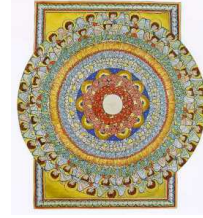


*Transmission, Translation and Dissemination in the European
Middle Ages, 1000–1500*

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Abstracts

“Transmission, Translation, Transformation: The Lebor Bretnach's Vision of Anglo-Saxon England”

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The Lebor Bretnach, an early Middle Irish translation of the ninth-century Latin *Historia Brittonum* commonly attributed to Nennius, is extant in manuscripts dating from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Yet the Lebor Bretnach is much more than an Irish reproduction of its Latin original, for the extant manuscripts of the Lebor Bretnach demonstrate significant alterations to the text of the *Historia Brittonum* in both form and content, via the rearranging, omission, and addition of material. While such variations have of course been studied, scholarship on the Lebor Bretnach thus far has tended to focus on either its value as a source for reconstructing the form and content of an earlier Latin version of the *Historia Brittonum*, or its importance as a source of evidence for the history of the Picts, which is the focus of the greater portion of the Lebor Bretnach's additional material.

While not denying the value of such approaches, this paper will focus not on reconstruction (either of the *Historia Brittonum*'s manuscript tradition or of Pictish history), but rather it will approach the Lebor Bretnach as a unified vision of history in its own right, one whose translation and transformation of the *Historia Brittonum* presents a different portrait of the island of Britain during the Anglo-Saxon period and has much to reveal about eleventh-century Irish conceptions of Anglo-Saxon England and its history.

“Mysticism for a New Age: Tracing the Dissemination of a Fifteenth-Century Mystical Guide”

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The Middle-Dutch companion to mysticism, the *Spiegel der volcomenheit* [Mirror of Perfection], was written circa 1455-1460 by one of the first followers and propagators of the Franciscan observant movement in the Low Countries, the friar Hendrik Herp († 1477). The dissemination of the text was quite broad and high in numbers from the start; today there are twenty-seven extant manuscripts dating 1460-1550, of which the majority dates before or in

1500. In 1501 the text was printed in Antwerp by the first female printer of the Low Countries, the widow of Roland van den Dorpe.

The dissemination of the text in the second half of the fifteenth century can be traced quite closely. Bringing together data about the manuscripts (provenance, contents), information about the dispersion of the new observant reform movement and developments within the different branches of the already 'established' Modern Devotion, I will try to reveal the factors that shaped and defined the dissemination (and thus the reception) of a new mystical text in the late Middle Ages.

"Translating for Power and the Power of Translation: Jews and Islamic Sciences in Thirteenth-Century Sicily"

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The literal or metaphorical translation of the cultural forms of antiquity to the Middle Ages or the transmission of them between different and sometimes divergent medieval cultures has been recently at the center of much scholarly debate. The chief purpose of it is either to validate the role of Islam in the shaping of modern European scientific culture, or to highlight the transmission of eastern thought to the west by Christian clerics. The role of Jewish translators, who, in the case of medieval southern Italy, were intermediaries between Arabic and Latin, sometimes through Hebrew, sometimes directly, and how they shaped the transmission of culture with their worldview, is still largely underestimated, neglected or disregarded.

This paper is centered on a few figures of Jewish translators, experts in philosophy and sciences who operated in Sicily and Naples in the 13th century. Using translators' writings (introductions, glosses, notes or original works) together with the chronicles of the time, I will sketch both the portrait of a possible "translator type" and an outline of the cultural environment of the 13th-century kingdom of Naples and Sicily, to which Jewish scholars participated. Finally, I will try to explain how the act of translating, with its mechanics and the choices it involves, contributed to both the philosophical debate with the surrounding Christian world and the shaping of the power relationships between rulers and papacy.

"Writing Transmission: Practical Discourses of Late Medieval English Book Production"

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This paper examines the textual traditions that describe the making of the physical book in the later medieval period, and the kinds of material contexts in which this type of text found its audience. Various texts of different form, length, and content survive from the English Middle Ages, and they describe, sometimes with great detail, the manner in which parchment, paper, ink, and other materials are made; furthermore some treatises also instruct readers and users on

how to illuminate, mix colours, paint, rubricate and achieve different artistic effects related to the decoration of the written word. These technical manuals were fairly widely copied, and their technical language, far from being alien and obtuse, found its way into common usage and, even, into literary discourses. They also, ironically, had a life in print and were copied and used well into the seventeenth century. I will show that an awareness of the materiality of the text was central to these treatises and implicit in the preservation of these even in the most humble of handwritten books. The complexity of such writings, then, pivots on their preservation in the very objects that they anticipate.

