

‘Continvaunce of remembraunce’:  
An edition and discussion of lyrics from  
the Findern Manuscript (CUL MS Ff.I.6)

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of  
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## Abstract

This edition and discussion of the Findern Manuscript (CUL MS Ff.I.6) presents the first time that its unique lyrics are edited as a whole. The edition pursues the balance between accessibility and authenticity, representing both the manuscript and the texts themselves. The discussion synthesises the current critical milieu which surrounds the manuscript, and draws out new aspects worthy of attention, such as inter-textual connections, thematic elements and musical context. Together, these parts create an impression of the unique lyrics as a body of work contributed by numerous aspirant female and male writers using the manuscript page as a meeting-place for the exchange of ideas.

## Acknowledgements

Professor Wendy Scase, my supervisor, deserves sincere thanks for her enthusiasm towards my project and for her unfaltering ability to solve my palaeographical queries. I would like to extend warm thanks to Dr David Griffith and Dr Emily Wingfield for their kindness and academic support.

I am highly grateful to the College of Arts & Law Graduate School Postgraduate Research Support Fund for their financial assistance towards my research trip to the University of Cambridge in order to study the original manuscript; my research is enriched due to this experience.

I would also like to acknowledge the continued support of my parents throughout my education. Lastly, I offer heartfelt thanks to John for his love and patience.



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24. Short piece of music (f. 139<sup>v</sup>).
25. Longer piece of music (f. 143<sup>r</sup>).

## List of Abbreviations

CUL - Cambridge University Library

DIMEV - Digital Index of Middle English Verse

EETS - Early English Text Society

IMC - International Medieval Congress

MED - Middle English Dictionary

MS - Manuscript

OED - Oxford English Dictionary

PMLA - Publications of the Modern Language Association

TEAMS - The Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages

# Introduction

CUL MS Ff.I.6: Anthology, miscellany, scrapbook

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The Findern Manuscript (CUL MS Ff.I.6) is a late medieval medley of canonical and amateur poetry that documents the experiences of a group of provincial landed gentry who engage with pseudo-courtly activities and social literary practices. The paper manuscript was compiled from the late fifteenth century over the course of a hundred years, which accounts for the presence of over forty scribal hands. Sarah McNamer posits that the manuscript's status 'declined in value', and suggests that it became more commonplace as time passed.<sup>1</sup> Cindy Rogers calls the manuscript a 'scrapbook', since unique items such as poetry and household notes were added at the end of quires and in spaces after longer canonical texts.<sup>2</sup> Beadle and Owen state the name 'Findern' attached to the manuscript is:

[...] after the family of that name and their country house (about five miles to the south-west of Derby) where it is thought to have been compiled.<sup>3</sup>

The manuscript was not a revered literary investment in the traditional sense; it was neither decorated nor treated with particular care. This means that the thirty-three unique compositions as well as evidence of writing practice, small doodles and even scribal errors are vital relics of the social life of this household manuscript. They display the unadulterated literary ambitions, accomplishments and personal tastes of men and women collaborating in one contained space over the course of a century. Thus, the manuscript provides a rare window to discuss the role of women in manuscript compilation, the relationship between canonical texts and aspirant amateur writing as well as the diverse range of emotions verbalised through the lyric form.

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah McNamer, 'Female Authors, Provincial Setting: The Re-Versing of Courtly Love in the Findern Manuscript', *Viator*, 22 (1991), 279-310 (p. 283).

<sup>2</sup> Cindy Rogers, Introduction. I am highly grateful to Cindy Rogers for providing me with a copy of her forthcoming thesis. All future references to this body of work will read 'Rogers', in reference to 'Rogers, forthcoming doctoral dissertation, Indiana University'.

<sup>3</sup> *The Findern Manuscript, Cambridge University Library MS. Ff.I.6*, ed. by Richard Beadle and Arthur Ernest Bion Owen (London: Scolar Press, 1978), p. vii. Henceforth, all references to folios are from this edition.

## Between the leaves: Amateurs among Chaucer and his circle

~

The manuscript contents can be divided into four groups: canonical texts by Chaucer and his circle, short secular lyrics which survive only in the Findern manuscript, longer unique religious and historical texts and, lastly, other unique household items such as bills and accounts.<sup>4</sup> Cindy Rogers describes the canonical selection of poetry in the manuscript as a ‘greatest hits’<sup>5</sup> of fourteenth-century secular literature. This is an apt account, due to the inclusion of seven texts by Chaucer and seven by Lydgate, Hoccleve’s ‘Lepistre de Cupide’, and extracts from Gower’s ‘Confessio Amantis’ as well as Roos’ ‘La Belle Dame sans Mercy’, plus ‘Sir Degrevant’.<sup>6</sup> The unique poems encompass many short forms of love lyric such as roundels, carols, laments and ballads, and make frequent use of refrains and burdens. They treat the theme of lovesickness from varying perspectives and moods, and represent numerous voices of victims of the game of love. The religious and historical texts are particularly neglected items. They include a prayer, an orison, a complaint and the Cato Major, all of which are located towards the end of the manuscript.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, several household items are included, such as a butcher’s bill, an account of a ‘rekenyng be twene Iohn wylsun & mester fynderne’ and an inventory of ‘clothys at fyndern’.<sup>8</sup> Robbins notes that H. L. Pink and A. I. Doyle date these additions to 1550.<sup>9</sup> This division of the manuscript contents is useful for conception of its scope. Once the manuscript is opened, however, the notion of sub-division is lost as texts change within a single line break, with a new scribe almost every time.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix: Manuscript Contents for detailed list.

