Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England

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The Auchinleck Manuscript and the Writing of History

The Auchinleck manuscript has been called many things by many critics, and read in many different ways, but no critic has ever called the book unimportant. It is a thick book, preserving some forty-three items in Middle English and one piece in Anglo-Norman in the 331 folios that survive intact in the codex.\(^1\) In contrast to the thirty-six items spread across 123 folios in Royal 12.c.xii, or the 121 items of Harley 2253’s 140 folios, the Auchinleck manuscript features a large number of long texts, most notably the romances for which the book is best known. The codex has been described as “unique, without precedent or emulator” but also as a book that “recalls and resembles the behaviours of legal book-producers.”\(^2\) At once sui generis and recognizably a textual and cultural product embedded in the practices of book-making and illumination in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Auchinleck codex mixes a large number of “unique”

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1. There are fourteen stubs in the codex, and ten folios preserved under three different shelfmarks at Edinburgh University Library, St. Andrews University Library, and University of London Library. See the online facsimile, “Physical make-up,” at http://auchinleck.nls.uk/editorial/physical.html. All quotations of texts in the Auchinleck manuscript will be from the facsimile, and the line numbers will correspond to the online transcriptions, unless otherwise specified.

Middle English texts with other items well attested in other manuscripts. The book has been the object of studies focussed very narrowly on particular texts (frequently editions) and of philological analyses both partial and more comprehensive. This chapter aims to reimagine the processes of composition for derivative texts preserved in the manuscript. In particular, the chapter will situate the Auchinleck manuscript and several connected historiographical texts amidst the challenges posed by source study when textual stability and transparent textual transmission are not assumed to be the only form of scribal practice. The second half of the chapter will turn to the technologies and processes of medieval composition, interrogating how texts were written and what is actually preserved in manuscripts.

The Auchinleck Short Chronicle bears very little resemblance to the Royal Short Chronicle considered in Chapter 3. At about 2400 lines (roughly two and a half times the length of the Royal 12.c.xii text), the Auchinleck Short Chronicle narrates the history of the island not from Brutus onwards, but from Albina, an eponymous founder of the island who was inserted into the historiographical narrative before Brutus. Albina’s place in the historiographical and literary record has occasioned much study recently, remedying long neglect. She and her sisters were, however, anything but neglected soon after their first appearance. Dating the appearance of the Albina story is challenging, as it seems to appear in both Anglo-Norman and Middle English in the late 1320s or early 1330s. The earliest Anglo-Norman text that narrates the story of Albina and her sisters, known as Des Grantz Geanz, survives in BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra D.ix, dated to c. 1333–4. There are in fact several versions of the poem, though only two have been edited: that in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix and a closely related shorter version that serves as a prologue to the Anglo-Norman Brut. Although it is possible that some


4. MS Cotton Cleopatra D.ix is in fact a composite volume, bound by Robert Cotton in the early seventeenth century, combining at least five separate manuscripts, including a book associated with a vicar for Lichfield Cathedral, one from Fineshade Priory (Northamptonshire), a short chronicle potentially from the Welsh Marches, the “Epistola ad regem Edwardi III” mistakenly attributed to Archbishop Islip (after 1349), and sections of the South English Legendary located dialectally to Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. See Manfred Görlach, The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1974), 111–12.

instance of the Albina story was circulating by c. 1327 when the historian Castleford claims to have composed his chronicle, as the only manuscript of Castleford’s *Chronicle* dates to the end of the fourteenth century, precisely when the story first made an appearance remains uncertain. Study of Des Grantz Geanz has been further complicated by the mistaken conclusions of the poem’s editor, who misidentified the number of constituent books in the manuscript as three, rather than five. Her precise dating of the poem to 1333–34 has been corrected by Carley and Crick, who offer instead a date for the relevant portion of the codex as 1332/4.

The Middle English translation of the story of Albina found in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was part of the sudden surge in the legend’s growth from obscurity to widespread popularity. In addition to the Cotton Cleopatra D.ix text, a version of the tale also serves as a prologue to at least sixteen manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman prose *Brut*, in a set of seemingly related manuscripts that narrate insular history up to 1333. This grouping of prose *Brut* manuscripts suggest that the version of the Albina story which neatly prefaces the prose *Brut* was likely created sometime after 1333. The Auchinleck manuscript has traditionally been dated to c. 1330–40, which puts it closely contemporary with the spread of the Albina story. Helen Cooper’s recent essay on the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* allows for a still more precise dating of the codex. The text refers to the tunnels and caves beneath Nottingham Castle, which were implicated in the arrest of Roger Mortimer in October 1330, indicating the manuscript was likely not copied before very late 1330 or 1331. Cooper’s important refinement of


8. Carley and Crick note that Brereton’s dating to 1333–34 derives from an *obit* on f. 74’ of Cotton Cleopatra D.ix that is itself a later addition, but note the last date of the chronicle ending on f. 67’ as evidence for dating the text to 1332/4. “Constructing Albion’s Past,” 351 n. 17. See also the catalogue description by Nigel Ramsay, available online at http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/cotton/mss/cle4.htm.


12. See Helen Cooper, “Lancelot, Roger Mortimer, and the Date of the Auchinleck Manuscript,” in *Studies in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Texts in Honour of John Scattergood,*
the date for Auchinleck (and her injunction that critics dating manuscripts by the chronicles they contain should check more than just the endings of those histories) pushes the composition of Auchinleck, and in particular the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, still closer to the 1332–4 range that seems to mark the first circulation of the Albina story.

The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* is unexpectedly connected to a textual tradition—the French *Lancelot-Grail* cycle—otherwise unattested in Middle English at this date. The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* in fact demonstrably draws from several unexpected French and Middle English literary and historiographical texts. The following sections will trace the remarkable reliance upon diverse texts by the scribe(s) responsible for assembling those texts in the Auchinleck manuscript. Impressive access to a large number of historiographical and romance exemplars is also demonstrated in the sophisticated use of those texts by the composer(s) of texts preserved in the Auchinleck manuscript. The version of *Des Grantz Geanz* that prefaces the prose *Brut* would be the more obvious source for the writer of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, as one history text would thus be used to compose another. Against expectations, however, the Auchinleck text derives from the longer version of *Des Grantz Geanz*, which survives only in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix. The Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* deploys the Albina story in precisely the same way that it occurs in the prose *Brut*, namely, as a doubled foundation narrative designed to precede Brutus’s foundation of the island. Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the version translated in the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was not that circulating with the prose *Brut*. The Auchinleck translation reveals its indebtedness to the longer version of *Des Grantz Geanz* through several instances of lexical closeness. For example, when Albina and her sisters have their lives spared, and are instead set adrift in a rudderless boat, *Des Grantz Geanz* describes the decision: “Mes les juges, qi furunt sage, / Pur l’onur de lur parage, / C’est a saver de lur pere,” ed. A. M. D’Arcy and A. J. Fletcher (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 95: “If this interpolation is indeed a response to the events of that October . . . unless the lines were both written and copied within ten weeks of the events . . . the manuscript cannot have been produced before 1331 at the earliest.” I am grateful to Helen Cooper for sharing an early version of her findings with me.

13. Thus Cooper: “So far as I know, the episode in the *Short Metrical Chronicle* predates any other reference in Middle English to the adultery of Lancelot and Guinevere by over half a century” (“Lancelot,” 97).

Chapter Four

/ Ausi de lur bone mere . . . Unt agardéqe a dreit ne a tort / Ne deivent sufrir vile mort.”

The Auchenleck Short Chronicle ascribes the decision to the women’s father, but the harshness of their sentence is tempered on the same grounds, “þemperour ȝaf jugement / Euerichon to ben ybrent / Ac for þai were of his linage / & ycomen of heye parage / He comaund swiþe a schip to make.”

The shorter version of Des Grantz Geanz does not contain these lines, instead describing the daughters as spared: “Doné lour feust par jugement / Pur ceo qe a si haute gent / Furent totes mariez, / Ne deivent estre dampnez / Ne aver nule vile mort.”

The linguistic and narrative evidence firmly supports a connection between the Auchenleck Short Chronicle and the version of Des Grantz Geanz that survives only in MS Cotton Cleopatra D.ix.

It is the access to an unexpectedly large and diverse array of texts demonstrated by the composer of the Auchenleck Short Chronicle that is most remarkable. I will argue that Auchenleck Scribe 1 was responsible for composing the Auchenleck Short Chronicle, an act of scribal authorship recalling the Harley Scribe’s work in Royal 12.c.xii a decade before. Resolving questions of access to texts can be difficult—now-missing copies can always be conjectured to explain matters. It is nonetheless important to recall that exemplars do not exist outside of history. Tantalizingly, the portion of Cotton Cleopatra D.ix containing Des Grantz Geanz was copied by Alan of Ashbourne, vicar choral of Lichfield Cathedral by 1325, and dead by 1334. The book was likely still at Lichfield Cathedral in 1345, when it was described as “unus liber de gestis Anglorum ligatus in choro [one book of the deeds of the English, chained in the choir].” Before it was chained in Lichfield, Alan of Ashbourne may have travelled from Lichfield with his book containing Des Grantz Geanz, or a scribe connected to the Auchenleck manuscript may have had access to it there. Speculation aside, somewhere the translator of the Auchenleck Short Chronicle encountered a text of Des Grantz Geanz that closely resembles that preserved in Cotton Cleopatra D.ix, and did so within a very few years of the text’s appearance in that manuscript. The writer of the Auchenleck Short Chronicle had in his hands copies of some extremely au courant texts. This suggests not what is called


“exemplar poverty,” but rather privileged access to a remarkably diverse and substantive selection of texts.\textsuperscript{19}

It is the Auchinleck \textit{Short Chronicle}’s somewhat unexpected textual lexicon, the body of texts standing behind the texts in Auchinleck itself, that reveals both a sophisticated engagement with new texts shaped from source texts, and also the repeated (but distinct) use of some source texts. Another source text employed by Scribe 1 in shaping the \textit{Short Chronicle} also seems to have enjoyed only very limited circulation. Though less fashionably contemporary than \textit{Des Grantz Geanz}, the source is all the more intriguing for surviving in only a single \textit{de luxe} copy. The texts that passed through the scribe’s hands were not merely exemplars, but also texts read, appreciated, and retained. Amongst the narrative details and episodes used to support arguments for the manuscript’s London provenance is a long and elaborate description of the consecration of Westminster Abbey. The Auchinleck \textit{Short Chronicle} narrates in approximately 130 lines the arrival of Christendom to the island with Saint Augustine and Ethelbert, the conversion of King Sebert by Bishop Mellitus, and then a rather unexpected tale of Saint Peter’s personal consecration of Westminster. It is a curious story, in which Mellitus, Bishop of London, is asked by King Sebert to consecrate the newly built Westminster Abbey. While Mellitus passes the night in preparations, a fisherman gives a stranger a ride across the Thames. The stranger, who is Saint Peter in disguise, consecrates the Abbey with signs and symbols, including an odd double inscription of the Greek alphabet, “& on þe grounde ouer al / Þat al men miȝt wele se / Of gru he made an a. b. c.”\textsuperscript{20} Peter then returns to the waiting fisherman, at which point they go fishing and haul in a vast quantity of salmon. The fisherman is enjoined to warn Mellitus that the Abbey has already been consecrated by Saint Peter himself, and he duly delivers the message along with a salmon, which becomes the occasion for an expository aside marking a folk etymology: “In his name to þou present y make / Himselue þis saumoun he gan take / & anon for þat tiding / Þat ich stede is cleped chering.”\textsuperscript{21} “Chering” refers to Charing Cross, and the Auchinleck \textit{Short Chronicle} offers up here yet another doubled etymology, as it has done in interpolating Albina before Brutus. It is also a peculiarly local detail to find in the text—Charing Cross, the site of the Eleanor Cross built by


\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Short Chronicle}, A.1178–80.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Short Chronicle}, A.1241–44.
Edward I to honor his late wife in the 1290s, was not likely susceptible after a mere few decades to the reimagining of its origins offered here. It is more likely, then, that the Auchinleck Short Chronicle refers to the village, Charing, rather than the cross. Such instances of local knowledge, like the reference to Isabella and Mortimer in the caves below Nottingham castle, seem to offer evidence for the localization of the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript. Yet the number of such moments suggests local details do not unproblematically indicate texts produced locally.