“Forma testandi – Conventions for Writing Last Wills in Late Medieval Sweden”

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The medieval diocese of Turku was part of archdiocese of Uppsala and Swedish kingdom. As a geographic region the Turku diocese covered almost the whole current Finland. During a major office reform in the end of the 15th century, dean and the future bishop Magnus Nicolai started his personal cartulary, which contains for example correspondence and copies from administrative documents. In this manuscript called “Codex Skokloster Aboensis”, have also remained four different formulas for writing last wills. Three of the formulas are Latin and the fourth one is written in old Swedish. These formulas follow the normal pattern of late medieval will but they do have certain local features. In the Middle Ages writing last will was part of preparing for a good death and securing the afterlife. Often the document itself was more religious than financial. In my presentation I will examine the different writing conventions in late medieval wills in Turku diocese and consider how testament formulas were used in the periphery of the Catholic Europe. I will also examine the difference between testaments written in Latin and those that were written in vernacular.

“Being Noble in Ireland Before Henry VIII”

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This paper considers nobles and concepts of nobility in the century preceding Ireland’s creation as a kingdom under the English crown (1541). A curious aspect of that constitutional change was Henry VIII’s acceptance of Gaelic lords into the ranks of English nobility - the so-called process of “surrender and regrant.” Much of the current historiography continues to detail how the English considered the Gaelic Irish barbarous and savage. How, then, could Henry have allowed “savages” like the O’Neill chief to come to court and leave an earl? Did the king believe he could raise the barbarous to civility merely by royal will? Or did he recognize Irish lords as fellow elites and merely wished to co-opt their traditional authority for crown advantage? A fundamental problem in answering these questions is that we have an underdeveloped sense for what being a noble in fifteenth-century Ireland entailed or what defined nobility more generally. In addressing those issues, the paper draws on English- and Irish-language sources, and attempts to set Irish norms of nobility in their larger European contexts.

"Ways of Learning in Twelfth-Century Glendalough"

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A fragment of a mathematical text, London, British Library, 3323, fo. 18, can be placed in the monastic school at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow in the early twelfth century because of a marginal note. The fragment, written in fine insular minuscule, contains multiplication tables for use on a board abacus and a condensed statement of Boethian numerical philosophy thus indicating that this text was at the forefront of mathematical enquiry. This paper assesses the content of this fragment and places it in the context of medieval monastic education. Almost certainly originating in Lotharingia, the route of this late tenth-century text to Glendalough must remain hypothetical. Two plausible routes of transmission are suggested: either via Worcester or directly from Cologne, both major centres for the study of medieval mathematics. In doing so, an intellectual network for the study of science is revealed: a network of which Glendalough must have been a part.

"Scenes of Their Own Making: The 'Performing' Texts of Late Medieval Cycle Drama"

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Compared to the lavish manuscripts in which medieval plays appear, the printed versions of these same works seem rather dull. Fortunately, in the last two decades, the field of medieval manuscript study has undergone a transformation with profound implications for early drama texts. Art historians and textual critics now understand individual manuscripts as unique sites of textual production, as distinctive and exceptional witnesses to the marriage of image and text. The pages of manuscripts, by balancing text and decoration, should be seen as more than otiose flourishes, scrollwork or drawings, more than images merely "illustrating" the text. Accordingly, both the manuscript and its individual pages can be considered to perform the text it contains. Manuscripts of medieval plays, rightly regarded as scripts for theatrical performance on stage, consequently open up a new set of interpretations that can highlight their performances on the page. In this paper I discuss some early English drama manuscript characteristics, paying particular attention to the Wakefield (or Towneley) plays (Huntington Library MS HM1), in order to observe how scribal patterns of decoration offer clues to mise-en-page performance and to suggest some interpretive strategies that can highlight such performances. Although critics have overlooked such an approach, we can better understand how the manuscript translated into physical performance on the late medieval English stage by investigating this relationship between text and image.

“Ex tempore: Transmission and Performance of Prayer in Anglo-Saxon England”

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The performance of prayer centres on the interplay of six actions: writing, reading, speaking, listening, memorising, and ruminating. The words are spoken, heard, written, read, considered, and committed to memory through rumination and meditation. The manuscript transmission of a prayer text is a literal performance of the text as the scribe reads and writes the prayer. Changes made by scribes (amendments of gender, expansions, and subtractions) provide evidence for the performance of the texts in actuality. This paper treats the dynamic transmission of prayer texts in Anglo-Saxon England by investigating the Royal Abecedarian Prayer (London, BL, Royal 2A.xx, fols. 29r-38r) and also the Oratio Alchfriðo ad sanctam Mariam. These two prayers have complex transmission histories, involving both oral and written culture.