<sup>5</sup> Cindy Rogers, ‘In Earnest and in Game: A reconsideration of women’s voices in the Findern Manuscript’, *IMC, Kalamazoo*, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> The Chaucer texts are as follows: ‘The Complaint unto Pity’ (ff. 15<sup>r</sup>-17<sup>r</sup>), ‘The Parlement of Foules’ (ff. 29<sup>r</sup>-42<sup>v</sup>), ‘Complaint unto his Purse’ (f. 59<sup>r</sup>), Anelida’s Complaint from ‘Anelida and Arcite’ (ff. 61<sup>r</sup>-63<sup>v</sup>), The tale of Thisbe from the ‘Legend of Good Women’ (ff. 64<sup>r</sup>-67<sup>v</sup>), ‘The Complaint of Venus’ (ff. 68<sup>r</sup>-69<sup>v</sup>). The Lydgate poems are: ‘A Lover’s Plaint’ (ff. 17<sup>r</sup>-18<sup>v</sup>), ‘A Complaint for Lack of Sight’ (ff. 19<sup>r</sup>-v), ‘The Wicked Tongue’ (ff. 147<sup>r</sup>-150<sup>r</sup>), ‘A Complaint for Lack of Mercy’ (ff. 152<sup>v</sup>-153<sup>r</sup>), ‘The Pain and Sorrow of Evil Marriage’ (ff. 155<sup>r</sup>-156<sup>r</sup>), ‘A tretise for lauandres’ (f. 164<sup>r</sup>). There is also a composite text compiled from an excerpt from Chaucer’s ‘Troilus and Criseyde’ and Lydgate’s ‘Fall of Princes’ (ff. 150<sup>r</sup>-151<sup>r</sup>). The other canonical poems are Hoccleve’s ‘Lepistre de Cupide’ (ff. 71<sup>r</sup>-76<sup>v</sup>); extracts from Gower’s ‘Confessio Amantis’ (ff. 3<sup>r</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>, 45<sup>r</sup>-51<sup>r</sup>, 81<sup>r</sup>-95<sup>v</sup>); Roos’ ‘La Belle Dame sans Mercy’ (ff. 117<sup>r</sup>-134<sup>v</sup>); ‘Sir Degrevant’ (ff. 96<sup>r</sup>-109<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>7</sup> These are: f. 146<sup>v</sup>, f. 146<sup>r</sup>, ff. 159<sup>v</sup>-161<sup>r</sup> and ff. 181<sup>r</sup>-185<sup>v</sup> respectively.

<sup>8</sup> f. 70<sup>v</sup> (which includes the word ‘battellys’, presumably as in ‘battles list’), f. 59<sup>v</sup> and f. 70<sup>r</sup>.

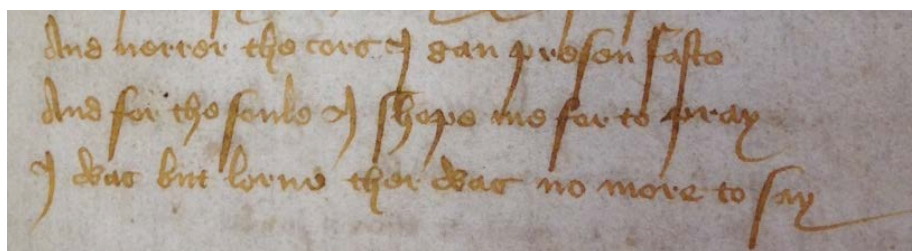
<sup>9</sup> Rossell Hope Robbins, ‘The Findern Anthology’, *PMLA*, 69, 3, 610-642 (p. 618).



## The writing on the page

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Due to the production dates of the manuscript, its loose cursive scripts vary from anglicana to secretary. None of the hands seems professional, although some are more competent than other idiosyncratic styles. The scribes of the unique lyrics are discussed more fully in Chapter 1; Kate Harris also provides a compelling account of the manuscript's scribal intricacies.<sup>10</sup> When I visited the manuscript for transcription purposes, I was able to note ink colours of black, brown and amber, which are not evident in the monochrome facsimile edition. Here is one such example:



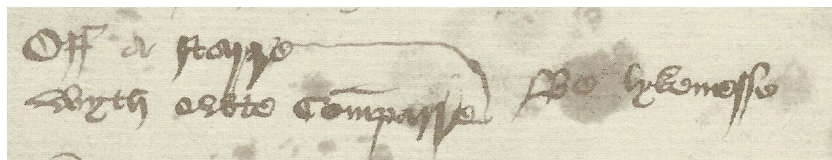
(Figure 1)

I was also able to observe the use of drypoint which, although faint, reads 'coton':<sup>11</sup>



(Figure 2)

Varying nib thicknesses and occasional blotting are noticeable, such as seen here:

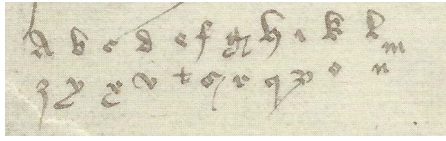


(Figure 3)

<sup>10</sup> Kate Harris, 'The Origins and Make-Up of Cambridge University Library Manuscript Ff.I.6', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 8, 3 (1983), 299-333 (Appendix III, pp. 331-333).

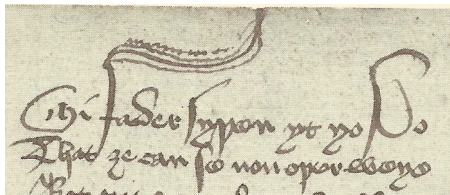
<sup>11</sup> See Harris, p. 307 for discussion of this.

The manuscript has no formal decoration or illustration, such as rubrication or colour. Instead, there are several ‘doodles’ throughout the manuscript, which include pen trials and alphabet practice. Here is an example:

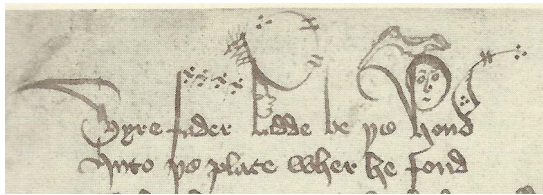


(Figure 4)

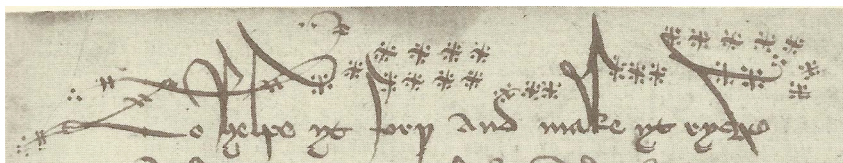
There are also a small number of lightly decorated capital letters, such as that found on ff. 47<sup>r</sup>-48<sup>r</sup>:



(Figure 5)



(Figure 6)



(Figure 7)

The scribe that uses the signature ‘a god when’ draws a scroll (poem 11, Plate XVII) and a barrel, rebus and two fishes (poem 15, Plate XX), seen here:



(Figure 8)

There are no catchwords, and there is minimal use of running titles, except for in ‘Sir Degrevant’ (ff. 96<sup>r</sup>-109<sup>v</sup>). We must exercise caution in terming any names that appear in the manuscript to be signatures, but there are several names inscribed in the manuscript, which are noted by Marshall.<sup>12</sup>