The lengthy story of the consecration of Westminster Abbey by Saint Peter and the miraculous catch of salmon is drawn from Matthew Paris’s Anglo-Norman Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei. The Estoire survives in a single exceptionally beautiful and richly illustrated manuscript, Cambridge, CUL, MS Ee.3.59. Matthew Paris composed the Estoire between 1236 and 1245, most probably before 1240. CUL MS Ee.3.59 was likely executed around 1255, and the text’s recent translators note: “It is neither an original nor an autograph, but is believed to be a copy made at Westminster or in London of an earlier manuscript by Paris that has not survived.” There are a number of details that suggest the Middle English account in Auchinleck is a direct translation of the Estoire. Most notable is the obscure inscription of the Greek alphabet by which Peter consecrates the Abbey: “Eu sabelun les escriptures / Tutes fresches, e figures / Sanz esfauçure aperte a fresche. / I verriez l’abecé grezesche [The writing is fresh in the sand, and the figures are new and crisp, without a smudge. There you can see the Greek alphabet].”

22. There survives a “folk etymology” for Charing Cross suggesting it derived from the placement of the Eleanor Crosses, “chère reine.” More obviously, there was a small village called Charing on the location, attested by a deed in the Feet of Fines for 31 Henry III. See W. F. Prideaux, Notes & Queries, 9th ser., vol. 3 (1899): 405–6.

23. Zettl notes the connection in his introduction, although he suggests the two texts share a common source, rather than being directly connected (Short Chronicle, lxviii).


25. The History of Saint Edward, 28. See also the facsimile of the manuscript available online, http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-EE-00003-00059/. The history of the manuscript is unknown before the middle of the sixteenth century, and thus offers no information for its circulation before that date.

26. La Estoire de Seint Aedward, 2191–94; The History of Saint Edward, 82. The curious inscription is mentioned twice in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle: “Þat al men miȝt wele se / Of gru he made an a. b. c” (A.1179–80) and “Þe tokne þai may wele se / Of gru þai han an a. b. c” (A.1217–18). The Anglo-Norman text is obscure; as the translators note of the lines “E l’abecé eu pavement / Escrit duble apertement” (2201–2), “inscribing both the Latin and Greek alphabets was a customary part of the ritual of consecration. . . . Nonetheless, the fisherman’s failure to
The Auchinleck Short Chronicle’s use of this otherwise unattested detail is
the only known evidence for the circulation of the Estoire in England. It is
to state where, when, and in precisely what form the composer
of the Auchinleck Short Chronicle had access to the text of the Estoire. Mat-
thew Paris’s text nonetheless seems to have enjoyed some circulation, ho-
ever limited. It has been persuasively argued that both the text of the Estoire
and the images (or closely related images) of MS Ee.3.59 were the source for
a series of stained glass panes from the early fourteenth century preserved
in the Lady Chapel at the Benedictine Abbey at Fécamp, in Normandy.27
Although hardly evidence for wide circulation, the use of the Estoire by the
Auchinleck Short Chronicle—the only evidence for its circulation in Middle
English—is an important example of the impressively broad range of texts to
which the composers of the constituent texts of the Auchinleck manuscript
had access.28 Beyond the forty-four texts preserved in the codex itself, sup-
plemental texts were used to transform those source texts into new textual
instances.29

Devotion to Saint Edward and supporting the claims of Westminster
Abbey work rather differently in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle, composed
sometime after Mortimer’s fall from power in the Nottingham Caves in late
1330, than they did in Matthew Paris’s Estoire, composed almost a century
before. For the Benedictine Matthew Paris, writing about Edward the Con-
fessor offered fairly evident benefits—Henry III’s devotion to the saint and

27. See Madeline Harrison, “A Life of St. Edward the Confessor in Early Fourteenth-Cen-
tury Stained Glass at Fécamp, in Normandy,” Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 26
(1963): 33: “All the surviving Fécamp scenes can be correlated with the text of the Estoire, and
eight can be regarded as being taken from illustrations to the text, which, if not identical to those
in the surviving copy in Cambridge, would have been closely related. . . . The remaining three
scenes . . . are so close to the text of the poem, following details which are not in Ailred, that the
artists must have had this Norman-French text before them. . . . It is thus certain that the glaziers
worked from the text of the Estoire, and probable that they were also influenced by illustrations
to it.”

28. Marisa Libbon argues that a surviving textual source stands behind the extremely
strange account of Hengist and Selmin found in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle. I am grateful to
her for sharing her work in progress.

29. Although it would conveniently place both Des Grantz Geanz and the Estoire at Lichfield
in the sixteenth century, the association of CUL MS Ee.3.59 with Lichfield Cathedral is incorrect.
The long and mistaken conflation of the antiquary Laurence Nowell (d. c. 1570) with the related
Laurence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield (echoed by Wallace, La Estoire de Seint Aedward, xv), incor-
correctly places CUL MS Ee.3.59 at Lichfield before entering Lambarde’s library. See the correct
account in R. M. Wanicke, “Nowell, Laurence (1530–c.1570),” ODNB.
also to Westminster Abbey is well known. Indeed, the focus of the Estoire on many of the specific rights and privileges of Westminster is neatly captured in the story of the fisherman and Saint Peter. The anecdote works to reinforce the miraculous foundations of the Abbey’s rights to a tithe of the salmon in the Thames. The episode in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle, however, does not indicate interest in the present-tense of Westminster Abbey’s claims, rather than its history. This can be seen by comparing the additional materials that the Auchinleck Short Chronicle adapted from the Estoire. Two further instances suggest the translator was interested more broadly in Saint Edward, reflecting a general interest during Edward III’s reign in the saint as a specifically national saint. In a moment marked visually and rhetorically, the Auchinleck Short Chronicle narrates the life of Edward beginning with a two-line red and blue penwork initial on f. 314vb, “After him regned seynt edward / Knowdes sone basta[r]t.” After those two lines (common to all versions of the text), the Auchinleck Short Chronicle then adds two nondescript couplets on Edward’s goodness and his heavenly reward. A red paraph sets off the third line, which introduces two additional moments translated from Matthew Paris’s Estoire: Edward’s vision of the destruction of the Danish fleet at sea, and his vision of a child in the elevated host. The text is translated more freely than the material on Westminster’s foundation, but it is noteworthy what has happened to the text of the Estoire: what appear as two consecutive episodes in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle are separated by some 1300 lines in the Estoire. Like the arrangement of the texts in the manuscript, this is not an unconsidered assemblage. Not only did the composer of the Auchinleck Short Chronicle avail himself of several source texts, including Des Grantz Geanz and the Estoire, but while adapting his source texts he did so with a thorough knowledge of his exemplars, not only a few lines or an isolated episode.

How the Auchinleck manuscript was constructed—specifically questions about how the book might have taken shape and the commercial circumstances of its production—has been examined in great detail by a number of scholars. I want to turn not to the production of the manuscript, but

30. See Fenster and Wogan-Browne, The History of Saint Edward, 18–19, and Paul Binski, Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200–1400 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 1–3. See also Wallace, La Estoire de Saint Aedward, 158: “This legend is the basis for the traditional tithe of salmon, as established custom at Westminster Abbey by at least 1231.”


rather to the composition of its texts and the shape of its exemplars. Before considering composition, however, a few observations about the manuscript are necessary. It is clear that the manuscript’s texts have been curated. That is, as with Harley 2253 and Royal 12.c.xii, the grouping and sequencing of Auchinleck’s texts in broadly thematic clusters suggests a purposeful assemblage for the codex. This is not surprising: books as large and expensive as Auchinleck do not come into being accidentally or carelessly. There is no consensus as to who the agent responsible for those clusters was, and no explanation currently accounts for the numerous instances of intertextual dialogue among texts in the manuscript. Moreover, the manuscript’s constituent texts and scribes seem to manifest a number of different regional dialectal features. As with Harley 2253 and many Middle English texts, there are tensions between the dialects of the book’s five or six scribes and the dialects of the texts: LALME localizes Scribes I, III, and V to London and environs, but texts such as Floris and Blancheflour are localized to the South East Midlands, and Sir Tristrem preserves certain northern forms. Moreover, what seem to be “local” details and knowledge are exhibited by a number of texts, such as the Charing Cross detail and the notes about the caves beneath Nottingham Castle, or several locations clustered around York found in Horn Childe.

The plurality of dialects, local details, and shared phrases has been deployed in support of arguments both for and against the common composition of some of the manuscript’s texts. The disjunctions between scribal and textual dialect have been used to mediate against anything resembling authorship, that is, against texts composed newly for the manuscript. Yet, a

33. Wiggins, following the earlier work of Coss and Mordkoff, takes the idea of the compiler of the volume as evidence against common composition for the constituent texts. She suggests that texts did not have to be “adapted in order to provide context for one another, they could be found.” Alison Wiggins, “Guy of Warwick: Study and Transcription” (PhD diss., University of Sheffield, 2000), 128. See also Turville-Petre, England the Nation, who imagines an editor for the codex, “[responsible for] reworking and adapting some texts, and perhaps even for composing works or commissioning their composition and translation” (112).

34. Note that Tristrem also features a large number of non-northern forms. See Angus McIntosh, “Is Sir Tristrem an English or a Scottish Poem?” in In Other Words: Transcultural Studies in Philology, Translation, and Lexicology Presented to Hans Heinrich Meier on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday, ed. J. Mackenzie and R. Todd (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1989), 85–95; and Runde: “The preponderance of northern forms in rhyming positions supports an association of Tristrem with the north” (“Reexamining Orthographic Practice,” 283).