The Oratio Alchfriðo ad sanctam Mariam was the most widely-copied Marian prayer in Anglo-Saxon England. Its transmission can be mapped from the early prayer books where it is attributed to Alchfrið the Anchorite to the fourteenth century where the composition of the prayer is re-assigned to Anselm of Canterbury. The Royal Abecedarian Prayer corresponds to prayers that are found intermittently in the Book of Nunnaminster (London, British Library, Harley 2965, fols. 19r-32r). The relationship between the witnesses of the prayers reveals the complexity of prayer composition and transmission in the early medieval world. Exploration of the transmission mechanics allows for theorization about the performances of texts, whether the manuscript texts were recited verbatim or used ex tempore.

“A Text in Transmission: The Case of Gerald of Wales’ *The History and Topography of Ireland*”

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How does the sustained revision of a text by an author affect the work and its early dissemination? In the case of Gerald of Wales and the *History and Topography of Ireland*, it results in a complicated and confusing textual tradition and the lack of a single standard text. This has led to difficulties in classifying the text. The various versions have traditionally been classified within a five recension model but a close analysis of the text’s early transmission allows for a new and more accurate classification system to be presented.

This paper will offer the findings of a detailed study of the *Topography*’s textual tradition. It will propose a new stemma which tracks the relationship of over twenty manuscripts of the text to one another. Building on the stemma, it also devises a new recension model for the text. This model takes into consideration the different methods of revision employed by the author and, in turn, offers a new understanding of the relationship between an author and his text.

“Breaking the Rules’: Column Layout in Medieval Classical Manuscripts”

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It is acknowledged that the twelfth century was a time of great interest in the classical corpus. Authors like Cicero and Seneca came to the fore of medieval curricula, and advanced knowledge of classical texts and tropes became the mark of the learned scholar. I am currently investigating some traits of medieval classical readership at the University of Leiden, as part of the project 'Turning Over a New Leaf: Manuscript Innovation in the Twelfth Century' (<http://www.hum.leiden.edu/icd/turning-over-a-new-leaf>). This paper shall present one aspect of my research: an examination of what the classical manuscript actually looked like in the twelfth century. In this period the composition of the medieval manuscript became increasingly standardised, with traits such as compression of script, increased use of abbreviations, and the presentation of the text in two columns, characterising the type of book we now term "Gothic". While most genres of manuscripts followed these trends, it is notable that classical texts continued, in the main, to be copied in 'long lines', that is in single text columns, in contradistinction to the prevailing trend. My paper shall illustrate why this choice of format persisted for classical texts, through a comparison of manuscripts by a variety of authors. I shall investigate whether scribes made a particular effort to distinguish classical texts from others through their mode of presentation, or whether the single column format persisted due to particular reader needs. In so doing, I shall demonstrate how changing ideas about the classics in the twelfth century were reflected in manuscript composition and transmission.

“From England to Iberia Through the Margins: The Transmission of Extratextual Elements in the Iberian Translations of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*”

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In the first decades of the 15th century, John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* crossed the borders of England to land in the Iberian Peninsula: the Spanish *Confesion del Amante* – in Madrid, Escorial Library ms. g-II-19 -, and the Portuguese *Livro do Amante* – in Madrid, Royal Library ms. II-3088 - are the first translations of an English work into another European language. The transition from English to Portuguese and Spanish was not, however, completely smooth: in the process, the text lost its poetic form and, even more importantly, the Latin apparatus that framed it.

The reading audiences in the Iberian Peninsula, presumably different from those who had favored the *Confessio* in England, may have been a reason behind the absence of the main Latin apparatus and the subsequent shattering of the original mise-en-page. Nevertheless, they do not account for all the alterations present in the Iberian manuscripts, some of which subtly talk of the involvement of the Portuguese and Spanish scribes and their stand on their translated texts.

This paper aims to explore the transfer of all extratextual elements – layout, marginalia, and decoration – from the English original to the Iberian translations in the light of the new audiences and scribes, who received an English work for the first time. I will argue that their influence marked the final appearance of the Iberian translations, which are significantly different, both physically and in their relationship with Gower, from the English original version.