### The physical codex

~

Beadle and Owen state that the manuscript survives in the form of 159 paper leaves.<sup>13</sup> On the basis of the fact that there are several stubs and some leaves which seem to be missing entirely, Henry Bradshaw speculates that there were originally up to 188 leaves.<sup>14</sup> Marshall disagrees with Bradshaw’s count, noting that there are 26, rather than 29 lost folios.<sup>15</sup> She establishes this by comparing Beadle and Owen’s contents list with the manuscript itself. The dimensions of the leaves vary from 212-220 mm by 146-153 mm, within which the writing spaces differ greatly and are frequently shared by more than one text and scribal hand. Lines per page therefore also vary, but the text is almost entirely comprised of single columns. The single exception to this is ‘Sir Degrevant’ (ff. 96<sup>r</sup>-109<sup>v</sup>), which uses two columns as well as running titles, pricking and ruling, all of which are rare elsewhere in the manuscript.<sup>16</sup>

Harris notes 13 different watermarks, some of which only appear with individual texts.<sup>17</sup> Cockerell removed the watermarks during binding in 1977.<sup>18</sup> At the time of an earlier rebinding in approximately 1866, foliation was also added in pencil to the top right hand corners of pages, which modern foliation (such as in the facsimile edition) is based on.<sup>19</sup> The collation can be summarised to the effect that there are fifteen gatherings, which vary from four to twenty-four leaves.<sup>20</sup> This irregularity, when considered in conjunction with the spread of watermarks, is suggestive of gradual composition. Beadle and Owen provide a collation diagram in

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<sup>12</sup> Simone Celine Marshall, ‘Notes on Cambridge University Library MS Ff.I.6.’, *Notes and Queries*, 49 (2002), 439–442.

<sup>13</sup> Beadle and Owen, p. viii.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Marshall, p. 441.

<sup>16</sup> For the best example of these features, see Beadle and Owen, f. 100<sup>v</sup>.

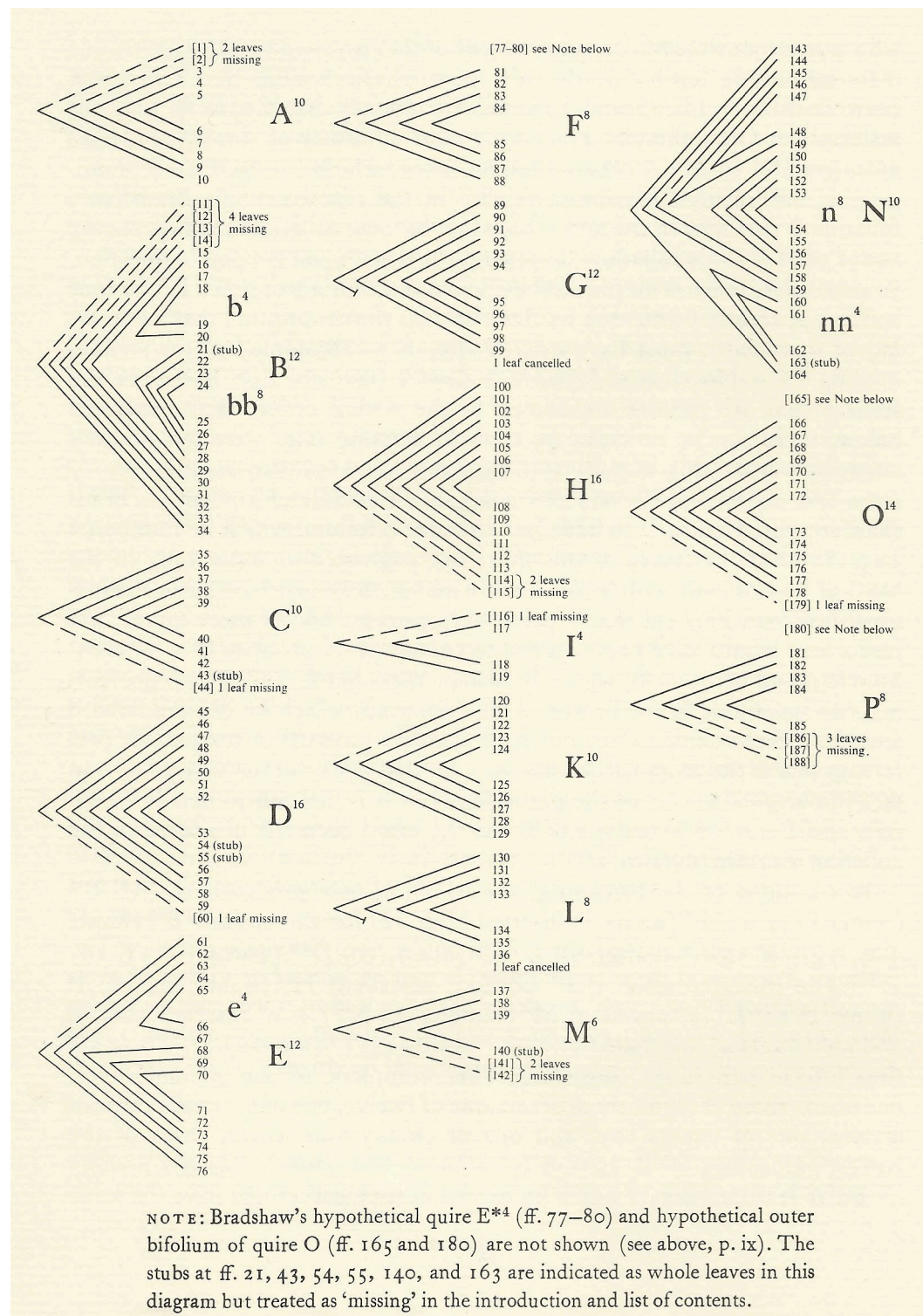
<sup>17</sup> Harris, Appendix II, pp. 329-331.

<sup>18</sup> Harris, p. 329.

<sup>19</sup> Beadle and Owen, p. ix.

