mead, lxxvi.

<sup>54</sup> Reisch's third book on *Rhetorica* is only twenty-two pages compared to the sixty-five and seventy pages given to the first and second books on *Grammatica* and *Dialectica*.

<sup>55</sup> See Hawes, *Pastime*, ed. Mead, xlv; Whitney Wells, 'Stephen Hawes and *The Court of Sapience*', *RES*, 6 (1930), 284-94, at 284-85; and Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 28.

<sup>56</sup> Further subdivided into the operations of the '.v. inward wyttes' (703): 'comyn wytte' (706-07); 'ymagynacyon' (708-21); 'fantasy' (722-35); 'estymacyon' (736-49); and 'memory' (750-64). Jane Griffiths understands Hawes's use of the vocabulary of faculty psychology to 'have an effect analogous to the later association of the fantasy with the process of writing, attributing responsibility for the work to the writer himself, rather than to any external authority'. Griffiths, *Skelton and Poetic Authority*, 140-41; cf. Ruth E. Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychology Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1975). My focus here is on Hawes's insistence on the existence of universal truths independent of the poet, which his allegorical poetry serves to preserve and conceal. The question of Hawes's self-presentation,

903); ‘elocucyon’ or style (904-31); ‘pronuncyacyon’ or delivery (1184-239); and ‘memoratyfe’ or memory (1240-95)—commonplace in Latin treatises on rhetoric,<sup>57</sup> though never previously treated at such length in English.<sup>58</sup>

Hawes’s description of rhetorical ornamentation closely resembles his justifications of poetic fictions in the prologues and proems to his poems. In the section on ‘inuencyon’, Rethoryke recalls that

It was the guyse in olde antyquyte  
Of famous poetes / ryght ymagynatyfe  
Fables to fayne / by good auctoryte  
They were so wyse / and so inuentyfe  
Theyr obscure reason / fayre and sugratyfe  
Pronounced trothe / vnder cloudy fygyres  
By the inuencyon / of theyr fatall scryptures

(*Pastime*, 715-21)

The proclivity of rhetoricians, like poets, to *feining* (cf. Lydgate, *Troy Book*, Prol. 268, 272), the difficulty of their ‘obscure reason’, and their pronouncement of truths ‘vnder cloudy fygyres’ and in ‘fatall scryptures’ especially resonates with the proem to the *Conforte*. The effect is a blurring of the tenets of poetic and rhetorical composition (itself nothing new)<sup>59</sup> and, in turn, the repositioning of obscure,

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especially in the *Conforte*, as an originator and not only a propagator of truths is returned to in section 3.2.2.

<sup>57</sup> Notably the two versions and epitome of the *Rethorica nova* of Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni (c. 1425-1503) published by Caxton in 1479-80 (STC 24188.5, 24189, 24190.3), discussed in Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1961), 78-81.

<sup>58</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 35-41. The *locus classicus* for the fivefold division of rhetoric is Cicero’s *De inventione* (91-88 BC) and the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (c. 86-82? BC). For an alternative account of Hawes’s transferral of rhetorical precepts to the theory of poetry, see Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, 81-87.

<sup>59</sup> On ‘[t]he Horatian-Medieval Christian-Renaissance Rationalist view’ of poetry and rhetoric dominant in medieval Europe, ‘in which poetic and rhetoric are identical, being only alternative terms for the ordered use of compelling language (eloquence) in ethical demonstration’, see Payne,

allegorical writing within a rhetorical programme to which it hardly belongs.

Metaphorical *obscuritas* is typically condemned by classical rhetoricians, for whom the normal function of rhetoric is unambiguous communication. Quintilian, in his influential *Institutio oratoria* (c. 95 AD, rediscovered 1416), condones the use of *allegoria* for introducing *novitas* ('novelty') and *emutatio* ('change') into an oration but warns against the exaggeration of the trope: *Sed allegoria, quae est obscurior, aenigma dicitur; vitium meo quidem iudico, si quidem dicere dilucide virtus* ('When, however, an allegory is too obscure, we call it a riddle: such riddles are, in my opinion, to be regarded as blemishes, in view of the fact that lucidity is a virtue' [VIII.vi.52]).<sup>60</sup> Deliberately obfuscating oratory of this kind runs entirely counter to Cicero's description of the origins of rhetoric: the exercise of *ratio* ('reason') in the service of moral and civic duty.<sup>61</sup> Hawes is eager to claim an analogous function for his own allegorical writing—but he has no intention of reducing poetic fictions to a series of benign rhetorical tropes. In the *Pastime*, Hawes conceives of poetry as arcane and visionary, even prophetic, but also seems to have realised the value of interpretative obstacles when trying to convey the seriousness of his message.<sup>62</sup> At

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*Key of Remembrance*, 9-59, 22 quoted; and on 'rhetorized poetics' in sixteenth-century England, *ERLC*, 48-55.

<sup>60</sup> In Quintilian, *The Orator's Education*, trans. D. A. Russell, 5 vols, LCL, 124-27, 494 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), III. Contrast the idea, prevalent in exegetical discourse, that some degree of obscurity is desirable in allegory, for truths that are acquired with difficulty are more readily retained. On attitudes to *obscuritas* from classical antiquity to the Renaissance, see further Katelijne Schiltz, *Music and Riddle Culture in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 22-64.

<sup>61</sup> *De inventione*, I.i-ii, in Cicero, *On invention. The Best Kind of Orator. Topics*, trans. H. M. Hubbell, LCL 386 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

<sup>62</sup> I distinguish here between Hawes's obscure allegory and the *sprezzatura* (to adopt the language of Baldassare Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* [1528]) or studied detachment evinced in the stylistic obscurity of the next generation of poets at the Tudor court, notably Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42). Chris Stamatakis, writing of Wyatt's sonnet 'Cesar when that the traytour of Egipt', identifies a prefiguration of Wyatt's 'poetic theory [...] of indirection and indeterminacy' in Hawes's *Pastime*. I am wary of overextending the analogy. In this sonnet, Wyatt is not describing obscure allegorical poetry but rather difficult eloquence such as that sanctioned as 'a poynte of witte' in the

moments, Hawes alludes to the received role of poetry/rhetoric to 'shewe' as well as to 'cloke' truths (e.g. *Pastime*, 869-72, 892-96). Yet in aggregate, Rethoryke's discourse is overwhelmingly concerned with the facility of her art for sequestering truth beyond the reach of the uninitiated.

Hawes's requisition of Ciceronian rhetoric in order to claim a rational, moral basis for allegorical poetry can be seen as an expedient response to his precarious position at the early Tudor court. Without the humanist pedigree of the continental writers patronised by Henry VII and the young Henry VIII, Hawes devises an unusual claim for the textual authority of his vernacular writings, appropriating and extending the social imperative of exactly that Latinate rhetoric which has otherwise circumscribed their status. In his discussion of the chamber of Rethoryke scene, A. S. G. Edwards draws attention to Hawes's privileging of rhetoric as the *sine qua non* of good speech and good governance<sup>63</sup>—the art which, as Rethoryke relates, 'was founde by reason | Man for to gouerne [...] His wordes to order / his speche to purify'. By aligning poetry with the beneficiary effects of ordered speech, Hawes lends to his writing a moral and also a political significance. The role of the poet, writes Edwards, 'becomes a didactic and expository one, to exemplify right conduct by the way he writes'.<sup>64</sup> That conduct is partly exemplified in the poetry of Lydgate; yet Hawes goes further, overtly conflating not only rhetoric and poetry, but poetry—and, by extension, rhetoric—and allegory. Rita Copeland, in her

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final section of Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (a distinction which Stamatakis does partly acknowledge). Stamatakis, 'Early Tudor Literary Criticism?', in *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.146>> (p. 15); Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique, for the vse of all suche as are studious of eloquence...* ([London]: Richard Grafton, 1553) STC 25799, sig. Z3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 35-41.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

illuminating study 'Lydgate, Hawes, and the Science of Rhetoric in the Late Middle Ages', notes precedents for the fusing of poetry and allegory in the writings of the Chartreans and Boccaccio (cf. section 1.1); in the *Pastime*, however, 'this common model of poetics takes a more complex form in its explicit linkage with rhetorical teachings of eloquence and especially of external ornamentation'.<sup>65</sup> Where Lydgate conceives of rhetoric chiefly in terms of verbal ornamentation, in the *Pastime*, rhetorical *colours* and allegorical *figures* become almost synonymous:

He [i.e. Hawes] defines rhetoric in terms of the ancient philosophical mode of Macrobius, as the ability to speak fictively, to cloak literal truth in fair figures, just as the old poets used fiction (*fabula*) as a vehicle of philosophy. [...] Rhetoric here has become allegory; and the job of allegory or *fabula* in its Macrobian sense is to hide truth from the uninitiated, to increase the gravity and prestige of philosophical truth by privatizing it.<sup>66</sup>

Whence, I propose, proceeds the fallacious but nevertheless compelling syllogism underpinning Hawes's obscure allegorical mode. The purpose of rhetoric, he avers, is the improvement of mankind; it functions, like allegorical poetry, by means of the covering and conveyance of pre-existing truths. Thus, surmises Hawes, in order to write edifying poetry, it is more desirable to obscure than to illuminate truths—and the more impenetrable or 'privatised' his fictions, the more certain ought to be the reader of their moral import.

This vaunted obscurity works to distinguish Hawes's allegories from the compositions of the poetasters, and to lionise his readers as a moral and intellectual elite. For Hawes, observes Edwards,

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<sup>65</sup> Copeland, 'Lydgate, Hawes, Science of Rhetoric', *MLQ*, 53 (1992), 57-82, at 76

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-77.



poetry should ideally be 'fables' [*Pastime*, 1074, 1389], particularly those which are 'pleasaunt and couerte' (1389). [...] True poetry is 'fatal', a word that is generally glossed as 'prophetic', but more properly in its contexts seems to mean 'true' or 'truthful'. But such truths as he perceives cannot be overtly expressed. [...] What Hawes seems to be arguing for is the validity and importance of a form of allegorical poetry in which meaning is concealed beneath the 'cloudy figures' of its surface, meaning which remains accessible only to intelligent, thoughtful readers since it is 'grounded on reason' [*Conuercyon*, 4].<sup>67</sup>

Edwards reasons that Hawes's 'truthful' writing is true only to the extent that is perceived through the lens of a rational understanding. The onus here is on the reader as much as the writer, as Hawes shifts the stakes of textual authority by re-emphasising the skill and morality preceding both the composition *and* interpretation of poetic fictions. His poetry includes a built-in rebuttal against allegations of emptiness and deceit. '[R]ude people / opprest with blydnes' may disclaim the veracity of *fatal* poetic fictions, 'For they byleue / in no maner of wyse | That vnder a colour / a trouthe may aryse' (792, 795-96). Yet if Hawes's claim is that the full significance of his poetry will be apparent only to the receptive few, it is not only inevitable *but necessary* that a good number of his readers will be excluded from its allegorical meaning. Reading cynically, one might observe that Hawes's writings remain *fatal* only so long as his readers are persuaded that his words conceal a meaning that they are unable to uncover. One implication of Hawes's obscure or sometimes simply banal framed first-person allegories is that the 'understanding' or, in Hawes's terms, the 'true experyence' needed to properly comprehend them is the preserve of an idealised court audience no less

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<sup>67</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 36-37.

insubstantial than his 'cloudy fygures'. Of course, this should not stop readers from trying, for if nothing else, the claim to textual authority implicit in Hawes's allegories means that, though the ordinary reader may lack access to their most profound truths, they can continue to take delight in the attractive surface of his poetry, confident in the knowledge that such 'poetycall scriptures' are no idle pastime.

### **3.2. Allegory turned inwards**

Having examined Hawes's theory of the necessary concealment of moral and/or political truths beneath poetic fictions that require interpretation, I now propose a reappraisal of what has usually been regarded as its infelicitous expression in the *Pastime* and the *Conforte*. My readings are informed by what I described in section 3.1.2 as Hawes's association of the mode of allegorical poetry with the social imperative of rhetoric—a claim for the textual authority of his writings at once enabling and restrictive, which helps to contextualise Hawes's difficult, distinctive engagement with the concept of literary authorship in his dream-framed first-person allegories. The challenges of balancing the delightful and the instructive, the generic and the particular, are everywhere apparent in Hawes's discursive and often structurally deficient dream poems. The dream, whilst aligning Hawes's poetry with Lydgate's selected canon (see section 3.1.1), is repeatedly exploded for the sake of didactic excursions and romance set-pieces, with little concern for narrative coherence. Hawes's adoption of the framed first-person form seems partly to have been motivated by the traditional association between dreams and poetic fictions: the claim shared by both to a meaningful point of reference in the

real world (cf. section 1.2). The problem for Hawes is that this assumed referentiality—that is, that the poet’s ‘cloudy fygyres’ intimate pre-existing, specific truths—demands a degree of accuracy and accountability that the English court poet cannot or will not maintain. Hawes’s solution is to create a closed circuit of signification, one in which poetic fictions refer only to their analogues in the texts, objects, and images of the early Tudor court. There are parallels here to Dunbar’s poetry of integration discussed in section 2.2, with the important difference that Hawes’s framed first-person allegories were written by a vernacular poet firmly outside of the literary establishment at court. A charade of extra-literary referentiality is made possible by Hawes’s insinuation that his writings will be meaningful only to readers with the requisite *experience*—a term which in Hawes more often denotes ‘good practical sense, understanding, or wisdom’ than the knowledge acquired through ‘[t]he actual observation of facts or events’.<sup>68</sup> Hawes’s claim for the textual authority of his writings proceeds from their supposed provenance in the early Tudor court, the seat of the *experience* necessary to their interpretation. Yet the rarefied society to which Hawes’s allegories are directed is itself the stuff of fiction, composed of the topoi and iconography of courtly entertainments and display. Insisting on the significance of poet’s *fygyres*, but presenting signifiers which point only to other signifiers, Hawes’s dream poems give the impression of allegory turning in on itself. This is the ideal impasse for a poet whose claim to textual authority rests on his supposed closeness to inner circles of

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<sup>68</sup> *experience*, n., def. 4, *MED*, cf. defs 1-3; *experience*, n., def. 3, *OED*, cf. defs 6 and 7. Illustrative examples appear in the *Pastime*’s chamber of Logyke episode, where Logyke describes how God made Hell to punish man, ‘that hadde intelligence | To knowe good from yll / by trewe experyence’ (*Pastime*, 636-37), but nevertheless persists in sin; and in the *Example*, Youth’s account of his defeat of a three-headed dragon (representing ‘the wordle’, ‘the flesshe’, and ‘the deuyll’ [1372]) by means of the ‘experyence’ ‘Of my maystress good dame sapyence’ (1582-83).

the court, but who in reality has little new to say. In what follows, section 3.2.1 presents a rereading of the *Pastime* with special attention to Hawes's technique of intratextual cross-reference in the poem—bypassing the need for extra-literary referentiality by confining its field of reference to fashionable court fictions. Section 3.2.2 examines what has been described as Hawes's turn to a more autobiographical, even prophetic mode in the *Conforte*, though I argue that this poem too is essentially concerned with the concealment rather than the illumination of its professed truths, as finally demonstrated by the unique example of autocitation in Hawes's poetry.

### **3.2.1. Intratextual cross-reference in *The Pastime of Pleasure***

Viewed as a whole, the allegory of the *Pastime* defies systematic interpretation. Not least among its difficulties is Hawes's conflation of genres and apparent disregard for dramatic continuity and narrative coherence. The poem has confirmed Hawes's reputation as a 'potential poet' in modern criticism; yet in its own time, the *Pastime* may have enjoyed some moderate success as an easily excerpted first-person allegory entirely assimilated to a recognisable courtly aesthetic.

Surprising and sometimes infelicitous combinations of genres and themes within the apparatus of the framed first-person form are a feature of nearly all the poems examined in this thesis; only in Hawes, however, does the amassing of topical matter lead to a total dissolution of the narrative frame and the authorial responsibility that it implies. An important structural analogue for the *Pastime*, following Hawes's earlier *Example*, is the 'Pilgrimage of Life' popularised by Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (first redaction c. 1330-32,

second redaction 1355) and translated by Lydgate as *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (1426).<sup>69</sup> In the *Pastime*, love and the pursuit of honour augment virtue and salvation as the motivations for Graunde Amoure's quest—a shift in emphasis towards 'conspicuously social, worldly and ultimately courtly preoccupations' much in line with the 'learned chivalry' extolled in the personification allegories of the *Grands Rhétoriqueurs* (see section 3.1.1).<sup>70</sup> In the *Pastime*, Hawes transposes the Deguilevillean Pilgrimage of Life to 'the more confined cosmos of the early Tudor court and its ideals';<sup>71</sup> however, an overview of the poem's action demonstrates Hawes's inability to control the conflicting impulses of its secularised spiritual quest. The progress of Graunde Amoure through the tower of Doctryne up to the chamber of Rhetorycke is outlined in section 3.1.2. Following a short sojourn in the chamber of Arysmetryke (1408-49), he first catches sight of Bell Pucell in the tower of Dame Musyke, where they dance for a brief space (1457-603). Next, a personified 'Councell' (1961) effects an interview between the lovers; they meet in a 'gardyn glorious | Lyke to a place / of pleasure' (2008-09), where, after a long dialogue, she accedes to his entreaties, before departing over the sea 'to a ferrenacyon' (1646-2408, 2279 quoted). Only now does Graunde Amoure return to his tutelage in the tower of Geometry and the pavilion of Astronomye (2549-933), before proceeding to the 'toure of Chyvalry' to be knighted by King Melyzyus (2934-3402).<sup>72</sup> Armed by 'dame Mynerue the chyualreous goddes' (3429)—an uncertain

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<sup>69</sup> On Hawes's possibly direct knowledge of the *Vie* and related works, see Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, 74-75; and for the influence of the Pilgrimage of Life on the *Example*, not discussed in detail here, Siegfried Wenzel, 'The Pilgrimage of Life as a Late Medieval Genre', *MS*, 35 (1973), 370-88; Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 29-32, 60; and Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, 81-84.

<sup>70</sup> Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, 83.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>72</sup> Hawes's source for Melyzyus, representing the perfection of knighthood, is unknown. Curt F. Bühler suggests an analogue in Melissus of Thebes, celebrated in Pindar's *Isthmian Odes III* and *IV*

amalgam of wisdom (cf. the *Garlande's* Pallas) and hardiness—Graunde Amoure sets out and, in an incongruous comic passage, meets the foul dwarf Godfrey Gobilyve, who gives a disparaging account of marriage (3403-742). Graunde Amoure's next stop is the temple of Venus, where Dame Sapyence, here Venus's secretary, writes a love letter for Cupyde to deliver to Pucell (3742-4104). Graunde Amoure goes on to defeat a series of fabulous beasts (4270-5172), before finally arriving at Pucell's silver tower. There, he is received in 'a chamber fayre | A place of pleasure and delectacyon' (5243-44) and the knight-courtier and his lady are at last joined in marriage by Venus and Cupyde (5173-326), as illustrated in de Worde's editions by the marriage-scene woodcut Hodnett 1241 (1509, sig. [R4<sup>r</sup>]; 1517, sig. R5<sup>r</sup>; Figure 3.1).

Hodnett 1241 is identical in composition to the marriage-scene woodcut at the end of Hawes's earlier framed first-person allegory, the *Example* ([1506?], sig. G2<sup>v</sup>; 1530, sig. G1<sup>v</sup>; Hodnett 1264; Figure 3.2). There, the groom is Vertue (formerly named Youth), the bride, the long sought after Clennes, but the significance of the scene is essentially the same: the attainment by Hawes's poet-narrator of the virtue and/or love for which he undertook the quest. It offers a clue to the function of the disparate elements apparently at odds in Hawes's *Pastime*. Taking one's cue from Hawes's printer, de Worde, one might view the poem as an album of such stock

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(474/73? BC); but this seems unlikely given the limited knowledge of Pindar's Odes in England before the second half of the sixteenth century. Bühler, "Kynge Melyzyus" and *The Pastime of Pleasure*, *RES*, 10 (1934), 438-41.



**N**ow Atanell goth to the castell gate  
 And brought this woman streyght to þe kyng  
 But she was wrympled so that wote ye what  
 Of her had he no maner knowlegynge  
 With that anone he had aspyed the ryng  
 Whiche he gaue to Clarponas the fayre  
 And yet he wylt not that she was thayre

I praye you syr be of good chere quod she  
 And please it your goodnes for to here  
 I am a woman of ferre countre  
 And therewithall in curteys manere  
 She proffred hym to kysse with lounge chere  
 I praye sytter myn with goddes grace  
 I must praye you of pardon as in this case

For I wyl kysse no woman be ye sure  
 To make me hole as euer I was  
 But onely her whiche is that creature

*Atanell*

*Genarid*

Figure 3.1. [*The history of the excellent knight Genrides*] ([London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1506?]), fragment, showing Hodnett 1241 (STC 12948-49 not available via EEBO). Reproduced from EEBO.

Capitulum. xiii.



**I**n to a chapell gayly glorified  
 And also hanged with cloth of tyssue  
 A place it was ryght gretly depyed  
 The roof was set with stones of vertue  
 As with rubyes and emeraudes bryght of hue  
 The rood loft was puerly garnysshed with gold  
 Set with dyamoundes ryght many a fold

Figure 3.2. Stephen Hawes, *The Example of Vertu* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1506?]) STC 12945, sig. G2<sup>v</sup>, showing Hodnett 1264. Reproduced from EEBO.



motifs, easily appreciated and passed over, and informed by a desire for eclecticism rather than consistency. As A. S. G. Edwards remarks,

[i]t is not easy, when reading such a work, to develop responses in other than the most localized way. One is left rather with the sense of various tableaux being moved in front of the reader, which, whatever their impact as static entities, do not possess any accumulated meaning or significance but remain a jumble of unrelated scenes arbitrarily yoked into a narrative sequence.<sup>73</sup>

Hawes's *Pastime* showcases an array of topics drawn from contemporary literary culture—the chivalric romance, the Pilgrimage of Life, the love complaint, and the encyclopaedic treatise are all represented in the outline above—but their narrative and allegorical significance rarely extend beyond the episode in which they appear. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the final, jarring shift in genre at the expense of narrative coherence at the end of the poem. Having lived 'In loye [...] full right many a yere' (5333), Graunde Amoure is overcome by a personified 'Age' then 'Dethe' (5348-410), familiar figures from the *ars moriendi* tradition and contemporary print publications, though not previously mentioned in the *Pastime*.<sup>74</sup> There is no return to the midsummer meadow where the narrative began (cf. 56-146); instead, Graunde Amoure's interment and epitaph (5411-94)—still narrated in the first person—are followed by a series of speeches delivered by Remembraunce, Fame, Tyme, and Eternyte, during which the poet-narrator

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<sup>73</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 27.

<sup>74</sup> The composite image depicting Graunde Amoure's confrontation with a mounted Dethe in de Worde's editions (sig. R6<sup>r</sup>) is identical, but for the reversal of the male figure, to that in Laurent d'Orleans, *Somme des vices et vertus* [*The boke named the royall*], trans. William Caxton (London: Richard Pynson and Wynkyn de Worde, 1507) STC 21430, 21430a, sig. J5<sup>r</sup>; and *Compost et kalendrier des bergiers* [*The kalender of shepeherdes*] (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1508 [i.e. 1516]) STC 22409, sig. K1<sup>r</sup>.

disappears entirely from view (5495-795). Fame, the figure who provided the initial impetus for Graunde Amoure's quest, pre-empted the poet-narrator's inscription of his exploits: she commands Remembraunce 'truely for to wryte | Both of myn actes and my gouernaunce [...] Whose goodly storyes in tongues seuerall | Aboute were sente for to be perpetuall' (5594-95, 5598-99). The next figure, Tyme, declares that the passage of time will eradicate earthly fame, before he too is superseded by Eternyte.<sup>75</sup> The poem ends with Eternyte's admonition to 'mortall folke' (5575), followed by 'The excusacyon of the auctore' (5796-816), now wholly detached from Hawes's poet-narrator. The figure of Graunde Amoure was never especially convincing as a textual double for the historical poet Hawes; as Anthony J. Hasler observes, there are 'numerous points at which the fiction of a lover-narrator is simply dropped, and the "I" is the neutral mediator of a rhetorical topos'.<sup>76</sup> But at the end of the poem, Hawes relinquishes even the final opportunity to make some authorial pronouncement on the preceding action. 'The excusation of the auctore' (5796-816) is a conventional modesty topos, in which the 'entencyon' claimed by the poet (via his book) is 'to eschewe the synne of ydlenes' (5806, 5808) and 'Bokes to compile of morall virtue' (5806, 5808, 5811). This is a different situation to the ending of Skelton's *Bowge*, where the inducement of the reader to 'constrewe ye what is the resydewe' implies the possible recovery of some further allegorical

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<sup>75</sup> Robert Coogan compares the ending of the *Pastime* and the final four pageants of Petrarch's *Trionfi* (completed 1374). Henry VIII is known to have possessed eleven tapestry pieces depicting the *Trionfi*, though a more likely iconographical source is the 'hanging of cloth' commissioned by Sir Thomas More in around 1500: nine pageants including the triumphs of love, chastity, death, fame, time, and eternity. Coogan, 'Petrarch's *Trionfi* and the English Renaissance', *SP*, 67 (1970), 306-27, at 310-14.

<sup>76</sup> Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 112. At times, it is only the appearance of extradiegetic tags—'This that I wryte' (855); 'I must reporte' (1292)—that reminds the reader of the *Pastime*'s narrative frame. The 'absence' of the poet-narrator is most acutely felt in the tower of Doctryne episode, where the teachings of the personified liberal arts are reported for hundreds of lines without any narratorial interjection.

meaning from the poem (see section 2.1). The *Pastime*, having come to an end, requires no more explication than what has gone before. For readers with the appropriate *experience*, its significance will be self-evident; for everyone else, Hawes has other, almost subliminal techniques for intimating the profitability of his poetic fictions.

The *Pastime*'s 'jumbled' allegory, combined with the diminution of its poet-narrator as a vehicle for self-representation, deprives Hawes's poetic fictions of two important claims to textual authority: an 'accumulated meaning' but also a clear attribution to a historical poet. This is not to say, as critics have so often suggested, that Hawes is entirely hopeless as an allegorist.<sup>77</sup> The principle according to which his poetic fictions are 'arbitrarily yoked' together is arguably better suited to his situation at court than authorial self-promotion or professed moral-political insight in the manner of Skelton. Rather than attempting to justify his poetic fictions by aligning them with a consistent and identifiable authorial intention or message, Hawes's claim for the textual authority of his writings is based on their total assimilation to a recognisable courtly aesthetic. He interweaves his writings with the texts and iconography of the early Tudor court, such that his own books become a part of that fabric. Tudor emblems, the trappings of the court, and allusions to the favourite works of Chaucer and Lydgate abound in Hawes's poetry. Yet most compelling is Hawes's technique of intratextual cross-reference within his poems themselves.

The most straightforward instances of intratextual cross-reference in the *Pastime* are the embedded descriptions and pictorial depictions of Graunde

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<sup>77</sup> E.g. Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 279; Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan, xliii; and Miskimin, *Renaissance Chaucer*, 166.

Amoure's quest: summaries of the deeds that he has already completed and predictions of those that he will later undertake. Typically, these summaries and predictions follow the naming of Graunde Amoure by, or to, a new character in the narrative. Each restatement of his title constitutes a renewal of the *Pastime's* plot: once named, the knight's history and attributes are immediately known and the assistance of his new acquaintance is assured. Thus, upon arriving at the tower of Doctryne early in the poem, the porter Countenaunce asks Graunde Amoure where he comes from. He replies

...in euery thyng expresse  
 All myne aduenture / chaunce and busynesse  
 And eke my name / I tolde her euery dell  
 Whan she herde this / she liked me right well  
 (*Pastime*, 382-85)

This naming exchange in the tower of Doctryne is the second of twelve similar encounters in the poem.<sup>78</sup> Here, the 'aduenture / chaunce and busynesse' of Graunde Amoure is corroborated by the testimony of another 'text'. The first hall into which Countenaunce leads the knight is hung with a tapestry depicting the complete plot of the *Pastime* (412-76). This is one of a number of tapestries and wall paintings in the poem that depict the familiar matter of classical history and romance.<sup>79</sup> Possible models for Hawes's ekphrastic descriptions include the story of

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. *Pastime*, 185-88, 491-92, 2974-82, 3784-95, 4139-40, 4466-72, 4522-23, 4662-68, 4879-84, and 5037-50.

<sup>79</sup> In Rethoryke's description of the 'storyes olde' devised by poets, she declares that 'The frutye [of poets' writings] / we maye well beholde | Depaynted on aras', for example, 'how in antyquyte | Dystroyed was / the grete cyte of Troye' (1077-80). Wall paintings of the Trojan War are mentioned in lines 3240-41 and 5234-35, and a tapestry depicting the siege of Thebes in lines 5250-51 (cf. n. 37). See also the golden tower entered by the poet-narrator of the *Conforte*, decorated with 'ymages / of kynges all of golde | with dyuers scryptures' (234-35), 'wyndowes hystoried / with

Dido and Aeneas ‘graven’ on the walls of the temple of Venus in *The House of Fame* (151-467), the ‘ful many a faire image | Of sondri lovers’ in Lydgate’s *Temple* (44-142), or the four murals depicting the ages of man at the end of the *The Assembly of Gods* (1469-509, 1779-939). Yet Hawes’s preference for ‘clothe of aras’ (413) over painted depictions also seems to reflect the strategic use of tapestry by Henry VII (see section 2.2), which led to a heightened awareness of the material, quality, and subject matter of decorative hangings at the early Tudor court.<sup>80</sup> Hawes probably knew the eleven-piece Burgundian tapestry depicting the *Story of the Trojan War* which hung in St Peter’s Church, Calais, during the first meeting between Henry VII and Philip IV, duke of Burgundy, in June 1500, and later in the great hall of Richmond Palace during the wedding festival of Prince Arthur and Katherine of Aragon (November 1501) (see Figure 3.3).<sup>81</sup> A possible analogue for the tower of Doctryne tapestry are the now lost tapestries depicting Henry VII’s arrival in England and marriage to Elizabeth of York, which may also have hung at Arthur and Katherine’s wedding festival.<sup>82</sup> Contemporary descriptions of the highest quality tapestry sets as ‘stor[ies] of Aras’ indicate the close connection

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many noble kynges’ (239), and an ‘aras golde / with the story pure | Of the syche of thebes’ (243-44).

<sup>80</sup> On the acquisition and use of tapestry sets from the second half of Henry VII’s reign, see Thomas P. Campbell, *Henry VII and the Art of Majesty: Tapestries at the Tudor Court* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 67-100.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-73, 98-100; Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, 41, n. 2.

<sup>82</sup> Campbell, *Art of Majesty*, 78, 81-82, 99.



Figure 3.3. *The War of Troy*, 1475-90, tapestry, 414cm × 737cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, thought to be the ninth of the eleven tapestries comprising the *Story of the Trojan War*, sets of which were supplied by Pasquier Grenier of Tournai to Charles I, duke of Burgundy, and Henry VII in 1472 and 1488, respectively. Reproduced from the Victoria and Albert Museum online collections <<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O86211/the-war-of-troy-tapestry-unknown>>.

between image and narrative in the medium.<sup>83</sup> The term *arras* served to distinguish tapestries woven with gilt-metal-wrapped thread from lower quality products, but it also indicated the grandeur and antique subject matter of a piece.<sup>84</sup> Such tapestries may have provided an iconographic source for the heraldic beasts and Tudor emblems in the *Pastime*: notably the two white greyhounds, Grace and Gouvernaunce, mentioned as Graunde Amoure's companions in lines 161-61, 300, 426, 2941, 3415, and 3824; and the architectural ornaments of the tower of Doctryne, 'Gargeyled with grehoundes / & with many Lyons | Made of fyne golde / with dyuers sundry dragons' (363-64).<sup>85</sup> As striking as these iconographic parallels themselves is Hawes's decision to deck out his allegory using the same decorative medium as that so closely associated with the public and private lives of the early Tudor court. In the tower of Doctryne, the first stage of Graunde Amoure's quest is provided with the same textile backdrop as some of the most spectacular and politically charged moments of Henry VII's reign. At the same time, the designation of the hanging as 'clothe of aras' also hints towards the more intimate spaces reserved for the upper echelons of court society. In fiction as in life, texts and textiles depicting contemporary and antique dignitaries affirm the values and ideals apposite to the Tudor knight-courtier. In need of further explanation is Hawes's

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<sup>83</sup> E.g. the instructions for the decoration of the bedroom antechamber and outermost room of Princess Mary Tudor (1496-1533) during her betrothal to Charles II (1500-58), duke of Burgundy, in 1508 (an event that never took place): the antechamber was to be hung with 'a rich story of Aras golde and silke [...] with a border of her armys and bagies'; and the outermost room with 'a story of good and fyne tapicery [...] with a bordour of her armys and bagies'. London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius C.xi, fol. 145<sup>r</sup>. I owe this reference to Campbell, *Art of Majesty*, 95.

<sup>84</sup> *arras*, n., *MED*; Campbell, *Art of Majesty*, 94.

<sup>85</sup> The white greyhound is the badge of the Honour of Richmond, one of Henry VII's titles. The red dragon is the emblem of the Briton king Cadwaladr (r. c. 655-82 AD), from whom the Tudors claimed descent. Charles Boutell, *Boutell's Heraldry*, rev. edn, rev. C. W. Scott-Giles and J. P. Brooke-Little (London: Warne, 1966; first published 1950), 211.

curious choice of Graunde Amoure himself as the subject of the *Pastime*'s most elaborate pictorial display.

The tower of Doctryne tapestry is different to the wall paintings in Chaucer's and Lydgate's framed first-person allegories, and to the tapestries of Henry VII, in that it depicts the exploits of a contemporary literary character, the protagonist of the very poem in which the tapestry appears:

The hall was hanged / hye and cyrculer  
With clothe of aras / in the rychest maner

That treted well / of a full noble story  
Of the doughty waye / to the toure peryllous  
How a noble knight / shoulde wynne the victory  
Of many a serpent / foule and odyous  
And the fyrste mater / than appered thus  
How at a venture / and by sodayne chaunce  
He met with fame / by fortunes purueyaunce

(*Pastime*, 412-15)

An account of the deeds of 'la graunde amoure' (442, 457) follows, until at last

...he weded/ the grete lady beauteous  
La bell pucell / in her owne domynacyon  
After his labour / and passage dangerous

(*Pastime*, 471-73)

The purpose of the description is ostensibly prophetic. Upon learning Graunde Amoure's name, Dame Doctryne's assures him 'That I was he / that shoulde so attayue | La bell pucell / with my busy payne' (496-97). A prophetic mode has been suggested for Hawes's *Conforte* (see section 3.2.2); in the *Pastime*, however, it is



the textuality rather than the predetermination of Graunde Amoure's quest to which Hawes draws particular attention. Hawes's protagonist is both the product and subject of texts, as illustrated by the explicitly descriptive as well as the more usual designatory function of his name in the poem. The appellation 'la graunde amoure' serves to designate the poet-narrator among the various characters in the *Pastime*; yet as Hasler observes, and as is typical of personification allegory, 'la graunde amoure' also describes 'the desire for which he stands'.<sup>86</sup> Later in the poem, when telling his name to the personified 'Veryte' following his defeat of a three-headed giant, 'la graunde amoure' is presented as *conditional*, and not only appropriate, to the knight's desire for Bell Pucell:

Madame I sayd I was so amorous  
Of la belle pucell so fayre and beauteous  
La graunde amoure truely is my name  
Whiche seke aduentures to attayne the same  
(*Pastime*, 4469-72)

Here, I suggest, long before Graunde Amoure's death and interment at the end of the poem, the *Pastime*'s protagonist has become detached from its poet-narrator, for whom no corresponding desire or noble status is claimed in the prologue or opening narrative frame. It hardly needs to be stated that Graunde Amoure does not *exist*, in any material sense, outside of the *Pastime*; what is remarkable in Hawes is the deliberate effort to sever even the imaginary link between the historical poet and his textual double. By confining Graunde Amoure to a world of texts, Hawes effaces the distinction between allegory and referent—or, as I put it,

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<sup>86</sup> 'Graunde Amoure is a personification on a quest moved by the desire for which he stands'. Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 117. Hasler questions 'the possibility of treating such a figure narratively at all'.

he turns allegory back in on itself. Graunde Amoure can be seen to stand for *all* 'great desire', and every imaginative account of a quest undertaken in its pursuit in turn refers back to him.<sup>87</sup> By making his protagonist synonymous with 'great desire' in general, Hawes willingly surrenders any historically specific or quasi-autobiographical significance for his poem. Instead, he effects in Graunde Amoure the convergence of a network of texts (and textiles): the embodiment in fiction of 'learned chivalry' in pursuit of love, reinforced and corroborated by each new statement of that ideal, whether in the *Pastime* or hanging from the walls of the King's Chamber.

The description of the tower of Doctryne tapestry is the first of a number of instances in which Graunde Amoure's quest is rehearsed or recorded by characters in the allegory, exposing the exclusively textual status of both. Graunde Amoure's interview in the temple of Venus is structured as three accounts of his quest for Bell Pucell. First, Graunde Amoure complains to Venus's secretary, Sapyence, of the goddess's entrapment of his heart. His lady's name, he says, 'la belle pucell is', who 'Bothe est and west [...] well knoken ywys' (3790-91). Sapyence requires no further information and agrees to draw up Graunde Amoure's supplication 'Vnto Venus to se derectly' (3800). Lines 3802-03 read: 'She drewe my piteous lamentacyon | Accordyne to this supplycacyon'; and the following chapter in de Worde's 1517 edition has the heading 'The Supplycacyon' (sig. M8<sup>v</sup>), as if a copy of the document presented to Venus.<sup>88</sup> It narrates in the first person Graunde Amoure's quest up to his first meeting with Bell Pucell in the tower of Dame Musyke (3804-45). Next

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<sup>87</sup> Note the special prominence of Troilus as the archetypal example of suffering-in-love like Graunde Amoure's: he is mentioned five times in the *Pastime*, twice specifically in relation to Graunde Amoure's separation from and eventual union with Bell Pucell (1808-27, 4481-82).

<sup>88</sup> Lines 3792-820 are not extant in the imperfect copy of the 1509 edition.

comes a blazon-type description of his lady (3846-80), followed by an appeal to Venus to dispatch her son Cupyde,

With louynge letters as fast as thou maye  
That she [i.e. Bell Pucell] may knowe some what of paynes fore  
Whiche for her sake I suffer euermore

(*Pastime*, 3904-06)

‘The Supplycacyon’ ends at line 3909, without any indication of a return to the diegesis. Confusingly, lines 3910-11 read: ‘Well then sayd Venus I haue perseueraunce | That you knowe somewhat of [my] myghty power’. Having left Graunde Amoure in interview with Sapyence, one now finds him standing before Venus herself, as if just having spoken the preceding lines. Without any narrative apparatus, it is unclear whether the passage with the heading ‘The Supplycacyon’ should be understood as a speech made by Graunde Amoure before Venus or, as Sapyence’s introduction would suggest, as a copy of a document that the reader of the *Pastime* has been reading simultaneously to Venus at the level of the diegesis.

Similar inconsistencies appear in the third account of Graunde Amoure’s quest in the temple of Venus: the ‘louynge letters’ sent by Venus to Bell Pucell on Graunde Amoure’s behalf. Unlike ‘The Supplycacyon’, the letter comprising lines 3951-4086 is unambiguously described as a copy of the document sent to Bell Pucell:

And right anone as the maner foloweth  
She [i.e. Venus] caused sapyence a letter to wryte  
Lo what her fauoure vnto me auayleth  
Whan for my sake she dyde so well endyte

As I shall shewe in a shorte respite  
The gentyll fourme and tenoure of her letter  
To spede my cause for to attayne the better.

*(Pastime, 3944-50)*

The following chapter (xxxi) in de Worde's editions has the heading 'The copy of the letter' (sig. N3<sup>r</sup>). Nevertheless, despite signalling the transition from narrative to epistle in the lines above, Hawes maintains a degree of uncertainty as to exactly who is speaking in lines 3951-4086. Venus's letter begins with an address to Bell Pucell, followed by the reason for the letter's dispatch:

In your courte there is a byll presented  
By graunde amoure whose herte in dures  
You fast haue fettred not to be absented  
Frome your persone with mortall heuynes  
His herte and seuyce with all gentylnes  
He to you oweth as to be obedyent  
For to fulfyll your swete commaundement

*(Pastime, 3979-85)*

In the lines that follow, Graunde Amoure is recommended by his constancy, youth, and nobility, but no reference is made to his many deeds completed for the sake of Bell Pucell. Instead, Venus's letter is premised on the argument that youth and beauty ought to be receptive to 'true loue' (3978); and here, the broader signification of 'graunde amoure' again comes to the fore. At line 4049, a new voice is invoked: Venus warns that if Bell Pucell does not show mercy to Graunde Amoure 'this may be his songe'; and lines 4050-76 comprise four stanzas of 'Wo worthe...' anaphora—a ventriloquising of Graunde Amoure within Venus's letter. The effect is to expose what was of course only ever a superficial distinction between the

discourse of the goddess of love and the complaint of the universal courtly lover. Both are highly depersonalised and mediated by literary convention, as illustrated by the appearance elsewhere in Hawes's canon of 'Wo worthe...' anaphora, which resemble in form, if not in sentiment, the climax of Venus's letter.<sup>89</sup> As in 'The Supplycacyon', Hawes shows little concern for the narrative coherence of his embedded texts. Both evince the regular slippage between the voice of the poet-narrator and the reported discourse of the allegorical characters that is characteristic of the *Pastime*.<sup>90</sup> This differs from the more explicit intratextual cross-reference represented by the tower Doctryne tapestry, but the principle is the same: Graunde Amoure and the characters of the *Pastime* belong exclusively to the realm of texts. Their status as allegorical signifiers with referents in the real world is irrevocably compromised; they function instead as epitomical examples of the elements of a courtly aesthetic.