35. Hanna, London Literature, 126: “Unlike the Auchinleck borrowings from Western texts, fitful after the first section of the volume, this Northern influence is pervasive in Auchinleck and appears scattered throughout, examples distributed among at least six booklets.” See also Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Middle English Texts 20 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988); and Matthew Holford, “A Local Source for Horn Child and Maiden Rimnild,” Medium Ævum 74 (2005): 34–40.
certain degree of “customization” for specific contexts has been permitted. Wiggins, Coss, and most recently Purdie have unravelled some of the ever-increasing complexities of the texts present in the Auchinleck manuscript, arguing against common composition and instead for a more rapid, vigorous, and cross-contaminating world of exemplar circulation. Such conclusions, though resting on close textual analysis, sit uncomfortably alongside many earlier arguments made on stylistic grounds, which are themselves a different type of equally close textual analysis. The “sameness” of some of the constituent texts has been remarked upon as evidence for shared authorship, most notably by G. V. Smithers, who suggested that Kyng Alisaunder, The Seven Sages of Rome, Richard Coeur de Lyon, and Of Arthour and of Merlin share a London-based author. Broad comparisons of style no longer suffice to make convincing literary arguments, as Laura Hibbard Loomis noted with regard to traditional conceptions of source and analogue study when attempting to demonstrate Chaucer’s familiarity with the Auchinleck manuscript. Nonetheless, scholars have examined the demonstrable textual connections, and thus the possible shared authorship, between the Stanzaic Guy, Reinbroun, and Amis and Amiloun; between the Short Chronicle and Richard Coeur de Lyon; between Of Arthour and Merlin, Kyng Alisaunder, Richard Couer de Lyon, and The Seven Sages of Rome; between Sir Orfeo and Lay le Freine; between Seynt Mergrete and Seynt Katherine; between Lay le Freine and Sir Degare; and between Otuel and The King of Tars. This list should be arresting. It has been variously suggested that, in various combinations, sixteen of the 44 items surviving in the manuscript are the work of common

36. Thus, Hanna on the Auchinleck Short Chronicle notes: “Originally another Western text, here it has been deliberately tailored for London use” (London Literature, 105).
38. Quoted in London Literature, 105 and 142 n. 2, where Hanna notes that “promised proof of common authorship never appeared.” Nonetheless, Hanna then quietly expands the list to include the first section of Guy of Warwick, crediting the assistance of Alison Wiggins.
author(s). Such textual interconnections were, of course, the impulse behind Loomis’s “bookshop” theory, and though some strands have been untangled, the manuscript’s sweeping intertextuality has not been fully explained. Moreover, most arguments both for and against common authorship for Auchinleck texts rely upon insupportably narrow definitions of authorship and upon conventional understandings of scribal copying as replicative.

Composition entails scribes making decisions about the nature of their work. Particularly for derivative texts such as the Auchinleck Short Chronicle, how such texts were written, and how constituent passages from other texts were identified, marked, and copied from exemplars, must reflect a series of decisions by scribal authors. In the unstable context where the sources of textual transmission may be plural and copying transformative, many of the arguments previously used to explain phrases common to multiple Auchinleck texts become problematic. Arguments against textual exchange during the creation of the manuscript (or those arguments for textual exchange in antecedent generations) rely upon recensionist models for the presence or absence of particular lines or passages in a number of interconnected texts. Such models assume a linear sequence of events. As I will argue below, different paradigms of composition and transmission link more closely the processes of composition and copying.

Composition has always been treated as something largely inaccessible for medieval texts—the process that takes place before the material record of the moment on the manuscript page. It has therefore been kept carefully distinct from copying and transmission. Such clear distinctions, however, rely upon an unsustainable differentiation between authorship and nonreplicative copying. It is not necessary to distinguish Scribe 1’s work as a scribe and the work of an Auchinleck redactor, compiler, editor, or translator whose hand is all over the texts of the manuscript, and perhaps the manuscript itself. Even Loomis, in her bookshop theory, maintained a strict separation of scribes from editors, and translators from versifiers. Auchinleck is Scribe 1’s book, and he had a role in composing and revising some of its constituent texts, beyond merely copying texts and assembling the codex. The following

42. Even Purdie concedes that some of the evidence for redaction and revision common to the Auchinleck texts of Sir Degare, Lay le Freine, and Beves of Hamptoun is difficult to accommodate in her models, noting that “these extremely complex intertextual relationships . . . are certainly more difficult to explain than any evidence adduced by either Loomis or Walpole and Smyser” (Anglicising Romance, 124 n. 109). See also Nicolas Jacobs, “Sire Degarré, Lay le Freine, Beves of Hamtoun and the ‘Auchinleck Bookshop,’” Notes & Queries 29 (1982): 294–301.
section will argue for Scribe 1’s scribal authorship of the Short Chronicle, and consider the consequences of his role in other texts in the manuscript connected to the Short Chronicle.

Auchinleck records textual transformations from multiple exemplars of a single text. As was seen with Des Grantz Geanz and the Estoire, exemplars do not exist outside of history. The Auchinleck Short Chronicle has, at least since Zettl’s 1935 edition, been known to share lines with the romance Richard Coeur de Lyon. Quite sensibly, the text from Richard was used to develop the Short Chronicle’s descriptions of Richard I’s reign. The passage begins with a mock-oral introduction, a rhetorical flourish that can mark in the Auchinleck texts (including the Short Chronicle) moments of episodic narrative and imply textual transference, “Ichil ȝou tel in what maner / Listeneþ al þat ben here.”

The Auchinleck Short Chronicle narrative of Richard extends to 150 lines, as against nine lines in Royal 12.c.xii or eight lines in MS Additional 19677. The account consists of a rapid survey of Richard’s career, including his preparations for crusade, a description of his floating siege tower and the bee hives catapulted into Acre, a note about windmills on his ships with colorful sails, his sundering of a chain with an axe, his quarrel with the French king Phillip, and his marksmanship with a crossbow bolt and a gold coin. All these episodes, of course, are familiar to readers of Richard (although, it should be stressed, not in all cases the Auchinleck Richard). But the patterns and the methods of borrowing reveal something about how the Auchinleck Short Chronicle handles its sources.

Despite the clear connection between the two texts, neither the Short Chronicle nor Richard exists in some idealized form outside of specific manuscripts. The connections between the two editions of the text, and the resistance the Short Chronicle has demonstrated to recensionist editing, have obscured the connections that can be made between individual manuscripts of the two poems. Some scholars have argued that the Auchinleck Short Chronicle derives its materials from a version of Richard that is not the one found in the Auchinleck manuscript. Particularly because the only edition

43. Short Chronicle, A.2041–42. Consider the insistent repetition throughout Arthour of “so we finde [in/on] [þe/our] boke,” which occurs in that form at least fourteen times, among some thirty references to books and rhymes in the text. The phrase also appears in King Alisaunder, and (with rather more obvious referent), “as it telleþ in þe boke” is found twice in The Life of Adam and Eve.

44. See Judith Mordkoff, “The Making of the Auchinleck Manuscript: The Scribes at Work” (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 1981). Her argument rests heavily on one particular variant (annoyed/atened), and the observation that the “Chronicle passage directly following . . . draws on one in Richard . . . which is omitted from the Auchinleck and four other versions of the romance” (53). She is referring to the striking episode of windmills mounted on
of Richard was completed in 1913, it is worth reconsidering the connections between the two.\(^45\) Two lines about Richard are present in every surviving manuscript of the Short Chronicle, suggesting they are common to the “core” of the text that predates later textual reimaginations of the poem: “Suþþen he was ischoten alas / At þe Castel Gailard þer he was / At þe Fount Euerard liggeþ his bon / & suþþe regned kyng Jon.”\(^46\) These lines are likely translated from the very end of Richard: “Syþþe he was schot, allas, / In castel Gaylard, þer he was. / Þus endyd Rychard oure kyng,” where they are found in substantively this form in several manuscripts.\(^47\) The presence of these lines in the common ancestor of the Short Chronicle suggests not one, but two moments of translation from Richard to the Auchinleck Short Chronicle: one antecedent to the Auchinleck version and common to all surviving manuscripts of the Short Chronicle, and a second more extensive set of borrowings found only in the Auchinleck version. The first translation from Richard to the Short Chronicle took place prior to the Auchinleck manuscript’s creation. This is not necessarily surprising—textual contact can take place on multiple occasions, as texts circulated in parallel, and in intersecting and overlapping contexts. Incidentally, the couplet’s presence in the Royal 12.c.xii Short Chronicle offers the earliest evidence for the transmission and circulation of Richard some ten years before the Auchinleck manuscript.\(^48\) Moreover, if the couplet was part of the core of the Short Chronicle dated to 1280, as attested by the fragment in MS Cotton Caligula A.xi, Richard may well have been circulating significantly before 1300. An entire romance narrating the reign of Richard was an obvious resource for the writers of history. More than one

\(^45\) An edition of Richard from the London Thornton manuscript (BL, MS Additional 31042) was the subject of a recent York PhD thesis by Cristina Figueredo.

\(^46\) See Richard Löwenherz, ed. Karl Brunner, Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie 42 (Vienna and Leipzig: W. Braumller, 1913), 7207–9. Hereafter the text will be referred to as Richard, and specific versions will be prefaced by the name of the manuscript or shelfmark.

Scribe 1 of Auchinleck copied Richard, and therefore had access to an exemplar of the poem that was not the version of Richard that survives in his hand. Scribe 1 was also responsible for a second distinct occasion in which Richard was used to modify the Short Chronicle. This is precisely the sort of circular textual borrowing that challenges most current models of transmission, staged in ways that trouble discrete recensions and the unidirectional strictures of editing. Copying and composition both take time, but need not take place sequentially. Mills has argued that the copying of the Short Chronicle seems to have taken place at an earlier stage of the manuscript’s production, as Scribe 1’s handwriting is noticeably smaller and finer in the Short Chronicle and the couplet version of Guy of Warwick, for example, than the script employed in the texts of booklet two, such as Amis and Amiloun. 50 (See figure 7.) I do not believe there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate this sequence. Although Scribe 1 is a remarkably consistent writer, his hand quite unsurprisingly exhibits substantive differences even within single texts, and certainly across stints, quires, and booklets. Establishing sequence paleographically (rather than codicologically) would likely require a secondary body of evidence akin to the dated charters by the Harley Scribe.

Anterior to the question of what order the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript might have been copied in is still another question of sequence: the order in which two texts, the Auchinleck Short Chronicle and Auchinleck Richard, might have been composed. The lines shared by the two are sufficiently extensive to allow for a series of close comparisons. These comparisons will demonstrate that Scribe 1 was working with more than one exemplar of Richard when composing the Short Chronicle.