<sup>20</sup> For a more detailed account of the booklet debate in the manuscript, refer to pp. 59-60 of this dissertation.

their introduction:



(Figure 9)

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The manuscript was kept in the Findern household until the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>21</sup> It is unknown if there were other owners between the Finderns and the Knyvetts of Ashwellthorpe, Norfolk, who owned the manuscript for the first half of the seventeenth century, and possibly earlier.<sup>22</sup> The link between the Finderns and the Knyvetts also remains unclear, but the Knyvetts' catalogue of their manuscript collection survives to reveal that Sir Thomas Knyvett owned 'manuscripts of the choicer kind'.<sup>23</sup> An entry in the catalogue terms the Findern Manuscript 'An English historical poeme'.<sup>24</sup> The Findern Manuscript was one of several manuscripts from the Knyvetts' collection to be acquired by Bishop John Moore, who described it as 'Poema historicum lingua Anglica vetere, 8vo'.<sup>25</sup> Beadle and Owen refer to these labels as 'remarkably inaccurate' accounts. Following Bishop Moore's death, George I bought his manuscript collection and donated it in its entirety to Cambridge University Library in 1715, where the Findern Manuscript is held today.<sup>26</sup>

It is important to explore how this provincial Derbyshire family could have acquired the canonical texts that occupy a significant proportion of the manuscript. Jurkowski has written extensively on the Finderns, with a focus on John Findern (arguably the most prolific member of the family) and his 'heretical associations' with known Lollards.<sup>27</sup> Since the 'relationship between Lollardy and literacy is indisputable', these connections and sympathies could be revelatory for the manuscript.<sup>28</sup> This could mean that John Findern had access to canonical texts facilitated by heretical friends of high status, such as Sir John Oldcastle and Sir Gerard Braybrook.<sup>29</sup> Jurkowski briefly references the possibility of John Findern's acquisition of 'The Boke of Cupide' by Sir John Clanvowe through a mutual friend.<sup>30</sup> She concludes that:

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<sup>21</sup> Beadle and Owen, p. vii.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Maureen Jurkowski, 'The "Findern Manuscript" and the History of the Fynderne Family in the Fifteenth Century', in *Texts and their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. by John Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 196-223 (p. 206).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



If the Derbyshire Fyndernes were involved in the Lollard heresy, then the fact that the family's female members could both read and write English at the end of the century is hardly surprising.<sup>31</sup>

This genealogical research suggests a household with daring literary ambitions, and as such presents evidence worthy of further investigation. The Finderns were of sufficient wealth and status to acquire texts and afford the production of a manuscript and therefore could have purchased a professional anthology made to a specification of their choosing. Instead, they were ambitious enough to compile their own by gathering canonical exemplars, by copying poems by hand and possibly by composing their own. These introductory sections are intended to familiarise the reader with the manuscript and to heighten enjoyment of the poems by presenting their physical and historical context.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

## Editorial Principles

The overarching rationale of this edition and discussion is to achieve readability and maintain authenticity in equal measure. Another key aim is to increase accessibility, which is of course inherent in the creation of an edition, and which I have acknowledged in my chosen title of ‘Continuance of remembrance’.

This edition exists in order to continue to update the availability of the manuscript and its texts, as initiated by R. H. Robbins’ ‘The Findern Anthology’ and continued by Richard Beadle and A. E. B. Owen’s *The Findern Manuscript*. In making this edition, I hope to emphasise the need for a digital edition as well as for a complete scholarly edition of the entire manuscript. I suggest that the Findern Manuscript would benefit greatly from a TEAMS edition. Restrictions on the length of this piece of work necessitate choosing a selection of poems to edit. In the case of the Findern Manuscript, it is a greater contribution to knowledge to edit unique and rare items rather than to re-edit canonical authors. Thus, this dissertation offers the first complete, edited set of lyrics that survive uniquely in the Findern Manuscript. There are twenty-five such texts. I have included one additional text (poem 11) that does appear in one other manuscript but which has minimal editorial history and which complements the unique items thematically. The poems I have chosen are linked in implementation of the lyric form, theme, and the fact that they have not been edited extensively.

I aim to apply steadfast and consistent editorial principles, which seek to address the unique editorial challenge of editing both a text and a manuscript. Adding punctuation and expanding abbreviations increases the poems’ readability. Preservation of the original layout and inclusion of scribal corrections ensures that the manuscript context is acknowledged on the edited page. Therefore, I hope to achieve an editorial balance that privileges both the text and the context equally.

I initially transcribed the texts from the facsimile edition, and later supplemented this with a trip to Cambridge University Library, where the original manuscript has been held since 1715.<sup>1</sup> This was instrumental for transcription revisions. It is both interesting and humbling to proofread my own transcriptions, only to find mistakes akin to those of scribes, such as eyeskip. I consulted a number of

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<sup>1</sup> Beadle and Owen, p. vii.

editions that date from 1845 and which include any number of poems from the manuscript from a single poem up to 15. These were influential in determining my own editorial policy and rationale, as well as being a point of comparison for transcription.<sup>2</sup> Pearsall, Barratt and McNamer are particularly inspiring for their clarity of presentation and the selection provided.<sup>3</sup> Some editors such as R.H. Robbins choose to create their own titles for the poems which, as I discuss later (see p. 58), can be problematic. Therefore, in this edition poems are titled by their first line unless enjambment separates the phrase awkwardly, in which case the title encompasses all or part of the second line as appropriate.

## Layout

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A primary aim regarding the layout and format of the poems is to maintain authenticity with the original manuscript context. Poems appear in the order that they are recorded in the manuscript and any poems that extend beyond one manuscript page have a folio notation along the right hand side of the page in square brackets.<sup>4</sup> I have numbered the poems and inserted line numbers to aid navigation and referencing. Footnote numbers employ the line number that the note refers to. Any deletions or corrections are noted in footnotes. Scribal errors are not emended, since these contribute to our reading of the texts within their unique manuscript context.

Line breaks and new stanzas are implemented when there is either an obvious line gap in the manuscript or when paraphs are used. Many of the unique poems indent the last line of each stanza, which indicates a refrain or burden. These are preserved in the edited poems as they contribute to our reading of the text and remind us of their lyrical possibilities as songs. Indented lines, as in the manuscript, are intended to be read last within that stanza. Furthermore, some of the indented lines can be read as a column and form their own poem, which must be maintained in order

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<sup>2</sup> I will list the editions consulted by citing the editor along with the year of publication. These can be traced easily in the Bibliography. Barratt (2010), Brown (1939), Brydges (1815), Chambers (1911), Cohen (1915), Cook (1915), Davies (1964), Furnivall (all), Greene (1935), Halliwell-Phillipps (1844), Jacob (1961), Luria (1974), MacCracken (1911, 1913), Mason (1959), McNamer (1991), Neilson (1899), Oliver (1970), Pearsall (1999), Person (1953), Ritson (1877), Robbins (1942, 1954, 1955), Silverstein (1971), Sisam (1970), Stevick (1964), Tatlock (1921), Wright (1845, 1859), Wülker (1874).