The single substantial sixteenth-century manuscript witness for Hawes's verse demonstrates the ease with which excerpts from his poems could be rearranged and adapted to make new texts belonging to that same aesthetic, even if at a physical and/or temporal remove from the court that they evoke. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.813, probably compiled by or for the Staffordshire gentleman Humphrey Wellys in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, includes fifty-one poetic pieces, predominantly courtly love lyrics, with borrowings from various medieval authors, principally Chaucer, Lydgate, and

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<sup>89</sup> *Example*, 463-90; *Conuercyon*, 234-61. For earlier appearances of 'wo worth' anaphora in English, see Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan, 130. Edwards complains of the 'poverty of invention' that leads Hawes to repeat phrases or whole lines between poems. Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 57; for examples, see the notes in Hawes, *Pastime*, ed. Mead, 225-43; and Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan, 123-62.

<sup>90</sup> On 'voice' in framed first-person allegory, see further section 4.2.

Hawes. The claim of the manuscript's most recent editors, Sharon L. Jansen and Kathleen H. Jordan, that Wellys had 'numerous connections with the Tudor court', and that some of the reworkings in Rawlinson C.813 may be by Hawes himself, is convincingly refuted by Edward Wilson.<sup>91</sup> It seems likely, nevertheless, that the manuscript was compiled in imitation of the perceived literary tastes of the early Tudor court.<sup>92</sup> Hawes's poetry was especially amenable to this purpose; excerpts from the *Pastime* and the *Conforte* are adapted and combined into six new poems: discrete love epistles in rhyme royal stanzas without any indication of their original narrative context.<sup>93</sup> Lines 1-98 of poem 13, the love epistle 'O my lady dere bothe regarde and see', are a rearrangement of the dialogue between Graunde Amoure and Bell Pucell in her bower (*Pastime*, 2052-387); lines 99-147 are from 'The Supplycacyon', lines 148-54 from the *Conforte* (638-44); and lines 155-68 are an adaptation of the final two stanzas of Venus's letter (*Pastime*, 3951-64). Lines that refer to the excerpts' position in Hawes's poems have been replaced or adapted: Graunde Amoure's recollection to Bell Pucell of the occasion 'In the olde temple / whan I dyde you grete' (*Pastime*, 2238) becomes 'In the myddes of þe church when I dyd yow grete' ('O my lady dere', 61); the significance of the dating of Venus's letter 'Of Septembre the two and twenty day' is unknown, but in 'O my lady dere' it becomes 'of Aprell the nyen and twenty day' (164), the beginning of

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<sup>91</sup> *The Welles Anthology: MS. Rawlinson C. 813: A Critical Edition*, ed. Jansen and Jordan (Binghamton: State University of New York, 1991), 3, 22-23; refuted in Wilson, review of *ibid.*, *RES*, 44 (1993), 246-49, at 489; cf. Edward Wilson, 'Local Habitations and Names in MS Rawlinson C 813 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford', *RES*, 41 (1990), 12-44, at 26-30. All references to the poems of Rawlinson C.813 are to Jansen and Jordan's edition.

<sup>92</sup> For a reading of Rawlinson C.813 as centred 'in the cultural authority of a known author [i.e. Hawes]', and the suggestion that its Hawesean poems adumbrate 'a distinctive early Tudor taste', see Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 129-43, 126 and 157 quoted.

<sup>93</sup> Poems 1, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 56 (*DIMEV* 4380, 4015, 4017, 4497, 3973, and 6258). Borrowings from the *Pastime* and *Conforte* are listed in *Welles Anthology*, ed. Jansen and Jordan, 300-02.

the Maying season; and in the poem's final stanzas, transposed almost exactly from Venus's letter (*Pastime*, 4077-90), the adapter substitutes 'my frend' ('O my lady dere', 166) for 'Cupyde her [i.e. Venus's] sone' (*Pastime*, 4085) as the bearer of the letter, and 'my swete lady' ('O my lady dere', 168) for 'labell pucell' (*Pastime*, 4090), its recipient. Here can be seen clearly the reception of Hawes's writings as texts representative of a recognisable aesthetic associated with the court. His topical commonplaces, so easily separated from their narrative context, facilitate amateur participation in the socio-literary mores which they educe.

Close reading of the *Pastime* does not dispel A. S. G. Edwards's sense 'of various tableaux being moved in front of the reader' without 'any accumulated meaning or significance', but it does provide some rationale for Hawes's disjointed poetics. The accumulation of meaning is of little interest to Hawes; it can hardly have been a concern to readers such as the Rawlinson C.813 adapter. In the *Pastime*, dramatic continuity, thematic coherence, and quasi-autobiographical self-representation are all subordinate to the amassing of topical matter. A similar attitude prevails in Hawes's final framed first-person allegory, the *Conforte*, though with a renewed emphasis on the literary activity of the poet-narrator. The *Conforte* has been understood as representing a shift towards a more autobiographical mode after Hawes's position at court came under threat. In section 3.2.2, I propose an alternative reading, demonstrating the elements of continuity between the *Pastime* and the *Conforte*, most overtly in the pointed cross-references between the poems. The *Conforte* represents a new development in Hawes's theory of 'obscure allegory'—specifically, an added political urgency to the uncovering of the truths hidden beneath his poetic fictions. Those truths are now closely intertwined

with the *trouth* of the poet-narrator—his fidelity to Pucell and the Tudor dynasty that she signifies, but also his predictions of internecine strife. Hawes professes to desire readers who will perceive his good intentions and credit his prophetic insights. Yet despite what at first appears like a move towards idealised self-representation in the *Conforte*, Hawes's poet-narrator remains as exclusively textual as the *Pastime*'s Graunde Amoure. As in the *Pastime*, the only stable referents for *Conforte*'s obscure allegory are the cultural artifacts of the early Tudor court, foremost among them, Hawes's own books.

### 3.2.2. Reading *The Conforte of Louers* 'by true experyence'

Less than a sixth of the length of the *Pastime*, Hawes's *Conforte* is the most tightly structured of his framed first-person allegories, and the most committed to the presentation of a quasi-autobiographical textual double speaking esoteric truths. Following the proem, the narrative begins, like the *Pastime*, with the poet-narrator walking out on a midsummer's day, 'Whan fayre was phebus [...] Amyddes of gemyny' (29-20)<sup>94</sup> and musing alone 'in a medowe grene' (36) for the unrequited love of his lady. He falls asleep and is transported to 'a garden fayre' (63), where 'a lady of goodly age' (76) asks the cause of his affliction. In what at first seems like a reversal of Hawes's obscure allegorical mode, the lady exhorts the poet-narrator to 'Tell your mynd / now shortly eurydale | To [s]ayne the trouthe / I charge you to beware' (81-82); and he complains to her of a love that he has dared not speak for fear of mysterious adversaries:

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<sup>94</sup> Cf. Skelton's and Dunbar's astrological settings, discussed in chapter 2.



I durst not speke vnto her of my loue  
 Yet vnder coloure I dyuers bokes dyde make  
 Full pryuely / to come to my aboue  
 Thus many nyghtes I watched for her sake  
 To her and to hers / my trouthe well to take  
 Without ony spotte / of ony maner yll  
 God knoweth all my herte / my mynde & my wyll

(*Conforte*, 92-98)

Much of this complaint is derived from the conventions of *fin'amor*, what John Stevens describes as the 'game of love' which informed the literature and society of the early Tudor court.<sup>95</sup> The secrecy of the poet-narrator's love, his nights without sleep, and composition of verses 'full pryuely' are all mechanisms of the 'game'. In the *Conforte*, however, the poet-narrator's suffering takes on a political dimension: his writings have been subjected to the 'mysse contryuynge' (187) of his enemies, who 'had wened for to haue made an ende | Of my bokes / before [t]he[y] hadde begynnyng' (184-85). The affirmation of his book's 'trouthe',<sup>96</sup> 'For the reed and whyte they wryte full true' (188-89), blends the countenance of the poet-narrator's beloved with the Tudor royal badge—the white upon the red rose—and hints at the serious ramifications of his illicit love.<sup>97</sup> He has perceived the 'falshode' and the 'subtylte' (169) of his enemies and suspects that 'My ladyes fader they dyde lytell

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<sup>95</sup> Stevens, *Music and Poetry in the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen, 1961), 154-202.

<sup>96</sup> One of eleven uses of *trouth* and *true* in the initial dialogue between the poet-narrator and the old lady, including nine mentions of his loyalty to his beloved and her kin, as faithfully expressed in his books: *Conforte*, 87-88, 95-96, 99-105, 120-23, 139-40, 168-69, 174, 188-89, 193-95.

<sup>97</sup> On Hawes's use of Tudor emblems, cf. n. 85.

loue' (168)—by implication, Hawes's recently deceased lord, Henry VII.<sup>98</sup> But the old lady assures him that she is confident of his loyalty, and of its eventual reward:

Well sayd this lady I have perceuraunce  
Of [y]our bokes / whiche that ye endte  
So as ye saye is all the cyrcumstaunce  
Vnto the hyght pleasure of the reed and the whyte  
Which hath your trouth / and wyll you acquyte  
Doubte ye no thyng / but at the last ye maye  
Of your true mynde yet fynde a loyfull daye  
(*Conforte*, 190-96)

Having confirmed his *trouth*, the old lady leads the poet-narrator to a golden tower (218-45), described in much the same terms as the *Pastime's* tower of Doctryne and the silver tower of Bell Pucell.<sup>99</sup> There, he is shown three mirrors, enigmatic visions of 'my dedes done in tymes past' (314-47, 345 quoted), self-knowledge in the present (348-448), and a portent of the future (449-574). By the second two mirrors hang enchanted arms: a golden flower set with an emerald and a sword and shield called 'preprudence' (512) and 'perceuraunce' (520). The poet-narrator's recovery of these items 'pacyfed well / myn inward doloure' but not his desire for his beloved ('fro my ladyes beaute / my mynde might not go' [598-99]). He speaks a second complaint, until at lines 687-88, 'I herde a lady speke | I loked aside I saw my lady gracyous'. The poet-narrator and his beloved meet, he describes her figure and clothing, and the poem's final two hundred lines constitute

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<sup>98</sup> Henry VII died on 21 April 1509. The titlepage to de Worde's edition of the *Conforte* states that the poem was composed in 'the seconde yere' of the reign of Henry VIII—that is, between April 1510 and April 1511.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. n. 79.

a *debat d'amours* between speakers named in the headings of de Worde's edition as 'Amour' and 'Pucell'.<sup>100</sup> The dream ends with Amour's consent to submit to the judgement of Venus and Fortune, but not before Pucell makes the startling revelation that she has seen and read one of Hawes's earlier poems, the *Pastime* (see further below). Finally, having convinced Pucell of the sincerity of his love, but awaiting the decision of Venus and Fortune, the poet-narrator awakes from his dream and, uniquely in Hawes, there appears an internal account for the composition of the poem: 'With that sodaynly / I truely awoke | Takyng pen and ynke to make this lytell boke' (930-31).

There is much in the *Conforte* to suggest tantalising revelations just out of reach; yet in the envoy to the poem, rather than offering to uncover his 'cloudy figures', Hawes returns to the theme of the proem, quoted in section 3.1, that 'Harde is to construe poetycall scryptures':

¶Go lytell treatyse submyte the humbly  
 To euery lady / excusing thy neclygence  
 Besechyng them / to remember truely  
 How thou doost purpose to do thy dyligence  
 To make suche bokes by true experyence  
 From daye to daye theyr pastyme to attende  
 Rather to dye / tho[u] tha[n] wolde them offende  
 (*Conforte*, 932-38)

As is typical of Hawes, the envoy provides few clues to any extra-literary referents for the allegory. There is no allusion to a historical lady to whom Pucell might correspond: neither the dedication of the book to the poet's supposed beloved, as

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<sup>100</sup> Cf., in de Worde's editions of the *Pastime*, the headings for the dialogue between Graunde Amoure and Bell Pucell (2051-317; sigs G4<sup>v</sup>-H1<sup>v</sup>).

in Lydgate's *Complaint of the Black Knight* (674-81), nor a lament for the vanished lady of the dream, as in the *Temple* (1362-403). Absent too, for all the statements of loyalty in the dream, is the direction of the book to 'our souerayne lorde', the king, as in the *Conuercyon* (360-66) and *loyfull Medytacyon* (204-10), or the wish to emulate the example of Lydgate, as in the *Example* (2116-29) and *Pastime* (5810-16). The intended audience for the *Conforte*, 'euery lady', is somewhat narrower than the 'lordes and ladyes', young and old, intimated in the proem; unchanged, however, is the emphasis on *experience* as the key to unlocking the poem. The 'treatyse' is commanded to remind its gentlewomen readers that it is intended as a 'pastyme' for their entertainment and instruction and not meant to offend them by the 'neclygence' of its composition. The line 'To make such bokes by true experyence' is difficult: one wants to construe it as a claim for the veracity of the reported dream (with 'experyence' denoting the 'observation of facts or events'—here, a dream) but there is confusion as to who—the 'treatyse' or the poet?—is the reporter. It cannot be the case that the book addressed in line 935 is the maker of 'suche bokes by true experyence', but neither is there an 'I' standing for the poet. The line starts to make sense only when one recalls the alternative senses of *experience* set out in the introduction to this section, a term which in Hawes's usage generally denotes 'good practical sense, understanding, or wisdom'. Lines 935-38 thus might be read as a set of three reminders to the *Conforte*'s gentlewomen readers: the first, in line 936, states the purpose or intention of the treatise to do its 'dylygence' or utmost effort in the women's service;<sup>101</sup> the second, in lines 935-37, asks the gentlewomen to put their idle hours to good use use by

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<sup>101</sup> *purposen*, v., def. 1, MED; *diligence*, n., def. 2, MED.

applying to ‘suche bokes’ their rational understanding or ‘true experyence’; and the third, in line 938, becomes clearer with a little rearrangement: a declaration that ‘tho[u] [i.e. the ‘treatyse’] wolde [r]ather dye tha[n] offende them’. Alternatively, it may be the ‘treatyse’ that does its ‘dyligence’ to make ‘bokes’ such as itself serve as a ‘pastyme’ to gentlewoman readers. In either case, it is only ‘by true experyence’ that this profitable reading is made possible—an *experience* that belongs to an at least partly fictitious court audience. What the *Conforte* ‘doost purpose’, it seems, merits attention; but its allegory remains obstinately obscure.

Recognising the *Conforte*, like the *Pastime*, as a poem espoused to a theory of obscure allegory enables a modification of the prevailing view of the poem as representing a shift towards autobiographical, even prophetic writing at the end of Hawes’s known literary career.<sup>102</sup> The titlepage of de Worde’s edition of the *Conforte*, and disappearance of Hawes from royal household accounts after 1506, suggests his inability to retain the office of groom of the Chamber after the death of Henry VII. Hawes’s uncertain position in relation to the new regime is thought to have precipitated a newly contemplative personalised poetry, in which claims to textual authority based on political affiliation and representativeness of a courtly aesthetic are superseded by the assertion of something like divine inspiration. But there is a case for continuity, as well as divergence, between the *Conforte* and Hawes’s earlier framed first-person allegories. The *Conforte* is undoubtedly different from the *Pastime* and the *Example* in structure and the presentation of its poet-narrator; nevertheless, in each of these poems, the justification of the profitability of poetic fictions relies on the specious claim that ‘poetycall

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<sup>102</sup> See Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 78-87; Ebin, *Illuminator*, *Makar*, *Vates*, 145-61; Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 187-90; and Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, 91-95.

scriptures', however obscure, convey pre-existing truths to those with the *experience* to understand them.

There is certainly a shift in the *Conforte* in the presentation of Hawes's poet-narrator: no longer the knight-courtier of the *Pastime*, the poet-narrator of the *Conforte* combines the role of the courtier-in-love with that of the divinely inspired prophet. The change is made apparent from the outset of the narrative. Following the proem, Hawes's first use of the slippery term *trouth* is not in reference to the poet-narrator's true love of Pucell, but rather to God, the ultimate arbiter of justice:

To god I sayd / thou mayst my mater spede  
And me rewarde / accordynge to my mede  
Thou knowest the trouthe / I am to the true  
whan that thou lyst / thou mayst them all subdue

(*Conforte*, 39-42)

The antagonistic 'them' who threaten to obstruct the poet-narrator's 'mater' have not yet been specified; but in the stanzas that follow, the examples of Oedipus (43-49) and Jonas and Moses (50-54) align the poet-narrator with the figure of the persecuted prophet. Hawes extends the analogy in his account of the three mirrors in the golden tower. The third mirror is accompanied by an image of the Holy Ghost, 'Vnder whiche I sawe with letters fayre and pure | In golde well grauen this meruaylous scripture' (454-55). The 'meruaylous scripture' describes the role of the Holy Ghost in divine inspiration, including a final stanza which connects inspired prophecy with the mode and interpretative difficulties of allegorical poetry:

And where I [i.e. the Holy Ghost] lyst by power dyuyne  
I do enspyre oft causynge grete prophecy

Whiche is mysconstrued whan some do enclyne  
Thynkyng by theyr wytte to perceyue it lightly  
Or ells calke with deuylls the trouth to sertyfy  
Whiche contrary be to all true saynge  
For deuylls be subtyll and alwaye lyenge

(*Conforte*, 484-90)

The connection between prophecy and poetry is made explicit in the interpretation of the third mirror's vision of 'The fyrmament / with the sonne all alofte' and 'a merualyous sterre | with beames twayne' (547-60, 535 and 539 quoted). This portent for the disastrous consequences of unheeded prophecy resonates with the 'mysse contryuyng' of the poet-narrator's books. The star with two beams signifies 'the resyng of a knyght' (547); the first beam, turning back on the star, betokens the 'rattonnes' (rottenness?) of those who wrongfully resist him; and the second, the destruction that will befall them. The following stanza states that 'God hath appered vnto many a one | Inspyrynge them / with great wytte refulgent' (555-56); and in the lines that follow, there is an implicit association between Hawes's poet-narrator and the 'Many one' who 'wryteth *trouthe* / yet *conforte* hath he none' (558, my emphasis). The following two stanzas begin with Latin quotations from Psalm 129:2 and 3, leading Lois A. Ebin among others to suggest parallels between the poet-narrator and the beleaguered poet-prophet David.<sup>103</sup> Ebin goes on to demonstrate how the poet-narrator's winning of the enchanted sword, enclosed in a 'hande of stele' by 'a grete lady hondred yeres ago' (500, 503), and which only can be retrieved by one of her kindred 'chosen by god in dede' (506), validates his triple

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<sup>103</sup> Ebin, *Illuminator*, *Makar*, Vates, 149-60; cf. Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan, 158; and Jane Griffiths, 'The Object of Allegory: Truth and Prophecy in Stephen Hawes's *Conforte of Lovers*', in *On Allegory: Some Medieval Aspects and Approaches*, ed. Mary Carr, K. P. Clarke, and Marco Nievergelt (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 133-155, at 149-50.

role as true lover, prophet, and poet.<sup>104</sup> By the end of the episode, Hawes's poet-narrator is confirmed as one chosen by God, who 'wryteth trouthe', but whose message has not been heard. Yet the question remains, if Hawes is attempting to suggest through the presentation of his textual double that his poetry contains estoteric truths, what are the personal, political, or eschatological insights that the *Conforte* professes to convey?

The *Conforte's* supposed political subtext is a favourite point of access for criticism of the poem, but ought to be viewed with caution. Alistair Fox writes most extensively on the 'political allegory' of the *Conforte*; he posits Hawes's special regard for the interests of the Tudor dynasty and sketches 'the political situation [that] Hawes is concerned obliquely to reveal':

diabolical enemies have hoped, or still are hoping, for the death of a young prince because of certain astrological predictions with the expectation that this will frustrate a divinely preordained future. As the poem proceeds, it is made increasingly clear that these enemies, who are also the poet's personal enemies, are enemies of the Tudor dynasty in particular and have hoped to see the young Henry VIII supplanted by a rival.<sup>105</sup>

The *Conforte's* amatory fiction, argues Fox, is a front for more serious issues: its emblems and allusions limn Hawes's personal and political anxieties in around 1511. Most critics have connected the poet-narrator—who describes himself as 'a louer' (131) but also the maker of 'dyuers bokes'—with 'the experience of Hawes's personal frustration both as poet and lover, possibly compounded by a loss of royal

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<sup>104</sup> Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 157-58.

<sup>105</sup> Alistair Fox, 'Stephen Hawes and the Political Allegory of *The Comfort of Lovers*', *ELR*, 17 (1987), 3-21, at 6.



favour'.<sup>106</sup> More ambitious are those attempts to identify the poet-narrator's beloved, Pucell, with Princess Mary Tudor, the younger sister of Henry VIII, and to suggest that Hawes's loss of office may have been the result of an ill-advised infatuation.<sup>107</sup> Mary Tudor is the subject of Hawes's specific praise in the *loyfull Medytacyon* (176-82). Pucell's revelation that she has been 'promest / to a myghty lorde' (861) may refer to Mary's betrothal to Charles II, duke of Burgundy, in 1507. The evidence is hardly compelling and a Hawes-Mary love affair is largely the product of overzealous critical speculation. A more likely explanation for the *Conforte's* political-amatory overtones is, as Spearing suggests, 'as often happens with the poetry of the early Tudor court, the language of love may be a way of expressing political allegiance.'<sup>108</sup> Notable in this regard is the evidence for the promotion of a loyalty cult centred on Princess Mary in the final years of Henry VII's reign.<sup>109</sup> In perhaps 1507, de Worde printed verse accounts of two tournaments with allegorical scenarios: *Here begynneth the iustes of the moneth of Maye...* and *Here begynneth the lustes and tourney of the moneth of Iune* (STC 3543).<sup>110</sup> The first tournament, held at Greenwich Palace in Spring 1506, was occasioned by the visit of the Burgundian Philip IV to England following his shipwreck off the Dorset coast. A surviving tournament challenge takes the form of a letter sent by Lady May to Princess Mary.<sup>111</sup> The second tournament, held at Kennington Palace in 1507, is

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<sup>106</sup> Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 81; cf. Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 49-57; and Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, 186.

<sup>107</sup> See Hawes, *Minor Poems*, ed. Gluck and Morgan, 154; Fox, *Politics and Literature*, 59-63, though Fox dismisses the idea in 'Political Allegory', 13; Nievergelt, *Allegorical Quests*, 92; and the rebuttal in Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 81.

<sup>108</sup> Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 256

<sup>109</sup> See Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 131-33.

<sup>110</sup> Discussed in Gordon Kipling, 'The Queen of May's Joust at Kennington and the *Iustes of the Moneths of May and June*', *N&Q*, 31 (1984), 158-62, at 160-61.

<sup>111</sup> London, British Library, MS Harley 69, fols 2<sup>v</sup>-3<sup>v</sup>.

similarly witnessed by an invitation sent by the Queen of May,<sup>112</sup> which establishes 'both an allegorical cast of characters and a romantic *mise-en-scène* for the essentially dramatic show'.<sup>113</sup> The allegorical love affair depicted in the *Conforte* seems also to belong to what Hasler describes as the 'broader cultural symbolism' of the May-Mary cult.<sup>114</sup> As in the *Pastime*, Hawes appropriates the politically charged media and iconography of the early Tudor court but does not fix his fictions to any specific extra-literary referent. The same can be said of the *Conforte*'s many, as yet unsolved, enigmas drawn from early Tudor England's 'abundant storehouse of political prophecy': notably the 'Aboue .xx. woulues' (163) that beset the poet-narrator; 'my / p / p / p / thre' (140) from which he begs relief; and the possible allusion to Skelton's *Phyllyp Sparowe* in the stanza beginning 'Surely, I thynke / I suffred well the phyppe...' (890-96, 890 quoted).<sup>115</sup> Hawes's poetic fictions offer an array of interpretative possibilities ranging from the urgent and specific to the timeless and universal. Tudor emblems and half-identities create the illusion of topicality; but any intended political message is at once unprovable and beyond reproof. In the *Conforte*, Hawes raises the stakes of obscure allegory; but he refuses to commit the poem to any one truth except its own inherent truthfulness.

As in the *Pastime*, Hawes's technique for advertising the allegorical significance of his poetry, whilst preserving its essential obscurity, is to generate an exclusively textual field of reference. The difference in the *Conforte* is the scope and

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<sup>112</sup> London, College of Arms MS R36, fol. 124<sup>v</sup>; transcribed in Richard Firth Green, 'A Joust in Honour of the Queen of May, 1441', *N&Q*, 27 (1980), 386-89; dated 1507 in Kipling, 'Joust at Kennington'.

<sup>113</sup> Kipling, *Triumph of Honour*, 133.

<sup>114</sup> Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 132.

<sup>115</sup> For suggested interpretations, see *ibid.*, 133-35, 134 quoted. Lines 890-96 may refer to Skelton's parodying borrowings from Hawes's *Pastime* in *Phyllyp Sparowe* and/or his attack on 'Gorbelyd Godfrey' (perhaps standing for Hawes, cf. the *Pastime*'s Godfrey Gobilyve) in *Agessnt Garnesche*, ii. On the possible poetic rivalry between Hawes and Skelton, see n. 8.

fluidity of those references, comprising not only earlier episodes *within* the poem (cf. the *Pastime's* tower of Doctryne tapestry) or a broadly recognisable courtly aesthetic, but pointed analogies to *other* poems: the romances and allegories of Hawes's English predecessors as well as his own framed first-person allegories. In Skelton's *Garlande*, such allusions enact an evocation followed by the superseding of poetic fathers (see section 2.3); by contrast, Hawes presents the *Conforte* as existing in the same bibliographic imaginary as *Troilus*, Lydgate's *Temple*, and the *Pastime*. It reinscribes for an early Tudor readership a living literary history, of which Hawes's own poetic fictions are the progeny, not the sum. Eulogies for Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, and verbal and topical borrowings from their 'wonderfull bokes' appear in each of Hawes's framed first-person allegories. Only in the *Conforte*, however, are books themselves incorporated into Hawes's allegorical narrative. Shortly before his arrival before the three mirrors, the lovesick poet-narrator recalls how

Two thynges me conforte / euer in pryncypall  
 The first be bokes / made in antyquyte  
 By Gower and Chauncers / poetes rethorycall  
 And Lydgate eke / by good auctoryte  
 Makynge mencyon / of the felycyte  
 Of my lady and me / by dame fortunes chaunce  
 To mete togyders / by wonder[f]ull ordynaunce

The second is / where fortune dooth me brynge  
 In many placys / I se by prophecy  
 As in the storyes / of the olde buyldynge  
 Letters for my lady / depeynted wonderly  
 And letters for me / beside her meruayllously

Agreyng well / vnto my bokes all  
In dyuers placys / I se it in generall  
(*Conforte*, 281-94)

Hawes's poet-narrator has read the books of the English literary triumvirate and sees parallels for his suffering in the figures of Amans, Troilus, and the lover in the *Temple*. More than this, he interprets these 'bokes / made in antyquyte' as *predicting* his desire and promising an imminent meeting with his beloved. The description in the following stanza of the 'storyes' inscribed on the walls of old buildings resonates with the pictorial depictions in the *Pastime* and their earlier Chaucerian analogues (see section 3.2.1). Like the *Pastime*'s tower of Doctyne tapestry, the passage anticipates a later episode in the poem: the dialogue between Amour and Pucell. Critics of the *Conforte* are troubled by the brazenness of Hawes's apparent reimagination of a whole amatory poetic tradition to conceive of a single love affair: 'there is surely something mentally unbalanced, perhaps paranoiac' writes Spearing, 'in Hawes's reading of his predecessors';<sup>116</sup> or in Hasler's more expansive formulation:

All the world, it would seem, loves a lover. In this all-engulfing erotic textuality, the poetry of England's poetic fathers augurs and authenticates a lover-author's 'felycyte' as if shadowing forth a historical truth, in a preposterous genealogy.<sup>117</sup>

But this is to view allusion in the *Conforte* as somehow final and exclusive, without the possibility of further textual generation. Hawes's aggregation of what can be seen and read 'in generall'—whether in books, the tiltyard, or tapestry—to produce

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<sup>116</sup> Spearing, *Medieval to Renaissance*, 257.

<sup>117</sup> Hasler, *Court Poetry*, 136.

an amatory history for his quasi-autobiographical textual double is ‘preposterous’ only if viewed as the culmination, rather than a temporary convergence, of its imaginative stemmata. By contrast, the line ‘Agreyng well / vnto my bokes all’ intimates a conception of the *Conforte* as *one among many* literary testaments of Hasler’s ‘erotic textuality’, for which no poet or lover has the final word or ‘letter’. Even in the poem itself, Hawes’s poet-narrator is available for reproduction and ventriloquising: before meeting with Pucell, he envisages the suffering of another lover, ‘The gentyll herte’ who ‘Dooth walowe and tomble in somers nyght’ (618), complaining ‘Where is my conforte / where is my lady fayre’ (628). At lines 631-32, the voices of poet-narrator and ‘gentyll herte’ reconverge—‘This maye I saye / vnto my owned dere loue | My goodle lady / fairest and moost swete’—followed by a restatement of the blurred boundaries between books past, present, and the stories that they tell:

In all my bokes / fayre fortune doth moue  
 For a place of grace / where that we sholde mete  
 Also my bokes full pryuely you grete  
 The effectes therof / dooth well dayly ensue  
 By meruelous thynges / to proue them to be true.

(*Conforte*, 633-37)

The prediction of the meeting between the poet-narrator and his beloved, ascribed to the books of the English literary triumvirate in lines 281-87, is here attributed to the poet-narrator himself. To read and cross-reference such books, it seems, even in private (‘my bokes full pryuely you grete’), is to make them true. Hawes’s claim for the textual authority of his writings becomes a matter of consensus rather than

referentiality—of their agreement with the poetic fictions of England’s most worthy poets and applicability to the *experience* of an ideal readership.

The idea of books ‘agreyng well’ as a claim to textual authority is most fully developed in the single moment of explicit autocitation in Hawes poetry: Pucell’s reference to the *Pastime*. Early in the dialogue between Amour and Pucell, the poet-narrator’s beloved reveals that

Of late I sawe aboke of your makynge  
Called the pastyme of pleasure / whiche is wond[rous]  
For I thyn[k]e and you had not ben in louynge  
Ye coude neuer haue made it so sentencyous  
I redde there all your passage daungerous  
Wherefore I wene for the fayre ladyes sake  
That ye dyd loue / ye dyde that boke so make  
(*Conforte*, 785-91)

This is the first time, not only in the *Conforte* but anywhere in Hawes’s poetry, that the historical poet or his works are cited by name.<sup>118</sup> In framed first-person allegory, attribution of the works of a historical poet to his textual double at the level of the diegesis suggests a degree of correspondence between the two—ranging from the implied and ironic in Chaucer’s Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* (see section 1.2) to the explicit and triumphant in Skelton’s *Garlande* (see section 2.3). Allusions to books found in the real world, but which also have putative existence in the realm of fiction, close the gap between allegory and referent and bring a poem’s quasi-autobiographical aspects into temporary focus. Not so in Hawes. In the Prologue to the *Legend* and the *Garlande*, the poet-narrator

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<sup>118</sup> Not including the titlepages and colophons of de Worde’s editions.

is identified as the author but not the protagonist of the works cited, even the dream poems:

He made the book that hight the House of Fame  
And eke the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,  
And the Parlement of Foule, as I guess  
(Prologue to the *Legend*, F. 417-19)

Item Bowche of Courte, where Drede was begyled  
(*Garlande*, 1183)

By contrast, in the *Conforte*, Pucell identifies Amour both as the author of the *Pastime* ('ye dyde that boke so make') and its allegorical knight-courtier Graunde Amoure ('for the fayre ladyes sake [...] ye dyd loue'). The stated subject of the *Pastime*, 'all your passage daungerous', invites confusion between the heroic *passage* of Graunde Amoure in his quest for Bell Pucell and the secret written *passages* that appear in the books of the *Conforte*'s poet-narrator.<sup>119</sup> According to Pucell, the *Pastime*'s poetic fictions are at once validated *by* and verification *for* the true love and political loyalty of the *Conforte*'s poet-narrator: 'For I thyn[k]e and you had not ben in louynge | Ye coude neuer haue made it so sentencyous'. The earlier poem is presented as an allegorical representation of the suffering in love reported in the latter, a metafiction at two removes from any historical referent, now authenticated by Pucell's retrospective reading.

A final layer of mist descends over Hawes's obscure allegory. Rather than yielding any extra-literary referent for the *Pastime* or the *Conforte*, Hawes shields

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<sup>119</sup> See *passage*, n., defs 1a and 13a, *OED*. The phrase 'passage daungerous' appears four times in the *Pastime* in reference to Graunde Amoure's quest for Bell Pucell (473, 3085, 3271-72, 5171). Hawes's use of the term convincingly predates the *OED*'s earliest attestation for the meaning '[a] section of a speech, text, play, etc.' (def 13a).

his poems from unwelcome interpretation by consinging their implied author and ideal reader to the realm of imaginative fiction. In the stanza following Pucell's reference to the *Pastime*, Amour corroborates her reading of the book:

Forsothe madame / I dyde compile that boke  
As the holy goost / I call vnto wytnes  
But ygnorauntly / who so lyst to loke  
Many meruelous thynges in it / I do expresse  
My lyue and loue / to enserche well dou[t]lesse  
Many a one doth wryte / I know not what in dede  
Yet the effecte dooth folow / the trouthe for to spede

(*Conforte*, 792-78)

The 'effecte' of writing anticipated in the final couplet seems to be its sympathetic and profitable interpretation by readers such as Pucell—the *speeding* or accomplishing of a poem's 'trouthe'.<sup>120</sup> For Jane Griffiths, these stanzas constitute

a significant revision of the way Amour (or Hawes) describes the operation of allegory in the 'prohemye' to the *Conforte*. [...] Hawes here implies that his works may also be appreciated in the level of narrative alone, and that each reader may take from them what he or she wills, whether instruction or entertainment.<sup>121</sup>

I agree with Griffiths that Hawes's autocitation of the *Pastime* contains the implicit suggestion that, if readers were unable to unveil its poetic fictions on their first reading, its inherent truthfulness should no longer be in doubt upon reading the *Conforte*. However, cross-reference between the poems brings one no closer to the 'purpose' stipulated in the envoy to the *Conforte*, nor is Pucell representative of 'each reader' of Hawes. Instead, I understand these stanzas as confirming rather

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<sup>120</sup> *speed*, v., sense 1, *OED*.

<sup>121</sup> Griffiths, 'Object of Allegory', 141.



than revising the circular reasoning underpinning Hawes's obscure allegories: that 'poetycall scriptures' conceal pre-existing truths beneath 'cloudy figures'; that they constitute edifying 'pastymes pleasaunt' to readers with *experience* or understanding; but that Hawes's ideal readers are themselves a poetic fiction and his allegories quite deliberately uninterpretable. The love affair of the *Conforte*, for all its fatedness and apparent topicality, is no less or more real than the *Pastime*'s allegorical quest. The later text depicts an Amour and Pucell who are the analogues as opposed to the referents of Graunde Amour and Bell Pucell. In both poems, the titles of the poet-narrator and his books fluctuate in their range of reference: sometimes—as in Pucell's reference to the *Pastime*—they point to a historical poet or known literary work with a material existence outside of the fiction; yet more often—as in the 'pastymes pleasaunt' in the proem to the *Conforte* or the 'comforte' offered and withheld in the *Pastime*—they seem to denote only a literary topos, weaving Hawes's books into the texture of his allegory.<sup>122</sup> Neither the *Pastime* nor the *Conforte* constitutes the secret confession of a historical 'Steuen Hawes somtyme grome'; they are examples of a reinscribed and in print reduplicated literary history so crowded with Amours and Pucells as to render any personal, political, or moral truth which may arise entirely provisional. Hawes's writings have all the appearance of allegorical poetry that is both pleasurable and profitable; yet to try to identify any extra-literary referents *outside* of the text, or even to determine the obscure relationship *between* texts, is to find oneself going round in circles.

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<sup>122</sup> Variations of the titles of the *Example*, the *Pastime*, and *Conforte* appear frequently in Hawes's verse, most notably in the numerous encounters between his poet-narrators and allegorical personifications in 'place[s] of pleasure', the topographical equivalents for Hawes's literary pastimes. *Example*, 346, 1664; *Pastime*, 66, 409, 2009, 2559; *Conforte*, 67.

Hawes's obscure allegorical mode releases him from the injunction to specify the truths which he claims to conceal beneath poetic fictions. By situating his books within a network of texts, objects, and images associated with the court, he is able to assert the profitability of his poetry to virtuous and learned readers with leisure hours to spare—should any such readers exist. Hawes's earlier writings and the books of his predecessors' are exploited as points of affirmative cross-reference in his poems. His allegories and their poet-narrators are *fatal* or true (cf. section 3.1.2) precisely *because* of their conventionality, comprehensible within a global scheme of poetic signification which is specific to no one text or writer. Hawes's claim for the textual authority of his writings is based on the effacement rather than the representation of the human author: the *mynde* or *trouth* of the historical poet is beyond retrieval; instead, Hawes legitimates his poetry by means of its complete assimilation to a recognisable, generative textuality. This strategy for the promulgation of vernacular poetry seems anathema to the concept of literary authorship elaborated in chapters 1 and 2 but ought not to be unfairly disparaged. Hawes's framed first-person allegories may lack the luminosity of Dunbar's *Targe* or the personality of Skelton's *Garlande* but outstrip them both in terms of their print publication in Hawes's lifetime. Hawes's pastimes of pleasure are difficult to interpret but easy to enjoy, unlikely to cause offence but certain to provoke interest. His poetry presents the thesis but also the proof for the profitability of contemporary imaginative fiction. The approach is expanded and made marketable by Hawes's first printer, Wynkyn de Worde.

### 3.3. Hawes, de Worde, and the improvisation of genre

The final section of this chapter considers how Hawes's obscure allegories were peculiarly suited to at least one early Tudor printer's idea of how contemporary English poetry could be categorised and marketed to an expanded readership. As noted above, the earliest complete texts for each of Hawes's poems are the near contemporary editions printed by Wynkyn de Worde (see Appendix 2). This interest shown by a single printer in a contemporary English poet is without parallel in early English print. The closest analogue is the long-standing collaboration between Richard Pynson and Alexander Barclay.<sup>123</sup> However, where Pynson's printing of Barclay's poems, mostly translations, is sporadic and non-exclusive, de Worde's printing of Hawes, in a flurry around 1509 and then at intervals of more or less ten years until 1530, can be understood as part of a larger effort to establish a non-court audience for contemporary English poetry with nevertheless courtly credentials.<sup>124</sup> The paratexts with which de Worde frames Hawes's verse—from woodcut illustrations, to the printing of the author's name, to the citation of Hawes by other writers associated with de Worde—demonstrate an alternative to the concept of literary authorship as a source of cultural capital in early English print.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> See David R. Carlson, 'Alexander Barclay and Richard Pynson: A Tudor Printer and His Writer', *Anglia*, 113 (1995), 283-302.

<sup>124</sup> After de Worde, printers' interest in Hawes is relatively limited: the *Conuercyon* was printed in London by John Skot for John Butler in 1530 (STC 12944) and by William Copland for Robert Toye in 1551 (STC 12944.5); the *Pastime* was printed in London by John Wayland in 1554 (STC 12950) and twice by William Copland in 1555, for Richard Tottell (STC 12951) and John Waley (STC 12952).

<sup>125</sup> I adopt Gérard Genette's definition of *paratexts*: the 'verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, [or] illustrations' which accompany literary texts, but with Helen Smith and Louise Wilson's important qualifications that paratexts operate throughout, not only at the beginning, of early printed books, and have a meaning and function not necessarily determined by the author. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1; Smith and Wilson, 'Introduction', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, ed. ead. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1-14, at 6-7. In section 3.3 and chapter 4, I distinguish between 'authorial paratexts' (e.g. Douglas's Prologues to the *Eneados*) and other scribal and editorial productions (e.g. rubrics and illustrations), though with an alertness to the often

Any extra-literary referents for Hawes's obscure allegories are unavailable or simply irrelevant to de Worde's diversified readership; his Hawes editions are received as the products of a press rather than the intimate revelations of a quasi-autobiographical poet-narrator. They are indicative of a growing tendency among London printers to provide opportunities for their readers to make imaginative cross-reference between their varied literary output. It is my contention in what follows that the processes for marketing, categorising, and collecting English poetry in this period represent an improvisation of literary genre running parallel but separate to 'the emergence of the English author'.

Wynkyn de Worde belongs to the second generation of English printers. A German immigrant, de Worde accompanied William Caxton from Cologne to Westminster in 1475 or 1476 and almost certainly helped to establish his press there.<sup>126</sup> After Caxton's death in early 1492, de Worde inherited the business. He left Westminster for Fleet Street in 1500 or 1501, probably in order to be closer to the publishing and mercantile centre of London.<sup>127</sup> De Worde's retention and later modification of Caxton's device, as well as the notices in many of his Westminster editions that the books were printed 'in Caxtons house', may have been designed 'to create a feeling of continuity between Caxton's and his own press'.<sup>128</sup> Yet de Worde differs from Caxton in terms of the number and diversity of the over eight-hundred editions issued before his death in around 1534.<sup>129</sup> De Worde established

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blurred boundaries between the multiple agencies involved in the making of manuscript and early printed books, and the potential for dialogue between them.