“Romancing the World, or Not: Medieval Vernacular Translations of the Imago Mundi”

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The present paper will present new findings regarding the translation of the twelfth-century Latin encyclopaedia *Imago Mundi* into French (as *Ymage du Monde*) and Welsh (as *Delw y Byd*) in the thirteenth century. I will concentrate on the differences between the approaches to translation demonstrated by the two vernacular texts. Both *Ymage du Monde* and *Delw y Byd* translate only the geographical section of the *Imago Mundi*. The *Ymage du Monde*, which survives in four versions and over two hundred manuscripts, transforms the text into a verse encyclopaedia, adds more explanations, and introduces illustrations. The two versions of *Delw y Byd*, on the other hand, which are preserved in five medieval manuscripts produce a slightly abridged but otherwise faithful prose translation of the original. Thus the Latin, Welsh and French versions, despite their common name, present different ‘images of the world’.

It is the goal of the present paper to present a theory explaining some of the most striking differences between these the original treatise and its two vernacular translations by anchoring them in their cultural and literary contexts. The paper will include the first presentation of the results of the research I undertook on the *Ymage du Monde* as a visiting scholar at the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, Paris in 2010-11.

“Blinded By the Light: Medieval Optical Physics in Dante’s *Paradiso*”

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Brilliantly colored lights splash across the heavens, transformed into the music of the spheres. Dante ascends to a new plane of existence as he enters the kaleidoscopic wonder of Paradise. With Beatrice as his guide, Dante marvels at the perfection of God’s kingdom. More than just vivid descriptions of heaven’s beauty, Dante’s journey reaches a new level of artistry that merges the aesthetic with the scientific philosophy of the medieval world. From the cantos of the *Paradiso*, spring the earliest mechanics of light wave interaction as interpreted by the Arabic philosophers from the Greek writings of Euclid, Ptolemy, and Archimedes. These cantos reflect that Dante’s understood optical physics to a certain point. Therefore, the intent of this presentation is to demonstrate the degree of accuracy to which Dante applied his knowledge of optical physics, particularly the concepts of reflection and refraction, as he describes the

wonders of Paradise. Knowledge of the Greek's explorations into the development of the human eye focused on the notion of rays. These rays emerged from the eye to the object in question, giving it depth, color, and shape. Yet, this theory fell under scrutiny as Arabic philosophers translated the Greek works during the ninth and tenth centuries. Arabic thinkers like Alhazen, Alkindi, Averröes, questioned and developed new theories in optics that by the twelfth century found solid scientific acceptance. Granted, Bacon and Snell advanced the concepts of optics to a level that scientists consider basic in the modern age; however, their work rose from the Greco-Arabic theories that Dante understood as universal truths. These truths emerge from the pages of *Paradiso*, giving insight to Dante's scientific prowess.

"Ofydd, Fferyll(t) and Dwned: Welsh ofydd 'love poetry', fferyll(t) 'magic' and dwned 'grammar'"

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In medieval Welsh literature, the names of Ovid, Virgil and Donatus can be used to refer not only to the authors or their works but also to the generic subject matter associated with them. By the late medieval period the names had often become simply terms for the subject matter and any connection to the authors gradually lost. While some work has been done on the Welsh terms either individually (e.g. references to Ovid in the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym) or in conjunction with native figures (cf. Juliette Wood on Virgil and Taliesin in *Folklore* 94 (1983), 91–104), the aim of this paper is to think about these terms as a group. A number of questions will be explored: there was a tendency throughout medieval western Europe to generalise these names to some range of activity associated with them, and we might ask how this impinged upon medieval Wales. While there is almost certainly some correlation between such usage and the original dissemination of knowledge of the authors, it is only out on the fringes of this area of transmission that we might be able to see how it worked. Within Wales itself the three terms seem to be popular at different periods and that may also cast light on the processes at work.