<sup>3</sup> Derek Pearsall, ed. *Chaucer to Spenser: An Anthology of Writing in English 1375-1575* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 402-405. *Women's Writing in Middle English*, ed. by Alexandra Barratt (Harlow: Pearson, 2010), pp. 288-293. Sarah McNamer, pp. 303-310.

<sup>4</sup> Foliation was added in 1866 by Bradshaw. Beadle and Owen, pp. viii-ix.



to appreciate the poem fully. Brackets are also commonly used alongside these indented lines. These cannot be reproduced accurately and thus the reader is recommended to refer to the brackets of the poem as it appears in facsimile form in the Plates section. The practice of preserving the layout of the poems as far as possible is integral to realising the significance of the material manuscript context.

### Capitalisation

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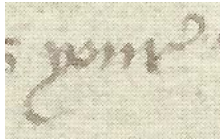
Capitalisation is irregular in the manuscript, both for the first word of each line and within lines. Therefore, I have standardised capitalisation for the first word of every line, and regularised capitals used within lines. A common device in the poems is the personification of abstract nouns such as 'Fortune', and these are capitalised in the text in order to aid this reading. Proper nouns are capitalised as they are in the text since it is worthwhile to note the application of capitals. For instance, 'God' only appears as 'god', and 'Jesus' appears as 'Ihesu'.

The use of 'ff' can be used to indicate a capital 'F' but is also used frequently at other points in the poems, such as 'ffor' and 'ffro'. Thus, the use of 'ff' is maintained in the edited poems as their application and formation can be used to distinguish one scribe from another.

### Abbreviations

~

The most common form of abbreviation in the manuscript is the use of superscript letters, which appear in common words such as 'with', seen as 'w<sup>t</sup>'. In cases such as these, the word appears as '*with*'. Any single superscript letters that are not abbreviations are brought in line with the rest of the text and are italicised, which is also the case for omitted words that have been added above the line. Flourishes which are otiose strokes are treated as such and therefore are not represented in the edition. A flourish is not considered an otiose stroke if it curls backwards to form a small reverse 'e'. In which case, it represents an abbreviation for an '-e' or '-er' suffix. This is italicised in the edited poems and appears in the manuscript as:



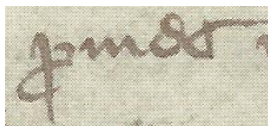
(Figure 10, enlarged)

Macrons are used frequently by some scribes and are represented in the edited text by either an italicised ‘m’ or ‘n’, as the context dictates. Some scribes apply non-standard abbreviations, usually in the form of macrons in place of any missing letters. In these cases the abbreviated letters are often clear from the other letters in the word or the sound necessitated by the rhyme scheme. Among the less common abbreviations are the cross-through in the descender of the letter ‘p’. This can mean either ‘par’ or ‘per’, which is determined by the scribe’s preferential use of ‘a’ or ‘e’ in other words. The letter ‘p’ occasionally has a looped descender, which represents ‘pro’. Here are examples of both ‘p’ abbreviations in the manuscript. Firstly, ‘par’, in ‘parde’:



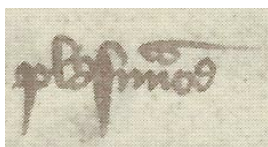
(Figure 11, enlarged)

And ‘pro’, in ‘promes’:



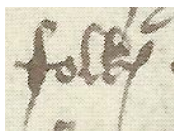
(Figure 12, enlarged)

This shape in the manuscript abbreviates an ‘a’, such as in ‘plesaunce’:



(Figure 13, enlarged)

This stroke represents ‘-es’, here seen in ‘folkes’:



(Figure 14, enlarged)

## Characters

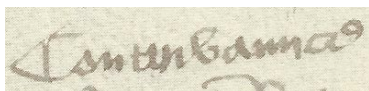
~

Yoghs and thorns are preserved in the edited poems, appearing as ‘ȝ’ and ‘þ’ or, when capitalised, as ‘Ȝ’ and ‘Þ’. The single character ‘and’ symbol is represented as ampersand ‘&’ to recreate the use of a single character. This is the ‘and’ symbol in the manuscript:



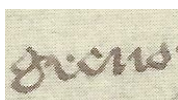
(Figure 15, enlarged)

The letters ‘u’ and ‘v’ are not standardised in the edition, and appear as in the manuscript. This is distinguished by the fact that the letter ‘v’ is more noticeable in its shape, as seen here:



(Figure 16, enlarged)

Whereas the ‘u’ is more simple, such as this usage:



(Figure 17, enlarged)

Since it does not contribute to the word it belongs to, nor does it reveal anything of the scribe, strikethrough such as ‘H’ is not included in this edition in order to avoid confusion with other letters. Numbers are represented as in the manuscript.

## Punctuation

~

The manuscript is entirely devoid of punctuation, which is to be expected of amateur lyrics dating from this period. Thus, any punctuation that is present in the edited texts is editorial and has been added to clarify the reading experience. Full stops and commas are the most common insertions, followed by question marks, semi-colons and speech marks. Hyphens are added to link words in order to aid comprehension, such as ‘a-mong’ or ‘al-vey’.

## The Poems

# I may well sygh, for greu<sup>ous</sup> ys my payne

1.

## Plate I

The chief poetic merit of this lyric lies in the simile presented in ll. 11-12, which establishes the motif of the lonely, lovesick figure that recurs through the manuscript's unique lyrics. Most of the unique poems which share such thematic similarities address an absent lover, whereas this lyric is from the perspective of the absentee. The medial caesura of the opening line allows the reader to hear the speaker sigh.

I may well sygh, for greu<sup>ous</sup> ys my payne, [f. 20']  
Now to departe fram yow thys sodenly;  
My fayre swete hert, ye cause me to compleyn.  
Ffor lacke of yow y stonde full pytously,  
Alle yn dyscomfort, withowten remedy. 5  
Most yn my mynde my lady souerayn -  
Alas, for woo, departynge hath me slayn.

Ffare-well my myrthe & chefe of my comfort,  
My joy ys turnyd ynto heuynesse  
Tyll y agayn to yow may resort. 10  
As for the tyme y am but recules,  
Lyke to a fygure wyche that ys hertlees.  
With yow hyt ys, god wote, y may not fayne –  
Alas, for woo, departynge hath me slayne.