<sup>126</sup> Norman F. Blake, 'Wynkyn de Worde: The Early Years', *GJ* (1971), 62-69, at 62.

<sup>127</sup> Norman F. Blake, 'Wynkyn de Worde: The Later Years', *GJ* (1972), 128-38, at 128-29.

<sup>128</sup> Blake, 'De Worde: Early Years', 63.

<sup>129</sup> For an impression of de Worde's output, search by publisher using the search query 'de Worde' at *ESTC*, which includes all of *STC* and is updated daily.

new markets for the religious and school books that constitute the bulk of his output.<sup>130</sup> From a literary-historical perspective, he is notable for the printing of older verse romances and contemporary English poets not seen under Caxton's press.<sup>131</sup> To some extent, de Worde's choice of English literary texts reflects Caxton's and his contemporary Pynson's 'adherence to traditions of literary popularity close to those of Middle English manuscript culture'.<sup>132</sup> The works of Chaucer and Lydgate dominate, Malory appears, and a number of Caxton's prose translations of continental romances were reprinted before 1510.<sup>133</sup> Soon, however, de Worde began to augment his English literary repertoire with works by contemporary poets: Skelton, William Nevill, William Walter, and, most extensively, Hawes.

It is not entirely clear who or what first encouraged de Worde to print Hawes's poems. As A. S. G. Edwards observes:

It is hard to account for this sudden appetite for verse by a hitherto unprinted poet. The publication of works by a court poet may suggest either an effort on de Worde's part to gain access to the court circle through printing Hawes, or an effort from within the court circle to have such works in circulation as widely as possible through the medium of print.<sup>134</sup>

Neither suggestion is wholly satisfactory: there is scant evidence for the appreciation of Hawes's poetry at court (see section 3.1.1) and, besides a vague

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<sup>130</sup> A. S. G. Edwards and Carol M. Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England', *Library*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 15 (1993), 95-124, at 117-18.

<sup>131</sup> On de Worde's unusual interest in contemporary poetry, see especially A. S. G. Edwards, 'Poet and Printer in Sixteenth Century England: Stephen Hawes and Wynkyn de Worde', *GJ* (1980), 82-88; Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print'; and Edwards and Meale, 'Marketing of Printed Books', 118-20.

<sup>132</sup> Edwards and Meale, 'Marketing of Printed Books', 118-19.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*; cf. Carol M. Meale, 'Caxton, de Worde, and the Publication of Romance in Late Medieval England', *Library*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 14 (1992), 283-98.

<sup>134</sup> Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print', 145.

allusion to the late king's financial policies in the *loyfull Medytacyon* (71-74), little to recommend Hawes's writings as, following Edwards, 'commentaries on the nature of kingly responsibility addressed obliquely to Henry VII'.<sup>135</sup> Norman F. Blake proposes that Henry VII's mother, the known bibliophile Lady Margaret Beaufort, may have facilitated de Worde's printing of Hawes's verse.<sup>136</sup> De Worde advertises his association with Margaret in a number of books printed in around 1509, the year of her death.<sup>137</sup> In the colophons to his two editions of the *Conuercyon*, de Worde describes himself as 'prynter vnto ye moost excellent pryncesse my lady the kynges graundame' (sig. [A8<sup>r</sup>]); and Hawes praises Margaret as the king's 'moder so good and gracyous' at the end of the *Example* (2061). But given that the editions that Margaret actually commissioned from de Worde are almost exclusively of religious texts, her active role in the promotion of Hawes's poems, other than perhaps the *Conuercyon*, seems doubtful.<sup>138</sup> It is more likely that de Worde printed Hawes on his own initiative, perhaps initially in collaboration with the poet.

It is not known how de Worde obtained his texts of Hawes's poems.<sup>139</sup>

There is some internal evidence to suggest that Hawes anticipated the dissemination of his verse in print, but little certainty as to how that process was effected. In the envoy to the *Pastime*, Hawes dispatches his book with an unusual prayer for the accurate 'Impressyon' of the text rather than its faithful copying by scribes: 'Go lytell boke I pray god the saue | Frome mysse metryne / by wronge

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Blake, 'Later Years', 134-35; cf. Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print', 145.

<sup>137</sup> Listed in Edwards and Meale, 'Marketing of Printed Books', 101, n. 23. As with Caxton's claimed aristocratic patrons, it is unclear whether Margaret's endorsement also constituted material patronage.

<sup>138</sup> See Susan Powell, 'Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books', *Library*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 20 (1998), 197-240, at 227 and 230-31.

<sup>139</sup> On the absence of manuscript witnesses for Hawes's poems, see n. 11.

Impressyon' (5803-04).<sup>140</sup> Elsewhere, there are in-text references to de Worde's woodcut illustrations. Following Godfrey Gobilyve's report of his failed attempt to woo a rich old maiden appear the lines: 'Lo here the figure of them both certayne | luge whiche is best fauourde of them twayne' (3780-81). On the facing page is a woodcut illustration depicting a bald-headed man and a loathly lady (1509, sig. [M2<sup>r</sup>]; 1517, sig. M8<sup>r</sup>; Hodnett 1011), a visual analogy to the preceding joke about the respective ugliness of the grotesque dwarf and the old maiden.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, in the *Conuercyon*, the lines attributed to Christ, 'Beholde this letter with the prynte also | Of myn owne seale by perfyte portrayture' (350-51), seem to refer to the *imago pietatis* woodcut earlier in the book (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>; Hodnett 390). These textual references to the publication and illustration of Hawes's poems, together with the evident attention given to their presentation by de Worde (on which, see further below), suggest a degree of collaboration between poet and printer—at the very least, they must have been aware of each other's processes.<sup>142</sup> Yet de Worde had his own motives for printing Hawes's poems. His interest in the poet is not restricted to Hawes's known period of literary activity between around 1503 and 1511: de Worde reprinted the *Pastime* in 1517 and the *Example*, with some significant textual variants, in around 1520 and 1530.<sup>143</sup> In this, Hawes's status as groom of the Chamber seems to have been important to de Worde as a marker of a particular kind of fashionable court poetry, rather than as a claim for the topicality or royal or

<sup>140</sup> The *OED*'s first attestation of the noun *impression* with the meaning '[t]he process of printing' (def. 3a).

<sup>141</sup> The words in the scrolls coming from the woodcut characters' mouths in turn refer back to the text: 'fayr mayde wyll ye haue me' (cf. *Pastime*, 3768); 'nay syr for ye be yl fauoured' (cf. *Pastime*, 3769-70).

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Edwards, 'Poet and Printer', 83.

<sup>143</sup> On the textual variants between de Worde's Hawes editions, especially the 1506? and 1530 *Example*, see Edwards, 'Poet and Printer', 87 and *Stephen Hawes*, 88.

aristocratic authorisation of his books. An initial period of collaboration between Hawes and de Worde may have presented the printer with an opportunity to establish a market outside of the court for amatory, instructive, often fantastic English poetry, with putative court connections. His reprinting of Hawes may represent periodic attempts to reinvigorate that market, reissuing Hawes's dream poems alongside other English poets in textually and visually related editions that recommended and promulgated one another.

De Worde's Hawes editions can thus be seen as a powerful alternative to the promotion of contemporary English poetry primarily on the basis of authorship. In section 1.1, I noted the use of the 'medieval author'—principally Chaucer and Lydgate—as a means of ascribing cultural capital to English literary texts in print.<sup>144</sup> De Worde's printing of Hawes demonstrates a solution to the problem of marketing contemporary English poetry that was not attributed to a recognisable author. Much like Hawes's approach to the composition of his poems, de Worde's publishing programme relies on connections made *between* books (cf. section 3.2). The paratexts in de Worde's Hawes editions speak of an effort by the printer to present his literary publications as a textually and/or visually related network of books that connects his customers to the reading habits and fashions of the court. I differ here from Seth Lerer's reading of Hawes's poetry as—with Skelton's *Garlande* and Caxton's prose (see section 1.1)—effecting 'the reestablishment of authorial identity around the name' in late fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century England, in contrast to 'the anonymities of earlier manuscript compilations'.<sup>145</sup> Lerer's concern is with Hawes's authorial self-promotion rather than his publication by de Worde;

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<sup>144</sup> Cf. Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*.

<sup>145</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, 180.



nevertheless, his final pronouncement that '[t]he goal of Stephen Hawes's poetry is, in a 'sense, to become "Stephen Hawes": [...] one whose name will reside in the closing colophon of printed books' seems to misrepresent both the agency of de Worde in the publication of Hawes's poetry and the function of Hawes's name in the colophons to his books. Just as the manuscript compilations from which Lerer looks to distance Hawes's poetry were directed towards 'a specific social function, be it education, entertainment, or group identification',<sup>146</sup> so de Worde's Hawes's editions, reprising the iconography of courtly entertainments and display, and meshing with the behavioural ideals of a refined social elite, allowed readers to imaginatively participate in the pastimes of an idealised court.<sup>147</sup> Hawes's name and, perhaps more importantly, his status as a groom of the Chamber, signalled the courtly credentials of de Worde's books, but are just one example of the printer's careful attention to the layout and illustration of his literary publications.<sup>148</sup> Bearing visual as well textual resemblance to one another, each of de Worde's books adds value to the next as part of a recognisable category of literature—a genre, even—catering to a socially aspirant, book-buying and -compiling early Tudor readership. Rather than deriving their cultural capital from the biography or patronage of the historical poet, de Worde's Hawes editions advertise the value of his poetry as part of a pleasurable, profitable bibliography. And in turn, whilst Hawes's framed first-

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> On the convergence of aristocratic, gentry, and professional interest in Tudor England's increasingly rarefied culture of chivalry and romance, as reflected in readers' bibliographic choices, see, e.g., Carol M. Meale, 'Patrons, Buyers, and Owners: Book Production and Social Status', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 201-38, especially 206-07 and 216-20.

<sup>148</sup> See especially the work of Martha W. Driver: 'The Illustrated De Worde: An Overview', *Slcon*, 17 (1996), 349-403; 'Ideas of Order: Wynkyn de Worde and the Title Page', in *Texts and Their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. John Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 87-149; and *The Image in Print: Book Illustration in Late Medieval England and Its Sources* (London: British Library, 2004).

person allegories presented characters and settings that were compelling in their own right, they also provided de Worde with the names, phrases, and images with which he could encourage analogies between his other literary publications.

Nowhere is this desire for analogy more apparent than in de Worde's production and reuse of the woodcuts illustrating his Hawes editions. Between perhaps 1506 and 1509, de Worde produced two series of woodcuts for his editions of the *Example* and *Pastime*. The 1506? and 1530 editions of the *Example* have the same ten woodcut illustrations (Hodnett 1255-64); one is repeated (Hodnett 1257), and Hodnett 1255, depicting the god of Love enthroned, is duplicated on the titlepage of the 1506? edition.<sup>149</sup> (De Worde's use and reuse of the *Example*'s and *Pastime*'s single-block woodcuts is fully tabulated in Appendix 3). All of these woodcuts seem to have been produced explicitly for the *Example*, demonstrating 'a concern for close correlation of the verbal and visual aspects of a contemporary poetic text [that] seems without precedent in early sixteenth century printing'.<sup>150</sup> Six are reused in later de Worde publications, among them the romances *The knyght of the swanne...* (STC 7571 and 7571.5), *Syr Degore* (STC 6470), and the *Hystorye of Olyver of Castylle, and of the fayre Helayne* (STC 18808). De Worde devoted similar attention to the *Pastime*. Nineteen of the twenty-four woodcuts in the 1517 edition (Hodnett 412, 1007-18, 1089-90, 1108-09, 1244) seem to have been produced for that text.<sup>151</sup> Seven reappear in later de Worde publications:

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<sup>149</sup> Hodnett 1260 is duplicated on the titlepage of the 1530 edition.

<sup>150</sup> Edwards, 'Poet and Printer', 83.

<sup>151</sup> Hodnett 1007 and 1109 are repeated and Hodnett 1258 appears three times. Of the twenty new woodcuts, four (Hodnett 1007-08, 1090, 1244) are lacking in the imperfect copy of the 1509 *Pastime*, though as Edwards observes, 'since the text is defective at all the points where they should have occurred there is no reason to assume that the 1509 edition lacked them'. Edwards, 'Poet and Printer', 83, n. 7.

further romances dating from around 1510 to 1520 and, in the case of Hodnett 1009, which depicts a woman giving a ring to a man (Figure 3.4), four editions: the titlepage of the *Confort*; the titlepage and penultimate leaf of de Worde's 1517 *Troilus* (STC 5095); and the titlepages of *The iiii: leues of the trueloue*, printed in 1510 (STC 15345), and the *Squire of Low Degree*, printed in perhaps 1520 (STC 23111.5).<sup>152</sup> Some of de Worde's illustrations closely correspond to the details of Hawes's text: the depiction of the god of Love in the *Example* ([1509], titlepage, sig. E6<sup>v</sup>; 1530, sig. E5<sup>v</sup>; Hodnett 1255; cf. *Example*, 1296-309); the *Pastime*'s personified Fame, enveloped in flames (see section 3.1.2); and most extraordinarily, Graunde Amoure's battle with a steel-breasted, talon-wielding, scorpion-tailed giant (sig. Q4<sup>v</sup>; Hodnett 1015; cf. *Pastime* 5096-109).<sup>153</sup> Unsurprisingly, these are among the woodcuts for which de Worde was unable to find further use in later publications. However, looking at the editions in which the *Example* and *Pastime* woodcuts are reused—romances, pseudo-histories, and antifeminist satires—one sees the emergence of a visually recognisable and thematically related corpus of English literary texts.<sup>154</sup>

Consider, for instance, the print peregrinations of Hodnett 1009. Lerer, writing of de Worde's reuse of the woodcut in the *liii: leues*, the *Conforte*, *Troilus*, and the *Squire of Low Degree*, suggests that, 'by reprinting it prominently in these other texts, [...] de Worde offers his readers a set of critical associations among

<sup>152</sup> See Lerer, 'Wiles of a Woodcut', and the discussion below.

<sup>153</sup> For further analysis of the correlation between text and image in de Worde's Hawes editions, see Edwards, 'Poet and Printer', 83-88.

<sup>154</sup> On de Worde's cultivation of a market for short, antifeminist pieces, partly as an outgrowth of his ventures in shorter verse romance, see Julia Boffey 'Wynkyn de Worde and Misogyny in Print', in *Chaucer in Perspective: Middle English Essays in Honour of Norman Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Lester (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 236-51; and Alexandra da Costa, *Marketing English Books, 1476-1550: How Printers Changed Reading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 95-126.

# The cōforte of louers

The comferte of louers made and compyled by Steuen Hawes somtyme grome of the honourable chambere of our late souerayne lord kynge Henry the seventh (whose soule god pardon). In the seconde yere of the reygne of our most naturall souerayne lord kynge Henry the eyght.



Figure 3.4. Stephen Hawes, *The Conforte of Louers* ([London]: Wynkyn de Worde, [c. 1515]) STC 12942.5, titlepage, showing Hodnett 1009. Reproduced from *EEBO*.

[them]’.<sup>155</sup> So in the *liii: leues*, de Worde’s use of Hodnett 1009 as the frontispiece for the edition may have been suggested by its position in the *Pastime*, where Bell Pucell is discovered in a garden, making ‘a garlonde [...] With trueloues’ (1991-92), at ‘the very moment introduced by the woodcut of the man and woman’.<sup>156</sup> There is a further connection between the *liii: leues*, the *Conforte*, and *Troilus*: in the *Conforte* and the *liii: leues*, the words printed in the scrolls above the man’s and woman’s heads—‘Holde thys | a token ywys’ and ‘for your sake | I shall it take’—evokes the ring-exchange episode in *Troilus* (III.1366-72), but by means of a ‘Skeltonized’ paraphrase in *Phyllype Sparowe* (682-92).<sup>157</sup> The allusion seems obscure but is indicative of the textual and visual cross-references that de Worde seems to have encouraged from his readers.

The range and complexity of the possible associations of a woodcut like Hodnett 1009 become further apparent upon closer examination of de Worde’s possible sources for the image. In *The Image in Print: Book Illustration in Late Medieval England and Its Sources*, Martha W. Driver gives an account of de Worde’s adaptation and recutting of woodcuts from French, Flemish, and Dutch sources for his editions of the 1490s and early 1500s.<sup>158</sup> His experiments in the medium include the production of composite images made of multiple factotums: ‘separate woodcuts [depicting, for example, male and female figures, backgrounds, and buildings] used in various combinations to form different illustrations within a text

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<sup>155</sup> Lerer, ‘Wiles of a Woodcut’, 395.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 385-86. Lerer takes this detail as evidence for Worde’s involvement in the poetic rivalry between Hawes and Skelton (see nn. 8 and 115).

<sup>158</sup> Driver, *Image in Print*, 40-47.

or across a number of texts'.<sup>159</sup> De Worde's chief sources for his composite images were the editions published by Antoine V  rard, the Parisian printer and publisher who produced a number of liturgical and didactic books for the English market between 1503 and 1508.<sup>160</sup> De Worde's *Kalender of shepeherdes*, published in 1508, contains his earliest use of one of early English print's most versatile factotums: a young man in a coat looking back over one shoulder (Figure 3.5)—what Driver calls the 'Everyman figure'.<sup>161</sup> The figure had earlier appeared in V  rard's *Therence en fran  ois* (1499-1503) representing the lovers Pamphile and Cherea, as L'amaunt or L'amoureux in the allegorical poetic anthology *L'amoureux transi sans espoir* (c. 1502/03), and in V  rard's own English *Kalendayr of the shyppars*, published in around 1503. It was copied and reused by de Worde and other English printers in a variety of publications until as late as the 1560s, an important 'pictograph' in what Driver describes as 'a conscious construction of a grammar of images, which is directly connected to the rise of literacy'.<sup>162</sup> Frequently appearing on the titlepages of books, the Everyman figure 'often represent[s] personifications of Love and/or Folly [...] with the image serving as a

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<sup>159</sup> Martha W. Driver, 'Woodcuts and Decorative Techniques', *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain, 1476-1558*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 95-126, at 99.

<sup>160</sup> See John Macfarlane, *Antoine V  rard* (London: Chiswick Press, 1900), 70-96; and Mary Beth Winn, *Antoine V  rard: Parisian Publisher, 1485-1512: Prologues, Poems, and Presentations* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997).

<sup>161</sup> See Driver, *Image in Print*, 55-63, to whom I am indebted for much of the material in this paragraph. De Worde's woodcut illustrations in his 1508 *Kalendar* are derived from *Compost et kalendrier des bergiers* [*The kalendayr of the shyppars*] (Paris: [Antoine V  rard], 1503) STC 22407. No copy survives of de Worde's 1508 edition; its layout and illustration are conjectured from a revised edition printed in around 1516, but with the 1508 colophon (STC 22409).

<sup>162</sup> Driver, *Image in Print*, 75, though the link between illustration and literacy is more usually discussed in relation to lay readership of religious and devotional books, e.g. Martha W. Driver, 'Pictures in Print: Late Fifteenth- and Early Sixteenth-Century English Religious Books for Lay Readers', in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), 229-44.

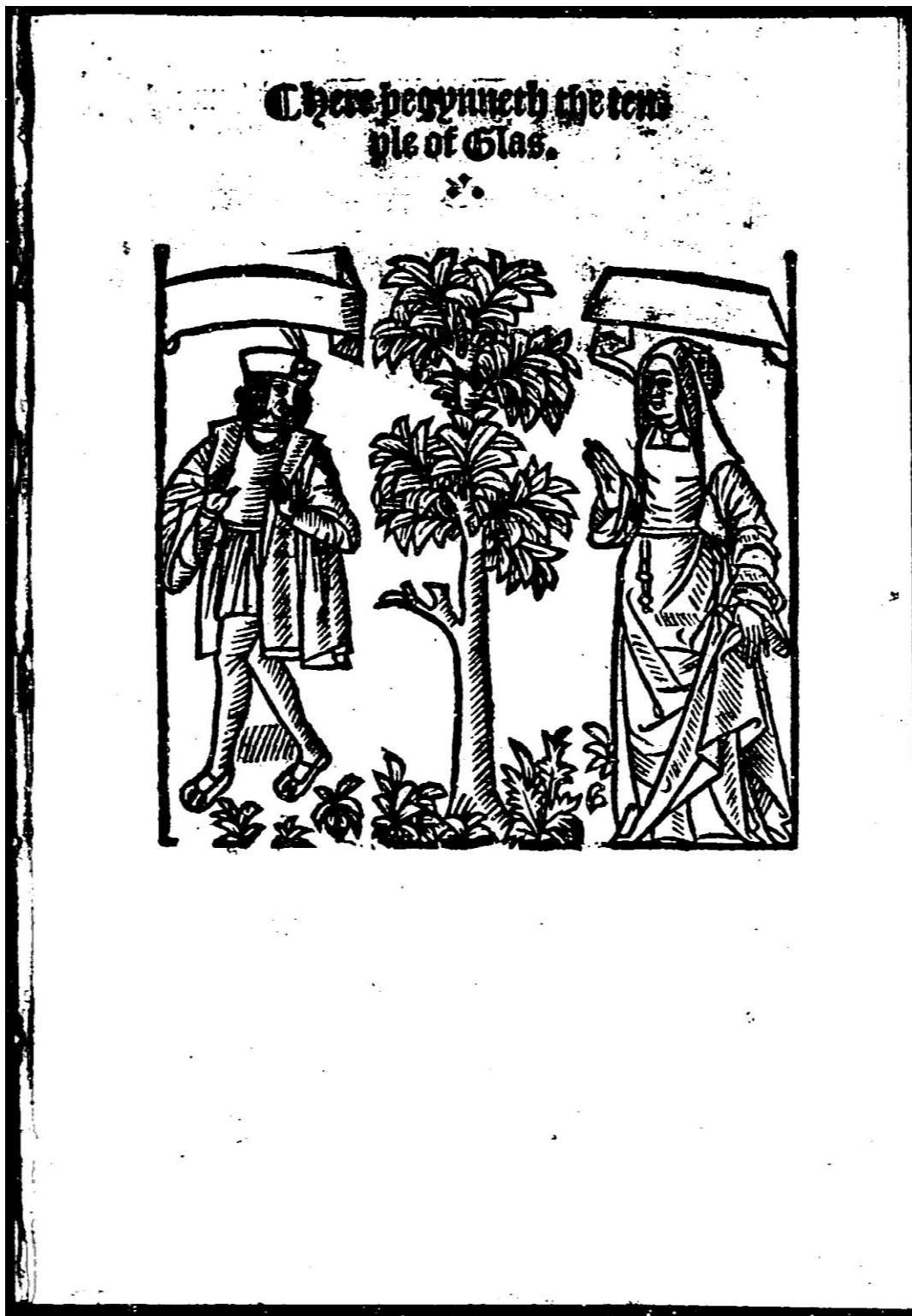


Figure 3.5. John Lydgate, *The Temple of Glas* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1506?]) STC 17033.7, titlepage, showing the 'Everyman' and 'Everywoman' factotum figures. Reproduced from EEBO.

marketing device for the volume'.<sup>163</sup> It invited the same kind of visual analogies as de Worde's reuse of single-block woodcuts, but with a far broader range of reference. The figure is incorporated into two composite images in the *Pastime* (sigs R6<sup>r</sup> and R7<sup>r</sup>), in both instances representing Graunde Amoure.<sup>164</sup> Later de Worde editions in which the Everyman figure appears, often as a beleaguered husband or lover, include the *Quinze joyes de marriage* [*The fyftene joyes of maryage*] (STC 15258), *Gesta Romanorum* (STC 21286.3), *The noble history of King Ponthus* (STC 20108), and *Troilus* (representing Troilus),<sup>165</sup> each of which also includes single-block woodcuts from the *Example* and/or the *Pastime* (see Appendix 3). Of particular interest in relation to Hodnett 1009 is the relationship between Everyman and another factotum figure that de Worde derived from V  rard: a woman in a long gown raising her right hand—the 'Everywoman figure'.<sup>166</sup> Like Everyman, the Everywoman figure illustrates a variety of de Worde editions between which his readers were invited to make textual and visual cross-reference: notably, William Nevill's Hawes-influenced *Castell of pleasure...* (STC 18475),<sup>167</sup> *The fyftene joyes of maryage*, *King Ponthus*, *The kynght of the swanne*, and *Troilus*. Together, the Everyman and Everywoman figures may also have provided a pictorial source for Hodnett 1009. On the titlepage of de Worde's edition of Lydgate's *Temple*, printed in perhaps 1506 (STC 17033.7), the figures appear in a composite image that bears a striking resemblance to Hodnett 1009: Everyman is on the left,

<sup>163</sup> Driver, *Image in Print*, 63.

<sup>164</sup> Meeting Age and confronting Dethe (cf. n. 74).

<sup>165</sup> See Driver, *Image in Print*, 60-62.

<sup>166</sup> See *ibid.*, 64-72. The figure was first used by V  rard in his c. 1500 *Therence en fran  ois*.

<sup>167</sup> See A. S. G. Edwards, 'Nevill's *Castell of Pleasure* and Stephen Hawes', *N&Q*, 28 (1981), 487; cf. Nevill, *The Castell of Pleasure*, ed. Roberta D. Cornelius, EETS, o. s., 179 (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), 29.



Everywoman on the right, and they are separated by a tree factotum (Figure 3.5). This is the first edition of the *Temple* to have an illustrated titlepage, a rough antecedent for the titlepage of the *Conforte*.<sup>168</sup> I do not mean to suggest that the latter edition was envisaged as a sequel or companion to the *Temple*; nevertheless, the resemblance is apposite to a text in which Hawes makes direct reference to Lydgate's 'bokes' (see section 3.2.2), and which has structural and thematic parallels with Lydgate's framed first-person allegories. Such details reinforce the idea of de Worde's production of textual and visual connections between his books—connections that he was confident would be appreciated, even innovated, by his readers (see further below). Much like the depersonalised poet-narrators of Hawes dream poems, the Everyman figure—Amour—the Everywoman figure—Pucell—and their single-block woodcut relations belong to no one text or poet and have no definite signification. They are available as representations of youths, lovers, and husbands, of maidens, beloveds, and wives, whether in romance, pseudo-historical, or satirical texts, and helped early Tudor readers to draw together these diverse reading materials.

It is becoming increasingly clear that authorship, far from being the only or even the most significant means of accreting cultural capital in early English print, is just one of the ways by which de Worde and his contemporaries were able to promote their literary publications. In the case of Hawes, advertising the character and reputation of the historical poet seems to have been of less importance than assimilating his identity to the type of the lover-poet-moralist, as demonstrated by

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<sup>168</sup> Earlier editions of the *Temple*, printed by Caxton in perhaps 1477 (STC 17032, reprinted by de Worde in perhaps 1495 [STC 17032a]), by de Worde in around 1500 (STC 17033), and by Pynson in perhaps 1503 (STC 17033.3) are unillustrated.

a brief reprising of his name and writings by de Worde and his associates in around 1530. Hawes's name appears in the colophon or on the titlepage of each of de Worde's editions of his poems; yet in over two decades of publication, the printer supplies only one further biographical detail regarding the poet: Hawes's position as a groom of the Chamber. The next references to Hawes in print are posthumous; both appear in de Worde editions and were written by writers associated with his press. In his verse preface to de Worde's 1530 edition of Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (STC 5092), the printer-poet Robert Copland somewhat incredibly names 'yonge Hawes' alongside Lydgate as one of the deceased 'heyres' of Chaucer (sig. [A1<sup>v</sup>], l. 9).<sup>169</sup> The verse is an address to the 'New Fanglers' who cry out for new writing, whilst 'Olde morall bokes stonde styll vpon the shelve' (27). Copland's dismissal of the 'Tryfles and toyes' (29) currently in demand recalls Hawes's condemnation of the writing of 'gestes and trifles / without fruytfulnes' in the *Pastime* (1387-93, 1392 quoted). Hawes's writings are held to contain the same 'morall sperkes' (23) as the books of Chaucer and Lydgate, and it is surely no coincidence that de Worde reprinted the *Example* in the same year.

Probably a year earlier, in 1529, a longer eulogy for Hawes appears in the prologue to Thomas Feylde's *Here begynneth a lytel treatyse called the contrauerse bytwene a louer and a jaye lately compyled* (STC 10838.7).<sup>170</sup> Feylde's first stanza closely follows the proem to Hawes's *Conforte*, praising poetry as a moral and edifying pastime:

<sup>169</sup> See A. S. G. Edwards, 'An Allusion to Stephen Hawes, c. 1530', *N&Q*, 26 (1979), 397; and on Copland, Mary C. Erler, 'Copland [Coplande], Robert [Roberte] (fl. 1505-1547)', *ODNB*.

<sup>170</sup> Feylde's only known work, reprinted in perhaps 1532 (STC 10839). *STC* suggests a 1527? date for de Worde's first edition; I follow A. S. G. Edwards in placing the edition closer to 1530, a year of apparently renewed interest in Hawes amongst de Worde and his associates. Edwards, 'Allusion'.

Thoughe laureate poetes in olde antyquyte  
 Fayned fables vnder cloudy sentence  
 yet some intytuled fruytefull moralyte  
 Some of loue wrote grete cyrcumstaunce  
 Some of cheuaulrous actes made remembraunce  
 Some as good phylosophres naturally endyted  
 Thus wysely and wyttely theyr tyme they spended.

(*Louer and a jaye* [1529?], sig. [A1<sup>v</sup>], ll. 1-7)<sup>171</sup>

Feylde next passes judgement on a series of love poets from antiquity (8-14),  
 praises Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate in terms of their ‘rethoryke’, ‘eloquence’, and  
 ‘moralytyes’ (15-21, 15 and 18 quoted; cf. section 3.1.1), before turning to a less  
 likely poetic exemplar, Hawes:

¶ yonge Steuen Hawse whose soule god pardon  
 Treated of loue so clerkely and well  
 To rede his werkes is myne affeccyon  
 whiche he compyled for Labell pusell  
 Remembrynge storyes fruytefull and delectable  
 I lytell or nought experte in poetry  
 Oflamentable loue hathe made a dytty.

(*Louer and a jaye* [1529?], sig. [A1<sup>v</sup>], ll. 23-29)

Feylde, like Copland, presents Hawes as a poet of virtuous love, one who, like  
 Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, ‘is deed’ and ‘gone’ (*Parliament* [1530], sig. [A1<sup>v</sup>], ll.  
 9, 11). However, unlike the poets of England’s medieval past, whose manuscript

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<sup>171</sup> Note, however, Feylde’s subtle modification of Hawes’s justification of the profitability of poetic fictions: Feylde reworks Hawes’s ‘cloudy fygyres’ trope (cf. *Conforte*, 1-2) in order to present ‘fables’ made ‘vnder cloudy sentence’ as the undesirable *alternative* to writings of ‘fruytefull moralyte’, clearly expressed.

books Copland has laid up ‘tyll that the lether moules’ (14), Feylde conceives of Hawes within the fiction of authorship devised at the end of the *Conforte*—as the diligent lover who ‘compyled [books] for Labell pusell’ (cf. section 3.2.2). Hawes’s books are attributed to Amour, lover of Pucell, rather than Stephen Hawes, groom of the Chamber. The description of Hawes as ‘yonge’ indicates the quasi-Troilean status which he had come to occupy in the bibliographic imaginary—an attentive courtier, vulnerable to the caprices of love, but amenable to wise counsel.<sup>172</sup> This is a convenient fiction for Feylde, who has written his own ‘dytty’ ‘Oflamentable loue’ under similar auspices. The *Louer and a jaye* is a dream-framed first-person allegory in which the poet-narrator reports a conversation overheard between a lover, Amator, and a jay, Graculus, precipitated by the departure of Amator’s beloved, ‘pucell’ (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>, l. 22). An exposition of the dream is supplied in ‘Lenuoye of the auctoure’, with clues to the identities of Amator and his beloved:

Who lyketh thy [i.e. the book’s] sentence and pondureth it ryght  
 Contectynge well in his remembraunce  
 Knowe maye he truely that by [‘on account of’] a lady bryght  
 Thou was compyled by pastymes pleasaunte.  
 Suche grete vnkyndnesse whiche caused varyaunce  
 Was shewed to a loue called. F. T.  
 Her name also begynneth with. A. B.

(*Louer and a jaye* [1529?], sig. [C4<sup>v</sup>], ll. 8-14)

<sup>172</sup> Contrast the presentation of Barclay as a moral poet-advisor in the mold of Lydgate in the author woodcuts (Hodnett 1510, 1962) illustrating Pynson’s editions of his poems and translations, analysed in Julie Smith, ‘Woodcut Presentation Scenes in Books Printed by Caxton, de Worde, and Pynson’, *GJ* (1986), 322-43, at 333-38; and the ‘Skelton Poeta’ and author woodcuts (Hodnett 2056, 2058, 2287) illustrating Faques’s 1523 *Garlande* and John Rastell’s 1527? *Comely Coystrowne* and 1528? *Dyvers Balettys*. One attraction for readers of Rastell’s editions ‘may have been their connection with a named author, one whose existing reputation must have grown through the 1520s as more of his works appeared in print’. Boffey, ‘Lyrics and Short Poems’, 111; cf. Mary C. Erler, ‘Early Woodcuts of Skelton: The Uses of Convention’, *BRH*, 87 (1986-87), 17-28; and Griffiths, ‘What’s in a Name?’, 224-33.

Feylde is as uninterested as Hawes in providing any definite extra-literary referents for his allegory. 'F. T.' clearly stands for 'Thomas Feylde', named in the colophon (sig. [C4<sup>v</sup>]); but 'A. B.' is no more helpful than the *Conforte*'s 'p / p / p / thre' for identifying the poem's Pucell. As in Hawes, the value of Feylde's poetry relies on its expression of topical commonplaces—here, 'the actes and propertyes of women' (sig. C4<sup>v</sup>, l. 2)—using a form and types associated with the 'pastymes pleasaunte' of a refined social elite. Feylde does not pretend to emulate the medieval authors cited in the prologue. Like Hawes, he is visible in his poetry only as Amator-Amour. The identity is reinforced by the titlepage of the *Louer and a jaye*: Feylde is not named; and the illustration is a composite image composed of the Everyman figure and an altered version of the tree factotum used in the 1506? *Temple* (Figure 3.6). Here, Everyman represents Feylde-Amator, forging a visual link to the lovers in the *Temple*, the *Pastime*, *Troilus*, and, by analogy with Hodnett 1009, the *Conforte*—all products of de Worde's press. It would seem that, by around 1530, the names of Hawes and his books perform a similar function, as markers of literary genre within an expanding print market—points of reference whereby other English poets (and their printers) could signal the pleasure and profit to be derived from their books.

Marketing English poetry by means of analogy rather than authorship seems to have proved a commercial success. De Worde and his associates continued to develop the possibilities for textual and visual cross-references between their books, with Hawes's *Example* and *Pastime* providing a useful paradigm. The printing by de Worde of a number of English literary texts containing allusions to or borrowings from Hawes has led A. S. G. Edwards and Carol M. Meale to posit 'the



Figure 3.6. Thomas Feylde, *Here begyneth a lytel treatyse called the contrauerse bytwene a louer and a jaye* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1529?]) STC 10838.7, titlepage. Reproduced from EEBO.

existence of a de Worde poetic coterie' during the 1520s and early 1530s.<sup>173</sup>

Between perhaps 1520 and 1533, de Worde printed: Christopher Goodwin's framed first-person allegory, *The chaunce of the dolorous louer...* (STC 12046);<sup>174</sup> the Boccaccian *Hystory of Tytus & Gesyppus* (STC 3184.5) and *Guystarde and Sygysmonde* (STC 3183.5), both translated by William Walter; Feylde's *Louer and a jaye*; Nevill's *Castell of pleasure* (STC 18475);<sup>175</sup> an *Interlude [Thenterlude of youth]* (STC 14111), for which the *Example* is a direct source;<sup>176</sup> and Walter's antifeminist dialogue, *The spectacle of louers...* (STC 25008), which includes borrowings from the *Pastime*.<sup>177</sup> De Worde's printing of contemporary English poets constitutes only a small portion of his English literary output; nevertheless, his selection and marketing of even this limited number of texts sets de Worde apart from Caxton, Pynson, and Julian Notary among England's early printers.<sup>178</sup> Edwards suggests a 'degree of interconnectedness' between de Worde's printing of Walter, Felyde, Nevill, and his reprinting of Hawes 'that seems not to have a great deal to do with actual content', but which was guided instead 'by a consistency of taste—in this instance, interest in Hawes' works'.<sup>179</sup> I am inclined to agree, but with the caveat that similarities in content seem to have been less meaningful to de Worde and his associates than similarities in function—and in this respect, de Worde's

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<sup>173</sup> Edwards and Meale, 'Marketing of Printed Books', 119; cf. Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print', 146-48.

<sup>174</sup> Goodwin's only other known work, a translation of the *Song de la pucelle* [*The maydens dreame...*], was printed in London by Robert Wyer for Richard Bankes in 1542 (STC 12047).

<sup>175</sup> Almost certainly a reprint of an earlier edition. An edition of Nevill's *Castell of pleasure* was printed in London by Henry Pepwell in 1518 (STC 18476).

<sup>176</sup> *Two Tudor Interludes*, ed. I. Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 39-41.

<sup>177</sup> A. S. G. Edwards identifies the *Pastime* as the source for two episodes in Walter's *Spectacle* in 'William Walter and Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*', *N&Q*, 33 (1986), 450-51.

<sup>178</sup> See Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print', 143; and Edwards and Meale, 'Marketing of Printed Books', 119.

<sup>179</sup> Edwards, 'From Manuscript to Print', 147-48.

pleasurable, profitable, English books are closely aligned. A programme of moralising and contextualising paratexts facilitated de Worde's publication of courtly, amatory, often romance-type English verse by little-known contemporary poets—'storyes fruytefull and delectable' such as those prescribed by Hawes, Feylde, and Copland. Crucially, de Worde and his associates seem to have appreciated the role of the reader in the collecting and application of their books. The bibliographic network or literary genre represented by de Worde's English literary publications is deliberately inclusive, one in which authors such as Hawes feature as one among many organising principles. As will be seen below, it was ultimately de Worde's readers, not the printer himself, who determined the consumption and compilation of contemporary English poetry. Textual and visual connections serve as prompts, not directives, in what can be understood as an interactive improvisation of genre in early sixteenth-century England.

In a bibliographic culture of manuscript booklets and nonce-volumes, where the availability of texts depended as much on happenstance as on demand, paratextual links between de Worde's English literary publications presented buyers and compilers with multiple options by which to organise their reading materials, whilst stimulating further print consumption. Alexandra Gillespie posits that de Worde, like Caxton before him, printed folio and later quarto editions of English texts that invited collection in *Sammelbände* (bound volumes of separately printed or hand-written texts) because of their visual and functional analogies.<sup>180</sup> 'Sammelbände, like manuscript booklets', argues Gillespie, 'allowed for a dynamic aspect in the early trade in printed books. They could accommodate for the whims

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<sup>180</sup> Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*, 26-117.



of buyers' but also demonstrate the 'new mechanisms' devised by printers and retailers 'to single out, promote, and also to link their wares'.<sup>181</sup> Textual allusions and borrowings, reused woodcuts, hortatory prefaces and envoys, and, less prominently, authorial attributions, encouraged what I have been describing as the improvisation of genre by early sixteenth-century readers of contemporary English poetry, with Hawes as a perennial intertext.

An early example, apparently representing more conservative literary tastes, is the book-list of James Morice, Clerk of Works to Margaret Beaufort from around 1505 until her death. The 'Kalendar of English bokes concerning to James Morice', dated around 1508, appears on the verso of the first leaf of a copy of John Tiptoft's translation of Cicero's *De senectute*, printed by Caxton in 1481 (STC 5293)—'the earliest surviving list of exclusively English printed books'.<sup>182</sup> Morice's twenty-three titles, mostly devotional and instructional texts, also include such diversionary reading as 'The Storie of the seuen Wise Maisters of Rome', 'Reynerd the fox', and 'Esope'. Nine of Morice's titles are enclosed by a bracket and accompanied by the note 'in j book'; they were probably bound together in a single volume. Morice's 'book' includes a work by Richard Rolle, four courtesy books, but also Lydgate's 'Temple of glase',<sup>183</sup> Caxton's 'order of knyghthode',<sup>184</sup> and Chaucer's 'The loue bytwene Mars and Venus',<sup>185</sup> intimating an interest in works of chivalry and medieval English authors alongside more practical writing. Mary C. Erler suggests

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>182</sup> Cambridge University Library, Inc. 3.J.1.1. For a full transcription of the book-list and identification of its editions, see J. C. T. Oates, 'English Bokes Concerynyng to James Morice', *TCBS*, 3 (1962), 124-32, 129 quoted.

<sup>183</sup> Printed five times before 1508. See n. 168.

<sup>184</sup> Ramón Llull, *Libre del orde de cavalleria* [*The book of the ordre of chivalry or knyghthode*], trans. William Caxton ([Westminster: William Caxton, 1484]) STC 3356.7.

<sup>185</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The loue and complayntes bytwene Mars and Venus* (Westminster: Julian Notary, [1500?]) STC 5089.

that the book-list's 'strong investment in secular self-improvement might be considered to represent the reading preferences of an emerging professional class'.<sup>186</sup> And as markets grew, printers and retailers continued to expand the range of English, literary, ostensibly edifying texts which might find a place in volumes like Morice's.