49. In a moment of occupatio, the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester refers its readers to a text likely to be the Middle English romance: “Me ne mai noṣt al telle her ac wo so it wole iwite / In romance of him [Richard] imad me it may finde iwite / So þat þe deuel adde þer to gret envie / & in is broþer herte Ion broȝte an tricherie” (Robert of Gloucester, Chronicle, 9986–89). Mannyng similarly points his readers to the romance, but he also adapts moments from the text: “Þe romance of Richard sais he wan þe toun; / his pele fro þat forward he cald it mate Griffoun” (Mannyng, Chronicle, II.3877–78).

50. See Mills, Horn Childe, 13, citing Mordkoff. Mills notes that “the unusually small scale of the hand throughout most of these two items led Kölbìng to ascribe both to his phantom scribe [gamma]” (13 n. 7).
Figure 7. Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1, f. 50v (detail) and f. 304v (detail)
The process of translation of the passage from *Richard*, without question the original, to the *Short Chronicle*, is typical of Middle English translation more generally. The passage suggests the composer sometimes worked quite freely in adapting his text, yet also tended at times to remain close to the original. That is, translation from one Middle English text to another recalls precisely the act of copying, with all of the attendant variations and divergent practices thus implied. Lines A.2091–94 of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, coming between the two translated couplets from Richard (the first verbatim, the second drawing on the sense and rhyme of its source), are seemingly original to the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*. In fact, however, lines A.2093–4 are shaped by *Richard*, drawn from a couplet found some five hundred lines later in the poem.\(^{51}\) *Short Chronicle* A.2091–2, although without a precise analogue in *Richard*, exhibit the influence of the vocabulary of *Richard* in referring to the “queyntise” by which the catapult cast the beehives. The word (and more broadly the concept) is important to *Richard*’s construction of kingship and military success, yet is found almost exclusively in this particular section of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*.\(^{52}\)

\(^{51}\) *Richard*, 3455–56: “Pe styward took ryt good yeme / To serue, Kyng R. to queme.”

\(^{52}\) In the *Short Chronicle*, “queynt” forms appear at A.2091, A.2108, A.2111, and A.2172, all part of the Richard expansion, excepting only A.1079, “Lancelot was a queynt man,” without parallel in any other texts of the *Short Chronicle*. "Queynt" forms appear only twice in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auchinleck <em>Short Chronicle</em></th>
<th>Auchinleck <em>Richard</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When it was wrouȝt fair &amp; wel</td>
<td>When his castel was framed fair &amp; wel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He set þerin a mangonel</td>
<td>He lete set þerin a mangonel,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þat þurth queyntise of mannes strengeþe</td>
<td>&amp; comand his folk bilieu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It miȝt cast þre mile o lengþe.</td>
<td>To feche him vp mani a be hiue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þe joinour þat þurth queyntise of mannes strengeþe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He purueyd king richard to queme.</td>
<td>(Richard, A.993–6; Brunner 2903–6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anon he tok him þe be hiue &amp; into acres slong hem bilieu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Short Chronicle, A.2089–96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þe weder was hot in somers tide,</td>
<td>þe weder was hot in somers tide,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þe ben brust out bi ich a side</td>
<td>þe ben brust out bi ich a side,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þat wer anoied &amp; ful of grame;</td>
<td>&amp; were atened &amp; ful of grame,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þai dede þe sarraȝins miche schame,</td>
<td>&amp; dede þe sarraȝins michel schame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For þai hem stong in her vissage</td>
<td>Þai stunggen hem in her visage,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þat al þai bigun to rage &amp; hedde hem al in depe celer</td>
<td>Pat alle þai gun for to rage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>þat þai durst com no neter.</td>
<td>No man durst com hem ner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Short Chronicle, A.2099–2106)</td>
<td>(Richard, A.1001–8; Brunner 2911–18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
leck Short Chronicle, coming between the translated couplets of Richard, is not translated from that text, yet deploys its vocabulary. Composition is here shaped by its immediate proximity to translation.

The simultaneity of composition and translation reveals other issues that trouble the connections between the texts. In particular, the evidence suggests that the Auchinleck Richard was subject to the same scribal rewritings as the Auchinleck Short Chronicle (see table on p. 164). The longer and more coherent narrative is again found in Richard, which tells more fully of a chain stretched between two pillars across the bay at Acre. This makes the direction of borrowing quite clear: from Richard to the Auchinleck Short Chronicle. The transformative and unstable processes of translation, however, are recognizable among all versions of the two texts. The Auchinleck Short Chronicle adapts the Auchinleck Richard, as suggested by the chain being cut into three pieces, rather than in two, and the rhyme on “pre” and “se.” The Auchinleck Richard preserves the “chain : main” rhyme found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 228, as against the “chain : twain” reading of the five manuscripts that divide the chain in two, not three, parts. It is a rather dramatic failure of logic to have the chain divided into three parts by Richard’s blow result in only two ends that “fel doun in þe se.” This gaffe suggests that the Auchinleck Richard was being written and translated from its exemplar in precisely the same ways the Auchinleck Short Chronicle was adapted from the Richard in the same manuscript. That is, the Auchinleck Richard itself demonstrates the same transformative relationship to its exemplar as the Auchinleck Short Chronicle does to its exemplar(s). Further, this scenario explains the presence of certain details in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle, details not found in the Auchinleck Richard, such as the famous windmills-on-ships episode. These moments likely reflect Scribe 1 working from both his own Richard and from a second Richard while composing the

Auchinleck Richard, but a cursory examination of Brunner’s edition turns up at least fourteen instances in the edited text. See Geraldine Barnes, Counsel and Strategy in Middle English Romance (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 1993).

53. Note, however, that although the rhyme is translated, the sense has changed in the Auchinleck Short Chronicle—“se” is no longer the noun “sea,” but the verb “see.”

54. Only four of which use the “chain : twain” rhyme, the last [Caius 175/96] uses “chain too : two.”

55. See Jacobs, “Sire Degarré,” 299: “All that can be said with certainty is that both stages of interpolation in Degarré involve the use of a redaction of Beves which survives only in the Auchinleck MS and which there is some reason to believe to have been itself made in the scriptorium in which that MS was copied. The case is sufficiently similar to that of Degarré and Freine to support the hypothesis that more than one copy of Degarré was made in the Auchinleck scriptorium and that the various copies were interpolated to differing degrees from the other two romances.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Auchinleck <em>Short Chron.</em></th>
<th>Auchinleck <em>Richard</em></th>
<th>MS Douce 228</th>
<th>Brunner <em>Richard</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King richard ariued to þe lond,</td>
<td>&amp; king richard þat was so gode</td>
<td>Kyng Richard þat was so good</td>
<td>And Kyng Richard, þat was so good,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ac first he smot a dint wel strong</td>
<td>Wiþ his ax afor schippe stode</td>
<td>With his ax in þe schip stood</td>
<td>Wiþ his ax in foreschyp stod,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiþ his ax a cheyne of þre;</td>
<td>&amp; whan he com ouer þe cheyne</td>
<td>Wanne he came be fore þe chayne</td>
<td>And whenne he come to þe cheyne,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al þat þer were miȝt it se.</td>
<td>He smot a strok wiþ miȝt &amp; mayn.</td>
<td>He smot a dynt with myth an 7 mayne</td>
<td>Wiþ his ax he smot it on twayne,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiche a dent as he smot þer</td>
<td>Þe cheyne he smot on peces þre &amp; boþe endes fel doun in þe se.</td>
<td>He carf þe chayne þat þei myth se þat alle þe barouns, verrayment,</td>
<td>þat alle þe þe barouns, verrayment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In lond nas smiten neuer er.</td>
<td>Þo alle his mariners verrament</td>
<td>Seyd þat it was a noble dent</td>
<td>Sayde it was a noble dent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A.2137–42)</td>
<td>Seyd þer was a noble dent</td>
<td>(Brunner, 2633–38)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A.739–46)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Auchinleck Manuscript and the Writing of History

Auchinleck Short Chronicle. It is possible, but not necessary, that the second text was the exemplar standing behind the Auchinleck Richard. If exemplar poverty is at play here, Scribe 1 nonetheless had access to at least two texts of Richard on at least two occasions, once while copying Richard, and a second time while composing the Auchinleck Short Chronicle.

The plurality of exemplars and the subtly transformative processes of copying and composition explain why many of the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript bear the marks of common composition, without necessarily sharing authorship in a narrow sense. The direction of textual borrowings and translations is not always clear in a large number of texts preserved in Auchinleck. Moreover, there seem to be instances in which multiple tranches of borrowings and translations from an exemplar occur. There are nonetheless uncanny amounts of overlap among unexpected texts through the Auchinleck manuscript. Some of the repeated instances are likely common formulae or stock phrases—“þe weder was hot in somers tide,” quoted above, is utterly banal. As such, it is not sufficient evidence to argue convincingly for a connection between the Auchinleck Richard and the Auchinleck Short Chronicle. As part of the near-verbatim sequence of eight lines shared between the two texts, however, its transference from one to the other is clear. More curious is the phrase’s reappearance in the couplet Guy of Warwick, “Swiþe hastiliche þai gun ride, / Þe weder was hot in somers tide.”

(See figure 8.) It may well be that the three instances of the phrase in the Auchinleck manuscript attest to the phrase’s conventional nature, rather than indicating an intertextual connection. However, the examples multiply. Taylor notes: “The Auchinleck scribes were steeped in the idiom of Middle English romance.”

One might more usefully think of the Auchinleck scribes as creating the language of romance, not merely transmitting it. Where are the lines to be drawn between stock phrases, conventional formulae, and unusual turns of phrase? In translating Des Grantz Geanz, the Auchinleck Short Chronicle rhymes “linage” and “parage,” where the rhyme is shaped by the vocabulary and rhyme of its Anglo-Norman source. Yet it is not a unique rhyme in the Auchinleck manuscript—the Stanzaic Guy uses the rhyme twice. Also less

57. Andrew Taylor, “Manual to Miscellany: Stages in the Commercial Copying of Vernacular Literature in England,” Yearbook of English Studies 33 (2003): 3. Taylor draws on Pearsall to revive something closer to the bookshop theory, although working after Shonk’s article, he advances a somewhat more specialized model hinging on Scribe 1: “As Pearsall notes, the people who worked on the manuscript were not just copying exemplars but also translating and modifying them. They knew the conventions of romance and had developed a considerable fluency in Middle English versification” (3).
58. Thus, “He mett a man of fair parage, / Ycomen he was of hey þe linage” and “& art a man of fair parage / Ycom þou art of hei þe linage” (Stanzaic Guy, 7455–56, 9018–19).
obviously formulaic are two phrases shared very nearly verbatim by *The Legend of Pope Gregory* and the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*: “& seyd schortliche att wordes þre” and “Wel depe at þe se grounde.” Such small examples do not serve as evidence for debates over what might be called capital-A authorship. However, these moments cannot usefully be read to conclude the direction of borrowing for an entire text, or even for the phrase itself. The evidence of common intervention, adaptation, and interpolation by an individual in numerous texts of the Auchinleck manuscript attests only to just that.