3yt not wythstondynge, for all my greuaunce, 15  
Hyt shall be taken ryght pacyently,  
And thenke hyt ys to me but a plesaunce  
Ffor yow to suffre a grete dele more truly,  
Wyll neuer change but kepe vnfeynygly  
With alle my myght to be bothe true & playn – 20  
Alas, for woo, departynge hath me slayn.

<sup>11</sup> 'recules'; 'recureless' or 'incurable'. See: OED, 'recureless', adj. and MED, 'recurles', adj.

<sup>18</sup> Deletion: 'ff' before 'suffre'.

## Where y haue chosyn, stedefast woll y be

2.

### Plate II

Stanzas 1 and 2 have been previously edited separately (Person, 1953; Robbins, 1954) from the quatrain. I propose that ll. 15-18 form either an envoi or an abandoned attempt at a full length stanza. The quatrain shares its second person address, tone, rhyme scheme, meter and scribal hand with the preceding verses. The reader is the judge of whether the quatrain is a comment on or a continuation of the previous verses. Also of note is the smaller hand at the top right of the page, which reads ‘margery hungerford *withowte* variance’, which is partially echoed in l. 14.<sup>1</sup>

margery hungerford *withowte* variance

Where y haue chosyn, stedefast woll y be, [f. 20<sup>v</sup>]  
Nelle y *euer* to repente in wyll, thowth, ne dede,  
Yow to sarue watt 3e commaund me,  
Neuer hyt *with*-drawe for no maner drede.  
Thus am y bownd by yowre godely hede 5  
Wych haþe me causyd and þat in eury wyse,  
Wyle I in lyfe endure to do yow my seruyse.

Yowre desertt can none odere deserue,  
Wych ys in my remembrauns both day & nyȝt.  
Afore al creaturus, I yow loue & serue, 10  
Wyle in thys world I haue strength & myȝt,  
Whych ys in dewte of very dewe ryȝt,  
By *promes* made *with* feythful assuraunce,  
Euer yow to sarue *with*-owtyn varyaunce.

Ye are to blame to sette yowre hert so sore, 15  
Sepyn þat ye wote that hyt rekeurles,  
To encrece yowre payne more & more,  
Syn þat ye wote þat sche ys merceles.

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Robbins writes that ‘Documentation can be found for the families of Hungerford, Coton, Francis, and Shirley, all in the immediate vicinity of Findern, showing that these were well-known local families, and surely friends of the Finderns’ (Robbins, 1954, p. 627).

## As in yow resstyth my Ioy and comfort

3.

### Plate III

Pearsall notes the unique nature of this poem; it deals not with the love-sickness expressed in other Findern lyrics, but instead with real sickness of a loved one.<sup>1</sup> Despite the relative simplicity of its language, this lyric aptly articulates the agony of anticipation and relates the beloved's bodily illness to the speaker's own physical experience: 'Myne hert hanggyng þus in balaunce'. In a personal address to themselves rather than the reader, the speaker asks a self-searching question – 'Ho but 3e may me sustayne?'.

As in yow resstyth my Ioy and comfort, [f. 28<sup>v</sup>]  
Youre dissese ys my mortal payne.  
Some god send me seche reporte  
Þat may comfort myn hert in every vayne.  
Ho but 3e may me sustayne? 5  
As of my gref be þe remedy,  
But ye some amendement of yowre maledy.

Weche ys to me þe heviest remembraunce  
Þat euer can be þouth in any creature,  
Myne hert hanggyng þus in balaunce 10  
Tyl I haue knowlege & verely sure  
Þat god in yow hath lyst done thys cure  
Of yowre dyssexe to haue allygaunce,  
And to be releuyd of all yowre grevaunce.

<sup>1</sup> Pearsall, p. 402.



## What so euyr I syng or sey

4.

Plates IV-VIII

Often referred to as ‘The Parliament of Love’, this poem employs rhyming couplets and rhyme royal in its adaptation of the parliamentary conceit, popularised by Chaucer’s *Parlement of Foules*, which appears earlier in the manuscript.<sup>1</sup> ‘Go thow litle songe thow hast a blisfull day’ (l. 108) is also reminiscent of Chaucer’s favoured phrase ‘littel bok’.<sup>2</sup> This poem has not been edited prolifically, despite the fact that it arguably demonstrates aspirant amateur interaction with a popular form. It does not engage with its chosen allegory as fully as it could, but the final line ‘At her oown leyser *schall* the syng and rede’ (l. 110) complements notions of women’s involvement in the production of the manuscript.

What so euyr I syng or sey, [f. 51<sup>r</sup>]  
My wyll is good too preyse here well.

Now 3ee that wull of loue lere,  
I counsell yow þat 3e on mere:  
To tell yow now is myne entent, 5  
Houth loue made late his parleament,  
And sent for ladyes of eury londe,  
Both mayde and wyfe þat had housbonde,  
Wythe gentyll wymen of lower degre,  
And marchaunt3 wyfes grete plente, 10  
Wythe maiden es eke þat where theym vndre,  
Of wyche there were a ryghte grete numbres.  
And all tho men þat louers wer, [f. 51<sup>v</sup>]  
They had there charge for to be there,  
And when they were assembled all 15  
(Yf I the werre sothe sey schall),  
With-in a castell feyre ande stronge,  
And as y lokyd them a-monge,  
I sawe a ry3th grete cumpany  
Of gentill wummen that were there by, 20  
The whyche, is the custum the custum was,  
Songe a balad stede of the masse,  
Ffor goode spede of thes folkys all  
þat where assemblede in the hall.

<sup>1</sup> Beadle and Owen, ff. 29<sup>r</sup>-42<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Troilus and Criseyde’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Book V, l. 1786.

<sup>13</sup> Deletion: ‘w’ before ‘tho’.

<sup>21</sup> Likely an eyeskip error.

And yf 3e lyst ley too yowre ere, 25  
Rygh thys they songe, as 3ee schall hayre:

"O god of loue, wyche lorde hart and souereyne,  
Send downe thy *grace* a-monge thys louerys all,  
Soo þat þey may too thy *mercy* a-teyne,  
At thys *parlament* most in asspeciall. 30  
As þu art oure Iuge, *so* be egall  
Too eury wygth þat louyth feythefully,  
And aftyr hys dyssert grante hym *mercy*."