Morice's book-list was produced during the period of de Worde's first printing of Hawes's poems. The contents of a *Sammelband* from the library of the eighteenth-century antiquarian Cox Macro, partially reconstructed by the bibliographer Seymour de Ricci in 1931, seems closely aligned with the literary tastes of the 'de Worde poetic coterie' a generation later.<sup>187</sup> According to de Ricci, the volume once contained copies of de Worde's second edition of Feylde's *Louer and a jaye*,<sup>188</sup> Goodwin's *Dolorous louer* and *The maydens dreme...*,<sup>189</sup> Walter's *Spectacle of louers*, and translations of four satirical texts on marriage: a redaction of *De conjuge non ducenda* [*The payne and sorowe of euyll maryage*], traditionally attributed to Lydgate (STC 19119); *A complaynt of them that be to soone maryed*, translated by Copland (STC 5729); Pierre Gringore's *Complainte de trop tard marié* [*Here begynneth the complaynte of them that ben to late maryed*], translated by Copland (STC 5728.5); and *The fyftene joyes of maryage* (STC 15258), also possibly translated by Copland. Each edition was printed by or has some association with de Worde's press, and the titlepages of all but two share a single-block or factotum

<sup>186</sup> Erler, 'The Laity', in *Companion to the Early Printed Book*, ed. Gillespie and Powell, 134-48, at 148.

<sup>187</sup> On the difficulties of establishing an early Tudor provenance for volumes which may have been bound by later book-collectors, retailers, or librarians, see Alexandra Gillespie, 'Poets, Printers, and Early English *Sammelbände*', *HLQ*, 67 (2004), 189-214, at 194-99.

<sup>188</sup> See n. 170.

<sup>189</sup> See n. 174.

woodcut with the *Example* or the *Pastime*.<sup>190</sup> Should the reconstructed Macro *Sammelband* be taken to represent an early-Tudor volume, the selection and arrangement of its contents indicate the receptiveness of its compiler to the textual and visual analogies suggested between de Worde's literary publications.

The star example of a de Worde *Sammelband*, and the compilation which most aptly demonstrates Hawes's place in the bibliographic network delineated above, is the volume that was sold at the auction of John Ker, 3<sup>rd</sup> duke of Roxburghe's library in 1812, formerly in the collection of the Revd Richard Farmer and now dispersed throughout the British Library, Library of Congress, and the Huntington Library.<sup>191</sup> This 'single-volume quarto assembly of lyric verse, visions, courtly love poems, and misogynist tracts' contained no poems by Hawes when described in 1812, though reminiscences of his books haunt its contents.<sup>192</sup> The volume's frontispiece, that of de Worde's 1517 *Troilus*, is shared by the titlepage of the *Conforte* (see above and Figure 3.4); the third and fifth items, Nevill's *Castell of Pleasure* and Walter's *Spectacle of louers*, are related to the *Pastime* both by textual borrowings and the illustration of their titlepages;<sup>193</sup> and two further framed first-person allegories, de Worde's 1506? *Temple* and the *The complaynte of a lovers lyfe* [i.e. *The Complaint of the Black Knight*], printed in perhaps 1531 (STC 17014.7), are

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<sup>190</sup> *Payne and sorowe of euyll maryage*: Hodnett 1264; *Complaynte of them that ben to late maryed*: Everyman and Everywoman figures; *Fyftene joyes of maryage*: Hodnett 1264; 1532? *Louer and a jaye*: Everyman figure; *Spectacle of louers*: Age-Councell figure (cf. *Pastime*, sig. R6<sup>r</sup>); *The maydens dreame*: Age-Councell and Everywoman figures.

<sup>191</sup> For a full description of the provenance and contents of the 'Farmer *Sammelband*' and remarks concerning the literary and commercial implications of their textual and visual connections, see Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author*, 110-16.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>193</sup> See nn. 167, 177, and 190.

by Hawes's claimed poetic master, Lydgate.<sup>194</sup> Other items include Walter's *Tytus & Gesyppus* and *Guystarde and Sygsmonde*, another copy of *The loue and complayntes bytwene Mars and Venus* included in Morice's 'book', and Felyde's *Lover and a jaye* with its eulogy for 'yonge Steuen Hawse'. These connections to Hawes's books need not indicate any special interest in Hawes's poetry *per se*; indeed, it seems highly unlikely that the compiler of the Farmer *Sammelband* should have been guided in his/her selection by a taste for Hawes *reliquae*, whilst including no poems by the poet himself. Instead, the volume stands as the physical manifestation of the dynamic processes for marketing, categorising, and collecting printed literary texts during this period—an improvisation of literary genre involving poets, printers, and readers that depends as much upon the appearance and perceived function of books as on their authorship or content. The texts of the Farmer *Sammelband* are amatory, often fantastic, but insistently instructive; they are the compositions of various writers, but share an imagined affiliation to the mores and ideals epitomised by the Everyman-Troilus-Amour and/or Everywoman-Criseyde-Pucell depicted on their titlepages. The role of Hawes within such volumes, and in the bibliographic network that they represent, is as a possible though not essential point of reference—a marker of genre rather than a guide to the meaning or selection of texts, and an advertisement for the products of de Worde's press.

The marketing and compiling of Hawes and other early sixteenth-century English poets can be seen to align with Hawes's own claims for the textual authority

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<sup>194</sup> The *Black Knight's* frontispiece is a composite image composed of the Age-Counsell figure, the *Temple-Feylde* tree factotum, and the Everyman figure, two of which also appear in the composite image illustrating the titlepage of the 1506? *Temple* (see above and Figure 3.3).

of his writings: in each, the literary author as a guide to meaning is greatly diminished; instead, whether justifying to the reader the profitability of poetic fictions, despite the obstacles to their interpretation, or persuading a prospective buyer of the suitability of a new edition to his/her growing *Sammelband*, Hawes and de Worde entrust to their readers a degree of hermeneutic and codicological responsibility far greater than that usually allowed by the regime of literary authorship. This may partly explain Hawes's low modern critical reputation. One is likely to be disappointed when considering Hawes's poetry as a programme of sustained authorial self-promotion, or if studying de Worde's editions as evidence for 'the emergence of the English author'. Instead, Hawes's literary career is a reminder of the alternative pathways for vernacular textual production and authority explored by poets and printers at the moment of transition evoked in the introduction to this chapter (and elaborated in section 1.1). His framed first-person allegories convey a claim to textual authority based on the assimilation of his writings to a recognisable courtly aesthetic rather than unfavourable competition against its 'poetes laureate'. The absence of definite extra-literary referents and accumulated allegorical meaning is what makes Hawes's poetry at once unexceptional and unexceptionable. In this, de Worde's printing of Hawes attests a measure of success: in his own lifetime, his writings proved acceptable to an expanded Tudor readership interested in the fashions of the court, though not necessarily its more minor courtiers. Hawes's framed first-person allegories see the textual first person almost entirely divested of its quasi-autobiographical potential. Books rather than authors are made the loci of *auctorite*; and it is to his own and others' books that Hawes's lovers and de Worde's paratexts make reference.

Hawes's contrast to Skelton in this respect is demonstrated both here and in my previous chapter. In the chapter that follows, I return to Scotland to consider a vernacular poet also very different to Hawes—Gavin Douglas—but who shares with him an attraction to framed first-person allegory for reasons other than its facility for overt self-representation in the text.

#### 4. 'Qu(o)d the compilar Gawin D': Gavin Douglas's implied authorship

In chapter 2, I quoted the eulogy of Sir David Lyndsay, poet and herald at the court of James V, for William Dunbar, 'quhilk language had at large'. Dunbar is one among twelve deceased vernacular poets named as paragons of their art in the prologue to Lyndsay's *Testament and Complaynt of Our Soverane Lordis Papyngo* (1530). First comes the English literary triumvirate, 'Chawceir, Gower, and Lidgate laureate' (12); next, a series of Scottish writers: Walter Kennedy (cf. section 2.2), Dunbar, and seven further names all also mentioned in *The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie* and Dunbar's *Lament for the Makars*.<sup>1</sup> Lyndsay praises these poets in terms of their 'rethorick' (11) and 'sweit sentence' (14), claiming that 'Thocht thay be ded, thar libels bene levand'. But in the stanzas that follow, all are surpassed by the superlative skill and learning of 'Albione's pre-eminent poet, Gavin Douglas:

Allace for one, quhilk lampe wes of this land!  
Of eloquence the flowand balmy strand,  
And, in our Inglis rethorick, the rose.  
As, of rubeis, the charbunckle bene chose,  
And, as Phebus dois Synthia presell,  
So Gawane Dowglas, byschope of Dunkell,  
  
Had, quhen he wes in to this land on lyve,  
Abufe vulgare poetis prerogative,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Qunintyng': no poems survive, cf. the references in Dunbar's 'Now lythis off ane gentill knyght' (37-38) and Dunbar and Kennedy's *Flyting* (2, 34); 'Rowle': unidentified but possibly the author of 'The cursing of Sir Johine Rowlis / Poun the steilaris of his fowlis' in Bannatyne, fols 104<sup>v</sup>-07<sup>r</sup> and, with some significant differences, Maitland Folio, pp. 141-48, cf. the two 'Roull's' praised in Dunbar's *Lament* (77-78); 'Henderson': Robert Henryson (d. c. 1490), cf. *Lament*, 81-82; 'Hay': Sir Gilbert Hay (d. before 1470), author of *The Buik of Alexander the Conquerour* (1430s) and translator of three French treatises on governance and warfare c. 1456, cf. *Lament*, 67; 'Holland': Richard Holland (d. c. 1482), author of *The Buke of the Howlat* (c. 1448), cf. *Lament*, 61.

Boith in prattick and speculatioun.  
 I saye no more. Gude redaris may discryve  
 His worthy workis, in nowmer mo than five,  
 And speciallye the trew transaltioun  
 Of Virgill, quhilk bene consolatioun  
 To cunnyng men, to know his gret ingyne  
 Als weil in naturall science as devyne.

(Lyndsay, *Papyngo*, 22-36)

Lyndsay's eulogy speaks of Douglas's high literary reputation in Scotland and, though to a lesser degree, England throughout much of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> It also points out some of the important differences between Douglas and the other English and Scottish poets examined in this thesis, not least, his particular agon with the concept of literary authorship. The most obvious difference is Douglas's noble status, both as a member of the powerful 'Red' Douglas family and, from 1516, bishop of Dunkeld.<sup>3</sup> Douglas's material 'prerogative' would have greatly exceeded that of the court servitors and minor ecclesiastics Skelton, Dunbar, and Hawes. This is reflected in the poems that he composed: no petitions, panegyrics, or flytings against members of the court, but, according to Lyndsay, 'worthy workis, in nowmer mo than five', of which three survive: the framed first-person allegory, *The Palice of Honour* (c. 1501); Douglas's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Eneados* (1512-13); and the short anticlerical poem, *Conscience*.<sup>4</sup> For Douglas, poetry seems

<sup>2</sup> On the 'Early Reception' of Douglas, especially his *Eneados*, see *The Eneados: Gavin Douglas's Translation of Virgil's 'Aeneid': Volume I: Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Priscilla Bawcutt with Ian Cunningham, STS, 5<sup>th</sup> ser., 17 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 24-32. Unfortunately, only the first volume of Bawcutt and Cunningham's new edition is available at the time of writing.

<sup>3</sup> For biographical information, see Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Douglas, Gavin (c. 1476-1522)', *ODNB*; and Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 1-22.

<sup>4</sup> *Conscience* is uniquely extant in Maitland Folio, pp. 192-93, where it is ascribed to Douglas. Bawcutt credits the attribution, though Douglas does not name the poem among his 'pryncipall warkis' in the *Eneados* (see section 4.2.1) and '[i]t seems impossible to date the poem precisely'. *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, liii. Also in the Maitland Folio (pp. 226-56) is the 960-line homiletic



partly to have represented a diversion from more ‘grave mater’ (*Eneados*, Prol. XIII, 112)—as borne out, following his completion of the *Eneados*, by almost a decade of political maneuvering on behalf of his nephew, Archibald Douglas, 6th earl of Angus, during the minority of King James V, a period for which no poems survive. This is not to say that Douglas’s poetical works are entirely contemplative and esoteric, nor that his literary-political career can be neatly divided between ‘speculatioun’ and ‘praticke’. The *Palice*, dedicated to King James IV, was clearly written with personal advancement in mind, whilst the *Eneados*, directed to Douglas’s kinsman, Henry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Sinclair, is presented as a ‘consolatioun’ to ‘euery gentill Scot’ (*Eneados*, Exclamation, 43), not only to ‘cunnyng men’. The 1510s saw continued relations between Douglas and the internationally renowned Scottish theologian John Mair; and in the year before his death (in exile in London in 1522), Douglas was in correspondance with the humanist historian Polydore Vergil regarding the legendary origins of the Scottish nation.<sup>5</sup>

Returning to the special ‘prerogative’ ascribed to Douglas by Lyndsay, it seems clear that no one aspect of Douglas’s ‘Scottish’, ‘Humanist’, or ‘Noble’ identities can account for the textual authority invested in his poetry, both by the poet himself and by his early copyists, poetic successors, and first English printer, William Copland.<sup>6</sup> Instead, I argue in the current chapter that the cultivation of

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allegory, *King Hart*, with two ascriptions to Douglas in a later hand, now generally regarded as spurious. On the uncertain canon of Douglas’s writings before the *Eneados*, see further Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 47-49.

<sup>5</sup> Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 16, 27-29, 30-31.

<sup>6</sup> On Douglas’s ‘Scottish’, ‘Humanist’, and ‘Noble’ identities, and the difficulty of situating his poetical works within British or indeed Scottish literary history, see especially the work of Nicola Royan: ‘The Scottish Identity of Gavin Douglas’, in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300-1600*, ed. M. P. Bruce and K. H. Terrell (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 195-209; ‘Gavin Douglas’s Humanist Identity’, *M&H*, n. s., 41 (2016), 119-36; ‘The Noble Identity of Gavin Douglas’, in

Douglas's literary authorship is closely related to his strategic manipulation of the quasi-autobiographical potential of framed first-person allegory. Douglas, like Skelton, writes with a clear view to posterity—'Throw owt the ile yclepit Albyon | Red sall I be, and sung with mony one' (*Eneados*, Conclusio, 12). But unlike Skelton, Douglas's strategy for demonstrating the magnitude of his achievement is to position himself firmly *outside* of his texts, as the authorial agent responsible for their compilation. This is the attitude displayed in Douglas's *Palice* and the narrative Prologues to the *Eneados*, in which the poet-narrator signals the existence of an authorial agent external and prior to the text, but is not meant as a plausible representation of the historical poet. Douglas's literary authorship relies on a readerly reconstruction belonging to the concept of the implied author.<sup>7</sup> His poetry enacts a shift from the poet-narrator at the level of the diegesis to the authorial agent evoked as the compiler of the text as a locus for textual authority—a triumph of authorial self-promotion, but by means of a considerable modification of framed first-person allegory as a vehicle for self-representation.

Beginning with the *Palice*, section 4.1 considers Douglas's synthesis of a range of forms and postures derived from the Chaucerian and Burgundian framed first-person allegories of the preceding century. Douglas's aim, it seems, is to emphasise the artifice and provisionality as opposed to the verisimilitude and vitality of his textual double—a strategy which he develops in his paratexts to the *Eneados*. The remainder of the chapter reappraises the prevailing view of the Prologues, Comment, and Aftertext to the *Eneados* as a set of authorial directives

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*Premodern Scotland: Literature and Governance, 1420-1587*, ed. Joanna Martin and Emily Wingfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 127-43.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the definition in section 1.2.

to the intended audience for the poem which betray the intention and personality of the historical poet. Instead, I argue that the basic function of these paratexts is to highlight the *difference* rather than the identity between the historical poet and the versions of himself presented in his texts—an invitation to conceive of an authorial agent external and prior to the *Eneados*. Section 4.2 examines the relationship between text, *sentence*, and ‘voice’ in the *Eneados*: Douglas’s claim to translate not word-for-word but sense-for-sense; the commentary and excursions that have accrued to his translation; and the figure of ‘the compliar’ Douglas as the organising principle for the many voices that the *Eneados* evokes. Finally, in section 4.3, I analyse moments that have the appearance of self-representation-as-author in the seventh, eighth, twelfth, and thirteenth Prologues. These narrative frames share formal features with the framed first-person allegories examined in previous chapters: a poet-narrator presented as the historical poet’s textual double; a metapoetic dream; and, in the thirteenth Prologue, instruction from a Virgilian continuator. But in the *Eneados*, the quasi-autobiographical potential of first person-allegory is subordinate to a different authorial project. Its poet-narrators, no less than the other author-figures encountered in their dreams, are shown to be the fabrications of a human author who is separable from them both, an implied figure who it is up to the reader to imagine and admire. In this, I suggest, Douglas returns to the ironic attitude towards self-representation displayed in Chaucer’s dream poems, but by way of a poetic tradition that has given to the vernacular poet the status of a literary author.

#### 4.1. *The Palice of Honour*

The central argument of Douglas's *Palice of Honour*—‘What is honour? How is it to be achieved?’ And what is its relation to poetry?<sup>8</sup>—resonates with Skelton's *Garlande or Chapelet of Laurell* and Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure* and *Conforte of Louers*, as does its expression by means of an allegorical quest. In the *Palice*, however, Douglas complicates his treatment of topical matter in ways not seen in Hawes and eschews the opportunity to develop a quasi-autobiographical textual double like the *Garlande*'s Skelton Poeta. The formal and certain thematic similarities between the *Palice*, Hawes's dream poems, and Skelton's *Garlande* indicate the common Chaucerian and continental influences affecting poetic composition in and around the courts of both Henry VII and James IV (see section 2.2). The *Palice* combines elements from the ‘Burgundian’ and ‘Chaucerian’ traditions of framed first-person allegory, but also the ‘humanist’ outlook of the *Eneados* (see further section 4.2). Like Skelton in the *Garlande*, Douglas engages with a problem broached in Chaucer's *House of Fame*: can the vernacular poet ensure his own, or anyone else's, honour and/or fame? But in contrast to Skelton's dream of laureate self-aggrandisement, the *Palice* presents *the possibility* rather than the celebration of an authorial canon and a testing ground for Douglas's self-promotional strategy in the *Eneados*. Its highly synthetic and, as will be seen, dramatically discontinuous narrative anticipates Douglas's later poem, whilst in his fictional account of Venus's commission of the translation, Douglas starts to develop an *implied* literary authorship as an alternative to self-representation-as-author.

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<sup>8</sup> Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 52.

Study of the *Palice* as a work of authorial self-promotion is hampered by the absence of any contemporary witness for the poem. Only fragments survive of an edition printed sometime in the 1530s, possibly by the Edinburgh printer Thomas Davidson (*STC* 7072.8).<sup>9</sup> The first complete text is the edition printed in London by William Copland in perhaps 1553 (*STC* 7073); the earliest surviving Scottish edition was printed by John Ross for Henry Charteris in 1579 (*STC* 7074).<sup>10</sup> Priscilla Bawcutt describes Copland's edition as 'carelessly printed', though David J. Parkinson makes a convincing case for his use of it as his base text in the recent critical edition.<sup>11</sup> Given the impossibility of retrieving anything like an authorial text for the *Palice*, the following analysis is based on Copland's text (reprinted in Bawcutt's edition)—further recommended by the opportunities for cross-reference with the printer's contemporary edition of the *Eneados* (see sections 4.2 and 4.3). The sidenotes in Copland's *Palice* and *Eneados* are of particular interest for their traces of Scots spelling and syntax; they have provoked speculation on the possible existence of earlier Scottish witnesses for both poems, now lost.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Edinburgh University Library, De.6.123, presented in William Beatie, 'Fragments of *The Palyce of Honour*', *EBST*, 3 (1951), 31-46. Davidson's edition is dated [c. 1525] in *STC*; but see Gavin Douglas, *The Palyce of Honour*, ed. David J. Parkinson (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), 12-14.

<sup>10</sup> A manuscript fragment corresponding to *Palice*, 770-71 is dated by Sally Mapstone to the early 1540s, though it is unclear whether the lines are derived from a manuscript or print source. Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland, MS B 21/1/1, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>; Mapstone, 'Editing Older Scots Texts', in *Probable Truth: Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Vincent Gillespie and Anne Hudson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013) 311-25, at 323, n. 59.

<sup>11</sup> *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, xxii; Douglas, *Palyce*, ed. Parkinson, 12-38. Both refute the assumption that Copland's edition is more anglicised than Charteris's and therefore more distant from the authorial text.

<sup>12</sup> See Mapstone, 'Editing Older Scots Texts', 315-16, 322-23; and *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt with Cunningham, 20-21. There is no evidence of explanatory sidenotes in the surviving fragments of Davidson's c. 1530-40 *Palice*; Bawcutt contends that Copland's sidenotes were probably composed by the printer himself. *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, xvi. On Copland's 1553 *Eneados*, see further n. 41.

Also uncertain, though presenting less of an obstacle to the present inquiry, are Douglas's immediate sources for the *Palice*. Much of the uncertainty arises from the sheer volume of potential literary analogues for Douglas's allegory: in the works of classical antiquity and the Bible as well as the Scots, English, French, and Italian vernaculars.<sup>13</sup> From the opening spring setting (1-54) and processions of Minerue (i.e. Minerva, 194-228), Diane (314-45), and Venus (382-604) in the first part, to the trial of the poet-narrator before a court of love (636-771), and visionary journey towards the dazzling Palice of Honour that occupies much of the rest of the poem (see the synopsis below), 'almost every theme or episode has some precedent in earlier medieval poetry'.<sup>14</sup> As a highly ornamented, allegorical disquisition on the nature of honour and virtue, the *Palice* resembles the personification allegories of the *Grands Rhétoriciens*,<sup>15</sup> though it is the Chaucerian 'aureate' style of Dunbar's *Goldyn Targe* with which the poem is more usually associated.<sup>16</sup> The order of composition of the *Palice* and the *Targe* is the subject of ongoing scholarly debate (see section 2.2). The direction of influence is probably a moot point, for as Bawcutt rightly maintains, besides certain verbal echoes, the two poems are 'quite dissimilar' in structure and tone.<sup>17</sup> The extent of the influence of Chaucer's *Fame* on

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<sup>13</sup> For an overview, see Douglas, *Palyce*, ed. Parkinson, 48-52. For evidence of Douglas's indebtedness to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the commentary produced by the Venetian humanist Raffaello Regio (c. 1440-1520), see Sandra Cairns, 'The *Palice of Honour* of Gavin Douglas, Ovid and Raffaello Regio's Commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *RPL*, 7 (1984), 17-38.

<sup>14</sup> *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, xxix.

<sup>15</sup> Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 51; *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, xxxiv-xxxvii. See further my section 3.1.1; and on Douglas's cultivation of the 'honour poem' subgenre, Calin, *Lily and the Thistle*, 46-51.

<sup>16</sup> On Douglas (and Dunbar's) interest in *copia* in the vernacular and their valuing of Chaucer, above all, 'for his use of and improvement of English as a poetic language', see Fox, 'Scottish Chaucerians', 169 (quoted); Ruth Morse, 'Gavin Douglas: "Off Eloquence the Flowand Balmy Strand"', in *Chaucer Traditions*, ed. Morse and Windeatt, 107-21; and Lyall, 'Stylistic Relationship'.

<sup>17</sup> Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 51.

the *Palice* may also have been over-emphasised.<sup>18</sup> Both poems have a three-part structure and culminate in the arrival of the poet-narrator at the seats of Honour and Fame, respectively. Each includes a barren desert landscape (*Palice*, 136-62; *Fame*, 480-91), digressions on sound (*Palice*, 364-81; *Fame*, 765-81), exacting dream-guides (Caliope's nymph in the *Palice* and Jupiter's eagle in *Fame*), and catalogues of famous writers (*Palice*, 895-924; *Fame*, 1429-515; cf. *Garlande*, 285-399);<sup>19</sup> yet as Parkinson observes,

[n]one of this is slavish copying. It is as if Douglas purposively takes apart Chaucer's motifs and reassembles them in a very different sequence and with strikingly different context, emphasis, tone, and import.<sup>20</sup>

It would be a mistake to read the *Palice* simply as an imitation of *Fame*, or of any other framed first-person allegory. The poem has superficial similarities to earlier and near contemporary allegories of honour and fame; but its most pointed allusions are to the future endeavors of the historical poet Douglas.

Closer analysis of the action of the *Palice* demonstrates Douglas's complex and sometimes destabilising narratorial strategy. The poem begins with a 126-line prologue, a conventional opening frame for the dream which resembles the beginning of Dunbar's *Targe* (see section 2.2). The poet-narrator steps out on a May morning 'to do my obseruance' (6) in honour of the season. He prays to Nature, May, and Venus for delivery from the great, though unspecified, 'affray' (94) that

<sup>18</sup> See Fox, 'Scottish Chaucerians', 196; Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, 104-28; and Chelsea Honeyman, 'The *Palice of Honour*: Gavin Douglas' Renovation of Chaucer's *House of Fame*', in *Standing in the Shadow of the Master? Chaucerian Influences and Interpretations*, ed. Kathleen A. Bishop (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010), 65-81.

<sup>19</sup> For further similarities, see *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>20</sup> Douglas, *Palyce*, ed. Parkinson, 50.

has kept him from singing their 'laudis' (94-95), before a blinding 'impressioun' (105) throws him into an 'extasy or swoun' (106). The narrative that follows is presented as a faithful account of 'Myn auision' (125) and there are reminders throughout the poem of its status as a written report.<sup>21</sup> It is divided into three parts. In the first, the poet-narrator finds himself in a barren desert, a 'wyldernes abhomynable and wast | (In quhom na thing wes nature confortand)' (155-56)—emblematic, perhaps, of 'Thow barrant wyt ouerset with fantasyis' bemoaned in the preceding invocation (127-35, 128 quoted). Concealed within a hollow tree-stump, he beholds three processions (cf. *Targe*, 73-135): Minerue with her court of 'hie prudence' (*Palice*, 194-228, 207 quoted); Diane and her smaller company of chaste ladies (316-45); and Venus with her court of love 'so variabill' (400-597, 484 quoted). Sight of the true and unfaithful lovers in Venus's retinue moves the poet-narrator to sing a lay (607-36), described in the sidenote in Copland's edition as 'A ballet of inconstant loue' (sig. D1<sup>r</sup>). He is overheard by Venus, set upon by her attendants (cf. *Targe*, 136-38), and brought to trial for blasphemy (*Palice*, 636-771), where the first part ends.<sup>22</sup> In the second part, the poet-narrator is delivered from Venus's judgement by the arrival of the 'court rethorically', comprising Thespis, her daughters, the Nine Muses, and ancient and modern poets ranging from Homer, Virgil, and Ovid to Chaucer, Kennedy, and Dunbar (772-1005, 835 quoted). Caliope, muse of the 'kyngly style [...] Clepyt in latyne, Heroicus' (877-78), persuades Venus

<sup>21</sup> *Palice*, 128-34, 1288-95, 1407-10, 2111.

<sup>22</sup> The trial is the occasion for an oft-cited moment of quasi-autobiographical self-reference in the *Palice*: the poet-narrator protests that he, like Douglas, is 'na secular' but 'A spirituall man' (696-97) and therefore must be tried before an ecclesiastic judge. Douglas was ordained before 1496, by which date he had been granted the deanery of Dunkeld. By 11 March 1503, Douglas was provost of the collegiate church of St Giles. The latter appointment may have been a reward for his composition of the *Palice*. Bawcutt, 'Douglas, Gavin', *ODNB*.



to forgive the poet-narrator's offence. He makes another, consolatory verse in her honour (1006-53) and is placed in the care of a nymph. Now the poem shifts to the form of the edifying allegorical quest. The poet-narrator accompanies the Court Rhetoricall across Europe, Africa, and Asia, before taking repose at 'the musis Caballyne fontane'—though he is denied a drink (1055-233, 1134 quoted). The poem's third part describes his final ascent to the Palice of Honour, situated atop a mountain of 'hard merbyll stone' (1300)—reminiscent of the 'rock of yse' that supports the House of Fame (*Fame*, 1130). Reaching the palace, the poet-narrator enters the outer courtyard, where he finds Venus enthroned before a great mirror (1441-94). The mirror shows 'The dedes and fetes of euery erdly wycht' (1496), from the creation of Adam to the final 'cumming of the Antecrist' (1495-728, 1701 quoted).<sup>23</sup> Before looking in the mirror, the nymph instructs the poet-narrator 'Quhat thow seyst, luke eftirwartis thow write' (1494)<sup>24</sup> and, after turning away, in a moment of pre-emptive autocitation discussed further below, he is handed a book by Venus and told to 'put in ryme that process than quyt tynt' (1729-57, 1752 quoted). At last, the nymph brings the poet-narrator to 'the ryche castell' (1766) beyond the courtyard. They proceed as far as the entrance to the palace's great hall—but 'Schit wes the dure' (1903). The poet-narrator looks in at a peephole and glimpses an enthroned 'god armypotent' (1921). So 'gloryus' is the divine visage that 'He smate me doun and byrst all my bonys' and the poet-narrator is again thrown into a 'swoun' (1922, 1924-25). He is revived by the nymph, who offers to

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<sup>23</sup> Including a stanza on the popular romance and satirical figures 'Raf Coilzear', 'Cowkewyis sow', 'Iohne the Reif', 'Piers plewman', 'Gowmakmorne', 'Fyn Makcoull', and 'Robin Hude' (1711-19), identified in *Shorter Poems*, ed. Bawcutt, 205-07. The stanza is omitted in Copland's edition.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the nymph's advice, before directing the poet-narrator to look to the Palice of Honour, to 'Considdir wondris and be viggylant, | That thow may bettir endytyng eftirwart | Thyngis quhillkis | sall the schwa or we depart' (1398-400).

lead him to 'My lydyis court'—that is, the court of the Muses (1925-62, 1957 quoted). But this effort too is frustrated when the poet-narrator falls from the log spanning the palace's moat (2071-88). He awakes in the pleasant garden where the poem began; but now, 'Me thocht that fare herbere maist lyk to hel' (2094) and he laments having awoken so soon. Finally, in a departure from convention, rather than taking up his pen in order to record the dream, the poem ends with the poet-narrator sitting under a tree and composing an elaborate verse 'In laude of honour' (2115). In both Copland's and Charteris's editions, there follows a three-stanza dedication in which 'The auctor direkit his buke to the ryvht nobill Prynce, lames the ferd Kyng of Scottis' (Copland's heading on sig. K3<sup>v</sup>), including the usual apology for the book's 'barrnat termis' and 'vyle endyte' (2164).

The movement in the *Palice* from lovesick inertia to praise of true honour has led to readings of the poem as a quest for the skill and appropriate subject matter for poetic composition. The outline above demonstrates a clear interest in the *Palice* in the learning and virtue necessary to good poetry. Yet too often has an assumed equivalence between Douglas's poet-narrator and the historical poet Douglas limited critical appreciation of his more sophisticated strategy for authorial self-promotion in the poem. See, for instance, Gregory Kratzmann's interpretation of the *Palice*:

the Scots poet regarded his work, in part at least, as a response to Chaucer's views [in *Fame*] about the proper allegiances of the literary artist, the problems which he confronts in reconciling the demands of life with those of art, and the nature of poetic composition. [...] *The Palice of Honour* offers an extended illustration, through the poet's 'aventure' within the dream, of the way in which the demands

of Venus are reconcilable with those of art. [...] He is to serve Venus not as a lover but as a poet.<sup>25</sup>

Kratzmann's *ars poetica* reading of the *Palice* is a useful starting point for considering the metapoetic aspects of Douglas's allegory. But it illustrates a tendency, common to much criticism of the poem, to regard the poet-narrator 'within the dream'—that is, depicted at the level of the diegesis—as a self-revelatory (if partly ironic) representation of the historical poet Douglas. So, in *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century*, Lois A. Ebin suggests that '[t]he experience of the narrator's renewal reveals an expanding vision of the purpose of poetry and a redirection of its styles to increasingly noble ends'; A. C. Spearing, meanwhile, describes the poem as 'a dream of the poetic career itself, but one involving much self-mockery. At its centre, inevitably, is Douglas, as poet but also as cleric'; and in an interesting but flawed article on 'The Quest for the Present Tense' in the *Palice*, Mark E. Amsler conceives of Douglas's poem as 'at once an allegory of the poet's psychic and creative growth and the net result of the process delineated in the allegory, the plan for the poem and the poem itself'.<sup>26</sup> Each of these readings assumes a sustained correspondance between the poet-narrator and the historical poet; none go so far as to describe the *Palice* as an autobiographical work but each understands Douglas and his textual double as undergoing a comparable process of poetic reformation whilst composing/dreaming the dream. It is impossible to know how the historical poet Douglas changed or matured during the composition of the *Palice*—his earliest

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<sup>25</sup> Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, 106, 112-13.

<sup>26</sup> Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates*, 91; Spearing, *Medieval Poet as Voyeur*, 233; Amsler, 'The Quest for the Present Tense: The Poet and the Dreamer in Douglas' *The Palice of Honour*', *SSL*, 17 (1982), 186-208, at 187.

witnesses are Copland's and Charteris's editions. Yet whatever Douglas's 'psychic and creative growth' in around 1501, it seems unlikely that his essentially provisional textual double was meant accurately to describe that process.

Embedded verses, the closing frame, and the passing of Venus's book point to the existence of an authorial agent external and prior to the text—certainly a cleric, possibly in love, but far from encompassed by his textual double.

Douglas's insertion of metrically elaborate, largely ornamental lyric set-pieces demonstrates a desire to showcase the metrical skill of the historical poet, even if at the expense of the dramatic continuity of the poem. The *Palice* contains five embedded verses: a hymn in praise of May overheard in the prologue (61-88), for which no speaker is assigned; and four verses attributed to the poet-narrator, described in the sidenotes to Copland's edition as 'A description of the inconstance of fortune' (163-92, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>), 'A ballet of inconstant loue' (see above), 'a ballat for venus plesour' (1015-44, sig. [E4<sup>r</sup>]), and 'A ballade in the commendation of honour & verteu' (2116-42, sig. [K3<sup>r</sup>]). Each has a similar set-piece character: entirely unoriginal in subject matter but displaying Douglas's technical virtuosity. The *Palice* was written using a deliberately demanding stanza form: nine-line stanzas rhyming *aabaabbab* in the prologue and first and second parts—the stanza form of the *Targe*—and in the third part, nine-line stanzas rhyming *aabaabbcc*. Douglas exhibits further variation in the embedded verses, most notably, 'A ballade in the commendation of honour & verteu', which reverts to the earlier nine-line stanza, with the addition of two, three, and then four internal rhymes per line in the first, second, and third stanzas, respectively. The easy dissociation of these pieces from their narrative context is especially apparent in the hymn in praise of May in the

prologue. Walking through ‘a garding of plesance’ (7)—no less stupefying, or artificial, than the opening of Dunbar’s *Targe*—the poet-narrator hears ‘A voce [...] preclare as phebus schone | Syngand...’ (63-64). The verse that follows ends mid-stanza and is almost immediately proceeded by the poet-narrator’s prayer to Nature, May, and Venus. Songs of praise and complaints attributed to characters at the level of the diegesis are a commonplace of the opening frames of ‘Chaucerian’ dream poems.<sup>27</sup> A fifteenth-century Scots analogue for the *Palice*’s hymn to May is the ‘Cantus’ sung by a nightingale in King James I’s *Kingis Quair* (232-38).<sup>28</sup> In the *Palice*, however, Douglas makes no attempt to provide a narrative point of origin for the hymn in praise of May. Its disembodied ‘voce’ is exposed as a textual effect, another ‘fanton’ or phantom (60) of the unreal *locus amoenus*.

A different destabilising of narrative is effected by ‘A ballade in the commendation of honour & verteu’ at the end of the poem. The expectation at the end of a framed first-person allegory is that the poet-narrator will take up his pen and record his previous experience (cf. Skelton’s *Bowge of Courte*, Dunbar’s dream poems, and Hawes’s *Conforte*). This internal account for the composition of the poem is obviously a fiction; even so, its importance as a marker of literary authorship is demonstrated by the jarring effect of the shift in narratorial perspective at the end of Hawes’s *Pastime* (see section 3.2.1) and William Caxton’s decision to provide an ending for Chaucer’s *Fame* (see introduction to chapter 1).

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<sup>27</sup> On my use of the term *Chaucerian*, see chapter 1, n. 65. Influential examples of embedded verses in Chaucer’s dream poems include the roundel in praise of Nature sung by the birds at the end of the *Parliament* (680-92) and the balade in the Prologue to the *Legend*, sung by the poet-narrator in praise of ‘My lady’ in the F text (249-69) and by nineteen ladies in praise of Alceste in the G text (203-23).

<sup>28</sup> In the sole manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B.24, the word ‘Cantus’ is written in the left margin of folio 195<sup>r</sup>, next to the verse.

By contrast, in the *Palice*, Douglas leaves his poet-narrator ‘sittand vnder a tre’, making verses ‘In laude of honour’ (2114-15), but with no mention of his account of the preceding dream. The moment which in most other framed first-person allegories serves to confirm the poet-narrator as a representation, however imprecise, of the historical poet instead functions to explode the idea of any meaningful correspondence between the two. This point, implicit throughout the *Palice*, is often missed by *ars poetica* readings of the poem such as those described above. An especially pronounced example is Amsler’s article on Douglas’s ‘Quest for the Present Tense’. Amsler distinguishes between ‘Douglas’ fully competent narrator’, speaking from ‘the present’, and ‘his previous, incompetent dreaming self’.<sup>29</sup> The *Palice*, writes Amsler, ‘is essentially a poem about the nature and making of poetry; its narrative form reduplicates the process by which the dreamer becomes the narrator who is able to write the poem’.<sup>30</sup> There are two major problems with Amsler’s ‘benighted-enlightened scheme’ for the *Palice*.<sup>31</sup> First is his adoption of what critics of E. Talbot Donaldson would describe as a ‘dramatic’ reading of the *Palice*, in which the narration is taken to represent ‘the utterance of a fictional speaker distinguishable from the author’.<sup>32</sup> Second, and more salient to the present discussion, is the fact that Douglas’s ‘dreaming self’—that is, the poet-narrator at the level of the diegesis—never ‘becomes the narrator’ after awaking from the dream. For Amsler, the final lines of the verse in praise of honour ‘stand as

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<sup>29</sup> Amsler, ‘Quest for the Present Tense’, 186.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>32</sup> Spearing, *Medieval Autographies*, 2. On Spearing’s and earlier critics’ correctives to ‘dramatic’ readings of medieval narrative verse, see chapter 1, n. 78.

the fullest fusion of the voice of the dreamer with that of the narrator’;<sup>33</sup> yet Douglas’s omission of any internal account for the composition of the poem seems instead to resist the alignment of the poet-narrator—waking or dreaming—and the authorial agent who is responsible for the work. The verse in praise of honour, like the earlier embedded verses, belongs to the literary career of the historical poet, not his textual double. In the *Palice*, it stands as the culmination of an allegorical quest for poetic inspiration; yet it could just as easily have been written before, during, or long after Douglas’s composition of the narrative, in the manner of Skelton’s *Garlande* lyrics (see section 2.3). The compositional ‘present tense’ sought by Amsler is an illusion, one which Douglas in the *Palice* seems to have been interested to dispel. He invites readers to conceive of an authorial agent responsible for, but not represented by, the ‘I’s, ‘me’s and ‘my’s of the narrative—a human author at once ubiquitous but invisible in his framed first-person allegory.

One has the sense here of a deliberate distancing of Douglas’s readers from the historical poet. But looking forward to the *Eneados*, the self-promotional purpose of Douglas’s implied literary authorship starts to become clear. His readers are encouraged to look upon the *Palice* as the work of a human author—as one of a number of compositions by a historical poet still early in his career, but which must be doubted as a representation of his personality or literary activity. This is most strikingly apparent in the strange pre-emptive moment of autocitation in the third part of the poem. In his interview with Venus following the description of her mirror, Douglas’s poet-narrator is reminded by the goddess of ‘thy promyt quhen of thy gret dangere | I thee deliverit’ (1742-43)—that is, Caliope’s promise that ‘He

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<sup>33</sup> Amsler, ‘Quest for the Present Tense’, 203; cf. the similar conclusion in Ebin, *Illuminator*, Makar, *Vates*, 95.

sall obserue in al poyntis 3our beheist' (1002) in return for his freedom. Now, Venus makes her 'beheist':

Than suddandly in hand a buke scho hynt  
The quhilk to me betaucht scho ir I went  
Commandand me to be obedient.  
And put in ryme that proces than quyt tynt  
The buke ressauand thairon my cure to preue.  
Inclyand syne lawly I tuke my leue.

Twychand this buke perauentur 3e sall here  
Sumtyme efter quhen I haue mare lasere.

(*Palice*, 1749-57)

The sidenote to lines 1756-57 in Copland's edition read: 'By thys boke he menis Virgil' (sig. I1<sup>r</sup>; Figure 4.1). For later critics too, the passing of Venus's book in the *Palice* constitutes a fictional commission for Douglas's translation of the *Aeneid*:

She [i.e. Venus] hands him [i.e. the poet-narrator] a book, and tells him to translate it; and, although the book is not named, it must surely be Virgil's *Aeneid* [...]. In this sense, *The Palice of Honour*, like Chaucer's *Prologue* to the *Legend*, acts as a justification for the existence of a later poem.<sup>34</sup>

The parallel with the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* is compelling; yet despite similarities in theme, the relative positions of Chaucer's and Douglas's fictional commissions to the texts that they introduce demonstrate quite different strategies for authorial self-promotion. In both poems, the poet-narrator is instructed to produce a work that, within the internal chronology of the narrative, has not yet been written. But unlike the Prologue to the *Legend*, the *Palice* is not a prologue to the *Eneados*; whereas Chaucer's poem provides an invented account

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<sup>34</sup> Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 210.