59. The full lines are “Into þat holi cite. / A cardinal spac þer among, / & seyd schortliche att wordes þre” (*Gregory*, 965–67) and “Schortliche he seyd at wordes þre / He wald haue þerof þe dignite” (*Short Chronicle*, A.2165–66). Also, “Y knowe a roche al ridi rounde; / Þerin þer is an hous ywrouȝt / Wel depe at þe se grounde” (*Gregory*, 919–21), which appears with variants twice in the *Short Chronicle*: “Woninge stede gode & sounde / Wel depe in þe hard grounde” and “Wel depe in þe se grounde, / Per he kept it hole & sounde (Short Chronicle, A.871–72, A.2065–66).

The shared phrases amongst different texts of the Auchinleck manuscript thus need not indicate shared authorship *per se*. Instead, they suggest that an individual was responsible for customizing the texts of the book, and for writing and situating new texts in the book. Texts circulated not in some abstract, ahistorical manner, but as copies that themselves served as exemplars. Fair-copy to fair-copy transmission, and the replicative copying by which it is accomplished, does not explain or describe the Auchinleck texts. Such a model also cannot explain how derivative historiographies and other assembled texts were crafted. For those distinctly curated and adapted Auchinleck texts such as the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle*, there must have been multiple stages in the processes of composing it as a derivative text. The evidence of the nonlinear use of several different sections of Matthew Paris’s *Estoire* suggests that the composer of the text did not merely pause while copying the life of Edward from his *Short Chronicle* exemplar, turn to a copy of the *Estoire* conveniently at hand, translate a few lines in his head, set them down in a perfectly executed formal bookhand directly on the page, and return to copying his exemplar before arbitrarily deciding, a few hundred lines later, that it was time to add a bit more *Estoire*. The customization of the *Short Chronicle* for the Auchinleck manuscript, specifically instances such as the lines drawn from the Auchinleck *Richard*, make it clear that the composer’s exemplar must have been an *ad hoc* text, specific to the moment of Auchinleck’s closely proximate copying and composition.

The localized exemplar of the Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* was likely a variety of what for a later period are termed “foul” or “working” papers. Reliance upon such an intermediary step, one predicated upon being ephemeral, bears with it some uncertainty.\(^{61}\) Finished products can also become intermediary steps: a finished manuscript can serve as an exemplar before then being the basis of further revisions. Some form of intermediary textual realization can both account for the unique nature of many of Auchinleck’s texts and also explain the obvious copying errors made when transferring those drafts to the page.\(^{62}\) Scribe 1, then, might well be copying his own written compositions, as Matthew Paris must have done when copying his own his-

\(^{61}\) See my article “When Variants Aren’t: Authors as Scribes in Some English Manuscripts,” in *Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Anne Hudson and Vincent Gillespie. (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming), which discusses the holograph manuscript by the historian Ranulf Higden, a manuscript hovering at the uncomfortable seams of the multiple roles manuscripts can play, and falling between translation, copy, exemplar, and original.

\(^{62}\) Thus, for example, the obvious error that occurs in the midst of the Albina section—Scribe 1 writes: “Of hem we haue miche grame / To ous al it is gret schame” (*Short Chronicle*, A.75); this is noted by the online facsimile as “MS reads garme.” See f. 304\(^{b}\), but also f. 49\(^{a}\), *Amis*, where Scribe 1 correctly copies “grame” rhymed with “schame.”
tories, and as Higden did in copying his own *Polychronicon* in San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 132.

Yet, the texts of the Auchinleck manuscript express very particular anxieties over one form of temporary writing: wax tablets. What is now the first text in the manuscript, the fragmentary *Legend of Pope Gregory*, relates the strange account of Pope Gregory the Great, derived from a French version of Gregory’s *vita*.63 Born of an incestuous relationship between brother and sister, Gregory is set adrift by his mother, who writes the story of his birth and her hopes for his future on a set of wax tablets backed with ivory: “Tables sche toke sone riche / Of yuori layen hir bifoire, / Wiþ honden sche wrot & sore gan sike / Hou he was biȝeten & bore.”64 As a record of his identity, the wax tablets are a peculiar choice. Wax tablets are useful precisely for their impermanence, rather than their durability. At the same time, wax tablets are primarily a space for private writing, rather than public communication. The note Gregory’s mother leaves for her son on the wax tablets seems to suggest a deep ambivalence about the permanence of writing. Even temporary texts that record a person’s lineage, that record a person’s history, inscribe that history in a larger cultural moment. In another primal misadventure, Gregory marries his mother, but spends so much time weeping in a private chamber over his sinful birth as recorded on his wax tablets that his mother becomes suspicious of his doings.65 Eventually, while Gregory is out hunting, “Sche souȝt & fond wiþ hert vnmild / Þe tables þat wiþ hir sone sche sent / & knewe it was hir owen child / Þat in his armes anȝt sche went. / Þo þe leuedi hadde þe latters radde / Þat sche wrot, ich wene, / Sone sche bicom al mad.”66 Again, the wax tablets are unexpectedly durable records of written history, containing private writings that should have been made public. Ultimately, though, the *Legend of Pope Gregory* is concerned with the contest between the historical and the Christian. Gregory’s tale is remarkable because he atones for sins that would seem to be unforgivable. His history is recorded on wax tablets, but also upon the parchment in Auchinleck,
written by Scribe 1, parchment that testifies to Gregory’s canonization and to the miracles he performed. The texts of the past, though fragile, cannot be easily erased, but their endings can be rewritten.

It is essential to understand the ways in which wax tablets, parchment scraps, and sheets of parchment make possible both composition and the forms of textual transference that stand behind derivative texts and Scribe 1’s work on the Auchinleck Short Chronicle. In their seminal article on wax tablets, Richard and Mary Rouse note the puzzling lack of attention paid by scholars to how medieval texts were composed, and explore the use of wax tablets throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. There is a small body of regularly cited descriptions of wax tablets, such as the poem by Baudri of Bourgueil celebrating his stylus and wax tablet, and a description in Eadmer’s Vita Anselmi, which will be discussed below. There is no doubt that wax tablets were in wide use in the medieval period, and useful for a variety of forms of literacy. However, by the fourteenth century, the use of wax tablets seems to have been primarily for more practical forms of literacy, rather than literary composition. Wax tablets share qualities with other surfaces designed for ephemeral writing, such as slates or hornbooks, and thus were an obvious instrument for the schoolroom. Other uses for wax tablets might be seen in several that survive from the French royal treasury, where large tablets were used to record the sums and processes of complicated royal finances. In another instance of wax tablets as a medium of practical literacy, consider the set of wood-framed wax tablets discovered in 1989 by the York Archaeological Trust during excavations in Swinegate, York. The set consists of eight small wood tablets with wax surfaces on both sides, held


in some form of a carrying-case, and accompanied by a small iron stylus. Michelle Brown has identified both Middle English and Latin words on the tablets, and describes the script as Cursiva Anglicana, likely datable to the last quarter of the fourteenth century. The tablets are approximately 2 inches by 1.2 inches. The text on these late-fourteenth-century tablets seems to be about five (very small) words to the line, and six or seven lines on the face of each tablet. Again, the utility of such tablets for practical writing is clear when used for a shopping list or a brief memorandum. However, though such tablets may have been sufficient to record short verses, it is difficult to imagine them as the site for large-scale verse or prose composition in later medieval England. Baudri may have celebrated his stylus and wax tablet, but he was writing in the middle of the eleventh century, when the expense of parchment and the economies of reading and writing were vastly different than those of London in the first half of the fourteenth century.

It seems extremely unlikely that lengthy poems were composed on miniscule wax tablets. Moreover, by the fourteenth century, contemporary references seem to suggest that wax tablets were not primarily thought of as compositional tools. The small York tablets and the large tablets of the French court were clearly employed for more practical forms of literacy: stenographic purposes, conducting business, keeping records while traveling, or as a repository for quotations or textual extracts. Quite a few ivory covers for late medieval wax tablets survive. Their dimensions and the quality of their decoration vary, but they again indicate personal, private literacies as distinct from the composition of longer texts. Chaucer describes precisely such a practical, rather than poetic, use of wax tablets in the Summoner’s Tale:

His felawe hadde a staf tipped with horn,
A peyre of tables al of yvory,
And a poyntel polysshed fetisly,
And wroote the names alwey, as he stood,
Of alle folk that yaf hym any good,
Ascaunces that he wolde for hem preye.

72. I am indebted to the materials gathered by Karen Larsdatter on her website, particularly the sections on wax tablets and scribal tools more generally. See http://www.larsdatter.com/tablets.htm. Many of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century examples are quite small, and measure approximately 4 inches by 2 inches, as Walters Art Museum 71.267 (French, 1340–1360, 3 ¾" x 2 ¾") and 21.203 (French? Late 14th century, 3 ½" x 2 ¾").

As an account book and an *aide-mémoire*, Chaucer’s depiction of wax tablets anchors forms of composition that fall somewhere between the truly ephemeral and the remarkable resilience of parchment.\(^ {74} \) It is clearly a conventional image, anticipating very particular expectations. Other texts rely upon expectations that wax tablets imply more practical written literacy, a literacy of lists and accounts. For example, *Jack Upland*, the late-fourteenth- or early-fifteenth-century Wycliffite text, echoes Chaucer’s association of wax tablets with inappropriate tabulation: “Frere, whi writist þou mennes names in þi tablis? Wenest þou þat God is suche a fool þat He wot not of mernes dedis but if þou telle Hym bi þi tablis.”\(^ {75} \) In the early middle ages, Baudri of Bourgueil and Ordericus Vitalis discussed composition on wax tablets. By the fourteenth century, however, the popular image of wax tablets is not that of a monk with cold fingers laboriously clutching a stylus and inscribing devotional lines. Rather, they suggest a corrupt friar tabulating donations and donors for his own purposes.

The means by which medieval texts were composed likely varied as much as the uses of wax tablets. The following sections will trace the materiality of longer projects of composition. I will argue that some medieval texts, including derivative historiography, were written directly on the manuscript page. By the end of the fourteenth century, although parchment remained expensive, it was not unimaginably so, and its expense did not preclude its use in composing texts. Evidence from the earlier Middle Ages suggests compositional practice was more substantially shaped by the then-greater expense of parchment. Wax tablets were not the only solution to the problem confronting the medieval author: how to compose a text. I want to focus here on the technologies employed for composition, on the technological and physical supplements to human capacity.\(^ {76} \) In the ninth century, the Irish philosopher John Scottus Eriugena likely oversaw the production of his *Periphyseon* in a manuscript scholars believe to be partly an autograph, Rheims, Bibliothèque...
Municipale, MS 875. A sophisticated philosophical text, the *Periphyseon* in MS 875 features a series of devices for accommodating layers of textual revision introduced in holograph by the author (and also by another hand). One critic explains the evidence as indicating that Eriugena was sometimes “working freehand” and other times, suggests that the process reveals Eriugena “[having] already written his text on a wax tablet . . . [he let] a Caroline scribe complete it.” It is not, in itself, surprising that an author should employ different methods when composing a lengthy text, or when inscribing that composition on parchment. The heterogeneity of Eriugena’s approach, however, is remarkable for how early in the medieval period we find an author composing directly on the page, modifying his own text, and supplying his scribes with scraps of parchment and wax tablets to be copied fresh or inserted into an existing text. The practices of Eriugena resemble later medieval approaches to composition, particularly those for nontheological texts. Eriugena’s working methods anticipate later attitudes towards parchment, its expense, and its availability.