And whan this songe was songe and done [f. 52<sup>r</sup>]  
Then went these ladyes euery schone 35  
Vn-too a schambyr where they scholde  
Take theire places, yonge and olde,  
Like as þat they where oft astate  
Ffor tescheue all maner debate.  
There sawe I first the goddesse of loue 40  
In here see sitte, righ ferre aboue,  
And many othyr þat ther where.  
Yitt for too tell whem y sawe there,  
It passit now righ ferre my wytte,  
But among all I sawe one sitte 45  
Whiche was the feyryst creature  
þat euer was furmyd by nature,  
And here beaute now too dyscryvye.  
Ther can noo mannes vyttys alywe  
Yett as ferre as y can or may 50  
Oof here beaute *sum* what too say,  
I will applye my wittes all.  
Ffor here I am & euyr schall  
Too speke of schape and semelynesse,  
Off stature & oft goodlynesse. 55  
Here sydes longe with myddyll smale,  
Here face well coulord and not pale,  
With white and rode ryth well mesuryd,  
And ther too schee ws well emyrid,  
And stode in euery mannes *grace*, [f. 52<sup>v</sup>] 60  
This goodly yong and fresche of face,  
And too speke of condicion,

<sup>24</sup> Deletion: 'a' before 'in'.

<sup>25</sup> Deletion: '3eue' before 'yf'.

<sup>44</sup> Deletion: 'ferre' before 'now'.

Coude noo man fynde in noo region  
 One of soo grete gentillnesse,  
 Of curtaise and lowlynesse, 65  
 Of chere, *of* port, and dalyaunce,  
 And mastres eke of all pleasaunce,  
 All soo welle of secretenesse,  
 The werray merroure of stedfastnesse.  
 Of onest merth sche coude rith mosche, 70  
 Too daunce and synge and othre suche,  
 Soo well assuryd in here hert,  
 That none il worde from here scholde stert.  
 And that thus on here y set my mynde,  
 And left all othre thyng by-hynde, 75  
 As touchyng too these louers all,  
 Why sche on here causes fast kan call,  
 And for too tell theire all *cum*playntes,  
 In sothe too me the matire queynte is,  
 Ffor as to hem I toke none hede. 80  
 But mmyne nowne causes to prosede,  
 I drowe me by sylf allone,  
 And into a corner gan too gone,  
 And there I satte me downe a while,  
 A litle bill for too compile 85  
 Vn-too thys lady wych was soo faire, [f. 53']  
 And in here doying soo debonaire.  
 And if ye list too hyre & rede,  
 Theeffect of whych was thus in dede:  
  
 "O soueuereyn prince off all gentillnesse, 90  
 Too whom I haue and euyr more schall bee  
 Trewe seruant with all *maner* humblenesse.  
 What payne I haue or what ad-versyte,  
 Yett 3ee schall euyr fynde suche feyth on me  
 Bat y schall doo that may be your plesaunce, 95  
 If god of his *grace* list me so a vaunce.  
  
 And yow I pray as lowly as I can,  
 Too take my seruice if hyt myth yow please,  
 And if 3ee list too reward thus yowre man,

<sup>82</sup> Deletion: 'mysylf' before 'me'.

<sup>85</sup> Deletion: 'tor' before 'too'.

<sup>88</sup> Deletion: '3ee lyst' before 'if' and long 's' before 'list'.

<sup>92</sup> Deletion: 'seruuat' before 'seruant'.

Than mygth hee say he were in hertis easee. 100  
Ffor by my trouth y wulde not yow displease,  
Ffor all the goode þat euer I hadde or schall,  
By my goode wille what-euer me be-fall.

And if I haue seide my thyng a-mysse,  
Too pardon me I yow be-sech and pray, 105  
Ffor as wissh as euer y cum too blisse,  
My will is goode what-euer y write or say."  
Go thow litle songe, thow hast a blisfull day,  
Ffor sche þat is the floure of womanhode  
At her oown leyser *schall* the syng and rede. 110

## When Fortune list yewe here assent

5.

Plate IX

This roundel employs a refrain which personifies the female figure of Fortune. This poem has been anthologised previously in four editions in accordance with its musical attributes.<sup>1</sup> The 'schort aviseament' (l. 10) to 'lyve in ioy out of turment / Seyng the worlde goth too and fro' (ll. 8-9) is a notable departure from other Findern lyrics' more negative, anxious world view.

When Fortune list yewe here assent, [f. 53<sup>v</sup>]  
What is too deme þat may be doo;  
There schapeth nought from her entent,  
Ffor as sche will, it goth ther-to.

All passith by her iugement; 5  
The hy astate, the *pore* all-soo,  
When Ffortune.

Too lyve in ioy out of turment,  
Seyng the worlde goth too and fro;  
Thus is my schort aviseament, 10  
As hyt comyth, so lete it go -  
When Ffortune.

<sup>1</sup> An example of this is *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution*, ed. by William Carew Hazlitt (London: Reeves and Turner, 1877), p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> Deletion: 'powre' before 'all'.

## What-so men seyn

6.

Plate X

This poem, first edited in 1845, is among the most popular of the unique items in terms of its appearance in collections of lyrics. The game of love is admonished from the perspective of a female speaker who (either genuinely or jokingly) objects to the fact that men ‘make butt game’ (l. 17). Robbins notes that an ‘interest in tail-line stanzas for “courtly” (as opposed to popular) use’ appears in the late fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This could suggest that this poem deliberately employs a courtly style to denounce duplicitous courtly poetry by men; McNamer suggests that ‘make’ (l. 17) could also represent ‘compose’.<sup>2</sup>

What-so men seyn,		[f. 56 <sup>f</sup> ]
Loue is no peyn,	Butt varians.	
To them, serteyn,		

For they <i>constreyn</i>		
Ther herts to feyn,	Ther displesauns,	5
Ther mowthis to pleyn		

Whych is in dede		
Butt feynyd drede,	And dowbilnys.	
So god me spede -		

Ther othis to bede,		10
Ther lyvys to lede,	New fangellnys.	
And proferith mede,		

For when they <i>pray</i>		
Ye shall haue nay,	Be-ware ffor sham.	
What-so they sey -		15

Ffor eury daye,		
They waite ther <i>pray</i>	And make butt game.	
Wher-so they may,		

Then semyth me,		
Ye may well se,	In euyry plase,	20
They be so fre		

<sup>1</sup> Robbins, p. 631.

<sup>2</sup> McNamer, p. 304.