## The Palys

Then suddadly in hand a buke scho hynt  
 The quhilk to me betaucht scho oꝝ I went  
 Commandand me to be obedient,  
 And put in tyme that proces than quyt tyme  
 I promysed hie forsupth oꝝ scho wald stynt  
 The buke ressaund thairon my cure to pzeue.  
 Inclynand syne lawly I take my leue.

**T**wochand this buke perauentur ze sail here  
 Sumtyme efter quhen I haue mare lasere.  
 My Armphe in hast tho hynt me by the hand  
 And as we sammyen walkyt furth in fere  
 I the declare(sayd scho)zone myrroure clere,  
 The quhilk thow saw afore dame Venus stand  
 Signifies nothing ellis till vnderstand  
 Bot the gret bewty of thir ladyis facts  
 Whairin louers thinkis thap behald all graces.

By this  
 buke he m<sup>e</sup>  
 was w<sup>it</sup>h

The thir  
 tois cons  
 elution of  
 Venus me  
 son

**S**cho me conuocit finally to tell  
 With gret plesance straucht to the ryche castell  
 Whare mony saw I pzes til get ingres  
 Thare saw I Syon and Achittefell  
 Dreissand til clym the wallis, and ho'w thap fell,  
 Lucius Catalyn saw I thare expzes  
 In et a wyndow pzes til haue entres  
 Bot suddandly Tullius come with a buke  
 And strake hym down quhill all his chaftis quake,

The pa  
 lice of ho  
 noure is pe  
 rent for ho  
 nest vertue  
 us men an  
 not for vi  
 cious fals  
 crafty pa  
 pylis

**F**ast clymmand by thap lusty wallis of stone,  
 I saw Jugurtha and tressonabill Tryphon  
 Bot thap na grippis thair mycht hald for wyddir,  
 Dreissand to clym stude thousandis mony one

¶.

And

Figure 4.1. Gavin Douglas, *The Palice of Honour* (London: William Copland, [1553?]), sig. 11<sup>r</sup>.  
 Reproduced from EEBO.

for the legends of good women that he was about to write (or, certainly in the case of the revised G text, possibly also F, that he had already written), Douglas's translation is pure conjecture—to be completed 'Sumtyme efter quhen I haue mare lasere'. This may explain Douglas's vagueness regarding the contents of Venus's book. Douglas would have required a remarkable degree of foresight to know, in around 1501, that he would go on to produce a translation of the *Aeneid* some twelve years later. There is nothing in Venus's commission to indicate that the 'proces than quyt tynt' which she desires to be 'put in ryme' is the story of Aeneas—though as the mother of the Trojan hero, her interest is appropriate. It is possible that the book passed to the poet-narrator is not the *Aeneid* but a blank volume, and that the 'proces than quyt tynt' refers to some other story seen in Venus's mirror. The description of the mirror includes a selective account of Aeneas's voyage from Troy to Carthage, his journey to the Underworld, and his defeat of Turnus (1630-55); but this treatment is hardly out of proportion with its other classical and biblical subjects. Elsewhere in the *Palice*, Douglas's attitude to Aeneas is notably ambivalent. Among the lovers in Venus's retinue are 'The quene Dido with hir *fals luf* Enee' (564, my emphasis), a depiction which is more indebted to Ovid's *Heroides* (and Chaucer's *Legend*) than to Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Dido's letter to Aeneas is *Heroides*, VII; cf. Chaucer's 'Legend of Dido' (*Legend*, F.924-1367), especially 1232-39 and 1323-29. For an overview of the medieval reception of the historical, Virgilian and Ovidian Didos, the emphasis placed on her role in vernacular redactions of the story of Aeneas—most influentially, the mid-twelfth-century *Roman d'Eneas*—and the 'gendered model of interpretation' favoured by Douglas in the *Eneados*, which sees Aeneas re-instated as the focus of Virgil's epic, see Marilyn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval 'Aeneid'* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 23-74, 99-194.

The identification of Venus's book as Virgil's *Aeneid* is at least partly a case of retrospective reading, not least by Douglas himself, who writes in the *Direction* of the *Eneados* to Lord Sinclair:

...also now am I fully quyt,  
As twichand Venus, of myn ald promyt  
Quhilk I hir maid weil twelf 3heris tofor,  
As wytnessith my Palyce of Honour,  
In the quhilk wark, 3he reid, on hand I tuke  
Forto translait at hir instance a buke.  
Sa have I doyn abufe, as ye may se,  
Virgillis volum of hir son Enee,  
Reducit, as I cowth, intill our tong.

(*Eneados*, *Direction*, 119-26)

Thus, at the end of the *Eneados*, Douglas completes the fictional conceit begun in the *Palice*, but in doing so only confirms the unreliability of self-representation in both poems. The belated reference to the *Palice* feels like an addendum; earlier in the *Direction*, it is Sinclair, not Venus, who has 'cawyst me this volume to endyte' (19) and it is as if only by good fortune that 'also now am I fully quyt, | As twichand Venus'. The allusion is reminiscent of the moment of auto-citation in Hawes's *Conforte*: 'Of late I sawe aboke of your makynge | Called the pastyme of pleasure...' (see section 3.2.2). Like Hawes, Douglas conceals the details of his literary activity beneath a poetic fiction; but in contrast to the *Conforte*, the *Direction* to the *Eneados* is just one of numerous, sometimes overlapping, accounts for the composition of the poem. The passing of Venus's book is characteristic of Douglas's authorial self-promotion—his poet-narrators and -translators are whatever and wherever he needs them to be in any particular poem and frequently disappoint

expectations of verisimilitude and/or consistency. In the *Palice*, as in the *Eneados*, the reader is presented with a range of accounts, not mutually exclusive, for the composition of Douglas's poems. The only clear conclusion is that no one of these accounts is entirely adequate—either fully plausible or dramatically sound. In a strategy that Douglas masters in the paratexts to his translation of Venus's book—the *Eneados*—the modern, no less than the sixteenth-century reader, is made to envisage a human author who is external yet integral to all that he has written.

#### 4.2. Text, sentence, and 'voice' in the *Eneados*

Douglas's *Eneados*, completed—according to 'the tyme, space, and dait of the translatioun of this buke'—on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1513, is the first complete translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* into English or Scots. Douglas's oft-stated commitment of fidelity to his source, his espousing of Scots as a literary language, and intimations of a newly sensitive 'historical consciousness' has garnered for the *Eneados* a (not uncontested) critical reputation as a 'Renaissance translation'.<sup>36</sup> The attribution of

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<sup>36</sup> Fox's assessment of the *Eneados* as 'in many ways a Renaissance translation' has enjoyed a long critical afterlife. Fox, 'Scottish Chaucerians', 188. On Douglas's philological humanism, see Kratzmann, *Anglo-Scottish Literary Relations*, 169-70; Jerome E. Singerman, *Under Clouds of Poesy: Poetry and Truth in French and English Reworkings of the 'Aeneid', 1160-1513* (New York, NY: Garland, 1986), 217-85, especially 278-82; Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution*, 68-120, though Simpson argues that, when Douglas's promotion of Scotland's legendary origins to Polydore Vergil (see my introduction to this chapter) is taken into account, 'we seem to have a figure who is at the same time "medieval" and of the "Renaissance"' (72); and Royan, 'Douglas's Humanist Identity', who offers a number of important qualifications to Douglas's humanism. A. E. C. Canitz reads the *Eneados* as 'an expression of national self-confidence and an assertion of Scottish linguistic and cultural autonomy at a time when Scotland was trying to take its place among the European powers'. Canitz, "'In our awyn langage": The Nationalist Agenda of Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*', *Vergilius*, 42 (1996), 25-37. And Thomas M. Greene, in his study of literary uses of *imitatio* in the Renaissance, takes Douglas's *Eneados* as the second of four stages in the growth of early English humanism's 'historical consciousness'. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 242-44, 244 quoted. In the last twenty years, a number of critics have refocused attention on the more traditional aspects of the *Eneados*, notably the moralising tendency of the Prologues, their Chaucerian and Older Scots verse forms and vocabulary, and the explanatory interjections within the translation itself—all features of an 'older, wider tradition of "medieval humanism" in which allusions can be expanded, commentary worked into the

this ‘Renaissance’ epithet and its literary-historical connotations—not least, the desire of the Scots translator to recover and reinvent his Latin *auctor* Virgil—draws support from the remarkable authorial paratexts to the translation. The *Eneados* is composed of thirteen Books: Virgil’s original twelve followed by the *Supplementum* of the Italian humanist poet Maffeo Vegio (see section 4.3). Each Book has an original verse Prologue ranging from twenty-one (II Prol.) to some five-hundred lines (I Prol.), followed at the end of the poem by a series of verse epilogues and signatures. Between Books XII and XIII is a stanza in which ‘the translatour of this buk makis mensioun of thre of hys pryncipall warkis’: the *Eneados*, the *Palice*, and the unknown ‘Lundeys Lufe the Remeid’—possibly a translation of Ovid<sup>37</sup>—followed by a cryptogram containing ‘the naym of the translatour’. At the end of Book XIII comes the ‘Conclusio’; next, ‘the translatar direkkis hys buk’ to his patron, Lord Sinclair; ‘ane exclamation’ is made ‘aganyst detractouris and oncurtass redaris’; and ‘the tyme, space and dait’ of the work is given.<sup>38</sup> That these paratexts were regarded by sixteenth-century copyists as integral to Douglas’s poem is demonstrated by their faithful reproduction across its five complete manuscript witnesses: Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.12 (Trinity Manuscript, completed by Douglas’s contemporary and associate, Matthew Geddes, between 1515 and the early 1520s); Edinburgh University Library, MS Dk.7.49 (Elphinstoun Manuscript, completed by or for one John Elphinstoun before 1527); Edinburgh University

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text, and the characters of the epic will be made to look, speak, and feel as if they were contemporary medieval figures’. Douglas Gray, ‘Gavin Douglas’, in *Companion to Medieval Scottish Poetry*, ed. Bawcutt and Hadley Williams, 149–64, at 158; cf. Alessandra Petrina, ‘Challenging the Author: Gavin Douglas’s *Eneados*’, in *Abeunt studia in mores: Saggi in onore di Mario Melchionda*, ed. ead. and Giuseppe Brunetti (Padua: Padova University Press, 2013), 21–33.

<sup>37</sup> On ‘Lundeys Lufe the Remeid’, see Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 49 and 215, n. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Hereafter, the Conclusio, Direction, Exclamation, and Time, Space, and Date are collectively referred to as the Aftertext. A translation of Virgil’s putative epitaph, *Mantua me genuit...*, follows the Time, Space, and Date in Trinity and Ruthven (fols 329<sup>v</sup> and 300<sup>v</sup>, respectively).

Library, MS Dc.1.43 (Ruthven Manuscript, undated, but containing the signature of William Ruthven, 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Ruthven and 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Gowrie, on folio 1<sup>v</sup>); London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 117 (Lambeth Manuscript, completed by John Mudy, with the assistance of the Justice Clerk Thomas Bellenden, in 1546); and Warminster, Longleat House, MS 252A (Bath Manuscript, completed by Henry Aytoun, a notary public, in 1547).<sup>39</sup> The earliest manuscript, Trinity, includes an incomplete marginal commentary to the first Prologue and chapters i-xvii of Book I—probably the ‘schort comment [...] To expon strange histouris and termys wild’ which Douglas claims to have compiled shortly after finishing the translation (Direction, 141-44, 141-42 quoted).<sup>40</sup> These authorial paratexts, with the exception of the Comment and Principal Works, are reproduced, with some rearrangement and alteration, in the sole surviving sixteenth-century edition of the *Eneados*, printed in London by William Copland in 1553 (STC 24797), which contains a unique set of recognisably Scots sidenotes.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For physical descriptions and known provenance, see *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt with Cunningham, 8-20. Copies of the fourth and tenth Prologues and the opening of the ninth appear in Bannatyne, fols 291<sup>r</sup>-94<sup>v</sup>, 9<sup>r</sup>-11<sup>v</sup>, and 45<sup>r-v</sup>, respectively. Textual variants between the manuscripts suggest the existence of further intermediate texts prior to the publication of Copland’s edition. Having examined each of the witnesses, I am inclined to agree with Coldwell that ‘[n]one of these texts is directly derived from any other’, though there is a close affinity between the texts of Elphinstoun, Lambeth, and Bath and the texts of Ruthven, Copland’s edition, and the Bannatyne excerpts—the basis for the speculative stemma in *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 105.

<sup>40</sup> The lines immediately following—‘And gif ocht lakis mar, quhen that [i.e. the Comment] is doyn, | At 3our [i.e. Sinclair’s] desyre it salbe writtyn soyn’ (Direction, 143-44)—indicate that, when composing the Direction, Douglas had not yet finished the Comment; the surviving manuscript witnesses suggest that he never did.

<sup>41</sup> For a physical description and overview of the surviving copies, see *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt with Cunningham, 20-23; and for its early circulation and readership, Priscilla Bawcutt, ‘Gavin Douglas’s *Eneados*: The 1553 Edition and Its Early Owners and Readers’, in *Manuscript and Print in Late Medieval and Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Professor Julia Boffey*, ed. Tamara Atkin and Jaclyn Rajsic (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2019), 74-87. In Copland’s edition, the Aftertext has the order: Conclusio; Time, Space, and Date; Exclamation; Name of the Translator. Traces of Scots in the spelling and syntax of the sidenotes and the only partial anglicisation of the translation suggest a Scottish co-editor or possibly a Scots exemplar (cf. n. 12). Four of the sidenotes also appear in Trinity, fols 2<sup>v</sup>, 3<sup>r</sup>, and 4<sup>v</sup>, evidence for a ‘a history of exchange between manuscript and print

Together, the authorial paratexts in the *Eneados* continue to serve critics as a rich and suggestive source for the personality and critical ideals of the historical poet Douglas. The dedicatory and expository non-narrative Prologues, Comment, and Aftertext as well as the four Prologues (VII, VIII, XII, and XIII) which provide narrative frames to the translation are often understood as a set of authorial directives made to Douglas's readers. That authorial paratexts serve to guide readers how to read a text seems self-evident; even so, the complex use of framing techniques seen in previous chapters urges caution when considering these ancillary compositions—especially the Prologues—as an unironic commentary on the translation. The approach to Douglas's Prologues as a set of authorial directives, meant to establish the tone or to justify the subject matter of the Book that follows, was made current by Bawcutt in her authoritative monograph on the poet.<sup>42</sup> Bawcutt discredits Denton Fox's assessment of the 'set piece' character of the Prologues (cf. the *Palice's* embedded verses)—some of which the poem's previous editor, David F. C. Coldwell, describes as "'too good to waste", draped on the *Aeneid* because no more suitable ones occurred'.<sup>43</sup> The Prologues vary in their obvious significance to the Book that follows; each, however, accommodates a biographical reading, whereby the poet-translator or -narrator is taken as a self-revelatory representation of the historical poet. From the first Prologue onwards, writes Bawcutt,

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witnesses', discussed in Jane Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 99-102, 101, n. 51 quoted.

<sup>42</sup> Bawcutt, *Douglas*, 164-91; cf. the similar approach to the Prologues in Lois A. Ebin, 'The Role of the Narrator in the Prologues to Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*', *ChauR*, 14 (1980), 353-65; A. E. C. Canitz, 'The Prologue to the *Eneados*: Gavin Douglas's Directions for Reading', *SSL*, 25 (1990), 1-23; and Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the 'Aeneid' from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 276-79.

<sup>43</sup> Fox, 'Scottish Chaucerians', 191; *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 88.

[w]e are involved in the composition, and given a sense of the work in progress. [...] From this Prologue and others (particularly V, VII, IX, XIII and the Direction) emerges a sense of the poet's personality [...]. They make one aware of the perennial anxieties of a writer, and bring one close to the particular problems and discomforts faced by a poet in sixteenth-century Scotland.<sup>44</sup>

Ebin adopts a similar reading of the Prologues: '[w]hen read sequentially as Douglas arranged them, they define a poet-narrator whose role is central to our understanding of the translation'; Nicola Royan distinguishes between the non-narrative Prologues, 'where Douglas argues directly in his own voice', and the seventh, eighth, twelfth, and thirteenth, where 'he returns to self-projection'; whilst Christopher Baswell regards the whole 'codicological superstructure' of the *Eneados* as 'the arena for Douglas's own voice, his readerly preoccupations, and his poetic ambitions'.<sup>45</sup> The Prologues, Aftertext, and Comment provide a fuller, apparently more realistic portrait of the historical poet than any of the framed first-person allegories examined in previous chapters. But there is reason to doubt the authorial paratexts as straightforward projections of Douglas's 'own voice'. The figure presented in the Prologues is certainly a translator, regularly a cleric, and evokes an appealing 'sense of the poet's personality'. But no less striking is the inconsistency, dramatic discontinuity, and often strong Chaucerian flavour of expository and narratorial voice in the *Eneados*. The effect, I propose, is to make plainly apparent the *non*-equivalence of the human author and Douglas's poet-narrators and -translators—to encourage readers to conceive of an authorial agent

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<sup>44</sup> Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 166-67.

<sup>45</sup> Ebin, 'Role of the Narrator', 353; Royan, 'Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*', in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature: Volume I: 800-1558*, ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 561-79, at 568; Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, 277.



external and prior to the text, as suggested in my discussion of the *Palice* in section 4.1. It is my contention that, rather than ‘defin[ing] a poet-narrator whose role is central to our understanding of the translation’, the authorial paratexts encourage a vision of Douglas as the compiler of a new, composite volume—the human author responsible for the recovery and reinscription of the *Eneados*’s multiple voices, but who it is impossible to align with any one of its fictional speakers. In section 4.2.1, I consider Douglas’s elaboration of the translator’s distinction between the *eloquence* and *sentence* of his source text, and his claim to preserve the meaning but not necessarily the style of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Virgil’s *sentence* is open to interpretation, and this is one of the ways in which Douglas draws attention to the polyvocality of the *Eneados*. Building on the work of Daniel J. Pinti and David Lawton, I argue in section 4.2.2 that the poem evokes a hierarchy of ‘voice’ that is flattened by Douglas into a continuous, authorially controlled text. This is authorial self-promotion based on implication rather than representation, a literary authorship that, as will be seen, is arguably best articulated by the non-authorial explicit to the *Eneados*’s Name of the Translator stanza: ‘Qu(o)d *the compilar* Gawin D’.<sup>46</sup>

#### 4.2.1. ‘Virgill [...] by me now at this tyme’: From *Aeneid* to *Eneados*

Foremost among the ‘perennial anxieties of a writer’ treated in the Prologues to the *Eneados*, and of special interest to critics arguing for or against its status as a

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<sup>46</sup> Trinity, fol. 304<sup>v</sup>, my emphasis; cf. Elphinstoun, fol. 341<sup>v</sup>; Ruthven, fol. 279<sup>r</sup>; Lambeth, fol. 397<sup>r</sup>; and Bath. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been unable to confirm folio references for certain details in the Bath manuscript, consulted on 3 January 2019. A microfilm of the manuscript held in Edinburgh University Library was viewed remotely on 22 February 2021, but only briefly due to limitations on library staff’s time.

‘Renaissance translation’, is the textual authority of Douglas’s Scots vernacular in relation to his *auctor* Virgil’s Latin. The first Prologue is probably the best known, less on account of its poetry than for its assertion of the distinct linguistic identity of Scots. Early in the Prologue, Douglas dedicates his translation, ‘Writtin in the langage of Scottis natioun’ (103), to the ‘Fader of bukis, protectour to sciens and lair | My speciall gud Lord Henry, Lord Sanct Clair’ (85-86). The Sinclairs were an important family of literary patrons in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Scotland. Henry’s grandfather, William Sinclair, last earl of Orkney and 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Caithness, commissioned Sir Gilbert Hay’s prose translations of three popular chivalric treatises in around 1456. Henry himself owned and may have commissioned Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Arch. Selden. B.24, the ‘first substantial anthology of Scottish verse’ and the sole extant manuscript witness for *The Kingis Quair*.<sup>47</sup> Given Sinclair’s apparent interest in vernacular, specifically Scots, writing, it seems appropriate that the poet-translator of the first Prologue should stress the ‘Scottish-ness’ of the work. He has kept, he claims, ‘na sudron bot our awyn langage’ (111) and has resorted to ‘Sum bastard Latyn, French or Inglyis oyss’ only ‘Quhar scant was Scottis—I had nane other choys’ (117-18). Douglas is among the first British writers to use the terms *Scottis* and *Inglis* to differentiate between the Scots and English vernaculars.<sup>48</sup> A. E. C. Canitz writes of Douglas’s ‘nationalist agenda’ in the *Eneados*, a patriotic attempt to make Virgil’s epic available to his

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<sup>47</sup> Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, ‘Bodleian MS Arch. Selden. B. 24: The Genesis and Evolution of a Scottish Poetical Anthology’, in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Mapstone, 14-29, at 14. For an overview of the Sinclairs’ literary patronage, see Sally Mapstone, ‘Introduction: Older Scots and the Fifteenth Century’, in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Mapstone, 3-13, at 3-9.

<sup>48</sup> The earliest attestations for *Scottis* with the meaning ‘[t]he vernacular of lowland Scotland’ appear in Adam Loutfut’s 1494 compilation of heraldic treatises, London, British Library, MS Harley 6149, fols 44<sup>r</sup> and 78<sup>r</sup>. *Scottis*, *Scotis(c)h*, *Scot(t)s Scotch*, adj. and n., def. 2, *DOST*.

Scottish countrymen and ‘part of the prevailing effort to reject English cultural and political hegemony over Scotland’.<sup>49</sup> Yet it seems more likely that Douglas’s emphasis on Scots is part of a localised strategy to distance the *Eneados* from two earlier English ‘translations’ of the *Aeneid*: the *Eneydos* (1490), translated by Caxton, though he ‘Knew neuer thre wordis at all quhat Virgill ment’ (152);<sup>50</sup> and, though less vehemently opposed by Douglas, Chaucer’s reworking of Book IV of the *Aeneid* in ‘The Legend of Dido’ (*Legend*, F.924-1367; cf. *Eneados*, I Prol., 339-451).<sup>51</sup> It is notable that in those passages in the first Prologue where the language of the translation is juxtaposed with Virgil’s Latin, the distinction between *Scottis* and *Inglis* disappears. Throughout the Prologues and Aftertext, Douglas repeatedly calls attention to the impossibility of reproducing Virgil’s Latin ‘With bad, harsk speech and lewit barbour tong’ (I Prol., 21), regardless of whether that ‘tong’ be English or Scots.<sup>52</sup>

The real issue, it emerges, is Virgil’s inimitable style—for which Douglas devises an effective solution. The first Prologue opens with a eulogy for ‘Maist reuerend Virgill, of Latyn poetis prynce’ (3), in which the ‘eloquens’ of the Latin poet is contrasted to the paucity of poetic resources available to the vernacular

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<sup>49</sup> Canitz, ‘Nationalist Agenda’, 32, cf. n. 39. For the association of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English and Scots translations of Virgil with the development of British national identity, see William Frost, ‘Translating Virgil, Douglas to Dryden: Some General Considerations’, *Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance*, ed. Maynard Mack and George deForest Lord (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 271-86; and for a modified view, Colin Burrow, ‘Virgil in English Translation’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil*, ed. Charles Muscatine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 21-37.

<sup>50</sup> In fact, the *Eneydos* is a translation of the French prose *Livre des Eneydes*, published in Lyon by Guillaume Le Roy in 1483, which is itself a translation of an Italian paraphrase of parts of the *Aeneid* and Boccaccio’s *De casibus*. Desmond, *Reading Dido*, 167. Douglas renews his attack on Caxton in *Eneados*, V Prol., 46-54.

<sup>51</sup> For a lucid discussion of Douglas’s criticism of earlier treatments of the *Aeneid*—‘part of a tradition of humanist controversy that explores different avenues in the undertaking of editing, translating and commenting a text’—see Petrina, ‘Challenging the Author’, especially 25-28, 26 quoted.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *Eneados*, I Prol., 19-74, 277-314, 339-96, IX Prol., 63-69, Direction, 92, 134, and Exclamation, 23-25.

translator (1-74). Nevertheless, determined to improve on Caxton's *Eneydos*, Douglas's poet-translator declares that, in this translation, he follows the 'fixt sentens or mater' of the *Aeneid*, for 'Rycht so am I to Virgillis text ybund' (I Prol., 289, 299). In the Prologues to the *Eneados*, writes Canitz, Douglas proposes 'a theory of translation based on the postulate of accuracy and fidelity'; but by claiming to convey the *sentence* rather than the *eloquence* of his original, Douglas is excused of the literalism which Theo Hermans describes as the 'innermost core and unattainable ideal' of much 'Renaissance' or humanist translation.<sup>53</sup> In practice, Douglas's expansion, substitution, and addition of commentary material to his source text bears out his quotation of Gregory the Great: not to translate 'Word eftir word bot sentence follow algait' (I. Prol., 396).<sup>54</sup> *Sentence* is an important term in the Prologues. Douglas exploits its full semantic range in order to assert his fidelity to Virgil's text, whilst allowing certain poetic and hermeneutic freedoms in the translation and paratexts. The Middle English and Older Scots term *sentence* is derived from Latin *sententia*, 'a way of thinking, opinion, judgment'—or, when transferred to words and discourse, 'sense, meaning, [or] signification'.<sup>55</sup> The Scots word has the same primary meaning: '[a]n opinion, point of view, [or] attitude

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<sup>53</sup> A. E. C. Canitz, 'From *Aeneid* to *Eneados*: Theory and Practice of Gavin Douglas's Translation', *M&H*, n. s., 19 (1991), 81-100, at 81; Hermans, 'The Task of The Translator in the European Renaissance: Explorations in a Discursive Field', in *Translating Literature*, ed. Susan Bassnett (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), 14-40, at 14. On Douglas's theory and practice of translation, see further especially Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 92-163; Blyth, *Knychtlyke Stile*, 37-63; and Royan, 'Douglas's Humanist Identity'.

<sup>54</sup> Douglas's source is unknown, but cf. *non sunt qui sensum de sensu exprimunt, sed transferre semper verborum proprietatem volunt, omnem dictorum sensum confundunt* (Gregory complains that 'there are none [in Alexandria] who express sense for sense, rather they wish to translate always the properties of [specific] words, and confuse the whole sense of what has been said'). Gregory the Great, *Epistolae*, X.xxxix [*Ad Eulogium patriarcham Alexandrinum*], *PL*, LXXVII, 1071, my translation. The *locus classicus* for the principle of sense-for-sense translation is Jerome, *Epistolae*, LVII [*Ad Pammachium*], where Jerome claims *non verbum e verba, sed sensum exprimere de sensu* ('to translate not word for word, but sense for sense'). *PL*, XXII, 308, my translation.

<sup>55</sup> *sententia*, -ae, n., sense 1, Lewis and Short.

taken by a person or persons on a subject', often with the sense of divine, royal, or legal authority, and increasingly associated with judicial contexts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>56</sup> Douglas dominates *DOST*'s attestations for the literary connotations of *sentence*: '[t]he meaning or sense of a word or passage'; and, in a significant extension of the meaning of the Latin term, '[t]he content, subject-matter, [or] theme, esp. of a work of literature'.<sup>57</sup> Somewhat confusingly, Douglas's usage of the term can also blur with its more literal sense: '[s]omething written or said, (a portion of) a text or discourse', though still with an emphasis on a text's moral or pedagogical content.<sup>58</sup> His meaning is made most explicit when *sentence* is placed in opposition to the many terms used for the actual words of Virgil's text: *wordis*, *termis*, and *versis*—or, referring more specifically to Virgil's poetics, his *eloquence*, *engyne*, and *style*. At these moments, *sentence* broadly denotes 'sense'—the import of Virgil's text as opposed to the words which he used, the *res* as opposed to the *verba*, the *sensus* as opposed to the *littera*—and it is *sentence* before *eloquence* with which the first Prologue is concerned. Douglas's contrast of 'my blunt endyte' and 'thy scharp sugurate sang Virgiliane' (I Prol., 28-29) involves an admission of his poetic inferiority, for even as Chaucer 'standis beneth Virgill in gre, | Vndir hym alsfer I grant my self to be' (I Prol., 407-08). Nevertheless, by separating the *Aeneid*'s *sentence* from Virgil's *eloquence*, Douglas invests his translation with a vernacular textual authority all of its own:

Ellis haue I said thar may be na compar  
Betwix his [i.e. Virgil's] versis and my stile wlgar.

<sup>56</sup> *sentence*, -ens, n., sense 1, def. 1, *DOST*, cf. def. 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, sense 2, defs 3 and 4, closer to Latin *res*: see *res*, *rei*, n., Lewis and Short, especially def. 2h.

<sup>58</sup> *sentence*, -ens, n., sense 2, def. 6, *DOST*. The overlap with def. 4 is acknowledged.

All thocht he stant in Latyn maist perfyte,  
3it stude he nevir weill in our tung endyte  
Less than it be by me now at this tyme.

(I Prol., 491-94)

The *Eneados*, contends Douglas, conveys Virgilian *sentence* but ‘by me now at this tyme’. It is *by virtue* of its Scots language and Douglas’s other interventions that the poem has special relevance to ‘euery gentill Scot’—and in this respect, at least, it is both original and peerless.

Douglas is far from unique in recognising that ancient *auctores* are available for reinscription in the present—indeed, it is the principle that underpins exegesis and redactions of the *Aeneid* from the fourth century to the sixteenth. What is unusual in Douglas is the extent to which translating, commenting, and, crucially, compiling become species of creation in their own right. Douglas’s *Eneados* picks up on the ‘long-standing ambivalence in the response of medieval Christians to Virgil’. As Bawcutt remarks,

for Douglas as for many of his contemporaries, the study of Virgil presented [...] an interesting but not insoluble problem: that of reconciling his admiration of a pagan work with his faith as a Christian.<sup>59</sup>

The methods of rationalising and allegoresis brought to bear on Virgil’s epic are closely connected to traditional defences of poetry, considered obliquely in the discussion of Hawes’s ‘obscure allegory’ in chapter 3. Like Hawes, Douglas makes use of the metaphor of ‘clowdis of dyrk poecy’ that conceal ‘mony notabill history’

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<sup>59</sup> Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 71-72. On ‘medieval’ and ‘Renaissance’ approaches to the *Aeneid*, see further Singerman, *Clouds of Poesy*, 1-25; Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, especially 9-13; and David Scott Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 145-247.

(I Prol., 193-94).<sup>60</sup> In the *Eneados*, he draws upon a commentary tradition almost as ancient as the *Aeneid* itself in order to prove that Virgil ‘tharin ane hie philosophour hym schew’ (I Prol., 193). Much of this material can be found in Douglas’s probable source text, Josse Bade’s *Aeneis*, printed in Paris by Thielman Kerver in 1501.<sup>61</sup> Bade’s edition includes the late-antique commentaries of Aelius Donatus and Maurus Servius Honoratus, the annotations on Servius compiled by the fifteenth-century Italian humanist, Filippo Beroaldo, and Bade’s own paraphrase and commentary—a huge tradition of allegoresis and pedagogy which had accrued to the *Aeneid* during the fifteen hundred years of its transmission.

Douglas makes his own contribution to the Christianising of the *Aeneid* in his Prologue to the poem’s most scrutinised episode, Aeneas’s descent into the Underworld in Book VI.<sup>62</sup> The sixth Prologue demonstrates Douglas’s commitment to what he construes as the *Aeneid*’s *sentence*, but also the stratification of voice to which I return in section 4.2.2. The Prologue begins with an invocation of ‘Pluto’, ruler of the Underworld: ‘Thyne now salbe my muse and drery sang’ (1, 6)—possibly an allusion to Virgil’s invocation: *Di, quibus imperium est animarum* (‘You gods, who hold the domain of spirits!’ [*Aeneid*, VI.264]).<sup>63</sup> Next, there is an appeal to the Cumaean Sibyl, Aeneas’s guide in the Underworld: ‘To follow Virgil in this

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<sup>60</sup> Probably derived from Boccaccio, whom Douglas goes on to cite, usually in connection to *De genealogia*, in *Eneados*, I Prol., 204, Comment to I.i.82, ii.12, iii.54, 85, v.2, 81, and Direction, 67-70. On the influence of Boccaccio on Douglas’s approach to the *Aeneid*, see especially Singerman, *Clouds of Poesy*, 234-55.

<sup>61</sup> Convincingly argued in Priscilla Bawcutt, ‘Gavin Douglas and the Text of Virgil’, *EBST*, 4 (1996-98), 213-31.

<sup>62</sup> On commentators’ disproportionate interest in *Aeneid*, VI, see Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, 145-90. Other Christianised readings of the *Aeneid* in Douglas’s Prologues include the meditation on virtuous love in the fourth Prologue and the homilising tenth and eleventh.

<sup>63</sup> Text and translation from Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid. Appendix Vergiliana*, rev. edn, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold, 2 vols, LCL, 63-64 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999-2000; first published 1916-18). All references to Virgil’s *Aeneid* are to this edition.

dyrk poyse | Convoy me, Sibil, that I ga nocht wrang' (7)—resonant with the defence of Virgil's 'dyrk poecy' in the first Prologue. These references to Pluto and the Sibyl suggest an analogy between Virgil, Aeneas, and Douglas's poet-translator,<sup>64</sup> though only after each has been brought into line with the commentary tradition. Douglas rebuts those 'fulys' (among them Caxton; cf. I Prol., 177-98) who think that Book VI 'be bot iapis, | Al ful of leys or ald ydolatryis' (9-10). Paraphrasing Servius, he declares:

Virgil is ful of sentence our all quhare,  
 Bot heirintil [i.e. in Book VI], as Seruius gan proport,  
 Hys hie knowlage he schawis, that euery sort  
 Of his clausys comprehend sik sentence,  
 Thar bene tharof, set thou think this bot sport,  
 Maid gret ragmentis of hie intelligence.  
 (VI Prol., 29-30)<sup>65</sup>

Indeed, continues Douglas, although pagan, Virgil's poetry anticipates elements of Christian doctrine:

He writis lyke a philosophour naturall;  
 Twichand our faith mony clausis he fand  
 Quhilk beyn conform, or than collateral  
 (VI Prol., 38-40)

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<sup>64</sup> See further n. 84.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Totus quidem Vergilius scientia plenus est, in qua hic liber possidet principatum* ('Indeed, all of Virgil is full of knowledge, in which this book holds the first place'), quoted at the beginning of Book VI in Virgil et al., *Aeneis*, ed. Josse Bade (Paris: Thielman Kerver for Jean Petit and Johannes de Coblenz, 1501) *USTC* 201808, fol. 169<sup>vb</sup>.



Douglas cites Augustine (61-67) and Bade (73-74) as Patristic and modern authorities on Virgil's Christian applicability. He admits that 'sum his writiis frawart our faith part drawis' (77) but considers it

Na wondir! he was na Cristyn man, per De,  
He was a gentile, and levit on payane lawis,  
And zit he puttis a God Fader maste hie.

(VI Prol., 75-80)

This need to interpret Virgil in the light of later Christian revelation is typical of the commentary included in Bade's *Aeneis*; it justifies Douglas's decision to translate the *Aeneid*, whilst emphasising the need to incorporate other, moderating voices. Throughout the sixth Prologue, Douglas distinguishes between what 'he [i.e. Virgil] puttis' or 'belevit' and what 'We trow' or 'grant' (see 80-84, 110-12, and 126-28). Christian orthodoxy temporarily coalesces in the figure of the poet-translator, when, writing of Virgil's affirmation that 'Happy war he knew the causs of all thingis...' (113-17, 113 quoted; cf. *Georgics*, II.490-92), Douglas agrees that 'Happy he callis sik wightis, and sa do I' (118, my emphasis). The dichotomy turns to opposition in lines 129-68, where Douglas objects to Virgil's account of the reincarnation of souls: 'I say nocht all hys warkis beyn perfyte, | Nor that sawlys turnys in othir bodeys agane...' (129-32, 129-30 quoted; cf. *Aeneid*, VI.724-51). Returning to the theme of the opening invocation, Douglas declares 'Quhom cal I Pluto and Sibilla Cumane, | Hark; for I wil na fals goddis wirschepe' (135-36); and in the stanzas that follow, the Sibyl is reinterpreted as the Virgin Mary (137-49) and

Pluto as Satan (150-64).<sup>66</sup> The final appeal for aid—‘Help me, Mare’ (167)—belongs unequivocally to the Christian present. From Virgilian allusion, to exegetical cross-reference, to the poet-translator’s confrontation with his task, the sixth Prologue enacts in miniature the poetic, ecclesiastic, and humanist concerns impinging on the translator of the *Aeneid*, but also the oscillation of voice and internal dialectic that is integral to Douglas’s authorial self-promotion in the *Eneados*.

The question of ‘voice’—its origin, nature, and relation to text—is a key concern in my analysis of Douglas’s translation and paratexts in section 4.2.2. The line of thought developed above—that the *Eneados* contains not one but multiple voices, which it is Douglas’s responsibility to recuperate and compile—bears certain similarities to the Bakhtinian approach to the poem elaborated in a series of penetrating articles by Daniel J. Pinti.<sup>67</sup> In contrast to those readings of the authorial paratexts as projections of Douglas’s ‘own voice’—that is, as distinct from the primarily Virgilian voice of the translation—Pinti draws attention to the conspicuously dialogic, multivoiced nature of translation: ‘a form of indirect, reported discourse’ that is ‘always a response to a previous text, and hence fundamentally dialogic’.<sup>68</sup> Pinti continues: ‘if a translation is necessarily dialogic, it is therefore necessarily heteroglossic, multivoiced, as well. [...] A translation is at once in the voice of the original *and* in the voice of the translator’—in Douglas’s terms,

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<sup>66</sup> The identity between the Sibyl and Mary is traditional and associated with interpretations of Virgil’s fourth Eclogue as a prophecy about Christ. See Sabine MacCormack, *The Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 21-31.

<sup>67</sup> Pinti, ‘Dialogism, Heteroglossia, and Late Medieval Translation’, in *Bakhtin and Medieval Voices*, ed. Thomas J. Farrell (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1995), 109-21; cf. id., ‘Alter Maro, alter Maphaeus: Gavin Douglas’s Negotiation of Authority in *Eneados* 13’, *JMRS*, 23 (1993), 323-44 and ‘The Vernacular Gloss(ed) in Gavin Douglas’s *Eneados*’, *Exemplaria*, 7 (1995), 443-64.

<sup>68</sup> Pinti, ‘Dialogism, Heteroglossia, Translation’, 110. Pinti acknowledges the influence of Bakhtinian language theory on his thinking, especially Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

‘Virgill [...] in our tung endyte’.<sup>69</sup> Here and elsewhere, Pinti argues that Douglas, in the *Eneados*, is interested to exploit his mediating role between Virgil’s Latin text and his intended Scottish audience:

Douglas’s *Eneados* embodies and enacts, by means of the original prologues Douglas appends to each of the books of the *Aeneid*, as well as within the translation itself, Douglas’s dialogue with the *auctor* Virgil as a means of self-styling an *auctor* Douglas.<sup>70</sup>

This reading of Douglas’s *Eneados* in terms of its evocations and oppositons of voice can be enhanced by reference to David Lawton’s recent wide-ranging study, *Voice in Later Medieval English Literature: Public Interiorities*. Lawton takes the term ‘voice’ as the heading for the ‘varying points of contact’—aesthetic or formal, ideological, intertextual, or pointers to a speaker or narrator—whereby readers seek to interpret a literary work.<sup>71</sup> ‘Though the points are found mainly in writing’, writes Lawton,

to call them voice, especially in a performative culture, is more than a metaphor—for they constitute the human agency of words, that which is capable of translation from text to reader. Voice is therefore at least a personification[.]<sup>72</sup>

Especially relevant to Douglas is Lawton’s account of what he calls ‘revoicing’ in vernacular literary texts. Lawton draws attention to the ‘twin, somewhat paradoxical meanings’ of *vox* (‘one of the available translations for *phōnos*, “voice”’,

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<sup>69</sup> Pinti, ‘Dialogism, Heteroglossia, Translation’, 113.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 114; cf., with reference to the Comment: ‘Douglas constructs a multi-voiced meta commentary that allows him to engage in a series of hermeneutic responses in and to his own vernacular, and the result of this “hermeneutic dialogue” is Douglas’s self styled status as a vernacular *auctor*.’ Pinti, ‘Vernacular Gloss(ed)’, 464.