Even in the twelfth century, writing texts required larger quantities of parchment than might be expected. The Benedictine monk Eadmer (d. after 1126) narrates a dramatic moment in the creation of his *Vita Anselmi*, in which he used at least four sets of parchment leaves to write his text. The proliferation of such now-invisible vellum should go some way to reshaping our understanding of where composition could and did take place. Eadmer’s recounting of his struggle in writing the *Vita Anselmi* is well known, but will be quoted at length in order to clarify the steps of his writing process:

> Praeterea cum operi manum primo imposuissem, et quae in cera dictaveram pergamenae magna ex parte tradidissem; quadam die ipse pater Anselmus secretius me convenit, sciscitans quid dictitarem, quid scriptitarem. Cui cum rem magis silentio tegere quam detegere maluissem; praecepit quatinus aut coepto desistens aliis intenderem, aut quae scribebam sibi ostenderem. Ego autem qui jam in nonnullis quae scriperam ejus ope fretus et emendatione fueram roboratus; libens parui, sperans eum insita sibi benivolentia quae corrigenda correcturum, quae aliter se habe-

77. See Paul E. Dutton, “Eriugena’s Workshop: The Making of the *Periphyseon* in Rheims 875,” in *History and Eschatology in John Scottus Eriugena and His Time*, ed. Michael Dunne and James McEvoy (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 141: “My fundamental assumption is that Eriugena’s handwriting has been identified.”

78. Dutton, “Eriugena’s Workshop,” 156. Dutton (155 n. 54) rejects the suggestion by T. A. M. Bishop that composition and revision could not have taken place on separate parchment or tablets. Dutton observes further: “It is also possible that on occasion Eriugena handed over new passages on scraps of parchment” (157).
When I had first taken in hand this work [the *Vita Anselmi*] . . . and had already transcribed on to parchment a great part of what I had drafted on wax tablets, Father Anselm one day called me to him privately and asked what it was that I had drafted and transcribed. And when I showed that I would rather keep silent than speak, he ordered me either to show him what I had written, or to give up and concentrate on other things. Now, since I had often shown him similar things which I had written, and had received his help in correcting them when I had got things in the wrong order, I gladly showed him what I had written, hoping for his corrections. Nor was I deceived in my expectation, for he corrected some things, struck out others, changed some, approved others. I was filled with joy to have my record supported by so great an authority. Indeed, I was bursting with pride. But, a few days later he called me to him, and ordered me to destroy the quires in which I had gathered the whole work together, judging himself unworthy of any such literary monument for posterity. I was utterly confounded. I did not dare to disobey him flatly; but I could not face the destruction of a work on which I had spent so much time. So I obeyed him in the letter by destroying the quires on which the work was written, having first transcribed the contents on to other quires.]

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79. Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. R. W. Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), II.lxxii, pp. 150–51. The translation, which differs slightly from that in his edition, is taken from R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 412. Eadmer also relates a well-known account of how Anselm wrote his proof of the existence of God, the *Proslogion*, “on wax tablets, which he gave to one of the monks for safe-keeping. A few days later . . . they had disappeared . . . Anselm therefore wrote the work a second time, and had the same monk store the tablets with greater care . . . the next day, the monk found them . . . ‘strewn about in small pieces.’ Only at this point did Anselm order that the work be copied onto parchment.” Quoted in Rouse and Rouse, “Wax
Eadmer’s specificity is quite revealing. Although the initial stage of composition takes place on wax tablets (“in cera dictaveram”), Eadmer then transcribes (“tradidissem”) his text to parchment in a rough state—that is, still as a draft. Anselm makes corrections to Eadmer’s parchment draft, including those “things in the wrong order” (“quae aliter se habebant singula loco sibi competenti ordinaturum”) which might indicate either text misplaced from a compositional perspective, or multiple folios or quires physically (rather than narratively) disordered. Moreover, Anselm also “corrected some things, struck out others, changed some, approved others” (“Siquidem in ipso opusculo nonnulla correxit, nonnulla subvertit, quaedam mutavit, probavit quaedam”). The language of Anselm’s changes to Eadmer’s transcriptions make emphatically clear that the correction process takes place on the parchment draft, not upon wax tablets. Eadmer then assembles the work in quires, the third step in the process of composition, and the second stage on parchment. Eadmer here presumably copies (or, more accurately, transfers) his draft along with Anselm’s changes to a new set of parchment leaves. When Anselm’s humility condemns the work to the dustbin, Eadmer copies the text yet again, presumably from the recopied quires that incorporated Anselm’s changes. This final illicit copy, it should be stressed, was likely still not a fair copy. That is, given the unfinished state of the work as a whole (and the subject still being alive), further stages in the text’s writing must have taken place before a fair copy was produced. Eadmer’s anecdote tells something about the preliminary use of wax tablets, but also more importantly indicates that parchment was not so impossibly precious as to preclude three distinct sets of quires of a single text in the hand of the text’s author: Eadmer’s draft, his revised draft, and his illicit copy of the revised draft. Moreover, a fourth set of parchment leaves was needed for a final copy. The only leaves that now survive, they were also written by Eadmer, well after Anselm’s death, and survive in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 371, where the Vita Anselmi fills ff. 147r–189v of the codex. The text itself survives in some twenty-three manuscripts in at least two recensions (plus one unique manuscript), suggesting there were still further instances of revision, expansion, and altera-

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80. In his edition of the Vita Anselmi, Southern translates this passage slightly differently: “For he did in fact, correct some things, and suppress others, change the order of some, and approve other things in this small work” (150).

81. See the online catalogue of the manuscripts at the Parker Library at http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=371.
tion to the text. Parchment may have been expensive, but it was an obvious medium for the composition of texts.

Moving closer to the time of the Auchinleck manuscript, by the thirteenth century a number of examples suggest composition commonly took place on parchment, even when wax tablets were available. The use of such scraps of parchment, “cedula” or “schedula,” is well attested. In the vita of Saint Foy attributed to Bernard of Angers, the text narrates how Bernard “made notes on scraps of parchment for the purpose of remembering precise details, and then turned the notes into prose narratives.” The theologian Robert Grosseteste (d. 1253) was an “inveterate scribbler on scraps of parchment.” A number of parchment scraps survive in Grosseteste’s hand, including those bound in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Savile 21. Grosseteste’s habits suggest the obvious appeal of working on parchment rather than wax: its immediacy and convenience. Parchment scraps, the necessary byproduct of trimming parchment sheets, must have been reasonably plentiful in any situation where parchment was being used. Such scraps might later serve as exemplars, but they also might feature as “finished” texts, as in MS Savile 21. Parchment scraps share with wax tablets a limited, and thus potentially limiting, writing surface. Richard and Mary Rouse briefly note the way in which that limited writing space might have influenced compositional practices. With admirable circumspection, they point to a possible connection between wax tablets and the “length of units in composition” in scholastic arguments or in homilies and sermons. Their insight is an important one for the endless subdivisions of medieval scholasticism.

The longer narrative poems and histories of later medieval England indicate that physical supports to composition other than scraps and tablets must

82. See Eadmer, Vita Anselmi, xiii–xxv for a discussion of the versions of the text.
83. See D. C. Skemer, Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 13: “For example, the word scheda could mean a ‘literary trifle’ in the twelfth century but in the late thirteenth century the preliminary draft of a text or document.” See also M. Teeuwen, The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 194–95.
86. See Burnett, “White Cow,” 17–18 and fig. 5.
have been available for those who authored texts. It is a small step from composing on scraps of parchment to composing on fully prepared folios—composition directly on the page. This is not a radical argument, but the question remains as to how common the practice was. Early in the twelfth century, Guibert de Nogent (d. ca. 1125) notes with some pride that, “For the composition and writing of this or my other works, I did not prepare a draft on the wax tablets, but committed them to the written page in their final form as I thought them out.” What composition directly on the page might look like, and how it might be distinguished from copying, poses certain challenges.

Some unique evidence survives in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS français 1446, a mixed thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscript containing a number of texts, including the Fables of Marie de France, Le Couvrenement de Renard, and parts of the prose redactions of Les Sept Sages de Rome. The codex is typically discussed in the context of Marie de France’s works, or with reference to the songs inset in its texts, but it is the drafts of a romance by the otherwise unknown Bauduins Butors in four versions scattered over approximately thirty folios that are of interest here. Bauduins Butors, writing after 1294, sets forth his incredibly ambitious plans for a sweeping romance, grandiosely titled Roman de fils du roi Constant. As Berthelot notes, calling the few scraps of the text that exist a “romance” is misleading: “What does exist . . . is the announcement of a text.”

It is a dazzling announcement, in which Butors proposes a series of Arthurian romances that recall in their impossibly vast scope the ending to Chaucer’s Squire’s Tale and its promise to tell the untellable at great length.


The announcement, or more properly announcements, take place in four successive iterations. Each attempt is abortive and inconclusive, the legacy of a writer seemingly in the simultaneous throes of grand literary ambition, the thrill of composition, and writer’s block. In the few thousand lines that survive in MS fr. 1446, the author makes his bid for literary immortality quite strongly: he names himself six times and associates himself and his project with at least four different noble patrons. Access to parchment was clearly an issue, however. Although his first draft occupies the main text area of ff. 108v–111v, his second attempt mostly occupies the bottom margins of other texts (all of f. 70r and the foot of ff. 71r–109v, thus running along the bottom of folios containing the Couronnement de Renard and Marie’s Fables). His penultimate attempt occupies an entire folio at f. 112r, and his final draft composition takes place on ff. 112v–114v. Bauduin Butors’s grand vision remains incomplete, offering us a record of the painfully human spectacle of unmet aspirations.