"The production of de luxe manuscripts in English Square Minuscule c. 1000"

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English Square Minuscule was created as a book-hand in the late ninth century for the dissemination of King Alfred's vernacular translations. In the oldest extant documents, Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20 and London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. xi), the script was immature and unpracticed, but within the early decades of the tenth-century scribes had were producing books and royal documents in Latin and the vernacular in a standardized and calligraphic script. When the Benedictine Reform introduced the use of Anglo-Caroline Minuscule in the mid-tenth century, it looked like English Square Minuscule would be relegated for use in vernacular translations alone. Yet, at the end of the tenth/beginning of the eleventh century, scribes would reinvigorate Square Minuscule's canonical forms for use in a series of de luxe manuscripts, including copy of the *Regula*

Pastoralis (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 12), the Codex Vercellensis, a florilegium of literary works, and an exquisite Southumbrian Psalter (London, BL, Royal 2. B. v). The choice to produce these de luxe manuscripts entirely in Square Minuscule at the demise of the script is curious and worthy of further consideration. This paper will examine the corpus of Anglo-Saxon luxury works disseminated in Square Minuscule at the turn of the century by exploring what influences might have played in the choice of script. In particular, I will discuss the relationships that exist between the content of these manuscripts, their origins and the parallels between the earliest and latest documents produced in Square Minuscule.

“Translating Giraldus: Transmitting ideas about the history of Ireland in the Late Middle Ages”

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Giraldus Cambrensis’ texts on Ireland are not only of interest for the ‘history’ they contain, but also due to the enduring perceptions and stereotypes which they projected about the Irish and the invading forces. This paper will trace the late medieval interest in Giraldus’ Irish works and examine some of the reasons behind the translations into various languages which were destined for a variety of audiences in England, France and Ireland. The main focus of this discussion will be centered on the most widely disseminated vernacular corpus translation – the fifteenth-century Hiberno-Middle English Conquest, a translation of the *Expugnatio Hibernica*. I will examine the translator’s approach to translating this particular text to enable us to get a better picture of how the textual transmission of a historical text can influence the perception of history which its readers receive. Representations of people and events in the translation can tell us a lot about perceptions in the period and give us an impression of how the past was viewed in the middle ages. The audience for such a corpus is undoubtedly an important consideration for those interested in the dissemination and impact of the text and to that end I will examine its readership and posit suggestions regarding the importance of the HME Conquest for English readers in Ireland in the late medieval period.

“Transmission and Selection: Instructing the Parish Clergy in Late Medieval Germany”

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I would like to propose a paper on the efforts of late medieval bishops to transmit knowledge of canon law, pastoral care, and the liturgy to their parish clergy. The repetitiveness of synodal statutes and the well-known lamentations regarding the ignorance of the clergy have led many historians to doubt the efficacy of this transmission.

By the fifteenth century, however, parish priests were bureaucrats accustomed to the use of the written word not only for the performance of the liturgy, but to keep accounts, administer the parish, uphold canon law, and correspond with authorities. The realities of manual textual production, however, did pose real challenges to bishops who sought to enforce a unity of thought and practice in their dioceses. New editions of the synodal statutes or liturgical books

of a diocese had to compete with older versions and even editions from neighboring dioceses in the textual marketplace. Although bishops in the late Middle Ages often recommended a particular pastoral handbook to their clergy, priests could readily find other options from neighboring priests or ecclesiastical institutions. What threatened the kind of uniform transmission of knowledge that bishops hoped for was not ignorance, but rather the options that priests had and the nature of manuscript production itself.

To examine these questions, I will present evidence from a case study of the books owned by the parish clergy in the fifteenth-century of Eichstätt, located in modern-day Bavaria. In addition to the survival of dozens of books owned by priests from this period, the diocese offers the further advantage of the oldest surviving, complete visitation record from German-speaking territories.

“Something ‘Gained’ in the Translation: Liturgical Quotation, Paraphrase and Translation in the Fifteenth-Century English Carols”

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The fifteenth-century English carol is a poetic and musical form characterized by verse-and-refrain structure. Carol texts treat in narrative style topics such as the Nativity and related Christmastide feasts. Some 130 carols are set to music in two- or three-part counterpoint. The simple beauty of this carol music, however, belies the complexity and richness of the texts.

The Latin, Middle English and macaronic carol poetry is permeated with quotations, paraphrases and translations from the Use of Salisbury. Moreover, where strong textual associations exist between a carol and a related liturgy, evidence of musical influence often emerges. Especially notable in this respect are the Latin and macaronic carols related to the Epiphany liturgy.

A narrative thread runs through the lessons and responsories for the Office of Matins, and a similar combination of narration and theology pervades several carols for Epiphany. Indeed, quotations, paraphrases and translations from other items of the Office and Mass enrich the carol poetry, in some cases to the point of saturation. Close examination of the carol music reveals structural similarities as well as musical paraphrases and direct quotations of pitch from those chants where text has been borrowed and reconfigured.

In this paper I will propose that, in the transmission of both words and music from the liturgy to the carols, nothing has been ‘lost’ and a great deal has been ‘gained’ in both beauty and understanding.