<sup>71</sup> Lawton, *Public Interiorities*, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

in medieval grammatical theory): ‘as quotation, the trace of authority cited if not always endorsed; and, notwithstanding, as independent human utterance’.<sup>73</sup> Both meanings intimate the availability of ‘voice’, rather like *sentence*, for reappropriation or ‘revoicing’—a secondary but nevertheless subjective activity; ‘Virgill’, but ‘be by me now at this tyme’. Lawton continues:

The nature of vernacular literary culture is an intricate negotiation between respect for authority and rebellion against it. The vernacular writer who compiles an assemblage of found texts (‘voces’) with new purposes for a new audience does not entirely align with that authority: he is not an *auctor* [i.e. an agent with the ability ‘to inaugurate or initiate the text or its lecture’] but a *lector*, ‘a slave or servant who read aloud to his master’.<sup>74</sup>

For Lawton, the concept of the *lector* ‘usefully describes the primary model of authorship in a culture of vocality’, in which textual authority ‘is shared among the book, its audience, and any or all readers of the moment; it belongs potentially to all possible readers’.<sup>75</sup> My interest, however, is in ‘revoicing’ in the *Eneados* as a strategy for authorial self-promotion—less overt but arguably more effective than Pinti’s ‘self-styling [of] an *auctor* Douglas’. Douglas’s ‘revoicing’ of the *Aeneid*, Virgil’s commentators, and vernacular poetic traditions confers a range of ‘subject position[s]’ (Lawton’s phrase, see n. 75) but no expository or narratorial voice that seems unironically to convey the personality and critical ideals of the historical poet

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 5; Lawton’s definitions of *auctor* and *lector* are from Thomas Doherty, *On Modern Authority* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), 18.

<sup>75</sup> Lawton, *Public Interiorities*, 5. From Lawton’s consideration of voice as ‘a counterweight to one of the dominant terms of medieval literary studies over the last generation, authority’, proceeds his second key critical term: ‘public interiorities’: ‘pieces of language—as speech or text—which already exist before they are [consciously] revoiced by a new user. [...] They evoke or confer a subject position [...] which is available to others, who may use and interpret it differently’ (4, 8).

Douglas. Douglas presents the *Eneados* as a composite volume—the work of a human author responsible for every word of the text, but who is impossible to reduce to any one of its voices. It is a translation, as Pinti rightly suggests, in which the voice of Virgil and the voice of the translator are in constant dialogue. But also included in that conversation are its poet-narrators, -commentator, and even the storytelling Aeneas—the personifying voices that are the textual materials of ‘the compilar Gawin D’.

#### **4.2.2. Aeneas, Virgil, Douglas: A hierarchy of ‘voice’**

As is usual in a translation of an ancient *auctor*, the *Eneados* presents its Latin poet and Scots translator in a hierarchical relationship. To ‘follow’ Virgil is the watchword of the Prologues and Aftertext; the Scots translator is, in Lawton’s terms, the *lector* to the Virgilian *auctor*. Yet as seen above, in early sixteenth-century Scotland, the actual words of the *Aeneid* were not the only or even the most desirable medium for conveying the poem’s preferred *sentence*. The second part of this second section examines Douglas’s and his early copyists’ techniques for investing the *littera* of the *Eneados* with the *sensus* of the *Aeneid*, augmented by the commentary tradition and reinscribed in Scots. In the translation itself, a blurring of narratorial voice across Douglas’s rearranged book divisions results in the alienation of authorial agency from the poem’s ‘speakers’—Aeneas, Virgil, and the poet-translator/-narrator/-commentator—in favour of the compiler of the composite volume. The evidence of the early manuscript witnesses points to a willingness among the *Eneados*’s early sixteenth-century readers to conceive of an implied author, ‘the compilar Gawin D’, as an organising principle for the volume. Non-

authorial paratexts constructively conflate the agencies of the *auctor* and *compiler*—a reformulation of the hierarchical, Bonaventuran system of textual production outlined in section 1.1, from which ‘the compiler’ Douglas emerges as a creative, controlling authorial agent.

The *Eneados* evidences an unstable stratification of narratorial voice, for which the *compiler* is invoked as the organising principle. The first Prologue’s ‘For as he [i.e. Chaucer] standis beneth Virgil in gre, | Vnder hym alsfer I grant my self to be’ (see section 4.2.1) suggests a hierarchy of tellers of the story of Aeneas, with redactors and translators like Chaucer and Douglas culturally and historically removed from the Latin poet Virgil.<sup>76</sup> In his translation, Douglas is engaged in what in Lawton’s terms can be described as a ‘revoicing’ of the *Aeneid*. The Aftertext reiterates the supposed purpose of the translation, ‘That Virgill mycht intill out langage be | Red lowd and playn’ (Direction, 85-86). This ‘wlgar Virgill’, insists Douglas, is ‘translatit rycht’ (Exclamation, 37-38) and worthy of its status as a ‘wark Virgilian’ (Time, Space, and Date, 1); yet for all these statements of fidelity to Virgil’s text, the translation itself is far from a disinterested rehearsal of a Virgilian ‘voice’. The *Eneados*’s multiple narrative frames, as well as the not infrequent intrusions of narrating characters, Latin poet, and Scots translator across its narrative levels, undermine the notion of consistently conceived speakers in the poem and any binary distinction between the voices of Virgil and Douglas.

This destabilising effect is apparent in Douglas’s translation of Virgil’s very first line. For *Arma virumque cano...* (‘Arms and the man I sing’ [*Aeneid*, 1.1]),

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<sup>76</sup> Whose own ‘verbal *auctoritas*’ existed in a ‘tense dialectic’ with ‘the hostile (or at least conflicting) historical claims of the counter-tradition’, for which Dares Phrygius’s and Dictys Cretensis’s ‘historical’ accounts were the ultimate sources. Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, 21; cf. Benson, *History of Troy*, 3-31; and my section 3.1.1.

Douglas has: 'The batalis and the man I wil discrive' (*Eneados*, l.i.i); and in the Trinity Manuscript, the Comment reads: 'Virgille reherssis not Eneas naim, bot callis him þe man be excellens / as þot he said þe mast Soueran man' (fol. 9<sup>v</sup>). Pinti is intrigued by Douglas's translation of Virgil's *cano* ('I sing') as 'I wil discrive'. Returning to his thesis of Douglas's 'self-styling [as] an *auctor*', he argues that the future tense of the Scots emphasises

that which is to come: Douglas's imminent translation, as distinct from Virgil's text of the past. [...] Douglas constructs his own poetic voice not only as a re-creation of the Latin but also as a response to it[.]<sup>77</sup>

By commenting on the Scots word, 'the man', instead of Virgil's Latin, *virum*, continues Pinti, Douglas 'reinforces his place as a producer of texts worth commenting on, an *auctor*'; the opening of Book I thus represents a bifurcation of the voices of Virgil and Douglas, with the latter gaining in prestige as a consequence.<sup>78</sup> I would modify Pinti's reading: Douglas's Comment certainly seems to elevate the status of the Scots translation in relation to Virgil's Latin; however, examination of the manuscript witnesses suggests that Douglas's 'own poetic voice' was not so clearly distinguished from Virgil's in the minds of his sixteenth-century copyists and readers. In the Elphinstoun Manuscript, the division between the first Prologue and Book I has been rearranged so that the translation proper instead begins with lines 505-10 of the first Prologue (a paraphrase of a pseudo-Virgilian

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<sup>77</sup> Pinti, 'Vernacular Gloss(ed)', 448.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 449; cf. the discussion and qualification of Douglas's use of the Comment as a 'self-authorizing strategy' in Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities*, 82-91, 90 quoted. Of particular interest are the references to the translation, Prologues, and, once, the *Palice*, in the Comment to I Prol., 425, l.i.3, 8, 13, 51, iii.36, 92, 100, iv.41, 65, 73, v.2, 28, 61, 74, 81, 122, and vi chapter heading. Arguably, these are the moments of closest alignment between the textual first person and implied author Douglas, in which he is presented as both the *compiler* of and a *commentator* on the *Eneados* (see further below).

alternative opening to the *Aeneid*).<sup>79</sup> In the Elphinstoun Manuscript, the final lines of the first Prologue read:

Quha list attend, gewis audience *and* draw near  
Me thoct virgile on [*sic*, read began in] þis manear  
I the ilk vmquhile þat in þe small ait Reid  
(Elphinstoun, fol. 8<sup>r</sup>, ll. 22-24)

Next comes the list of contents, after which, Book I begins:

I the ylk vmquhile þat in þe small ait reid  
Tonit my sang syne fram þe woddis zeid  
And feildis about taucht to be obeysand  
Thot he war gredy to þe besy husband  
Ane thankfull wark maid for þe plewmanis art  
Bot now þe horrible sterne dedis of mart  
The batellis and þe man I will describe  
(Elphinstoun, fol. 8<sup>v</sup>, ll. 1-7)

This rearrangement in the Elphinstoun Manuscript or its exemplar was probably motivated by a desire for a clear division between the voice of Douglas in the first Prologue and Virgil in Book I. The penultimate line of the first Prologue allows for the ‘I’ of the opening of Book I—ostensibly ‘Virgill’—to be more easily differentiated from the textual first person of the first Prologue—the poet-translator—than in the other manuscript witnesses. This is how Douglas Gray chooses to read the transition:

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<sup>79</sup> Edited and translated in Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Fairclough, rev. Goold, I, 261. The lines regularly appear in commentary in manuscripts and early printed editions of the *Aeneid*, including Virgil et al., *Aeneis*, ed. Bade (1501), fol. 3<sup>r</sup>, Douglas’s likely source text. On their dubious authenticity, see R. G. Austin, ‘*Ille ego qui quondam...*’, *CQ*, 18 (1968), 107-15.



‘Gevis audiens and draw near’ at the end of the first Prologue is Douglas. It is Virgil in the first line of the first book who announces ‘The batalis and the man I will discrive’. That voice, mediated through Douglas’s Scots, speaks for long stretches of the narrative.<sup>80</sup>

In the Elphinstoun Manuscript, the moving even of pseudo-Virgilian material from the first Prologue to Book I does indeed suggest an acute distinction between the voices of Virgil and Douglas. But in every other *Eneados* manuscript, the position of the ‘I the ylk vmquhile...’ passage *at the end* of the first Prologue points rather to the interchangeability of the words of the Latin poet and Scots translator. Gray suggests that readers’ willingness to tolerate the often abrupt shifts in the translation from narration to explanation, or from ‘Virgil’ to ‘Douglas’, ‘is a testimony to the power of the “cumulative” narrative voice’.<sup>81</sup> But this is to ascribe an unwarranted monologism to the translation—not a feature of most of its manuscript witnesses. The *Eneados* gives the impression of a welter of voices, from which Virgil, Douglas, or, as will be seen, Aeneas, rise occasionally to the surface only again to be submerged. It is a continuous rehearsal of all of these voices by an authorial agent who is responsible for, but separate from, the fictional speakers supposed to have produced them.

Approaching the *Eneados* as a dynamic, dialogic, composite volume can help to explain Douglas’s apparently deliberate disruption of the discrete narratorial voices of his source text. At a number of points in the translation, the distinction between the reported speech of the characters in the story and the narratorial

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<sup>80</sup> Gray, ‘Virgil in Late Medieval Scotland: *Aeneid* and *Eneydos*’, in *Focus on Literature and Culture: Papers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Polish Association for the Study of English Literature, Kazimierz, 1993*, ed. Grażyna Bystydzieńska and Leszek Kolek (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 1994), 11-22, at 19.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

voice of the Latin poet/Scots translator becomes curiously blurred. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Douglas's handling of the transition between Books I and II. In the *Aeneid*, Books II and III are framed as the report of Aeneas, arrived in Carthage, of his flight from Troy and journey across the Mediterranean. His fictional audience are Dido and her banqueting guests, and his account ends with his landing in North Africa—that is, where Book I begins. In Douglas's translation, it thus becomes possible to construct a three-tiered hierarchy of narratorial voice in Books II and III: the account of Aeneas to Dido in the story; Virgil's report of that account; and Douglas's translation of Virgil's text. But this structure is difficult to maintain, for from the very beginning of Book II, Douglas refuses to observe any clear distinction between Trojan hero, Latin poet, and Scots translator. In the *Aeneid*, Book I ends with Dido's request that Aeneas recount the destruction of Troy and his subsequent wanderings:

*'immo age et a prima dic, hospes, origine nobis  
insidias' inquit 'Danaum casusque tuorum  
erroresque tuos; nam te iam septima portat  
omnibus errantem terris et fluctibus aestas.'*

'Nay, more', she cries, 'tell us, my guest, from the first beginning the treachery of the Greeks, the sad fate of your people, and your own wanderings; for already a seventh summer bears you a wanderer over every land and sea.'

(*Aeneid*, I.753-56)

The equivalent lines in Douglas's translation are Book I.xi.119-24. In the *Eneados*, however, Book I includes another chapter, a translation of the first thirteen lines of Book II of the *Aeneid*. In the Latin, these lines provide a brief narrative frame for

Aeneas's account in Books II and III: *Conticuere omnes intentique ora tenebant. | inde toro pater Aeneas sic orsus ab alto* ('All were hushed, and kept their rapt gaze upon him; then from his raised couch father Aeneas thus began' [II.1-2]). In lines 3-13, Aeneas describes the great sorrow caused by his recollections; nevertheless, *quamquam animus meminisse horret luctuque refugit, | incipiam* ('though my mind shudders to remember and has recoiled in pain, I will begin' [II.12-13]). By contrast, in the *Eneados*, Douglas's translation of *Aeneid*, II.13, '3it than I sal begyn 3ou forto playss' (I.xii.24), is followed by the second Prologue. Book II thus begins at the *Aeneid*, II.14-15: *Fracti bello fatisque repulsi ductores Danaum* ('The Grekis chiftanys, irkit of the weir' [*Eneados*, II.i.1]).<sup>82</sup> Douglas's redistribution of narratorial voice across Books I and II serves to obscure the transition from extradiegetic to intradiegetic narration and allows for the insertion of the complementary voice of the poet-translator. As Royan observes, the brevity of the second Prologue (21 lines) and restatement of Aeneas's theme—'of Troy the subuersioun and fall' (II Prol., 4; cf. I.xii.5-24)—'maintains the flow of the larger narrative'.<sup>83</sup> She suggests that

[i]n distributing Aeneas's response to Dido's request across the book division, Douglas-as-translator manages to embed himself in Aeneas's speech, thus for the first time identifying himself with Aeneas.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Douglas also changes the *Aeneid*'s book divisions at the beginning of *Eneados*, VI (begins at *Aeneid*, VI.9), VII (begins at *Aeneid*, VII.25), and VIII (begins at *Aeneid*, VIII.18). These changes are discussed in Royan, 'Douglas's Humanist Identity', 127-33. The usual book divisions are silently restored in Copland's edition.

<sup>83</sup> Royan, 'Humanist Identity', 132.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.; cf. the discussions of Douglas's 'quasi-heroic similarities with Aeneas and Virgil' in Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, 277, quoted; and Emily Wilson, 'The First British *Aeneid*: A Case Study in Reception', in *Reception and the Classics: An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Classical Tradition*, ed. William Brockliss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 108-23.

I interpret the transition differently: rather than an interpolation of narratorial voice as one among a series of ‘self-associations’ between Aeneas and Douglas,<sup>85</sup> the rearrangement of the division between Books I and II seems to negate the supposed orality of Aeneas’s account. The result, I contend, is a flattening of the hierarchy of narratorial voice in the *Eneados*—the storyteller Aeneas, the reporter Virgil, and the translator Douglas—into one continuous text.

A number of local infelicities compound this effect of a flattened text with an interchangeable narratorial voice in Books II and III of the *Eneados*. In Book II.x, Aeneas recalls his father Anchises’s account of having been struck by Jupiter’s lightning:

...the fader of goddis and kyng of men  
With thunderis blast me smate, as that ze ken,  
And with his fyry levin me omberauch  
That we intill our langage clepe fyreflauch  
(II.x.153-56)

Here, Aeneas’s putative quotation of his father includes a gloss, not in the *Aeneid*, that betrays the intervention of the Scots translator. Oddly enough, the glossed word *levin* is not an obscure Latinate term like ‘nymphis and fawynis’ (VIII.vi.5) or ‘The gret gammys Circenses’ (VIII.x.95-96), also explained in asides.<sup>86</sup> The word’s origin is uncertain, though probably Germanic, and in Scots it is common only in Douglas.<sup>87</sup> For Gray, the *levin* gloss embedded in Anchises’s reported speech demonstrates Douglas’s domesticating of the *Aeneid*: ‘the characters, like the

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<sup>85</sup> Royan, ‘Humanist Identity’, 132.

<sup>86</sup> For discussion and further examples, see Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 120.

<sup>87</sup> *levin*, n., *DOST*.

setting, have been more or less Scotticised, Anchises and Anneas speak “our language”.<sup>88</sup> In fact, they speak not only Scots, but the historical poet Douglas’s Scots, and breakdowns in dramatic continuity such as these highlight the handling and repurposing of all of the poem’s voices within a continuous, authorially controlled text. A different narrative intervention gives a similar impression in Book III. Speaking of his journey across the Mediterranean, Aeneas recalls how, at Actium, he fixed a shield belonging to Abas, king of Argos, onto the entrance pillars of the temple of Apollo and quotes the verse that he engraved there: *AENEAS HAEC DE DANAIS VICTORIBVS ARMA* (‘THESE ARMS AENEAS [TOOK] FROM VICTORIOUS GREEKS’ [*Aeneid*, III.288]). The capitalisation of the line in most modern editions imitates Aeneas’s engraved words. A similar mimetic concern may have motivated Douglas’s decision to preserve the Latin verse:

Apon a post in the tempyl I hang  
 A bowand scheild of plait, quilk Abas strang  
 Bair vmquile, and, the maner to reherss,  
 I notify and tyillis with this verss:  
 ‘Eneas hec de Danais victoribus arma’<sup>89</sup>  
 (*Eneados*, III.v.5-9)

This preservation of the original text, unique in Douglas’s translation, is justified by the unusual narratorial status of the line: a report by the Latin poet of a quotation by the storytelling Aeneas of a verse commemorating events belonging to the

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<sup>88</sup> Gray, ‘*Aeneid* and *Eneydos*’, 20.

<sup>89</sup> In red ink in Trinity, fol. 48<sup>v</sup>; to the right of the main text-block in Elphinstoun, fol. 51<sup>v</sup>; separated from III.v.8 and 10 by blank lines and highlighted by a marginal note (‘nota’) in Ruthven, fol. 40<sup>r</sup>; and in the same larger script as the preceding chapter heading in Lambeth, fol. 70<sup>r</sup> and Bath.

legendary past.<sup>90</sup> Douglas, like Virgil, like Aeneas, uses the line to reach back into the past—a momentary elision of the historical and cultural distance between Aeneas and the Trojan War, between Virgil and Aeneas, and between Douglas, Virgil, and Aeneas.<sup>91</sup> In the *Eneados*, this elision, if not entirely reversed, is certainly reduced by Douglas’s inclusion of a translation of the verse: ‘That is to say, “Eneas festynt thus | This armour of the Grekis victoribus”’ (III.v.10-11). The passage loses something of its poignance, evoking the atmosphere of the schoolroom rather than the shores of Actium, but is in keeping with Douglas’s practice elsewhere in the translation. ‘Eneas hec de Danais victoribus arma’, the reader is reminded, does not represent a moment of unmediated access to Virgil’s text or Aeneas’s narration; the intended audience for the verse as it appears in the *Eneados* is not the Carthaginian banqueting guest or the Augustan patrician but the contemporary ‘gentill Scot’. Rather than temporarily overcoming the distance between the Scots translation, Latin source text, and legendary subject matter, Douglas compiles his various materials into a flattened text imbued with multiple voices—voices that he, ‘the compilar’, is able to draw upon and suppress as he sees fit.

This notion of an authorial agent who is at once ubiquitous to but removed from the text presents difficulties to readers, sixteenth-century or modern, who are interested to differentiate Douglas’s ‘own voice’ from that of Virgil and the speaking characters in the *Eneados*. Some resistance to the blurring of narratorial

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<sup>90</sup> According to Servius, Abas, the son of Lynceus and Hypermnestra (and thus the grandson of Daunus), was able to rout his enemies simply by showing them his shield and was the inventor of the *clipeus*, a round shield of antiquity. *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, ed. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen, 3 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1878-1902), II, 392.

<sup>91</sup> In the *Aeneid*, there is an additional proleptic aspect to the episode: Aeneas’s verse, commemorating his despoiling of the Greeks, prefigures Octavian’s victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 BC and his dedication of the spoils. J. F. Miller, ‘The Shield of the Argive Albas at *Aeneid*, III.286’, *CQ*, 43 (1993), 445-50, at 445.

voice elaborated above is suggested by the poem's earliest manuscript witnesses, but can be reconciled to my proposal of Douglas's implied literary authorship by a reappraisal of the connotations of the Scots term *compilar*. The five complete *Eneados* manuscripts have an unusually consistent *ordinatio*, for which Douglas may partly have been responsible (see, for instance, the instructions for the illumination of the seventh and twelfth Prologues, discussed further in section 4.3). There is little deviation from the arrangement of the Trinity Manuscript,<sup>92</sup> which was almost certainly completed before Douglas's death (see introduction to section 4.2) and, according to its copyist, Matthew Geddes, was 'þe first correk copy nixt efter þe translation'.<sup>93</sup> In certain respects, the arrangement of the Trinity Manuscript establishes a clear distinction between text and paratext and the voices of Virgil and Douglas: books are separated from Prologues by an explicit; each new part begins with a large decorated initial in red and/or blue ink; and running titles for the current Prologue/Book are accurately maintained throughout (see, e.g., Figure 4.2).<sup>94</sup> At a number of points in the manuscript, Geddes supplies appropriate descriptors for his and Douglas's respective roles in the production of the text, for which there are some analogues in the Elphinstoun, Ruthven, Lambeth, and Bath manuscripts. The explicit to Book XIII reads in full: 'Heir endis þe thretteyn and final buke of Eneados | quhilk is þe first correk copy nixt efter þe translation |

<sup>92</sup> With the exception of the Comment.

<sup>93</sup> On the relationship between the five complete *Eneados* manuscripts, none of which, it should be restated, seems to be 'directly derived from any other', see n. 39.

<sup>94</sup> In each manuscript, Prologues are followed by an explicit with little variation on the formula: 'here [endis the proheme/proloug and] begynnys the [n]th buke [of Eneas/Eneados]' (see Figure 4.2), with the exceptions of the seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth Prologues, discussed in section 4.3, and the first Prologue, which is separated from Book I by the list of contents and has no explicit. Latin is used for the explicit to Book I, for the incipit and explicit to the seventh Prologue, the incipit to Book VII, and for the incipits and explicits from the explicit to the ninth Prologue (the explicit to Book VIII/incipit to the ninth Prologue in Lambeth and Bath) up to the Aftertext (including the Principal Works and Name of Translator stanzas), where Scots incipits and explicits resume.

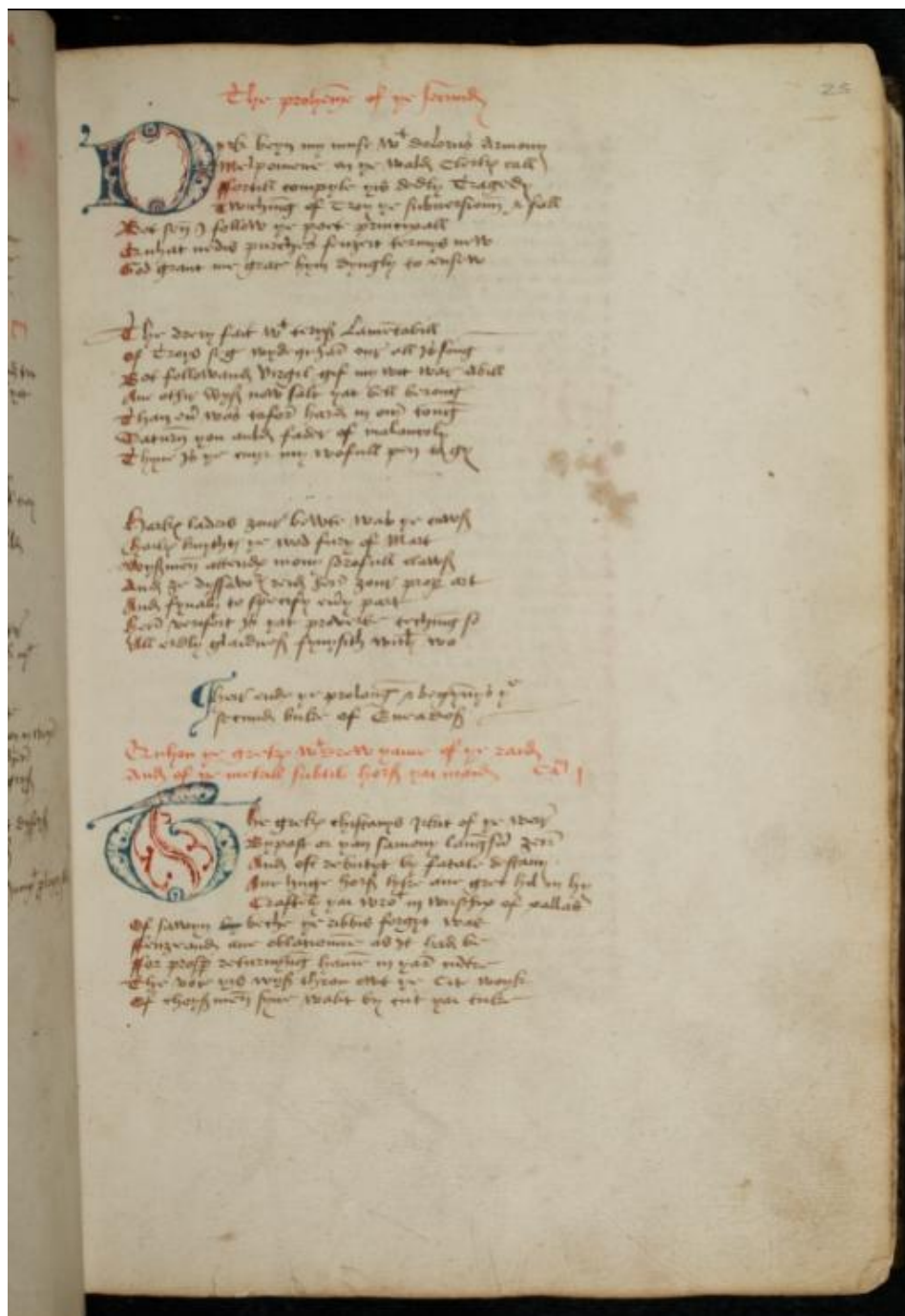


Figure 4.2. Gavin Douglas, *Eneados*, Prol. II. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.12, fol. 25<sup>r</sup>. Reproduced from *Wren Digital Library*  
<https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/library/wren-digital-library>.



wrytin be master matho geddes scribe or writar to | þe translatar' (fol. 326<sup>v</sup>).

Douglas is also described as the *translatour* of the *Eneados* in the incipit to the Direction and the incipits to the Principal Works and Name of the Translator stanzas.<sup>95</sup> The explicit to the latter stanza, 'Qu(o)d the compilar Gawin D', is the only place in the manuscript witnesses where Douglas is described as the *compilar* of the *Eneados*.<sup>96</sup> His only other descriptor, 'altar' or 'autour', appears in the explicits to the original seventh and twelfth Prologues (see section 4.3). At first, these rubrics seem intended to reinforce a hierarchy of narratorial voice in the poem. It is tempting to map the Scots terms *auctour/authour/autour*, *compilar/compilour*, *translatour*, and *scribe/writar* onto the Bonaventuran system of textual production outlined in section 1.1: at the top is 'Virgill', the *auctor* who *scribit et sua et aliena, sed sua tanquam principalia, aliena tamquam annexa ad confirmationem* ('writes the words of other men and also of his own, but with his own forming the principal part and those of others being merely annexed by way of confirmation')—among which *aliena* might be included the storytelling Aeneas of Books II and III; next is 'Douglas', sometimes *commentator* (most overtly in the Comment), sometimes *compiler*, one who *scribit aliena, addendo, sed non de suo* ('writes the words of other men, putting together material, but not his own'); and at the bottom of the hierarchy is the *scriptor*, the 'scribe or writar'—'geddes' in the Trinity Manuscript. But this is to oversimplify the attitudes towards textual production evidenced by the *Eneados*'s manuscript witnesses, especially the significance of the Scots term *compilar*. Use of the term to designate Douglas's

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<sup>95</sup> Trinity, fols 326<sup>v</sup>, 304<sup>v</sup>; cf. Elphinstoun, fols 365<sup>r</sup>, 341<sup>v</sup>; Ruthven, fols 298<sup>r</sup>, 279<sup>r</sup>; Lambeth, fol. 396<sup>v</sup> (no incipit to the Direction); and Bath (no incipit to the Direction).

<sup>96</sup> Cf. n. 46. On the titlepages of Trinity, Lambeth, and Bath, Douglas is described as having 'compilit and translait furth of Latyn in our Scottis langage' (Trinity quoted).

literary activity at a crucial point in the poem—immediately after Douglas’s naming as the translator of the twelve books of the *Aeneid* and, by implication, the *Supplementum* that follows—challenges the primacy of the Bonaventuran *auctor* in the making of a book. Douglas, whilst not granted the elevated status of the *auctor* of the *Eneados*, is allowed far greater agency than simply the *compiler* of and *commentator* on Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The text and paratexts of Douglas’s *Eneados* are recognised as a continuous whole, the work of an authorial agent responsible for a composite volume. ‘Qu(o)d the compilar Gawin D’ continues the dismantling of the binary distinction between Latin poet and faithful Scots translator begun in Douglas’s Prologues. What is more, it points to the shifting connotations of the term *compilar* from a merely ancillary to an independently creative role in vernacular textual production.

In Middle English, the meaning of the verb *compilen* ranges from the act of originary literary composition (as in Lydgate’s *Troy Book*, of Virgil, who ‘þat boke [i.e. the *Aeneid*] in worschip of Enee compiled hath’ [ll.344]) to the compilation of existing materials and writing of chronicles.<sup>97</sup> The verb *compile* has a similarly broad semantic range in fifteenth-century Scots literary texts, where it can describe the act of ‘collect[ing] or bring[ing] together in writing’ (e.g. Robert Henryson’s report that Chaucer ‘Compylit’ Troilus’s ‘cairis’ in *Troilus* [*Testament of Cresseid*, 60]), but also ‘[t]o compile or compose (a book, etc.)’ or simply ‘[t]o give an account of, to describe’.<sup>98</sup> The related Middle English noun *compilour/compilatour* usually describes the secondary status of a vernacular writer in relation to an (often Latin) *auctour*: notably Chaucer’s ‘lewd compiler of the labour of olde astologens’ in *A*

<sup>97</sup> *compilen*, v., defs. 1, 2, and 3, *MED*.

<sup>98</sup> *compile, compyle*, v., defs 1 and 2, *DOST*.

*Treatise on the Astrolabe* (61-62); and in the *Mappula Angliae* (written probably before 1445) of the Augustinian friar Osbern Bokenham,

I of no þinge seyde þere-yn chalenge ne desire to be holdyn neythur Auctour ne assertour, ne wylle aske no more but to byn holdyn oonly the pore compilatour & owte of latyne in to ynglyssh the rude & symple translator.<sup>99</sup>

In these examples, *compilour/compilatour*, even if used ironically, is primarily self-deprecatory. Elsewhere, however, and especially in Scots, *compilour/compilatour* and *compilar/compilour* come to designate a role in vernacular textual production no less instrumental, though different, than that of an originary *auctor*. Writing of the explicit to Chaucer's *Retraction* ('Heere is ended the book of the tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geffrey Chaucer', possibly authorial), Stephen Partridge argues that Chaucer, much influenced by contemporary French literary culture, sought to 'blend his authorial identity with that of a book artisan or "maker of books"'.<sup>100</sup> Partridge contends that '[e]ven if this blending might always have been primarily fictional and figurative', in contrast to the more overt involvement of writers such as Guillaume de Machaut and Christine de Pizan in the production of manuscripts of their works,<sup>101</sup> 'it nevertheless fulfilled an important function, as it helped create the illusion of Chaucer's presence and agency in any copy of the *Tales* a reader was holding'.<sup>102</sup> Partridge cites Minnis's comparison between Chaucer's self-deprecatory claim in 'The General Prologue' only to 'reherce' the pilgrims' Tales

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<sup>99</sup> '*Mappula Angliae*, von Osbern Bokenham', ed. C. Horstmann, *ES*, 10 (1887), 6-34, at 34.

<sup>100</sup> Partridge, "'Makere of this Boke'", 107.

<sup>101</sup> See Sylvia Huot, *Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 211-301; and my chapter 2, n. 188.

<sup>102</sup> Partridge, "'Makere of this Boke'", 107.

(l.732)—what Minnis describes as ‘the compiler’s stock disavowal of responsibility’—and the *Retraction*, in which Chaucer

was not prepared to assume the role of the ‘lewd compiler’ to whom no blame could accrue. [...] The ‘shield and defence’ of the compiler has slipped, and for once we see Chaucer as a writer who holds himself morally responsible for his writings.<sup>103</sup>

Following a further examination of the connotations of the verb *compiler* in the context of late-fourteenth and fifteenth-century French literary culture, Partridge concludes that,

[w]hereas in the *General Prologue*, Chaucer’s compiling activity has the status of fiction, in the *Retraction*, where the ‘I’ of the *Canterbury Tales* is identified as the author who exists and has written outside that fiction, the description of him as one who has ‘compiled’ seems intended to describe his activity in the ‘real world’ — his engagement with the material details of book production.<sup>104</sup>

Certain of Partridge’s conclusions are applicable to the presentation of Douglas’s literary activity in the manuscript witnesses for the *Eneados*: Douglas’s criticism of Caxton and eschewing of the pagan muses demonstrates the extent to which he ‘holds himself morally responsible for his writings’; and Geddes’s rubrics and traces of the ‘altar’/‘autour’ in the *ordinatio* hint at Douglas’s ‘engagement with the material details of book production’. Yet the description of Douglas as the *compilar* of the *Eneados* goes beyond the explicit to the *Retraction*, both in the dignity that it confers on the historical poet and its evocation of Douglas’s ‘presence and agency’.

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 132-33, quoting Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 199 and 208.

<sup>104</sup> Partridge, “‘Makere of this Boke’”, 137.

By the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century, usage of the Scots term *compilar/compilour* is at times almost synonymous with the primary meaning of *authour*: '[a] writer; an authority in writing'.<sup>105</sup> In the prologue and epilogue to the comic prose treatise, *The Spectacle of Luf* (1492), the translator makes the typical disclaimer that nothing in his 'sempill translatioun' is meant to offend and that 'all ladyes and gentillwemen' ought to 'put nocht þe blaim þairof to me bot to *myn auctour* þat was *þe fyrst compylar* of þis buk'.<sup>106</sup> *Compilar* and *authour*, with the sense of the composer of the original, are still not quite interchangeable here. The translator is still inclined to distinguish his 'auctour' as the treatise's 'fyrst complyar', with the implication that, independently, the term *compilar* continues to denote a secondary role. But the direction of travel is clear. Earlier in the fifteenth century, James I alludes to 'a boke [...] clepit properly | *Boece* eftir him that was the compiloure' (*Kingis Quair*, 14-16)—that is, Boethius, author of *De consolacione philosophiae* (c. 524)—whilst in the Scots romance *Lancelot of the Laik*, possibly near contemporary to *The Spectacle of Luf*, the poet praises an unknown Latin predecessor as 'the most conpilour [...] Flour of poyetis' (319-20).<sup>107</sup> By the time of the production of the earliest *Eneados* manuscripts, *compilar* may have seemed the ideal term to account for the historical poet Douglas's translating, commentating, and original compositions in the poem, and his control over its various parts. *Compile* is the verb used by Douglas himself to describe the production of the

<sup>105</sup> *authour, author*, n., def. 1, *DOST*; cf. *compilar, -pylar*, n.; and *compilour*, n., *DOST*: 'A compiler, author'.

<sup>106</sup> In *The Asloan Manuscript*, ed. W. A. Cragie, 2 vols, STS, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., 14, 16 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1923-25), I, 272, my emphasis; cf. the explicit at 298.

<sup>107</sup> In *The Kingis Quair and Other Prison Poems*, ed. Linne R. Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005); and *Lancelot of the Laik*, ed. Alan Lupack (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1994).

*Eneados* in the Aftertext to the translation: 'I dyd this wark compyle' (Direction, 135); like *compilar*, it recognises the activity of compiling as a species of creation. Douglas *scribit aliena, addendo*, but unlike Bonaventure's *compiler*, by 'joining' and 'augmenting' his materials, he at once changes them and makes them his own.<sup>108</sup>

The implications of this revalorisation of the literary activity of the compiler for the textual authority of the *Eneados* and Douglas's literary reputation are most boldly stated in the Conclusio following Book XIII, though still with a refusal to prioritise any one of the poem's voices as that of the historical poet. Lines 1-12 are a 'fairly close translation' of Ovid's claim to the immortality of poetry at the end of the *Metamorphoses* (XV.871-79).<sup>109</sup> Douglas rivals Skelton and his self-regarding *Garlande* in his boast that, though his body must perish,

The bettir part of me salbe vpheld  
 Abufe the starnys perpetually to ryng,  
 And heir my naym remane, but enparyng;  
 Throw owt the ile yclepit Albyon  
 Red sall I be, and sung with mony one.

(Conclusio, 8-12)

As impressive as this claim to everlasting poetic fame is the systematic transferral of images previously applied to the *Aeneid* and Aeneas to Douglas's *Eneados*. In the first Prologue, it was 'thy [i.e. Virgil's] wark' which 'sall endur in lawd and glory' (49) whilst 'my wark full febill be of rent' (82); but in the Conclusio, it is 'my wark' that is impervious to 'lovis ire', 'fyris bryndand heit', and 'lang process of age' (1-4, my

<sup>108</sup> See *addo*, *-ere*, *-idi*, *-itum*, v., def. 2a, Lewis and Short.

<sup>109</sup> *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt with Cuningham, I, 224.

emphasis). In the first Prologue, ‘Wyde quhar our all rung is thyne [i.e. Virgil’s] hevynly bell— | I meyn thy crafty warkis curyus’ (10-11); in the Conclusio, ‘The bettir part *of me* salbe vpheld | Abufe the starnys perpetually to ryng’ (my emphasis), possibly ‘[a] Christianized interpretation of Ovid’s “parte tamen meliore” (XV.875), i.e. the soul’,<sup>110</sup> but also clearly an allusion to Aeneas’s stellification at the end of Book XIII.<sup>111</sup> The lines ‘Thus vp my pen and instrumentis full 3or | On Virgillis post I fix for evirmor’ (13-14) recall Aeneas’s fixing of Abas’s shield on the temple of Apollo in Book III (see above)—‘[t]he pen is the weapon Douglas has used to meet the challenge posed by the *Aeneid*’, writes Emily Wilson, ‘and he has won a permanent triumph’.<sup>112</sup> By virtue of his ‘wark’, Douglas’s name will be publicised throughout the island of Britain, independently of Virgil; anticipating Lyndsay, the Conclusio conceives of a literary authorship ‘Abufe vulgare poetis prerogative’.

But of course, no one paratext tells the whole story of Douglas’s literary authorship. The Conclusio presents an audacious statement of the instrumental role of translating and compiling in the production of literary texts and the fame accruing to the person responsible for those activities. Yet as is the case throughout the *Eneados*, the poet-translator presented in the Conclusio is in many ways at odds with the figure in the Prologues and elsewhere in the Aftertext, and probably partly ironic.<sup>113</sup> The Direction, proceeding from the Conclusio, resumes the less confident

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> See especially Jupiter’s command that Venus ‘abuf the starnys thou him [i.e. Aeneas] bryng’ (XIII.xi.52) and the commemoration of Aeneas by the ‘kynrent Iulian’ (77-82, 77 quoted). The equivalent passage in Vegio’s *Supplementum* (593-630) is itself partly in imitation of Ovid’s account of the deification of Julius Caesar in *Metamorphoses*, 802-42; ‘[i]t is possible that Douglas realised what Maphaeus had done, and devised his Conclusio in the same spirit’. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 225, n. 18.

<sup>112</sup> Wilson, ‘First British *Aeneid*’, 121; cf. n. 89.

<sup>113</sup> Consider, e.g., another notable Ovidian analogue for the Conclusio, especially the image of the votive offering: Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, II.121-22.

tone of the first Prologue. The *Eneados* is no longer invulnerable, but subject to ‘corrupit tungis violens’ (12); the poet-translator invokes his patron Sinclair as his ‘salfgard and protectioun’ (10) and repeatedly defers responsibility for the translation: ‘3he war the causs tharof, full weill 3e wait; | 3he cawsyt me this volume to endyte’ (17-18; cf. 61-66, 71-75, and 119-40, the reference to Venus’s commission in the *Palace* discussed in section 4.1). Douglas reaffirms the expediency of the translation:

That Virgill mycht intill our langage be  
 Red lowd and playn be 3our lordschip and me,  
 And other gentill compan3eonys quha sa lyst  
 (Direction, 85-86)

But the intended audience of Sinclair and his intimates is rather more limited than that ‘Throw owt the ile yclepit Albyon’ envisaged in the *Conclusio*. The styling of the *Eneados* as ‘wlgar Virgill’ in the Exclamation that follows reprises some of the earlier claim to vernacular literary achievement; but the Time, Space, and Date, Douglas’s last word in the *Eneados* manuscripts, is again more modest, a conventional plea to

3he writaris all, and gentill redaris eyk,  
 Offendis nocht my volum, I beseik,  
 Bot redis leill, and tak gud tent in tyme.  
 3he nother maggill nor mysmetyr my ryme,  
 Nor alter not my wordis, I 3ou pray.  
 Lo, this is all; now, bew schirris, haue gud day.  
 (Time, Space, and Date, 21-26)



Rather than providing a set of authorial pronouncements on the *Eneados* spoken in Douglas's 'own voice', the Aftertext instead adds a few more voices to this supremely polyvocal poem—none of them with clear authority. This is not to say that Douglas's authorial paratexts are ineffective as a strategy for authorial self-promotion; the Aftertext is highly successful in refocusing attention on the implied author Douglas as the compiler of the *Eneados*'s multiple voices. It is a strategy that Douglas has artfully developed in the Prologues to the preceding thirteen Books, especially the narrative Prologues. Its further features and ultimate effect are the subject of the final section of this chapter.