Bauduin Butors’s texts are at once drafts and final copies, almost certainly composed directly on the page even as he worked in ever-diminishing fits. Butors did not find it inappropriate to begin his masterpiece on the few blank folios available at the end of a quire. The second draft of the prologue and introductory material, which begin on a blank verso but continue on the foot of subsequent folios, suggests again a compromise between the need for parchment upon which to write and his ambitions and expectations for the text. That is, the author seems to perform his sense that the Roman de fils du roi Constant deserves to begin at the top of a blank folio, thus asserting its status as a major text, even if a mere folio after that beginning the text is physically and textually subordinated to other texts. Though composed directly on the page, the text contains a few minor errors. This is an enormously important reminder that mechanical errors do not only take place when scribes copy texts. Errors that are thought of as scribal can occur when an author composes directly on the page. The acts of poetic composition and physical transcription took place then, as now, simultaneously. The converse is also true, however: the act of physical transcription can be, in itself, an act of composition. Scribal authorship is a mode of copying as much as it is a means of composing. The complex intertextuality of the texts of the Auchinleck Manuscript and the Writing of History

94. The foliation and divisions of the four drafts are Thorpe’s, described in “The Four Rough Drafts,” 4–5.

95. Thus, Thorpe: “If he had made rough copies first, then he would surely have jettisoned three of them, and only one would have been written up as the finished product. All in all, there seems little doubt that what exists in MS 1446 must be his rough drafts. Two things then follow: even when dittographies are included, there are very few errors of copying” (“The Four Rough Drafts,” 17).
leck manuscript, some copied and some authored by Scribe 1, points to the innate materiality of scribal authorship.

The remainder of this chapter will look at scribal authorship and composition on the manuscript page in a mid-fifteenth century codex, London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58. I will consider the codex as a whole, before turning to Scribe 1’s responsibility for the book, and to the derivative historiographical text that is the book’s core. The parchment manuscript contains, among other items, a unique version of the Middle English *Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, the romance *Richard*, and the text known as the Anonymous “Kings of England.”

As was the case with Auchinleck, Arundel 58 is very much the book of one of its scribes, here identified as Arundel Scribe 1. There are three hands at work in the codex: Scribe 1 writes ff. 1–98v and 304–42, Scribe 2 writes ff. 99r–264 and 276–303, and Scribe 3 copies a mere ten folios, ff. 265–75. Scribe 1, however, is responsible for a remarkable colophon that both dates the book and takes in the entirety of the book’s contents. At the top of f. 1r, Scribe 1 begins his book, “The tabile of cronycul offe Engelond fro quene Albina the furste ethely creature that entriede in to this lond vn to kyng Richard the Secunde.” Taking up the diction of his own rubric, the scribe provides a short prose account that summarizes the entire history of the island, beginning (a bit awkwardly, given the uncorrected error) “[T]he ferste ether ertheley creature that entred in this lond.”

The text consists of little more than name-dropping: it races through the reigns of Brutus, Arthur, Vortigern, Alfred, Ethelred, Edward the Confessor, Harold, William the Conqueror, and Henry fitz Empress, before ending with “Harry the vi.” At the foot of f. 1r, Scribe 1 then begins his colophon, in which he specifies not merely the historical endpoints of his narrative, but the endpoints of his book as a whole:


97. There has been a fair amount of debate over the number of hands at work in the codex: Hudson, “An Edition,” believes it is “possibly by a single scribe” (1: 17), whereas Matheson, The *Prose Brut*, concludes that there may be two hands at work, but possibly only one. Robinson identifies four hands, although she demurs that the fourth hand is “a hand similar to that of hand 1” (Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts, 29). My conclusions here differ from those in my DPhil thesis. I am grateful to Hollie Morgan for sharing her work with me and corresponding about the manuscript. Morgan argues that there are three hands present in the manuscript. See Hollie Morgan, “A Study of London, College of Arms, Arundel MS. 58” (MA thesis, University of Leicester, 2010).
this tabel kalender of more plenarly knewlich ffoluyng with a boke offe the fful text. All so | A petegreu ffro William conquerour of the Crowne of Engelonde lyny-ally descenbyng vn to kynge Henri the vi in the end of thys boke lymned in fflygurs. Thys boke with hys Antecedens and consequens was ful ended the vi day offe August ; the ȝere of oure lorde anno m cccc. xlvij And the [small blank space] yere of oure souerayn lorde kynge Harry the vii afster the conquest the xxvj.98

Crucially, the colophon comprehends the entire codex: the “tabel kalendar” refers clearly to the table of contents that occupy the following folios, the “boke offe the fful text” to the unique and much-expanded version of the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, and the “petegreu . . . in the end of thys boke lymned in fflygures” to the illuminated “Verses on the Kings of England” that conclude the codex. Scribe 1 knew the whole book. His description incorporates not only those portions he actually copied (the beginning and the end), but also the stints copied by Scribes 2 and 3. The codex is a planned and deliberate assemblage of texts, and Scribe 1’s awareness of the whole is incontestable.

Despite the uncorrected error in the opening rubric, several of the colophon’s features suggest that Scribe 1 was a sophisticated, well-educated, and in particular, a well-read man. He employs two terms, “antecedens” and “consequens,” in a novel way and in an unexpected context. Both terms are frequently found together, but almost exclusively in dense and pointedly learned Latin theological, grammatical, or philosophical texts.99 Neither word is common in Middle English, and their use here likely points to Scribe 1 having absorbed a Latin theological or grammatical vocabulary.100 The technical, even academic register from which the terms derive does not obscure their meaning here: they refer to the texts before and after the “boke” that is the Arundel Chronicle, namely, the Albina prologue and the illumina-

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98. MS Arundel 58, f. 1r–1v.
99. See, for example, P. King, “Consequence as Inference: Medieval Proof Theory, 1300–1350,” in Medieval Formal Logic: Obligations, Insolubles, and Consequences, ed. Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 117–46; King intriguingly notes that, while “consequent” has remained a primarily logical term, “modern logicians have been . . . not at all [successful] with ‘antecedent,’ which still has a broad range of uses not tied to either conditionals or consequents—for instance, in speaking about one’s background or genealogy” (139).
100. “Consequens” does appear in some French legal texts. See the Anglo-Norman Dictionary, “consequence.” The MED offers instances of “antecedent” twice in Passus 4 of the C-Text of Piers Plowman, in Reginald Pecock’s Rule of Christian Religion, the Donet, and The Follower to the Donet, in the Wycliffite Sermons preserved in MS Bodley 788, and most frequently in Guy de Chauliac’s Grande Chirurgie, a medical text. It should be noted that they frequently appear as a pair, as in the Wycliffite Sermons: “al oonli whanne antecedent and consequent ben convertiblis in kynde.”
nated “Verses on the Kings” that conclude the volume. Again, Scribe 1’s language encompasses Arundel 58 as a whole. Moreover, he frames the book as inherently amenable to the structure of logical argument, as a kind of logical proof of history.

Imagining the book as a singular entity does not resolve the difficulties posed by composing a derivative text, and assembling heterogeneous sources into a composite whole. The text of the Arundel Chronicle was first identified as unique by Hearne in his 1724 edition of the Chronicle. The large-scale alterations to the text performed by the Arundel Chronicle are most obviously seen in the prose passages that disrupt the single column layout employed to accommodate the long-line verse of the Chronicle. Instead, the prose is continuously written in two columns of equal length. (See figure 9.) There are 60 mixed-format folios in the manuscript, and on the whole Scribes 1 and 2 accomplish the transitions between prose and verse without difficulty.\(^{101}\) This is not, in itself, surprising. Scribes tend to be so astonishingly good at the sorts of calculations necessary to accomplish their task that we take their skills for granted, noticing only their mistakes, made particularly available by the insidious prevalence of the trope of the incompetent scribe. In Arundel 58, the two scribes have miscalculated (or otherwise encountered difficulties) while negotiating 19 of the 96 transitions between prose and verse.\(^{102}\) Both scribes avoid wasting parchment, and instead choose to “mis-write” verse in the two column layout reserved for prose. In order to visually mark the verse as such, they leave the second line of each line of verse to form a “ragged” right margin—the long lines of the Chronicle are too long to fit in the width of a single column. (See figure 10.) It is a sensible solution that saves parchment, and that in itself may account for both scribes employing it. Yet the consistency of the layout and of the solution asserts the continuity of the book, and suggests something like a house style.\(^{103}\) Scribe 2 is either working to Scribe 1’s model (and thus has some portion of Scribe 1’s

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101. Thus, for shorter prose interpolations, the scribes must calculate the number of column-inches that will be required, and then rule two columns on a mixed-format folio appropriately. For example, see f. 89\(^r\), f. 96\(^r\), and f. 134\(^r\), where columns of more than twenty lines of prose are balanced to within a line. While it is easy to estimate how many lines verse will occupy when copying from an exemplar, copying prose can vary considerably with respect to the size of parchment or script. I am deeply grateful to Anne Hudson for her insights on scribal behaviors, and for discussions about this manuscript.

102. As many of the prose additions extend beyond a single folio, the 60 mixed-format folios are not equal to the 48 prose passages, and thus 96 transitions. Two of the instances are Scribe 1’s solution to the problem, while the remainder are Scribe 2’s: Arundel 58, f. 81\(^r\), 145\(^r\), 154\(^r\), 157\(^r\), 159\(^r\), 162\(^r\), 166\(^r\), 193\(^r\), 198\(^r\), 200\(^r\), 200\(^v\), 201\(^r\), 205\(^r\), 214\(^r\), 216\(^r\), 220\(^r\), 278\(^r\), 300\(^r\), and 334\(^v\).

103. That is, both scribes are consistent in their use of single columns for the long-line verse of the Chronicle, double columns for prose, and filling mismeasured columns lineated for prose with miswritten verse.
Figure 9. London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58, f. 81r
In the month March, ysed in thuc
accepted deed. Agor the bysshop
pas gas atone. Tho on the
one of Deuter. The love of to
are the son of church. In the
for the frateron of our
lord, ye e and ye. Tho my
man). And this recorded, that
non benefice of other mon
with the benedict. Of the
Pope John, that does deped.
Hereafter many indignitious pies
with a word to me may see i
the chronicles of popes. This
was he that the fende by hto
him he shulde nat Depe, or he
shulde say a mass after thor.
shulde. Of seijmes the sone.

and toke of one trow 3 seconds hom
Sone upon after to hwe no
theme they come.

In my halle of this lovee hame
ne they hadd.

And toked of the love, hem
the voy ladde.

Setthar vrest underloude ofte
by despexe.

And also destroyed they in the
of side.

The resiutna. Alp they beyme
benefice.

And the theme of e on caste caste
they a poper.

On king. Wroence also, as he
might be.

Witte breche of his broth the
harden to him. The power
was the breche of all men
side.
first stint available to him), or is otherwise familiar with the solution (instructions from the book’s supervising editor, for example). Miswriting verse in the columns reserved for prose solves a problem, however, that can only occur when the exemplar does not feature the same layout as that of the manuscript being copied.