#### **4.3. 'Fenzeand' authors in the narrative Prologues**

The seventh, eighth, twelfth, and thirteenth Prologues to the *Eneados* are framed, first-person narratives. But unlike the *Palice* or any of the other poems considered in previous chapters, Douglas's narrative Prologues are positioned as prefaces to another text: Books VII, VIII, XII, and XIII of the *Eneados*. In the 'Chaucerian Tradition' of framed first-person allegory outlined in section 1.2, narrative frames typically provide an internal account for the composition of the poem—as a report by the poet-narrator of a past experience, often a dream. By contrast, each of Douglas's narrative Prologues ends with the poet-narrator awaking from a dream or, in the seventh and twelfth Prologues, appearing for the first time after a lengthy seasonal description in order to resume the translation:

And, for it was ayr morrow, or tyme of mess,  
I hynt a scriptour and my pen furth take,

Syne thus begouth of Virgill the twelt buke.

(XII Prol., 305-06)

Unlike Chaucer's dream poems, Skelton's *Bowge of Courte*, Dunbar's *Thrissil and the Rois*, and Hawes's *Conforte*, Douglas's narrative Prologues do not include an internal account for the composition of the Prologue itself, only for the subsequent Book.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, to a greater degree than in any of Chaucer's, Skelton's, Dunbar's, or Hawes's framed first-person allegories, Douglas's Prologues and their procrastinating poet-narrators give what Bawcutt describes as 'a sense of the work in progress' (cf. introduction to section 4.2). These homodiegetic narratives present a poet-narrator who, like Douglas, is the translator of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Unsurprisingly, they have often been read as self-revelatory representations of the human author: 'they define a poet-narrator whose role is central to our understanding of the translation' (cf. introduction to section 4.2). Douglas creates a sense of biographical verisimilitude in the narrative Prologues not, as in Hawes's *Conforte*, by lacing his poetry with cryptic allusions to the life of the historical poet; instead, he situates the Prologues as stations in an entirely textual biography—biographical time is measured by the poet-translator's progress through the *Aeneid*; settings and action reflect (to greater and lesser degrees) themes in the subsequent Book.<sup>115</sup> The appealing sense of intimacy with Douglas generated by the narrative Prologues is

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<sup>114</sup> The closest structural parallel in Chaucer's dream poetry is the G text of the Prologue to the *Legend*: Chaucer's poet-narrator awakes from his dream of the God of Love and Alceste 'And right thus on my Legende gan I make' (G.546).

<sup>115</sup> Alistair Fowler understands the Prologues to be structured as a 'calendrical cycle' in the manner of Renaissance calendar art, in 'Gavin Douglas: Romantic Humanist', in *Rhetoric, Royalty, and Reality: Essays on the Literary Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland*, ed. Alasdair A. MacDonald and Kees Dekker (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 83-103, at 96-103; but Bawcutt, despite noticing 'fleeting but consistent references to the passage of the seasons', rebuts 'attempts to fit the Prologues into a pre-meditated, over-all scheme, calendric or thematic'. Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 185.

undeniable; the sidenotes to Copland's edition anticipate many later readers of the *Eneados* by taking Douglas's poet-narrators as expressive of the morals and critical attitudes of the 'author'—a consistent personality which can be traced throughout the poem. But as demonstrated below, a more attentive reading of the narrative Prologues must quickly come to terms with the conspicuous *inconsistency* of the personality that they evoke. At the basic level of dramatic continuity, their poet-narrators have little in common with the poet-translators and -commentator seen elsewhere in the authorial paratexts. It is difficult to reconcile the embittered poet-narrator who disclaims the veracity of 'swevynnys' or dreams in the eighth Prologue with the recollection in the Direction of 'myn ald promyt' made to Venus in the *Palace* (see sections 4.1 and 4.2.2). In terms of critical attitudes too, there is a clear disjoint between, for instance, the scepticism expressed in the thirteenth Prologue about the expediency of the *Supplementum* and the disinterested allusion to Aeneas's non-Virgilian stellification in the Comment: 'The deification of Eneas is eftyr in the last c. of the xiii buyk' (Comment to I.v.56). The narrative Prologues see the unstable stratification of narratorial voice described in section 4.2.2 taken to its precarious extreme: the personifying though disembodied voices that inhabit the non-narrative Prologues, Comment, and Aftertext are given bodily form, but are if anything less convincing (or flattering) as representations of the historical poet. The result is not the total collapse of authorial self-promotion in the *Eneados*; indeed, the narrative Prologues are perhaps the most effective illustration of the necessary existence of an authorial agent external and prior to the text who has compiled its various parts. 'Fen3eand' or feigning authors—whether writers of the past or an idealised version of the self—is a strategy for authorial self-promotion employed by

each of the poets examined in this thesis; for Douglas, however, its ultimate purpose is to provoke readers' imagining of an implied author who is responsible for that art.

### *The seventh and twelfth Prologues*

The seventh and twelfth Prologues are sometimes described as Douglas's 'nature poems' or 'prologues of natural description'.<sup>116</sup> The ornate descriptions of winter and May and temporarily diverted poet-narrators have been read as 'familiar self-portraits of the artist' or even 'a kind of diary' for the composition of the *Eneados*.<sup>117</sup> I argue instead that what Fox describes as the 'set piece' character of the seventh and twelfth Prologues (cf. introduction to section 4.2) draws attention to the artificiality and provisionality of Douglas's settings and poet-narrators, and their production by a human author who is not to be found straightforwardly represented in the text.

Seasonal descriptions occupy well over half of the seventh and twelfth Prologues. They have been have interpreted as reflections of the 'inner state of mind' of the historical poet at significant points in the translation: Aeneas's arrival in Italy after his reascent from the Underworld in Book VI,<sup>118</sup> and the beginning of Virgil's (final) Book XII.<sup>119</sup> However, the narrative and codicological framing of both

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<sup>116</sup> *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 93; Charles R. Blyth, 'Gavin Douglas's Prologues of Natural Description', *PQ*, 49:2 (1970), 164-77; Penelope Schott Starkey, 'Gavin Douglas's *Eneados*: Dilemmas in the Nature Prologues', *SSL*, 11 (1973), 82-98. The thirteenth Prologue, with its description of midsummer, is usually also included among the 'prologues of natural description'.

<sup>117</sup> C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 87; Schott Starkey, 'Dilemmas in the Nature Prologues', 84.

<sup>118</sup> In another of Douglas's rearrangements of the *Aeneid*'s book divisions (see n. 82), Book VII of the *Eneados* begins with Aeneas's first sighting of Italy (1-24; cf. *Aeneid*, VII.25-36).

<sup>119</sup> Ebin, 'Role of the Narrator', 357; cf. Canitz, 'Directions for Reading', 11-12, 19-20. For a reading of the twelfth Prologue as 'a resolution'—at the end of Douglas's literary career—'of the orphic themes

Prologues raise questions as to the extent to which Douglas's poet-translator (or any of his textual doubles) ought to be assimilated to the historical poet. In the seventh Prologue, the poet-narrator appears for the first time at line 94: 'Repatyrrit weil, and by the chymnay bekyt, | At evin be tyme dovne a bed I me strekyt' (93-94). The description of his preparations for bed—'I crosyt me, syne bowynt forto sleip' (97), then 'On slummyr I slaid full sad, and slepit sound | Quhil the orizont vpwart gan rebound' (97, 112-13)—seems to anticipate a midwinter's dream in the manner of Chaucer's *Fame* or Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*.<sup>120</sup> Instead, just lines later, the poet-narrator is awoken by a siege of cranes 'crowpyng in the sky' (119). Shivering, he shuts out the draft and in the final twenty-two lines of the Prologue, Douglas dramatises the return to the translation:

And, as I bownyt me to the fyre me by,  
 Baith vp and down the howss I dyd aspy,  
 And seand Virgill on a lettron stand,  
 To write onone I hynt a pen in hand,  
 Fortil perform the poet grave and sad,  
 Quham sa fer furth or than begun I had,  
 And wolx ennoyt sume deill in my hart  
 Thare restit oncompletit sa gret a part.  
 And to my self I said: 'In gud effect  
 Thou mon draw furth, the 3ok lyis on thy nek.'  
 Within my mynde compasynd thocht I so  
 Na thing is done quhil ocht remanys ado;  
 For byssynes, quhilk occurrit on cace,  
 Ourvoluyt I this volume, lay a space;

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of aspiration and loss' in his poetry, see David J. Parkinson, 'Orpheus and the Translator: Douglas's "lusty crafty preambill"', in *Rhetoric, Royalty, Reality*, ed. MacDonald and Dekker, 105-20.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. section 2.1. Given the many echoes of Henryson in the fourth Prologue (see especially 165-66, quoted below), *The Testament of Cresseid*'s 'doolie sessoun [...] quhen I began to wryte | This tragedie' may be a closer analogue.

And, thocht I wery was, me list nat tyre,  
 Full laith to leif our wark saw in the myre,  
 Or zit to stynt for bitter storm or rane.  
 Heir I assayt to 3ok our pleuch agane,  
 And, as I couth, with afald diligens,  
 This nixt buke following of profound sentens  
 Has thus begun in the chil wyntir cald,  
 Quhen frostis doith ourfret baith firth and fald.

(VII Prol., 141-62)

This Prologue constitutes a suitably bleak epilogue to the chthonic Book VI; it also provides an apt transition to the second half of the *Aeneid*, which concerns the war in Italy. Douglas and his copyists seem to have been keen to emphasise this deliberate thematic design; the epilogue at the end of the Prologue is presented as a pronouncement by the 'altar' on his work:

Explicit tristis prologus  
 Quhareof the altar says thus:

Thys proloug smellis new cum furth of hell,  
 And, as our buk begouth hys weirfar tell,  
 So weill according dewly bene annext  
 Thou drery preambill, with a bludy text.  
 Of sabyll be thy lettyris illuminate,  
 According to thy process and estait.

Incipit Liber septimus Eneados

(VII Prol., 163-68)

The epilogue functions in a similar way to the Comment, evoking a critical perspective external to the text. This is not the voice of the Prologue's poet-

narrator, who, though presented as the translator of the ‘Virgill’ or copy of the *Aeneid* sitting on his lectern, also belongs to the fiction devised by the ‘altar’.

Within that fiction, the poet-narrator occupies a diegetic level above the translation of Virgil—‘the poet grave and sad, | Quham sa fer furth or than begun I had’—but is himself confined to a single moment in an entirely textual biography. By contrast, the ‘altar’ who passes comment on ‘our buk’ speaks from an imaginary point at which the translation and its paratexts have been completed. The instructions for the illumination of the Prologue’s initials create the illusion of a voice emanating from outside the text, as if overseeing the production of the very book that the reader has in front of them.

A similar effect is achieved in the twelfth Prologue, though the formal separation of the poet-narrator and ‘altar/autour’ in the epilogues to both Prologues seems also to indicate that Douglas’s ‘own voice’ is in fact beyond retrieval in any of the authorial paratexts. The first 266 lines of the twelfth Prologue comprise a highly allusive, ornamental description of a May morning.<sup>121</sup> The Prologue begins with the requisite roll-call of the deities of dawn (1-32), followed by an extended paean of ‘Phebus, | With goldyn crowne and visage gloryus’ and his regeneration of the landscape, the Prologue’s prevailing theme (33-72, 35-36 quoted). Next, the scene’s flora (73-150) and fauna (151-186) are described, ‘thochtfull luffaris’ appropriate to the season make ‘ballettis’ of hope or despair (and later divulge their ‘schamefull play, Na thyng accordynd to our hailsum May’ [187-229, 201, 205, and 225 quoted]), before a second catalogue of birds

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<sup>121</sup> For Douglas’s many Chaucerian, Virgilian, and Ovidian allusions in the twelfth Prologue, as well as the borrowings from his own *Palice*, see the notes in *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt with Cunningham, 201-06.

culminates in fifteenth lines of anaphora bidding 'welcum' to the sun (231-66). As in the seventh Prologue, and again with similarities to Chaucerian dream poetry, only after this lengthy seasonal description does the poet-narrator finally appear:

And with this word, in chalmer quhar I lay,  
The nynt morow of fresch temperit May,  
On fut I sprent into my bair sark,  
Wilfull fortill compleit my langsum wark  
Twichand the latty buke of Dan Virgill,  
Quhilk me had tareit al to lang a quhile  
(XII Prol., 267-72)

Again, the seasonal description is consonant with the Prologue's position in the translation, now almost complete. The theme of renewal has been linked to Douglas's likely mood upon approaching the end of his 'langsum wark':

Douglas uses convention so as to point up highly individual concerns. [...] The long aureate description is interesting primarily for what it reveals of Douglas's poetic aspirations [...]—a final grand flourish before the translator settles down to complete his great task.<sup>122</sup>

But to expect any candid disclosure of the historical poet's 'poetic aspirations' in the narrative Prologues is to underestimate the complexity of Douglas's design. As in the seventh Prologue, the twelfth ends with an epilogue that distinguishes the poet-narrator from the poem's 'auctour', but which also marks up both voices as

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<sup>122</sup> Schott Starkey, 'Dilemmas in the Nature Prologues', 90, 92.



products of Douglas's text. In line 288, Peristera the dove, who 'byddis luffaris awaik' (288),<sup>123</sup> drives the poet-narrator back to his translation:

That, for the dynnyng of hir wanton cry,  
I irkyt of my bed, and mycht not ly,  
Bot gan me blyss, syne in my wedis dress,  
And, for it was ayr morrow, or tyme of mess,  
I hynt a scriptour and my pen furth tuke,  
Syne thus begouth of Virgill the twelt buke. etc  
(XII Prol., 305-06)

The explicit and epilogue immediately follow:

Explicit scitus prologus  
Quharof the auctour says þus:  
  
The lusty crafty preambill, 'perle of May'  
I the entitil, crownyt quhil domysday,  
And al with gold, in syng of stait ryall  
Most beyn illumnyt thy letteris capital. etc  
(XII Prol., 307-10)

Where the seventh Prologue was 'tristis', this is the 'scitus prologus' — 'very clever, very fine' — transliterated in the description of the 'The lusty crafty preambill'.<sup>124</sup>

The provision of the Prologue with a title, 'perle of May', supports the set-piece hypothesis mentioned in section 4.2. It is quite possibly an earlier composition that Douglas later chose to adapt and incorporate into the *Eneados*, and thus hardly the

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<sup>123</sup> Peristera's command, "'Do serve my lady Venus heir with me, | Lern thus to mak zour obseruance", quod she' (289-90), may serve as an oblique reminder of Venus's commission in the *Palice* (see section 4.1).

<sup>124</sup> *perscitus*, -a, -um, adj., Lewis and Short; cf. *lusty*, *ie*, adj. (adv.), def. 3, and *crafty*, *craftie*, adj., def. 2, *DOST*.

‘final grand flourish’ which the attitude of its poet-narrator and later readers might lead one to believe. As in the seventh Prologue, the epilogue works to evoke a critical perspective external to the text; the satisfied ‘auctour’ commends his work and provides instructions for the illumination of its initials with gold. Again, the Prologue’s poet-narrator is relegated to the status of fiction; his voice in the narrative is distinguished from the apparently more authentic voice of the ‘auctour’ in the epilogue. Arguably, however, the material context for the epilogue would have demonstrated to sixteenth-century readers that this second voice too is an entirely textual effect. The failure of the ‘auctour’’s instructions for the illumination of the Prologue’s initials to be carried out in any of the *Eneados* manuscripts (unsurprising, given their only moderate quality) and Copland’s edition draws attention to the temporal and spatial distance between the reader and the historical poet—that is, the many textual removes of the copy of the *Eneados* in front of them from any that Douglas might actually have overseen. The voice of the ‘auctour’, though formally separated from the poet-narrator, belongs to the same text; and that text is a compilation of multiple voices by an authorial agent never fully visible in it. Signs of his presence and agency appear throughout the *Eneados*, often in the form of intrusions and interpolations from which readers might attempt to delineate a consistent personality. Yet as has been seen above, the strain of combining the poem’s poet-translators, -narrators, and -commentator into a single coherent figure quickly becomes insupportable. This tension between the desire to discern some accurate representation of the historical poet in the authorial paratexts and an awareness of the artificiality of the personifying voices of which they are composed is made acute in Douglas’s eighth and thirteenth

Prologues—framed first-person allegories in which the poet-narrator confronts another, antagonistic author-figure in a dream. The eighth and thirteenth Prologues see Douglas’s poet-narrator forced to justify his translation against a personified vernacular poetic tradition and the pretensions of an Italian humanist. Yet in both, the enduring sense is that the books and authors encountered in the dreams are exactly that, dreams.

### *The eighth Prologue*

The eighth Prologue is essentially an extended proof for the contention set out in its opening line: ‘Of dreflyng and dremys quhat dow it to endyte?’ The poet-narrator’s conclusion, that ‘Mony mervellus mater nevir merkit nor ment | Will seggis se in thar sleip, and sentens but seill’ (172-73), ironically negates Aeneas’s vision of the river god Tiberinus at the beginning of Book VIII—an oracular dream for which the god provides authenticating tokens, *ne vanaputes haec fingere somnum* (‘lest you [i.e. Aeneas] deem these words the idle feigning of sleep’ [Aeneid, VIII.42]).<sup>125</sup> The Prologue follows the pattern of a vision or dream preceding the composition of a text—here, Book VIII of the *Eneados*. The narrative begins with the poet-narrator recalling how

...as I lenyt in a ley in Lent this last nycht,  
I slaid on a swevynnyng, slummyrrand a lite,  
And sone a selcouth seg I saw to my sycht,  
Swownand as he swelt wald, sowpyt in syte  
(VIII Prol., 2-5)

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<sup>125</sup> In another of Douglas’s rearrangements of the *Aeneid*’s book divisions (see n. 82), Book VIII begins at *Aeneid*, VIII.18, ‘Quhou Tiberinus, god of the river, | Till Eneas in visioun gan appeir’ (VIII.i chapter heading).

The 'selcouth seg', literally a 'seldom known' or strange man,<sup>126</sup> does not yet address the poet-narrator but speaks an estates-satire type complaint against contemporary abuses. Only at line 118 does the 'seg' at last turn to his auditor, demanding

'Quhat bern be thou in bed, with hed full of beys,  
Grathit lyke sum gnapper, and, as thi greis gurdis,  
Lurkand lyke a longeur?'...

(VIII Prol., 120-22)

The poet-narrator's defense is fairly feeble. He disclaims any desire for position, wealth, or 'to lyk of a quart' ('to drink a quart of beer' [139]); he is preoccupied instead with the epic task at hand: 'I lang to haue our buke done' (142). This alignment, if any was needed, of the poet-narrator and the *Eneados's* Scots translator is here put to comic effect. The 'seg' rails against the poet-narrator, protesting that 'Thy buke is bot brybry' (144)—probably with the meaning 'a thing of little value' rather than 'Bribery; taking of bribes'.<sup>127</sup> Promising to provide the poet-narrator with more edifying material, the 'seg' 'racht me a roll' (146), which is disparagingly described by the poet-narrator as 'The roytast ane ragment with mony rat rane, | Of all the mowys in this mold sen God merkyt man' (147-48). Unimpressed by this alternative reading matter, a miscellany of vernacular astrology and esoteric knowledge that ranges from 'The moving of the mapamond' (149) to 'Quhy the corn hes the ca' (155), the poet-narrator charges the 'seg' to 'lern me ane other lesson, this I ne like' (158). The 'seg' leads him 'doun dern in dolf

<sup>126</sup> *selcouth*, adj., *DOST*; cf. *seld*, adv.; *couth*, a..

<sup>127</sup> (*bribery*,) *brybry*, -*rie*, n., defs 1 and 3, *DOST*.

by a dyke' (160), where the poet-narrator discovers a hoard of pennies, which he 'prevely [...] begouth vp to pike' (162). But alas, he recalls, 'quehn I walkynt, all that welth was wiskyt away' (163), and the Prologue ends with the repudiation of dreams quoted above, followed by the poet-narrator's setting himself down beneath a tree to begin 'this aucht buke' (182).

As the only substantial piece of alliterative verse in Douglas's oeuvre,<sup>128</sup> critics have been inclined to read into the difficult eighth Prologue some tacit statement of Douglas's critical attitudes. The Prologue is often regarded as a burlesque, either of the oracular dream at the beginning of Book VIII, moral-didactic writing of the kind represented by the 'seg''s complaint and roll, or both.<sup>129</sup> Felicity Riddy interprets the Prologue as a satire of the Scots alliterative dream poem:

In it, the humanist poet confronts a venerable vernacular tradition and judges it too narrowly provincial, too restricted in its outlook, too ignorant to carry authority. The Prologue can thus be seen as part of the poet's long meditation on his own poetic role.<sup>130</sup>

This view of the eighth Prologue as standing in opposition to the 'poetic role' elaborated in the *Eneados* seems too invested in reconciling this aberrant composition with Douglas's supposedly candid self-representations elsewhere in

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<sup>128</sup> There are traces of alliterative diction in the seventh Prologue and at moments of heightened martial description in the translation, especially Books VII-XII, though nothing to compare with the eighth Prologue's thirteen-line alliterative stanza. The stanza form is accurately reproduced in the *Eneados* manuscripts and Copland's edition: in each, the final line of the wheel appears to the left of the three preceding short lines; and in the manuscripts, a bracket draws attention to the shared rhyme (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

<sup>129</sup> See, in addition to the critics discussed below, Bawcutt, *Douglas*, 173; and Ian S. Ross, "'Proloug" and "Buke" in the *Eneados* of Gavin Douglas', in *Scottish Language and Literature, Medieval and Renaissance: Fourth International Conference, 1984: Proceedings*, ed. Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986), 393-407, at 400-01.

<sup>130</sup> Riddy, 'The Alliterative Revival', in *The History of Scottish Literature: Volume I: Origins to 1660*, ed. R. D. S. Jack (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 39-54, at 51.

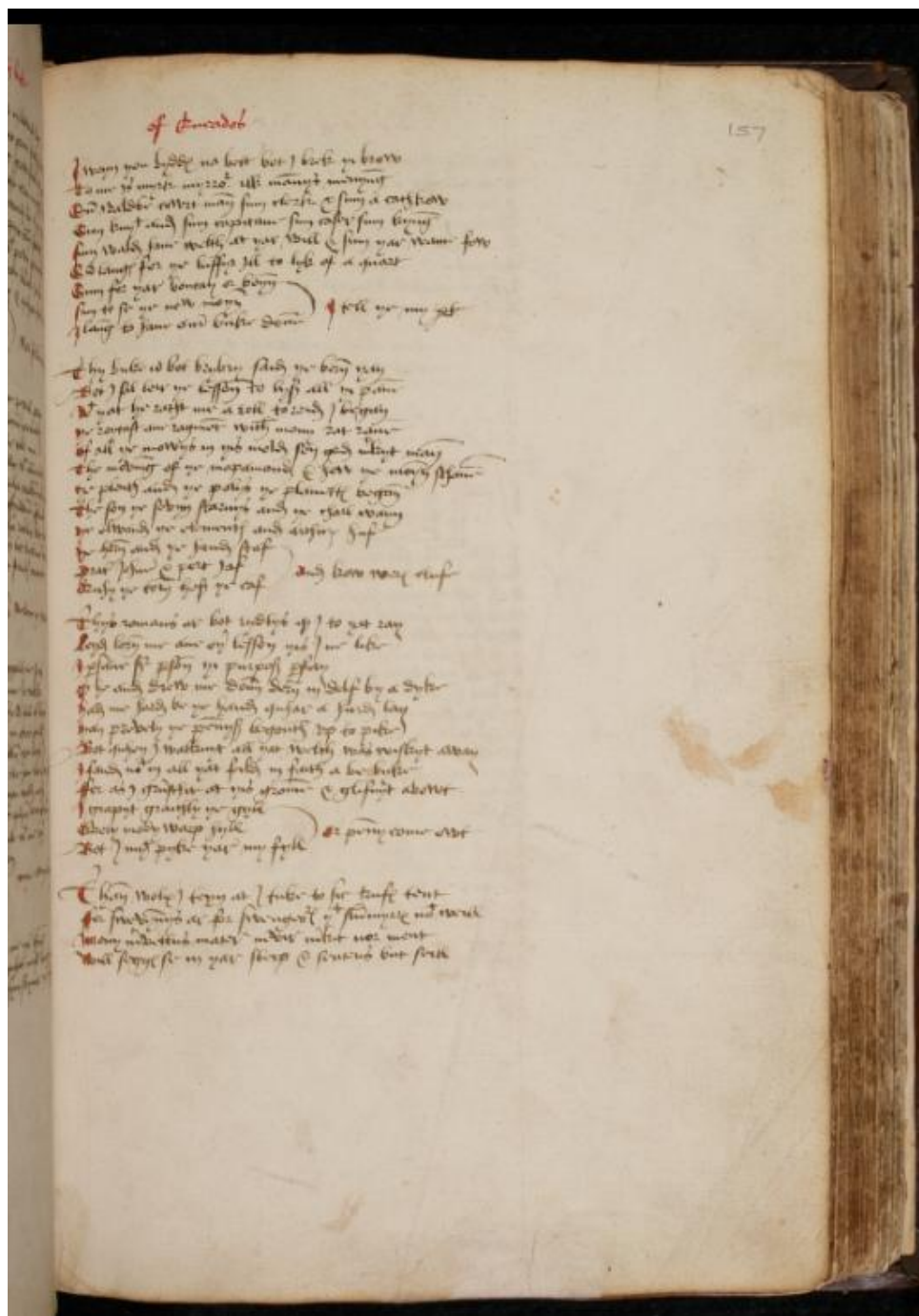


Figure 4.3. Gavin Douglas, *Eneidos*, VIII Prol. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.3.12, fol. 157r. Reproduced from Wren Digital Library  
<https://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/library/wren-digital-library>.

of Eneados.

CLXXXII.

I speik to the into spout spel me this thing  
 What likis ledis, in land, what man langis thou  
 Quod I smask, lat me slepe, spm saymar the hang  
 I wene thou biddis na better, bot I brek the brot  
 To me is myk myrour, ilk mannis menyng  
 Sum wald be court man, sum clerk, and sum ane cary how  
 Sum knicht, sum Capitane, sum caser sum king  
 Sum wald haue welth, at thare wil, and sum thar wame for  
 Sum langis for the leuer ill, to lik, of ane quart  
 Sum for thar boneth, at boune  
 Sum to se the new monie  
 I lang to haif, our buke done.

And the my part

The buke is bot brisy said the, betne than  
 Bot I sall lere the ane lessoun to leis, al thy paine  
 With that he raucht me ane roll, to rede I begane  
 The copetest ane ragment with mony car, rime  
 Of all the molis in this moly, sen god mecht man  
 The mouing of the mapamound, and ho the mone schank  
 The pleuch and the poles, the planetis began  
 The son the seim sternes, and the chaele wan  
 The elwand, the elementis, and arthuris huffe  
 The hoine, and the hand stasse  
 Water I houe, and portinffe  
 Why the corne, has the calfe

And how weis cluse,

This romanis ar bot trolis, quod I to that day  
 And lere ane better lessoun, this I the like  
 I persait for person, thy purpos persay  
 Quod he and bein one down, derne in delf by ane dyke  
 Had me hard by the hand, quhare ane hild lay  
 Than priuely the pennys, begouth by to pike  
 Bot quhen I walkyt, al that welth was wiskit away  
 I fand not in all that feid in faith, ane be like

b.4.

f.03

Figure 4.4. Gavin Douglas, *Eneados* (London: [William Copland], 1553) STC 24797, p. 192'. Reproduced from EEBO.

the authorial paratexts. One can instead take the Prologue as yet another example of the multiplicity of voices that are present in the poem, thus helping to resolve its problematic status in relation to the other Prologues and proceeding Book. Jeremy Scott Ecke has recently reappraised the eighth Prologue as a stylised ‘set piece’ (echoing Fox)—a composition that would have signified Douglas’s ‘membership in or ability to imitate the coterie of Middle Scots alliterative poets’, without detracting from the erudition of the larger volume.<sup>131</sup> By contrast, Riddy’s reading of the Prologue as a denigration of alliterative verse betrays a common misidentification of the ‘venerable vernacular tradition’ to which Douglas is responding. This also seems to be the case in S. Melissa Winders’s article “‘Bad, Harsk Spech and Lewit Barbur Tong’: Gavin Douglas’s Langlandian Prologue’, which connects the ‘seg’’s complaint, his accusation of the poet-narrator’s idleness, and the practical learning contained in the roll to William Langland’s *Piers Plowman* (c. 1360-99).<sup>132</sup> The eighth Prologue, writes Winders,

stages its narrator’s encounter with a Langlandian mode of writing as a conflict, in which the narrator and his Langlandian interlocutor each try to dismiss the other’s way of writing as worthless while positing his own as a profitable alternative.<sup>133</sup>

But despite the appearance of ‘Piers plewman’ among the popular romance and satirical figures seen in Venus’s mirror in the *Palice* (see n. 23 above), the limited evidence for the northern circulation of Langland’s poem suggests that Douglas

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<sup>131</sup> Ecke, “‘Let all zour verse be Literall’: Innovation and Identity in Scottish Alliterative Verse’, *M&H*, n. s., 41 (2016), 169-93, at 172; on the endurance of alliterative verse as an ‘aristocratic and literary’ mode in Scotland far later than in England, see also Calin, *Lily and the Thistle*, 176-77.

<sup>132</sup> Winders, ‘Douglas’s Langlandian Prologue’, *YLS*, 25 (2011), 137-59.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.



probably knew it only indirectly.<sup>134</sup> In fact, the eighth Prologue's thirteen-line alliterative stanza—comprising nine lines of four or five stresses, four shorter lines of two stresses, and with the rhyme scheme *ababababcdddc*—is characteristic of a distinctively Scottish body of fifteenth-century alliterative verse, notably Richard Holland's comic allegory, *The Buk of the Howlat* (c. 1448), the late-fifteenth century romances *Rauf Coilgear* and *Golagros and Gawane*, and Henryson's *Sum Practysis of Medecyne*.<sup>135</sup> *Golagros and Howlat* were among the outputs of the Edinburgh press of Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar, published just prior to the composition of the *Eneados* (STC 11984, 13594; cf. section 2.2), whilst 'Raf Coilgear' is another of the figures seen in Venus's mirror. Far from simply a burlesque of an old-fashioned and unsophisticated form by a 'humanist poet' interested only in Latinate epic, the eighth Prologue seems rather to be a deliberate exhibition of Douglas's mastery of an alternative poetic voice.

An 'exhibition' rather than a 'confrontation-with-tradition' reading of the eighth Prologue is supported by analysis of the respective dictions of the 'seg' and the poet-narrator. Were the Prologue meant as a dramatisation of Douglas's encounter with and rejection of a vernacular poetic tradition of alliterative dream poetry and practical learning, one might expect some discernible difference between the manner of speaking of its narrative representative—the 'seg'—and the poet-narrator. In fact, there is very little. The 'seg's' complaint is full of the dialectal

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<sup>134</sup> See Simon Horobin, 'Manuscripts and Readers of *Piers Plowman*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. Andrew Cole and Andrew Galloway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 179-97.

<sup>135</sup> See Nicola Royan, 'The Alliterative Awntyrs Stanza in Older Scots Verse', in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, ed. John A. Burrow and Hoyt N. Duggan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 185-94.

and often specialised vocabulary that is characteristic of alliterative verse.<sup>136</sup> The precise sense of certain lines remains unclear; see, for example: ‘The fillok hyr deform fax wald haue a fair face, | To mak hir maikles of hir man at myster myscheif is’ (perhaps ‘The young woman would have a fair face instead of her deformed one, so as to make her seem matchless to her man whom poverty afflicts’ [32-33]);<sup>137</sup> or the ‘seg’’s rebuke of the poet-narrator as a ‘gnapper’ (‘[o]ne who bites with snaps’), whom he has discovered ‘lurkand’ (‘skulk[ing]’) ‘as thi greis gurdīs’ (perhaps ‘as your degrees leap forward’ or ‘as your steps stop’).<sup>138</sup> The poet-narrator’s response is no less obscure or idiomatic: the phrase ‘ga chat the’ (‘[a]n obscure expression of contempt’) is of uncertain origin, as is the line “‘Smake, lat me sleip, Sym Skynnar the hyng[”]’ (156; ‘Sym Skynnar’ ‘may have been the public hangman’ but also appears as the name of a devil in the late fifteenth-century mock-cursing poem ‘Devyne poware of michtis maist’).<sup>139</sup> Rather than the humanist antithesis to the uncouth ‘seg’, Douglas’s poet-narrator is in certain respects the sympathetic continuator of the eighth Prologue’s estates-satire type complaint. His claimed uninterest in ‘ilk mannys menyng’ (135)—the worldly preoccupations attacked by the ‘seg’—is followed by six lines enumerating how ‘Sum waldbe cowrt man, sum clerk and sum a cachkow...’ (136-41, 136 quoted), an identical device to the ‘seg’’s ‘Sum...’ anaphora in lines 44-51 and 96-99. And the dismissal of the ‘seg’’s roll on account of its disorganisation (‘The roytast ane ragment...’) and doggerel verse (‘...with mony rat rane’) resonates with the ‘seg’’s earlier

<sup>136</sup> See the notes in *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt and Cunningham, 151-56.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>138</sup> *gnapper*, n., *lurk*, v., def. 1b, *DOST*; *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 216.

<sup>139</sup> *Eneados*, ed. Bawcutt with Cunningham, 155; *skin(n)ar*, -er, n., *DOST*; *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 216; cf. *chat*, v. and *skin(n)ar*, -er, n., *DOST*.

condemnation of the ‘ralgear’ or abusive speaker, who ‘rakyns na wordis, bot *ratlis* furth *ranys*, | Ful rude and *royt* ressons baith roundalis and ryme’ (66-67, my emphasis).<sup>140</sup>

This consonance between the ‘seg’ and poet-narrator is partly reflected in Coldwell’s comments on the Prologue:

The attacks on contemporary society come not from Douglas, but from his interlocutor [...]. Nevertheless, the prologue seems to be pointless unless it at least partly represents Douglas’s point of view, and the device of evading responsibility is common.<sup>141</sup>

Rather than getting bogged down in conjecture about Douglas’s attitudes towards the nobility, clergy, and commons of early sixteenth-century Scotland, it seems more important, with regard to Douglas’s literary authorship, for one to recognise that, in the eighth Prologue, Douglas succeeds in fabricating a credible, if temporary, ‘point of view’ that both is and is not his own. This is the conclusion recommended by the introductory sidenote in Copland’s edition. It reads: ‘In this | prolog he | shawis | the staite | of thys | fals world | quhou all | thyng is | turnit | fra | vertue tyll | vyce’ (fol. 190<sup>r</sup>)—an assessment of the Prologue which entirely ignores any bifurcation of voice. Everything the readers sees and hears, reminds the sidenote, Douglas ‘shawis’. ‘Seg’ and poet-narrator alike are aspects of a single voice which is available for reappropriation by the compiler and incorporated into the composite volume. This understanding of the text as the product of an external authorial agent who has prepared and organised its various parts underpins my

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<sup>140</sup> See *royet*, adj., *rat-rime*, *-ryme*, n., *rattil(l)*, *-el(l)*, *rat(t)le*, v., def. 2b., and *rane*, *raine*, n., *DOST*.

<sup>141</sup> *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 213-14.

concluding discussion of Douglas's most confident and compelling manipulation of voice in the *Eneados's* authorial paratexts: the opposition then accord of the poet-narrator and a fictionalised Maffeo Vegio in the poem's thirteenth Prologue.

### *The thirteenth Prologue*

Book XIII of the *Eneados* is a translation of the Italian humanist poet Maffeo Vegio's *Libri XII Aeneidos Supplementum* (1428), a 630-line poem which supplies a Christianising conclusion to Virgil's epic.<sup>142</sup> The authority for Vegio's account of the Italian-Trojan truce, the marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia, Venus's petition for her son's stellification, and how she *immisitque Aeneam astris* ('admitted Aeneas [among] the stars' [628]) remained a subject of debate throughout the almost one hundred and fifty years of the poem's currency.<sup>143</sup> The *Supplementum* appears in most *Opera Vergiliana* printed from 1471 until the mid-seventeenth century,<sup>144</sup> among them Bade's *Aeneis*, though with a pointed note by the printer-commentator: *vnde frustra quidam quadrigis rotam quintam addidit* ('whence a certain person needlessly added a fifth wheel to the quadriga' [fol. 383<sup>r</sup>, my translation]). Douglas's appending of a thirteenth Book to his translation is thus a less novel decision than has sometimes been supposed—he was conforming to early sixteenth-century editorial convention, though perhaps not scholarly

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<sup>142</sup> First published in Venice by Adam de Ambergua in 1471; edited with Thomas Twyne's English translation (1584), Douglas's translation, and commentary, in *Maphaeus Vegius and His Thirteenth Book of the Aeneid: A Chapter on Virgil in the Renaissance*, ed. Anna Cox Brinton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1930). All references to the *Supplementum* are to this edition, translations are my own. See also the summary discussion in Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, 237-47.

<sup>143</sup> The *Supplementum* was much lauded by Vegio's Italian humanist contemporaries; its omission from the third edition of Aldo Manuzio's celebrated *Virgilius* (1514) marks a downturn in the poem's critical prestige, though popular taste for its Christian allegoresis endured into the mid-seventeenth century. *Vegius and His Thirteenth Book*, ed. Cox Brinton, 29-32.

<sup>144</sup> Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, 247.

decorum. Douglas seems to have been well aware that translating the work of a recent Virgilian continuator came with a different set of considerations to translating his *auctor* Virgil. The reduced emphasis placed on fidelity to his source is immediately made apparent by the greater freedom of translation in Book XIII.<sup>145</sup> More subtle, but no less significant, is Douglas's divergence in the thirteenth Prologue from the framing techniques employed in the previous twelve. This is the last of Douglas's narrative Prologues and the second framed as a dream; yet here, for the first time, Douglas's poet-narrator encounters the figure of the author of his source text—'Mapheus'<sup>146</sup>—and not only a copy of Virgil's *Aeneid* 'on a lettron'. The Prologue has been read as bringing the historical poet Douglas closer to the *auctores* of the past by placing his textual double in conference with an esteemed emulator of Virgil. It is rightly suggested as one of the most accomplished claims to vernacular textual authority in the authorial paratexts to the *Eneados*— though the nature of its achievement, I argue, has not been fully appreciated. Rather than presenting Mapheus as a model for contemporary Virgilian writing, the thirteenth Prologue sends up the Italian humanist and, to an extent, Douglas's poet-narrator as examples to be avoided. It again demonstrates the provisionality and artificiality of anything resembling an author encountered in Douglas's poetry. Instead, the reader is asked to conceive of an authorial agent external to the text—a compiler to whom authorship of the whole composite volume can be attributed, an implied literary author for the *Eneados*.

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<sup>145</sup> As observed in Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 148-49; and Kantik Ghosh, "'The Fift Quheill": Gavin Douglas's Maffeo Vegio', *SLJ*, 22:1 (1995), 5-21, at 7.

<sup>146</sup> Hereafter, the historical poet of the *Supplementum* is referred to as Vegio and the character in the thirteenth Prologue as Mapheus.

The thirteenth Prologue bears certain structural and thematic similarities to the prologue to Henryson's 'Lion and the Mouse'.<sup>147</sup> Central to both is an imagined dialogue between the poet-narrator and a fictionalised version of the author of the proceeding text, a dramatisation of the *translatio studii* from Latin into the vernacular, but which in the *Eneados* betrays the impossibility of simply 'supplementing' Virgil's *Aeneid*. In Henryson's fable—the middle item in the first extant Scottish editions of the *Fables*<sup>148</sup>—the poet-narrator describes the appearance in a dream of his 'maister venerabill' (1384) Aesop.<sup>149</sup> He urges the fabulist 'to tell ane prettie fabill | Concludand with ane gude moralitie' (1386-87) and, though complaining of the current disregard for 'haly preiching' (1390), Aesop 'thus begouth ane taill' (1404)—that is, the fable of 'The Lion and the Mouse', which comprises the next one hundred and sixty-seven lines—followed by a *moralitas*, again ostensibly spoken by Aesop within the dream. Douglas's thirteenth Prologue also depicts an interview between the poet-narrator and a poetic 'maister' in a dream.<sup>150</sup> Beginning, like 'The Lion and the Mouse', with a description of a midsummer evening, the poet-narrator recalls how

Toward the evyn, amyd the symmyris heit,  
 Quhen in the Crab Appollo held hys sete,  
 Duryng the ioyus moneth tyme of June,

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<sup>147</sup> Besides the many echoes in the narrative Prologues, Douglas's familiarity with at least one of Henryson's poems is signalled by the allusion in the Comment to 'Maistir Robert Hendirson in New Orpheus [i.e. *Orpheus and Eurydice*]' (Comment to l.i.13). See Bawcutt, *Gavin Douglas*, 43-44.

<sup>148</sup> Printed in Edinburgh by Robert Lekprevik for Henry Charteris in 1570 (STC 185), and by Thomas Bassandyne in 1571 (STC 185.5).

<sup>149</sup> Though as Iain MacLeod Higgins observes, the *Fables* are derived from both Aesopian and Reynardian sources: 'what Henryson calls Aesop's "buke" has now been transformed into a thoroughly medieval—that is, contemporary—work'. MacLeod Higgins, 'Master Henryson and Father Aesop', in *Author, Reader, Book*, ed. Partridge and Kwakkel, 198-231, at 210.

<sup>150</sup> Which, in its reprimand of the poet-narrator for baulking at his task, also resonates with the interview between Bochas and Petrark in Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (see section 2.3).

As gone near was the day and supper doyn,  
 I walkyt furth abowt the feildis tyte  
 Quhilkis tho replenyst stud full of delyte  
 With herbys, cornys, catal, and frute treis,  
 Plente of stoir, byrdis and byssy beys,  
 In amerant medis fleand est and west,  
 Eftir laubour to tak the nychtis rest.

(XIII Prol., 1-10)

In the thirteenth Prologue, the seasonal description has a clear symbolic significance: having suffered the hardships of winter in the fourth Prologue, and celebrated the arrival of spring in the twelfth, Douglas's poet-narrator, now at the end of Virgil's twelve Books, is ready 'Eftir laubour to tak the nychtis rest'. But this promise of respite is short-lived; in lines 62-72, the poet-narrator moves into a garden and sits beneath a laurel tree, reliable signs of the onset of a dream. Sure enough,

On sleip I slaid, quhar sone I saw appear  
 Ane agit man, and said: 'Quhat dois thou heir  
 Vndyr my tre, and willyst me na gude?'

(XIII Prol., 75-77)

The 'agit man' is Mapheus. He appears, 'Lyk to sum poet of the ald fasson' (88), to reprimand the poet-narrator for having laid down his translation without first affixing the *Supplementum*:

[']Knawis thou not Mapheus Vegius, the poet,  
 That onto Virgillis lusty bukis sweit  
 The threttyn buke ekit Eneadan?  
 I am the sammyn, and of the na thing fayn,

That hess the tother twelf into thy tong  
 Translait of new, thai may be red and song  
 Our Albyone ile into 3our wlgar leid;  
 Bot to my buke 3it lyst the tak na heed.'

(XIII Prol., 99-106)

The sidenote in Copland's edition describes this meeting as 'A commo | ning betue[ne] the autho[r] | and Ma | phaeus' (fol. 357<sup>r</sup>). But Douglas's Mapheus, like Henryson's Aesop, is not the figure that their late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Scottish readers were likely to expect. *The Lion and the Mouse* is notable for its reimagination of the servile deformed Aesop popularised by the mid-fifteenth century *Vita Aesopi* as a learned 'poet lawriate' of Rome (1377).<sup>151</sup> Iain MacLeod Higgins contends that, by recasting Aesop as a Latin laureate poet, Henryson defends the *auctorite* of fables, whilst at the same time continuing 'the Chaucerian work of making that authority his own'.<sup>152</sup> Douglas, in the thirteenth Prologue, works in the opposite direction, playfully mocking Mapheus's claim for the textual authority of his 'buke' by rendering the Virgilian continuator a ridiculous poseur. Bawcutt notes the similarity between Douglas's Mapheus, who wears 'on his hed of lawrer tre a crown' (XIII Prol., 88), and Henryson's Aesop, with his scarlet hood and 'bonat round and of the auld fassoun'—all attributes of the laureate poet.<sup>153</sup> The essential difference between Henryson's and Douglas's fictionalised authors is demonstrated by the poets' handling of a favourite iconographical trope of the

<sup>151</sup> See MacLeod Higgins, 'Master Henryson and Father Aesop', 201-06. Henryson's presentation of Aesop as a poet of Rome is not without precedent; see, e.g., Lydgate's *Isopes Fabules*, discussed in section 3.1.1.

<sup>152</sup> MacLeod Higgins, 'Master Henryson and Father Aesop', 207.

<sup>153</sup> Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Henryson's "Poeit of the Auld Fassoun"', *RES*, 32 (1981), 429-34; cf. the depiction of Mercury crowned 'Lyke to ane poeit of the auld fassoun' in Henryson, *Testament of Cresseid*, 245; and the discussion of Skelton's historical and poetic laureations in section 2.3.



oracular dream: the description of the author-figure's gown.<sup>154</sup> Aesop wears a gown 'of ane claith als quhyte as milk' over a robe 'of chamberlate purpoure broun' and has a 'hude of scarlet bordowrit weill with silk' (*Fables*, 1349-51). By contrast, Mapheus's 'weid' looks 'so ald, that it had not beyn change, | Be my consait, fully that fourty zeir' (XIII Prol., 81-83). These 'fourty zeir' possibly refer to the little over four decades since Vegio's death in 1458 or, more likely, the publication of the *Supplementum* in 1471. Where Henryson's ennobled Aesop affirms the legitimacy of his (and by extension, Henryson's) fables, Mapheus's meagre poetic fame, as symbolised by his thread-bare gown, bears witness to the theme of the remainder of the thirteenth Prologue: that a new composition merely 'ekit' to the *Aeneid* does not automatically possess Virgilian textual authority.

Mapheus's claim for the textual authority of his 'buke' is based on the proposition that the Christianising *Supplementum* is not only an addendum to the *Aeneid* but the moral and aesthetic culmination of Virgil's original project. Douglas, unlike Henryson in 'The Lion and the Mouse', denies that claim; instead of using Mapheus as an analogue, and thus as a justification, for his own literary authorship, Douglas deploys this dissimulating 'poet of the ald fasson' as a foil to the very different kind of literary activity that has produced the *Eneados*. Mapheus is obsessed with the *Aeneid*-ness of the *Supplementum*. In just over sixty lines of dialogue, his 'buke' is cited six times (101, 106, 116, 140 ['my schort Cristyn wark'], 142, 151,); Mapheus's repeated claim is that the *Supplementum*'s moral instruction, its *sentence* (cf. section 4.2.1), is consistent, integral even, to the *Aeneid*'s—'My buke and Virgillis morall beyn, bath tway' (142). The crux of Mapheus's argument

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<sup>154</sup> E.g. Philosophy's torn gown in Boethius, *De consolatioen philosophiae*, l.pr. i; and the ecphrastic description of Nature's dress in Alain de Lille, *De planctu naturae*, pr. i.73-105.

seems to be the syntactically contorted assertion that he has ‘onto Virgillis lusty bukis sweit | The threttyn buke ekit Eneadan’.<sup>155</sup> The precise meaning of the word ‘Eneadan’ here is ambiguous; it would have seemed so, I suspect, to Douglas’s first Scottish readers. In the Prologues, ‘Eneados’ is the title usually given to Virgil’s epic.<sup>156</sup> In the translation, the substantive adjective *Eneadanys* denotes the followers of Aeneas (in Virgil’s Latin, *Aeneadae*), whether in the subject, object, or indirect object position.<sup>157</sup> A form close to Maphaeus’s ‘buke [...] Eneadan’ appears in Book XI, where the maiden warrior Camylla promises Turnus ‘To mach in feild the ostis Eneadane’ (XI.x.38). In the *Aeneid*, the equivalent sense unit reads: *audeo et Aeneadam promitto occurrere turmae* (‘I am eager [for battle] and promise to meet the cavalry [dat. sg] of the *Aeneadae* [gen. pl]’ [XI.503]). *Aeneades*, -ae denotes in general ‘those who are related in any manner to Aeneas’;<sup>158</sup> and in *Aeneid*, XI.503,

<sup>155</sup> Such anacoluthia is an observed feature of Douglas’s syntactical habit. See George Gregory Smith, *Specimens of Middle Scots* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1902), xxxix-xl.

<sup>156</sup> *Eneados*, I Prol., 44 (‘I wald into my rurall wlgar gross | Wryte sum savoryng of thyne [i.e. Virgil’s] Eneados’), 140 (‘Caxtoun [...] In proysse hes prent ane buke of Inglys gross, | Clepand it Virgill in Eneados’), IX Prol., 98 (‘Na mar as now in preambill me list expone, | The nynt buke thus begouth Eneadon’). The incipits and explicits to the Prologues and Books in the manuscripts and Copland’s edition follow a similar morphology. In classical Latin, the proper noun used to refer to Virgil’s epic is *Aeneis*, -idis, or -idos. John Trevisa’s translation of Ralph Higden’s *Polychronicon* (1327-64, trans. 1387) contains the earliest attestation for the more familiar ‘Eneyd’ form in English, from the ablative in *Aeneid* in his source. *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis: Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Churchill Babington and J. Rawson Lumby, 9 vols (London: Longman, 1865-86), IV, 407. Nevertheless, throughout the fifteenth century, ‘Eneydos’ is the name more usually given to the Latin poem, e.g. Chaucer, ‘Nun’s Priest’s Tale’, *Canterbury Tales*, VII.3359; Lydgate, *Troy Book*, II.34; and Caxton, *Eneydos*, passim.

<sup>157</sup> *Eneados*, IX.viii.17 (‘The forcy and the stowt Eneadanys [subject]’; cf. *Aeneid*, IX.467), xii.23 (‘effrayit Eneadanys [subject] | Hys face onfrendly persauit’; cf. *Aeneid*, IX.735), XI.x.38 (discussed above), XII.i.27 (‘3on cowart Eneadanys [object]’; cf. *Aeneid*, XII.12), iv.64 (‘Nor Eneadanys [subject] neuer [...] Aganyst 3ou sall rebell’; cf. *Aeneid*, XII.186), xii.204 (‘3our honour, that be the contrar Eneadanys [indirect object] | Hess violet and prophanyt’; cf. *Aeneid*, XII.779), XIII.iii.78 (‘quhat avalit the [...] to perturbe the strangis Eneadanys [object]’; cf. *Supplementum*, 159: *Aeneadas*), vi. 29 (‘Forto convoy the said Eneadanys [object]’; cf. *Supplementum*, 315: *Aeneadasque*), xi.34 (‘mychty Ene | And the Eneadanys all of hys menze [object] | Ithandly and onyrkyt luffyt haue I’; cf. *Supplementum*, 608: *Aeneadasque*). The Trojan colony founded by Aeneas in Thrace ‘clepit Eneadas’ (III.i.39; cf. *Aeneid*, III.18: *Aeneadas*). On Douglas’s distinctive use of the noun ending -is for plural adjectives, see *Aeneid*, ed. Coldwell, I, 114-15; and Smith, *Specimens of Middle Scots*, xl.

<sup>158</sup> *Aeneades*, -ae, n., def. 3, Lewis and Short.

as in *Eneados*, XI.x.38, *Aeneadum turmae*/'ostis Eneadane' seems to designate 'the cavalry of the followers of Aeneas'—in other words, the 'Aenead-an' cavalry. I labour this grammatical point for its importance to Mapheus's pretensions to Virgilian textual authority. Should my interpretation be accepted, the line 'The threttyn buke ekit Eneadan' can be read as Mapheus's boast to have added to Virgil's twelve originals 'the thirteenth book of the *Aeneid*'—that is, 'the thirteenth *Aeneid*-an book'. Rather than merely extrapolating his conclusion from the *Aeneid*'s Books I-XII, Douglas's Mapheus claims to have picked up where Virgil left off, emulating the ancient *auctor* in both *sentence* and style,<sup>159</sup> though with a greater emphasis on the *Aeneid*'s Christian aspects, for 'I lat the wyt I am nane hethyn wight' (XIII Prol., 137). In the thirteenth Prologue, Douglas points to the limitations of this approach, especially in the case of translation. The textual authority claimed by Mapheus represents a paradox: it relies on the ability of the continuator or translator to faithfully re-create the original text—both its *sentence* and its *eloquence*—whilst subtly modifying its import to suit a contemporary Christian audience. Douglas's appreciation of the need to reinscribe and not only to rehearse Virgil's *Aeneid* in order to ensure its relevance to 'euery gentill Scot' was demonstrated in section 4.2.1; its humorous converse is seen in the figure of Mapheus, before a powerful reaffirmation of Douglas's alternative approach in the thirteenth Prologue's final lines, discussed below. First, I return to the narrative and Douglas's poet-narrator, a figure whom, in his opposition to Mapheus, it is especially tempting to read as self-revelatory representation of the historical poet,

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<sup>159</sup> A feature of the historical poet's approach in the *Supplementum*: 'Vegio almost never invents anything out of whole cloth. Whenever he needs to say something, he searches his text (or his memory) of the *Aeneid* in order to find the proper Virgilian way of saying it; then he uses that form.' Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance*, 240.

but who serves, I argue, as yet another reminder of the unknowable implied author who precedes him.

The sidenote to the thirteenth Prologue in Copland's edition quoted above demonstrates the convenience of a reading of the poet-narrator as a projection of the *Eneados's* 'autho[r]';<sup>160</sup> yet as in the eighth Prologue, alert readers are unlikely to mistake the embodied voices framed within the dream for the critical ideals of the human author. Douglas's poet-narrator is again a deliberately unconvincing textual double for the historical poet. He acts as a placeholder for two non-consecutive attacks on Virgil's *Aeneid* and Vegio's *Supplementum*, which by their close proximity become humorously contradictory. First, the poet-narrator returns to the contention—already rebutted in the first and sixth Prologues (see section 4.2.1)—that Virgil's pagan epic is not suitable to be studied by conscientious Christians. He asks for Mapheus's pardon,

[']Not that I haue 3ou ony thing offendit,  
Bot rathir that I haue my tyme mysspendit,  
So lang on Virgillis volume forto stair,  
And laid on syde full mony grave mater,  
That, wald I now write in that trety mor,  
Quhat suld folk deym bot all my tyme forlor?[']

(XIII Prol., 109-14)

One has learned not to expect too much consistency between the attitudes expressed across, or even within, the *Eneados's* authorial paratexts. Even so, the shift in voice in the lines that follow is striking:

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<sup>160</sup> For modern critical examples, see Starkey, 'Dilemmas in the Nature Prologues', 92-98; Ebin, 'Role of the Narrator', 361-62; and Canitz, 'Directions for Reading', 20-21.

[']Als, syndry haldis, fader, traistis me,  
 3our buke ekit but ony necessite,  
 As to the text accordyng neuer a deill,  
 Mair than langis to the cart the fift quheill.[']

(XIII Prol., 115-18)

The image is lifted from Bade's commentary, quoted above. Abandoning, momentarily, his censure on Virgil, Douglas's poet-narrator politely informs Mapheus that, even if his translation of the *Aeneid* did not already constitute 'tyme myssspendit', the addition of the *Supplementum* would be a redundant appendage. He concludes this rhetorical *non sequitur* by recalling 'the story of Iherom' (122), the famous vision in which the Christian Father was admonished for his fondness for *gentilium litterarum libros* ('books of pagan literature').<sup>161</sup> '["]Thus sair me dredis I sal thoill a heit["]', protests the poet-narrator, '["]For the grave study I haue so long forleit"' (130); yet this conventional defence is as shot through with irony as are Mapheus's boasts of Virgilian textual authority. Douglas's poet-narrator is presented as oblivious to the fact that, if he intends to cite a vision as a counter-argument to Mapheus, he ought to bear in mind that he is currently in the middle of just such an oracular dream. In the lines that follow, the poet-narrator is subjected to a slapstick version of the 'heit' or burning that he had hoped to avoid.<sup>162</sup> Roused to fury, Mapheus threatens 'Thou salt deir by that evir thou Vigill knew' (145) and the dream ends in farce:

And, with that word, doun of the sete me drew,

<sup>161</sup> Jerome, *Epistolae*, XXII [*Ad Eustochium, Paulae filiam*]; PL, XXII, 115, my translation.

<sup>162</sup> See *hete, heit*, n., def. 2, *DOST*.

Syne to me with hys club he maid a braid,  
 And twenty rowtis apon my riggyng laid,  
 Quhill, 'Deo, deo, mercy', dyd I cry,  
 And, be my rycht hand strekit vp inhy,  
 Hecht to translait his buke, in honour of God  
 And hys Apostolis twelf, in the number od.  
 He, glaid tharof, me by the hand vptuke,  
 Syne went away, and I for feir awoik

(XIII Prol., 146-54)

The Prologue's closing frame marks another change in tone. When the poet-narrator awakes, it is dawn; the setting sun and homecoming beasts of the opening are replaced by 'gentill lubar schynand, the day star', and 'the byrdis blisfull bay', whilst the bailiff calls the farm-hands to "'Awaik on fut, go till our husbandry'" (156, 166, 172)—all reminiscent of the return to work symbolised in the twelfth Prologue (especially 1-5, 231-32, and 288). The thirteenth Prologue constitutes a very different vision, but the outcome is the same: it functions as the preface to Book XIII, probably already written, or at least underway, at the time of the Prologue's composition. As in the eighth Prologue, the apparent opposition between Douglas's poet-narrator and the author-figure encountered in the dream may '*give the impression* of expressing a personal dilemma' about whether or not to proceed with the translation;<sup>163</sup> but these anxieties, if they ever existed, must have been overcome long before Douglas's composition of the thirteenth Prologue—otherwise, he would never have translated the Book that it precedes.<sup>164</sup> The

<sup>163</sup> Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry*, 190.

<sup>164</sup> Though see Ghosh's suggestion of a 'basic duality of his [i.e. Douglas's] critical response' to the *Supplementum* in Book XIII, which 'finds expression in sudden startling intrusions of the narrative

resistance to the *Supplementum* expressed in the thirteenth Prologue is, I contend, once again an exercise in writerly ‘revoicing’. In response to the citation of Jerome, Mapheus himself highlights the capacity of poets to reappropriate the writings of the past: ‘Quhou think we he [i.e. the poet-narrator] essonzeis him to astart [...] Fenzeand him Iherom for to contirfeyt, | Quahr as he lyggis bedovyn, lo, in sweit!’ (133, 135-36). The poet-narrator pretends to share the scruples of Jerome; Mapheus points out that he is no saint, lines which to me seem emblematic of Douglas’s strategy for authorial self-promotion throughout the authorial paratexts. He endeavours in each to present a compelling poetic voice or voices; they may diverge from one another or be humorously undercut but are not meant as the expressions of a consistent personality. Beyond their local thematic purpose, they evoke *the idea* of an author responsible for their preparation and arrangement, one who is not bound to their sentiment but is the agent of their masterful feigning.

The irreducibility of the *Eneados*’s multiple voices, but also the fluidity with which Douglas moves between them, and the revalorisation of the activity of compiling which is his ultimate achievement in the poem, is encapsulated in the final lines of the thirteenth Prologue. As in each of the narrative Prologues, the thirteenth ends with the poet-narrator turning to resume the translation:

Than thocht I thus: I will my cunnand kepe,  
 I will not be a daw, I will not slepe,  
 I wil compleit my promyss schortly, thus  
 Maid to the poet master Mapheus,  
 And mak vpwark heirof, and cloys our buke,

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voice of the “Chaucerian” dreamer whom one had encountered in the Prologue’. Ghosh, ““Fift Quheill”, 7.

That I may syne bot on grave materis luke:  
 For, thocht hys stile be nocht to Virgill lyke,  
 Full weill I wayt my text sall mony like,  
 Sen eftir ane my tung is and my pen,  
 Quilk may suffyys as for our wlgar men.  
 Quha evir in Latyn hess the bruyt or glor,  
 I speke na wers than I haue doyn before:  
 Lat clerkis ken the poetis different,  
 And men onletterit to my wark tak tent;  
 Quilk, as twitching this thretteynt buke infeir,  
 Begynnys thus, as forthwith followis heir.

(XIII Prol., 183-98)

At first, the poet-narrator's reluctant resolve to keep the 'cunnand' or promise made to Mapheus in the dream reads like a return to the doubts about the expediency of the *Supplementum* voiced earlier in the Prologue. Further time spent on continuing the translation is held still to be a distraction from more 'grave materis' (cf. 112) and Mapheus's thirteenth book is again differentiated from Virgil's original twelve ('hys stile be nocht to Virgill lyke'; cf. 115-18). Douglas and his copyists were clearly concerned that the transition from Virgil to Vegio should not be missed:<sup>165</sup> the explicit to Book XII in the Trinity Manuscript is the only explicit, other than that to Book V, in which Virgil is cited by name ('Explicit liber duodecimus Virgilli in Eneados' [fol. 304<sup>r</sup>]);<sup>166</sup> Book XIII is separated from Books I-XII by the Principal Works and Name of the Translator stanzas; and the incipit to the

<sup>165</sup> A genuine worry: four of the thirty-four extant fifteenth-century *Aeneid* manuscripts that include the *Supplementum* ascribe the latter poem to Virgil. Virginia Brown and Craig Kallendorf, 'Maffeo Vegio's *Book XIII* to Virgil's *Aeneid*: A Checklist of Manuscripts', *Scriptorium*, 44 (1990), 107-25.

<sup>166</sup> The explicit to Book XII in Ruthven (fol. 279<sup>r</sup>) follows Trinity; it is omitted in Lambeth and Bath; in Elphinstoun, it is accompanied by an expanded translation in red ink: 'heyr endis þe xii buik of aeneados and his proloug and sua | endis xii buikis of aeneados maid be virgil and efre cumis xiii | buik maid be ane | ane [sic] famous auchtor | maupheus anno domini | etc etc etc etc etc' (fol. 341<sup>r</sup>).



thirteenth Prologue emphasises the different authorship of Book XIII: ‘Heir begynnys the Proloug of *the Threttene and last Buk of Eneados* ekit to Virgill be Mapheus Vegius’ (fol. 304<sup>v</sup>).<sup>167</sup> Vegio’s authorship of Book XIII is restated in the explicit to the thirteenth Prologue, now apparently with the effect of placing the translator Douglas’s literary activity in a subordinate position to that of the Italian humanist poet. In the Trinity Manuscript, it reads:

Explicit prologus in decimumtertium librum Eneados

Sequitur liber decimustertius de maphei vegii carmine  
traductus per eundem qui supra interpretem etc

Gawin D

(Trinity, fol. 307<sup>v</sup>)<sup>168</sup>

However, returning to the Prologue, one can see in the explicit a reworking of Douglas’s claim for the textual authority of the *Eneados*, regardless of its sources, that in this chapter I have tried to describe. ‘Quha evir in Latyn hess the bruyt or glor’, whether Virgil in the *Aeneid* or Vegio in the *Supplementum*, writes Douglas, ‘I speke na wers than I haue doyn before’. Confronted by a difficult transition

<sup>167</sup> The explicit to the thirteenth Prologue in Ruthven (fol. 279<sup>v</sup>) follows Trinity; in Elphinstoun (fol. 341<sup>v</sup>), Lambeth (fol. 401<sup>r</sup>), and Bath it is expanded: ‘Explicit duodecimus Liber et quaquid Vergilius in Eneados | Scripsrat / Sequitur prologus in xiii et ultimum Librum | per maffeu Veggum superadditum etc etc’ (Elphinstoun quoted). In Copland’s edition, the Principal Works stanza is omitted, the Name of the Translator stanza is moved to the Aftertext, there is no explicit to Books XII, only the word ‘Finis’, and the thirteenth Prologue has the heading ‘The Prologue of the .xiii. Booke’ (fol. 355<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>168</sup> ‘Explicit the prologue to the thirteenth book of the *Eneados*. The thirteenth book follows, translated from the *Carmen* [an alternative name for the *Supplementum*] of Maffeo Vegio by the same translator as before. Gawin D’. The explicit to the thirteenth Prologue in Elphinstoun (fol. 345<sup>r</sup>), Ruthven (fol. 281<sup>v</sup>), Lambeth (fol. 401<sup>r</sup>), and Bath follows Trinity; in Elphinstoun, it is accompanied by a translation in red ink: ‘heyr endis þe proloug of þe xiii buik of eneados | and eftyr followis þe buik of þe samyng anno domini | etc etc etc etc’. In Copland’s edition, there is no explicit to the thirteenth Prologue, only the word ‘Finis’ (fol. 359<sup>r</sup>).

between source texts, Douglas draws attention to the one constant in the exchange: himself. He, 'Gawin D', is the *interpre*s in the explicit who is responsible for all the words that the reader has before them, and it is this Scots text to which contemporary 'men onletterit' will 'tak tent'. It is upon these same readers that Douglas depends for the poetic fame envisaged in the *Conclusio*, and here one comes to the underappreciated crux of Douglas's literary authorship. Pinti reads the end of the thirteenth Prologue as 'perhaps Douglas's most striking and powerful claim for the vernacular', in which 'the poet claims in effect that the vernacular can erase difference, creating something truly new even as it re-creates an original text'; Douglas 'suggests that his fame and poetic power, his place as an *auctor*, reside in the vernacular'.<sup>169</sup> I agree that these lines constitute an audacious restatement of the terms of vernacular literary authorship; yet crucial to the vaunted idea of Douglas's authorship—as articulated by Lyndsay in my introduction—is the supplanting of the *auctor* as the sole creative agent in textual production and the introduction of the *compilar* as a worthy peer. This is not a role that Douglas straightforwardly represents in his poetry; instead, the unwieldy polyvocality of the *Eneados* encourages the imagining by readers of an authorial agent who is responsible for the compilation of its multiple parts into a continuous, authorially controlled text. This is implied rather than asserted literary authorship. Douglas cannot dictate what readers will make of the 'compilar'; but he can at least be confident that they will know his name: 'Gawin D'.

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<sup>169</sup> Pinti, 'Alter Maro, alter Maphaeus', 330.

## Conclusion

I hope to have borne out in the preceding analytical chapters my contention in chapter 1 that the literary careers of England's and Scotland's late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century poets are best described in terms of their heterogeneity and individual temperament, rather than as the products of a 'literary system' premised on Chaucerian reception or the 'institutional simplifications and centralisations' of Simpson's *Reform and Cultural Revolution*. Skelton, Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas evidence a spectrum of conceptions of literary authorship—not stages in a transition from a 'medieval' to a 'modern' paradigm, but rather four distinct engagements with tradition and opportunity, united by their utilisation of a particular form and mode. Their similarities and differences transcend national and period divisions. Dunbar and Hawes seem relatively cautious, or perhaps simply pragmatic, in their strategies for authorial self-promotion: Dunbar's poetry works to evoke a lively, literary court culture in which *makaris* can flourish and flyt; Hawes, meanwhile, assures the approbation of his writings by interweaving his poetic fictions with the texts and iconography of the image-conscious early Tudor court. That neither poet supplies biographical details beyond vague allusions to their royal service speaks of an imaginative and material dependence on the court and its systems of patronage; yet it is Dunbar and Hawes whose names appeared in print alongside Chaucer and Lydgate during the first decades of the sixteenth century (even if authorial self-promotion and commercial opportunism are difficult to disentangle in the early years of print). Skelton and Douglas make more obviously author-centred claims for the textual authority of their writings: Skelton, by affiliating his poetic labours to those of the idealised Skelton Poeta; Douglas, by

associating his name with the implied author for the *Eneados*. Both had the advantage of a clerical income and time to devote to the reading and emulation of classical and humanist poets—less evident in the poetry of Dunbar and Hawes. Nevertheless, the distinct conceptions of literary authorship and strategies for authorial self-promotion examined in this thesis cannot be explained simply in terms of ‘servitors’ at court versus servants to fame: neither the ‘radical’ Skelton versus the ‘parochial’ Hawes (it is the former, for instance, who traces his laureate poet labours to an inner chamber in Sheriff Hutton Castle), nor the ‘medieval’ Dunbar versus the ‘Renaissance’ Douglas (to whom neither term wants to stick). Mount Parnassus is a familiar enough trope to feature as a topic of abuse in Dunbar and Kennedy’s *Flyting*; Hawes’s Dame Rethoryke is as indebted to Cicero as to the encyclopedic dream poem; and both Skelton and Douglas have a traditional satire of the times (the *Bowge* and *Eneados*’s eighth Prologue, respectively) to go with the laurels and classical learning of the *Garlande* and the *Palice*. In this thesis, I have chosen not to describe these poets in terms of endings and beginnings, borders, and transition. Instead, I have attempted to assess their experiments in literary authorship based on the evidence of their poetry, with attention to their models, possible influences and motivations, anticipated reception, and manuscript and print witnesses. New, focused, and I hope thought-provoking readings of the literary careers of Skelton, Hawes, Dunbar, and Douglas have proceeded as a result, as well as one last more general observation for the history of the English author.

A central tenet of this thesis is the importance of a highly conventional though still vital form and mode—framed first-person allegory—for authorial self-promotion in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century England and Scotland. It is

here, I suggest, that there emerges a critical attitude common to all (or almost all) of the poets studied—too general to be taken as a defining characteristic of English literary authorship post-Caxton, ante-Thynne, but which suggests a through line between realities and ideals of textual production at the beginning of the sixteenth-century and literary composition, criticism, and publishing programmes of subsequent decades. The historical poet of the *Targe*, *Thrissil*, *Pastime*, *Conforte*, *Palice*, and *Eneados* is not to be found in the text. The statement seems obvious—hardly a conclusion at all—but contains two important propositions: first, that every literary text has an author responsible for the unique handling of its materials, even if those materials are derived from other sources; second, that even though a text might depict a poet or translator who bears superficial resemblance to its supposed author, that figure is a fiction. The first raises the status of traditionally secondary literary activities like redacting and compiling by recognising their capacity to create texts and meaning anew. It includes the potential, not always realised, for the transformation of the vernacular poet into a subject of study and esteem—ennobled by the works that are attached to their name and used as a guide to understanding their meaning. The second proposition, more particular to framed first-person allegory, though relevant to all literary texts, constitutes a paradox. Dunbar, Hawes, and Douglas, by presenting versions of themselves in their poetry, dramatise the re-evaluation of traditionally secondary literary activities noted above. The obvious artificiality of their poet-narrators and -translators does not diminish or undermine the work of integration, assimilation, and compilation that they represent; instead, the reader is compelled to apply what they have seen in fiction to their understanding of textual production in the real world. A more

plausible (though still imaginary) author must be conjured by the reader, perhaps one with a name, bibliography, and conjectured moral or other motivations for their work (e.g. ‘the compilar Gawin D’); or alternatively, a more dimly perceived figure—little more than a name—set against a recognisable backdrop of, for instance, the court, for which the author is the personified literary function (e.g. ‘Stephen hawes one of the gromes of the most honorable chambre...’ or ‘Dunbar the mackar’). The notable exception is Skelton; in the *Garlande*, he *does* attempt to represent himself-as-author in the figure of Skelton Poeta. But even if in his poetry, Skelton adopts a strategy for authorial self-promotion most different to that of Dunbar, Hawes, or Douglas, his subsequent, probably undesired literary reputation as a satirist and jestbook figure seems to intimate the inescapability, not only the broad applicability, of the critical attitude summarised above: that the historical poet is not to be found in the text—even if they want to be.

What does this mean for historiography of ‘the emergence of the English author’? The poets examined in this thesis are not the first to make claims for the textual authority of their writings based on their attribution to a human author not represented (at least not plausibly) in the text. They may be among the last in England or Scotland, however, for whom literary authorship is a concept that can be refused as well as exploited. In the decades that follow, the notion that every literary text has an author, often living, becomes much more of a given. Again, this statement has two implications: first, that English and Scottish writers of the mid- and later sixteenth century do not feel it necessary to remind readers of the existence of a human author external to the text—such a figure is already assumed; second, that the traditionally secondary literary activities for which writers

previously felt it necessary to make some gesture of apology are more readily accepted as the occupation of an author. This is a broad claim, which to begin to elaborate requires a further study of the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, their contemporaries in England, and, after a hiatus in literary activity during the minority of James V, Sir David Lyndsay and John Bellenden in Scotland. Once again, framed first-person allegory, especially the dream poem, seems like a good place to start. The framed first-person form (though certainly not allegory) loses much of its currency as a medium for serious poetic speculation after the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The change is more pronounced in England than in Scotland. The few examples are mostly introductions to other texts, often consciously archaic (e.g. Thomas Sackville's 'Induction' to *The Mirror for Magistrates* [1563]), and the form is not again employed as a vehicle for sustained quasi-autobiographical self-representation until Thomas Lodge's *Scillaes metamorphosis* and Robert Green's *Vision* in the late 1580s and early 1590s. In Scotland, probably as a result of the political and social upheavals which 'caused the maturation of new literary modes to be a more drawn-out process than in most neighbouring countries',<sup>1</sup> but perhaps partly due to the high literary reputation of Douglas, (dream-)framed first-person allegory endures, though usually in the service of political satire (e.g. Lyndsay's *Dreme* [c. 1526], *The Monarchie* [1548-55], and the anonymous *Complaynt of Scotland* [c. 1550]) or, as in England, as introductions to other texts (e.g. John Bellenden's 'Proheme to the Cosmographie' [late 1520s]). Yet for all its apparent decline, the utility of framed first-person allegory for interrogating the realities and ideals of textual production and authority

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<sup>1</sup> Theo van Heijnsbergen, 'Modes of Self-Representation in Older Scots Texts', in *Older Scots Literature*, ed. Mapstone, 314-46, at 315.

was not forgotten during the middle decades of the sixteenth century, nor has it ever been. Whether by Lodge and Greene grappling with the Elizabethan book market, John Bunyan in his allegories of spiritual regeneration, Robert Burns, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, or John Keats reflecting on poetry and imagination, or James Joyce and W. B. Yeats in their portraits of the artist as a young man and in old age, English and Scottish (and Irish) writers have repeatedly turned to other worlds, or the world seen in other ways, when reflecting on their art, or trying to convince others of its import. Rather than an ending or irreversible shift, the experiments in literary authorship between the 1480s and 1530s represent a moment of particularly pressurised inquiry, followed by investigations in other areas, into a perennial set of questions: who or what is responsible for a literary work; how do they affect its reception; and if the answer to the first question is ‘the author’, is their ‘death’ inevitable, or can dreams give them life?



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## Appendix 1. Hawes's 'cloudy fygures' trope

1. Of the pre-eminence of Dame Sapyence before Dames Hardynes, Fortune, and Nature:

The olde philosophers by theyr prudence  
Fonde the seuen sciences lyberall  
And by theyr exercise & grete dyligence  
They made theyre dedes to be memoryall  
And also poetes that were fatall  
Craftely colored with cloudy figures  
The true sentence of all theyr scryptures  
(*Example*, 897-904)

2.

And some [poets] endyted theyr entencyon  
Clocked in coloure harde in construccyon  
Specyally poetes vnder cloudy figures  
Coueryd the trouthe of all theyr scryptures.  
(*Conuercyon*, 11-14)

3.

Grounded on reason / with cloudy fygures  
He [i.e. Lydgate] clocked the trouthe / of all his scryptures  
(*Pastime*, 26-35)

4. Of the role of the 'v. inward wyttes' in the first operation of rhetoric, 'inuencyon':

As wryteth right many a noble clerke  
With mysty colour / of cloudes derke  
(*Pastime*, 705-06)

5. Of 'ymagynacyon', the second of the 'v. inward wyttes' employed in 'inuencyon':

And secondly / by ymagynacyon  
To drawe a mater / full facundyous  
Full meruaylous / is the operacyon  
To make of nought / reason sentencyous  
Clokyng a trouthe / with colour tenebrous  
For often vnder a fayre fayned fable  
A trouthe appereth gretely profytable  
(*Pastime*, 708-14)

6.

Theyr [i.e. poets'] obscure reason / fayre and sugratyfe  
Pronounced trouthe / vnder cloudy figures  
By the inuencyon / of theyr fatall scryptures  
(*Pastime*, 719-21)

7.

The fatall problems / of olde antyquyte  
Clocked with myst / and with cloudes derke  
Ordered with reason / and hye auctroyte  
The trouthe dyde shewe / of all theyr couert werke  
(*Pastime*, 869-75)

8.

To cloke the sentence / vnder mysty figures  
By many colours / as I make relacyon  
As the olde poetes / couered theyr scryptures  
(*Pastime*, 932-34)

9. Of poets' devising of beast fables:

And vnder colour of this beest pryuely  
The morall cense / they cloke full subtyly  
(*Pastime*, 942-43)

10.

In an example / with a mysty cloude  
Of couert lykenesse / the poetes do wrtye  
And vnderneath the trouthe / doth so shroude  
Both good and and yll / as they lyst acqutye  
With symylytude / they dyde so well endyte

(*Pastime*, 985-87)

11. Of the student's acquisition of 'memoratyfe', the fifth operation of rhetoric:

With exercise / he shall it well augment  
Vnder cloudes derke / and termes eloquent

(*Pastime*, 1273-74)

12. Of Lydgate's composition of *The Churl and the Bird* with its threefold moral:

And thre reasons / right gretely proufftyable  
Vnder coloure / he cloked crafetly  
And of the chorle . he made the fable  
That shytte the byrde / in a cage so closely  
The pamflete sheweth it expressely

(*Pastime*, 1352-56)

13.

The gentyll poetes / vnder cloudy fygures  
Do touche a trouth / and cloke it subtylly

(*Conforte*, 1-2)



## Appendix 2. De Worde's Hawes editions

Titles given below and in Appendix 3 are as printed (where extant) rather than uniform or edited titles. Places and dates of publication are from *STC*, with revisions from Joseph J. Gwara, 'Dating Wynkyn de Worde's Devotional, Homiletic, and Other Texts, 1501-11', in *Preaching the Word in Manuscript and Print in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Susan Powell*, ed. Martha W. Driver and Veronica O'Mara (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 193-234; and Edwards, *Stephen Hawes*, 119 (for editions printed after 1511; Gwara is preferred for earlier editions).

*Here begynneth the boke called the example of vertu* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1506?])

*STC* 12945. Single copy extant in Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys Library.

*[Pastime of Pleasure]* ([London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1509]) *STC* 12948. Single imperfect

copy extant in London, British Library. Further fragments extant in Oxford, Bodleian Library, and Cambridge University Library.

*The conuercyon of swerers* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [April-before June 1509]) *STC*

12943. Single copy extant in London, British Library

*[The Conuercyon of Swerers]* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1509?]) *STC* 12943.5. Single

copy extant in San Marino, CA, Huntington Library.

*A ioyfull medytacyon to all Englonde of the coronacyon of our moost naturall souerayne*

*lorde kynge Henry the eyght* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, [1510?]) *STC* 12953.

Single copy extant in Cambridge University Library.

*The conforte of louers...* ([London]: Wynkyn de Worde, [c. 1515]) *STC* 12942.5. Single copy

extant in London, British Library.

*Here begynneth the passe tyme of pleasure* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1517) *STC* 12949.

Single copy extant in New York, NY, Pierpont Morgan Library.

*[Example of Vertu]* ([London: Wynkyn de Worde, c. 1520]) *STC* 12946. One leaf only extant

in Cambridge University Library.

*Here foloweth a compendyou story, and it is called the exemple of vertu...* (London:

Wynkyn de Worde, 1530) *STC* 12947. Two copies extant in San Marino, CA, Huntington Library and University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center.

### Appendix 3. Reuse of *Example* and *Pastime* woodcut illustrations in later de Worde publications

	<i>Example</i> new woodcuts										<i>Pastime</i> reused woodcuts*			<i>Pastime</i> new woodcuts (cont. below)		
De Worde Hawes editions	1255	1256	1257	1258	1259	1260	1261	1262	1263	1264	952	987	1241	412	1007	1008
<i>Here begynneth the boke called the example of vertu</i> ([1506?]) STC 12945	X X	X	X X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
[ <i>Example of Vertu</i> ] (1530) STC 12947 (fragment)	X	X	X X	X	X	X X	X	X	X	X						
[ <i>Pastime of Pleasure</i> ] ([1509]) STC 12948 (imperfect)				X X X	X	X					X	X	X	X		
<i>Here begynneth the passe tyme of pleasure</i> (1517) STC 12949				X X X	X								X	X	X X	X
<i>The confort of louers</i> ([c. 1515]) STC 12942.5																
<b>De Worde romances and pseudo-histories</b>																
[ <i>The noble history of King Ponthus</i> ], trans. Henry Watson (1511) STC 20108													X			
<i>The kynght of the swanne...</i> , trans. Robert Copland (1512) STC 7571. Reprinted [c. 1522] (STC 7571.5)				X						X X						
<i>Syr Degore</i> ([1512-13]) STC 6470									X				X			
Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>The noble and amorous au ncyent history of Troylus and Cresyde</i> (1517) STC 5095																

\*Hodnett 952 earlier uses: *Her[e be]ggneth [sic] the kalender of shepherdes* (London: Richard Pynson, 1506) STC 22408; Laurent d'Orleans, *The boke named the royall* , trans. William Caxton (London: Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson, [1507]) STC 21430, 21430a. Hodnett 987 earlier uses: *Kalender* (1506); *Here begynneth a treatyse agaynst pestele nce and of ye infirmits* ([London]: Wynkyn de Worde, [1509?]) STC 24235. Hodnett 1241 (probably) earlier uses: [*The history of the excellent knight generides* ] ([London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1506?]) STC 11721.5 (fragment).



*Pastime* new woodcuts (cont.)

**De Worde Hawes editions**

*Here begynneth the boke called the example of vertu*  
([1506?]) STC 12945

*[Example of Vertu ]* (1530) STC 12947 (fragment)

*[Pastime of Pleasure ]* ([1509]) STC 12948 (imperfect)

*Here begynneth the passe tyme of pleasure* (1517) STC 12949

*The co nforte of louers* ([c. 1515]) STC 12942.5

**De Worde romances and quasi-histories**

*[The noble history of King Ponthus ]*, trans. Henry Watson  
(1511) STC 20108

*The kynght of the swanne...* , trans. Robert Copland (1512)  
STC 7571. Reprinted [c. 1522] (STC 7571.5)

*Syr Degore* ([1512-13]) STC 6470

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The noble and amorous au ncyent*  
*history of Troylus and Cresyde* (1517) STC 5095

**1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1089 1090 1108 1109 1241 1244**

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