The mistakes made in fitting prose interpolations into the area ruled for them suggest that composition and copying are simultaneous or taking place in very close proximity. Consider moments such as those observed by Richard Moll, who identifies instances of Middle English verse (not drawn from the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester), that preserve untranslated Anglo-Norman, “ke” and “peron.” Such moments suggest Scribe 1 is here translating from a source as he writes Arundel 58, something also seen in Chapter 1, where the Middle English text of the MS Ashmole 35 version Gower’s Confessio employs the declined Latinate form “Tiresiam” for Tiresias. Such evidence suggests that copying and composition were a single act. Yet, if that is the case, it poses a problem for understanding Scribe 1’s role in creating the codex, and Arundel 58 as a whole. It accounts for the errors made in underestimating the extent of the prose additions to the Chronicle, which now reflect the processes of assembling a derivative text from multiple sources. It does not, however, address Scribe 2’s role in the codex. Composing a derivative text requires an enormous amount of planning. It cannot have been a matter of simply opening three or four relevant historiographical texts, and copying a few lines from one and translating a few lines from another. Identifying passages to be copied or translated, and identifying the sequence in which they were to be copied, requires a specifically textual infrastructure to accomplish. Arundel 58 preserves some signs of that infrastructure, along with a rhetoric specific to the processes of composition.

The texts incorporated into the Arundel Chronicle are not a plurality of texts juxtaposed in the form of an inert compilation. At every level, the composition of the text and of its appearance on the page demonstrates purposive engagement and determined participation in the traditions of history writing. Scribe 1 carefully facilitates the transitions from verse to prose and back again by embedding them in the larger narrative of the reading expe-

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104. In almost all of the instances of miswritten verse, the amount of prose to be copied has been overestimated. The magnitude of some of these mistakes suggests this is not merely a mechanical error, as, for example, f. 220a–b, where the miscalculation has left a column and a half filled with verse.

105. Thus, “Ke in the boke of Seint Graal me may rede and se, / But that thes clerkes holdeth noght as for auctoryte,” and “to helpe hym that he myghte the swerd of the peron a-say” (f. 55r), where the scribe has added “ston” above the line. See Moll, Before Malory, 208 and 316 n. 46.
rience of his derivative text. He uses a variety of phrases to accomplish this integration, ranging from short phrases to longer and more complex rhymes. Some of these transitions are verse, and are thus visually indistinguishable from the verses of the *Chronicle*. The experience of the reader is thereby made continuous. That is, the visually distinct prose and verse portions of the text refer to each other, thereby establishing a singular coherence that overcomes the visual opposition suggested by their layouts. For example, the transition on f. 80\(^v\) anticipates, in verse, the prose that is to come, “And as wise in bothe side speke of this matere / In ryme y fynde hit noght write but in prose here / as hit in latyn is rad y wole telle nouthe / aftur the storye of Geffray of Monemouth.” This is not the argument of a scribe, but rather a scribal author. Scribe 1 here imagines his text to be, as he describes it in his colophon, the “fful text,” a text that incorporates the words of “bothe side” of an issue. He brings together the prose and the verse, the Bedan and the Galfridian, Latin and Middle English, into a unified text. He is writing a text and holding himself responsible to a vision of history and history writing that aspires to a kind of historiographical completeness.

The author of the Arundel *Chronicle* marks other formal transitions for his reader, bridging the gaps between prose and verse through the text’s articulated awareness of both. He renders the text continuous even as it threatens to seem discontinuous, engaging the reader precisely as a reader. Here, he marks a shift from prose back to verse, but does so by making clear the historiographical argument standing behind his assemblage of the derivative text:

Many sor
rowful thyngus and thyngus sodey
ne fell in his tyme . Which beth
tolde in the Ryme here after
for hit accordeth to the latyn
prose the most part . And now to
the geste rymed . that telleth sum
what more than the prose hath
tolde of summe thyngus . and yut
nought all that the prose hath tolde
¶Whanne that kyng William Rous
as Rymed is byfore

106. MS Arundel 58, f. 80\(^v\). Other examples marking transitions include “Ryme here after,” f. 198\(^v\); “And for as muche as we speketh her of cristendom / a litel in prose y wole rehers,” f. 90\(^r\); “whiche in Ryme afterward is tolde more pleasing,” f. 185\(^r\); “¶prose more pleyne of the same mater,” f. 221\(^v\); “as myche notable þynges in the cronicles rymed that is nat in this prose,” f. 300\(^r\).
The scribal author here draws attention to the plurality of sources that are the foundations of his derivative text. He visibly compares the historical coverage, as it were, of multiple texts in his observation that “the geste rymed . . . telleth sum what more . . . and yut nought all.” He also concerns himself with textual fidelity, an always-pressing issue for translations. He rightly claims of the Chronicle that “hit accordeth to the latyn prose for the most part,” echoing distantly the opinions of the scribal verses of MS Royal 20.a.xi contrasting the works of Wace and Langtoft.

There is an insistence throughout the codex on clarity that recalls the Harley Scribe’s concern with historical accuracy in the Royal Short Chronicle. The text of the Arundel Chronicle repeatedly deploys some variation of the phrase “more pleyne of the same mater” to describe the logic behind the sometimes awkward transitions made from verse to prose and back again. The text stresses its aspiration to be “pleine” for the reader, performatively exposing its constituent texts, comparing them to each other in order to provide both clarity and demonstrable thoroughness. This emphasis is still further compelling evidence for Scribe 1’s authorship of the Arundel Chronicle. In his colophon, that quintessential moment of the voice of a scribe in a space framed by the rhetoric of authorship, Scribe 1 describes the book to come and also records the date of its completion. In the visual space of scribal holograph that colophons offer, Scribe 1 describes the table of contents as “more plennarly knewlich.” Throughout Arundel 58, in stints copied by both Scribes 1 and 2, and particularly at the transitions from prose to verse and back, the text emphasizes that it seeks to provide a text “more oppen” and “more plenure fullich.” The imperative describes both the logic and the labor standing behind the assemblage of this derivative text. Such moments work to expose to the reader not the ruptures between constituent texts, but rather the continuity of the Arundel text. The consistency of that

107. MS Arundel 58, f. 198v. Lineation of the manuscript is retained, especially as the final four lines are an instance of miswritten verse. The final couplet of the passage quoted is a lightly translated version of Robert of Gloucester, Chronicle, 7966–73, followed by more strictly replicative copying equivalent to Chronicle, 7974.

108. MS Arundel 58, f. 221v: “¶prose more pleyner of the same mater.”

109. The confusion and slippage among the several definitions in the MED of “plain” and related adjectives and adverbs suggest that multiple senses are always available in the word’s use.

110. MS Arundel 58, f. 136v and f. 185r. See also “more plenure,” f. 193v; “more pleyner,” f. 221v; “Now be cause the story in Ryme is nought full plenner,” f. 284v; and “And hit is to remember that the ffrensh story telleth more plenure,” f. 287v.
rhetoric throughout the book—its appearance in Scribe 1’s colophon, and the shared vocabulary throughout the Arundel Chronicle—argue that Arundel 58 is Scribe 1’s book, and the Arundel Chronicle is Scribe 1’s text.

In assembling the Arundel Chronicle, Scribe 1 demonstrates an incredibly broad textual lexicon. In addition to his (obvious) familiarity with the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, he translates or adapts a number of texts, including—but emphatically not limited to—Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia regum, the Anglo-Norman Brut, and the texts of John of Glastonbury, Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, Nicholas Trevet, and particularly William of Malmesbury. The impressive and consistent appeal to this corpus of texts throughout the Arundel Chronicle further confirms the text is Scribe 1’s production. He composed some verse directly on the page, particularly the transitions he wrote to anticipate and respond to his prose interpolations. He also translated from his source texts without intermediaries at times, as seen in the Anglo-Norman forms that survive untranslated. We also see Scribe 1 working from whatever might have preceded Arundel 58, whether scraps of parchment or wax tablets, in those instances where he has misestimated the extent of the prose to be translated or copied, resulting in miswritten verse. In a few cases, we see him making mechanical copying errors, as did Bauduin Butors in his tragic textual announcements. Scribe 1’s compositional exemplar must have indicated the layout of Arundel 58 without actually modeling it, given Scribe 2’s similar occasional difficulties in creating mixed-format folios to accommodate prose and verse. After Scribe 1 composed the Arundel Chronicle, it fell to Scribe 2 to copy over half of the codex. In copying Scribe 1’s exemplar, Scribe 2 performs something wholly typical of scribal practice, an unproblematic aspect of replicative copying. Scribe 2 was largely responsible for transforming the text into the finished page, for adhering to a set of visual and textual standards, and for applying those standards throughout his work. Arundel 58 is not a particularly attractive book, despite its occasional illuminated initials and program of rubrication. Nonetheless, the book was not created without effort or expense; not only do the Anonymous “Kings of England” feature illuminated roundels, but throughout the book there is a regular plan of illuminated decorated initials with borders. An expensive book, Arundel 58 is the mate-

112. For example, the struck-through “cronicles” on MS Arundel 58, f. 87b.
113. Scribe 2 also makes errors typical of a scribe copying a text, as at f.133v: “In this doyn-gus / Athelston shewed shewed wysdom / and holynesse”; at f. 178b: “but Natheles he trusete sum what / in the multitude of his Pепele / But natheles he trusete sum what / in the multitude of his peple”; at f. 179r: “not vsing not vsyng”; or the line of verse marked as omitted and supplied at the foot of the folio on f. 210r.
rial remnant of a scribal author copying his own derivative text, which also attests to the skills of his fellow scribe, Scribe 2, who fashioned the book as a book.

Scribe 1 of Arundel 58 composed on a much grander scale than did Auchinleck Scribe 1 in the *Short Chronicle*. Starting with the *Chronicle* of Robert of Gloucester, a text of some 18,000 lines, rather than with the *Short Chronicle*, a text of perhaps 1,000 lines, Arundel Scribe 1’s project to create a definitive historiographical record was a deeply learned and intertextual undertaking. Arundel Scribe 1 created a new history in verse and prose, written directly on the folios of Arundel 58, combining deftly derived text and measured contributions, such as the verses he writes on Scota, eponymous founder of Scotland, and Edward I’s seizure of the Stone of Scone.\(^\text{114}\)

Time passes for books as well as for texts—Auchinleck Scribe 1 confronted the history of the texts in his hand and that passed through his hands. He translated and adapted *Des Grantz Geanz*, the work of Matthew Paris, *Richard*, and other texts in order to write an Auchinleck *Short Chronicle* featuring both important historical detail and intriguing historical anecdote. The *Short Chronicle* invited scribal authorship, and both the Harley Scribe and Auchinleck Scribe 1 responded to that invitation to compose unique texts in dialogue with the other texts of the manuscripts, and with the historical circumstances of the books’ production. History is always written on the historical page, and history writing records its own history as much as the history of the past.

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114. See MS Arundel 58, f. 17: “Aftur a womman that Scot hyght . the doughtur of Pharaon / that broughte into Scotlond ; a white marbel ston / that was ordeyned for hure kyng . whan he crouned were / And for a gret jewel longe . hit was yholde there / kyng Edward with the lange shankes fro Scotlond hit sette / By syde the shryne of seynt Edward at westmester let hit sette.” I do not believe these verses have been discussed elsewhere.