Hitt were pete,  
Butt they shold be,      *With-owtyn* grase.  
Be gelid, *parde*,

## My woo full hert, this clad in payn

7.

### Plate XI

Malcolm Parkes chose this love lyric to demonstrate how “displayed” layouts’ can help the reader ‘to recognise the contribution of the stanza form to the ‘message’ of a poem’.<sup>1</sup> The use of brackets and indentation also means that the right-hand column can be read separately as an envoi of the whole lyric.<sup>2</sup> Please also refer to pp. 71-72 of this dissertation for discussion of this poem’s relationship with the preceding manuscript text, Chaucer’s ‘Complaint of Venus’. The lyric employs standard imagery of discomfort in solitude; however, a moment of originality occurs when the speaker realises, ironically, that they have no one to complain to about their loneliness.

[f. 69<sup>v</sup>]

My woo full hert, this clad in payn, Wote natt welle what do nor seyn;	Longe absens greuyth me so.
Ffor lakke of syght, nere am I sleyn, All ioy myne hert hath in dissedeyn;	Comfort ffro me is go. 5
Then thogh I wold me owght complan Of my sorwe and grete payn,	Who shold comferte me do?
Ther is no thyng can make me to be fayn Butt the syght of hym agayn;	That cawsis my wo. 10
None butt he may me susteyn, He is my comfort in all payn;	Y loue hym & no moo. 15
To hym I woll be trywe & playn, And euyr his owne in serteyn,	Tyll deth departe us to.
My hert shall y neuer ffro hym refrayn; I gaue hitt hym <i>with</i> -owte constrayn,	Euyr to contenwe so. 20

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Parkes, *Pause and Effect* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), p.100.

<sup>2</sup> The significance of layout is explained on pp. 79-80 of this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup> Deletion: ‘nay ioy ffor well or w’. For full discussion of this, refer to p. 64.



## Welcome be ye, my souereine

8.

Plates XII-XIV

This poem divides into four sections which deal with similar themes of lovesickness, but which can also be read separately. The verses are preserved here in the order they originally appear. Pearsall reorders them, citing his desire for 'a happy ending'.<sup>1</sup> Read the poems in order of II, III, IV, I for this reading; the numerals are editorial for this purpose. Also of note is the reference to 'Seynt Martyn' (l. 34), possibly Saint Martin of Tours.<sup>2</sup>

### I

Welcome be ye, my souereine, [f. 135<sup>r</sup>]  
The cause of my joyfull peine.  
Ffor the while ye were a-way  
Myn herte seyde nocht but 'walaway!'

No more I do my merthys fayne, 5  
But in gladnesse I swym & baine;  
Ye haue my mornyng drevne away.

Of your comyng I ame so fayne,  
That mirthes done my sorow steme  
And make a-monge theim suche afray 10  
That reste may they with me no day.  
Gladnesse ye haue brought me a-gaine.

### II

Come home, dere hert, from tarieng:  
Kausith me to wepe, boþe weile & wring,  
Also to lyve euere in distresse 15  
So gret þere may no wight expresse;  
Al my joye ye torne to mournyng.

Sorowe is in myn herte digging –  
To deþe, I trowe, he woul me bring  
In woful trans wiþoute redresse. 20

Whanne I haue of you sume tiding, [f. 135<sup>v</sup>]  
Gret joye *I have*, with-oute failing,

<sup>1</sup> Pearsall, p. 404.

<sup>2</sup> See further discussion on pp. 76-77.

Right as me ought with rightwisnesse;  
But yet may not myn hevey-nesse  
Depart frome me til your comyng. 25

### III

To you, my joye and wordly plesaunce,  
I wol *shrive* me, with dredful countenaunce,  
Of chiding which your letter bereth wittenesse;  
Therto constrained by my woful distresse,  
Asking you absolucion and penaunce. 30

What wol ye more of me but repentaunce?  
God wol him-selve have therof suffisaunce –  
Mercy I seke and aske aye for yevenesse.

By Seynt Martyn, and ye knew my *greyveaunce*,  
The whiche I suffred *with* long continuance, 35  
Dreding ye were of my woos roghtlesse:  
That was to me a grevus hevinesse,  
Yet aske I mercy to be in pacience.

### IV

There may areste me no pleasaunce, [f. 136<sup>r</sup>]  
And our be our I fele grevaunce. 40  
I not to whome I may complaine,  
Ffor he that may my woo restreine  
Wol haue of me no remembrance.

Sith I ame vnder his gouernaunce,  
He shuld sett me suche ordinaunce, 45  
As I might haue ease of my paine.

Me þinketh he might haue conscience  
And of my woos sum suffisance,  
Considering that I ame so plaine  
To hym euer, with joye or paine. 50  
Let hym haue therof repentance.

<sup>33</sup> Deletion: 'ha' before 'aske'.

# Who so lyst to loue, God send hym right good spede

9.

Plates XV-XVI

This carol's burden is representative of many of the unique lyrics; those who engage with the complications of love require divine assistance. Greene edits this poem, and his introductory chapters on the choral history of the carol and discussion of the 'quasi-independent character of the burden' are of especial relevance to the musical context of the Findern Manuscript.<sup>1</sup>

Who so lyst to loue, God send hym right good spede. [f. 136<sup>v</sup>]  
Some tyme y loued, as ye may see;  
A goodlyer there myght none be,  
Here womanhode in all degre,  
Ffull well she quytt my mede. 5

Vn-to the tyme vpon a day,  
To sone ther fill a gret affray; Who so lyst  
She hadde me walke forth on my way,  
On me she gaff none hede.

I askid the cause; why and wherfor  
She displeside was *with* me so sore? Who so list 10  
She wold nat tell but kepe in store,  
Pardy, it was no nede.

Ffor if y hadde hure displeased,  
In worde or dede, or hire greued; Who so list 15  
Than if she hadde be sore meved  
She hadde cause in dede.

But well y wote y hadde nat done  
Hure to displese, but in grete mone Who so lyst  
She hath me left and ys a gone – 20  
Ffor sorwe my hert doth blede.

Some tyme she wolde to me complayne,  
Yffe she had felt dysease or payne; Who so list  
Now fele y nought but grete disdayne;

<sup>1</sup> Richard Leighton Greene, *The Early English Carols* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), p. cxxxiii. For discussion of the relationship between music, song and the Findern Manuscript, please see pp. 79-80 of this dissertation.

‘Allas, what is youre rede?’. 25

Shall y leue of and let hure go?  
Nay, nere the rathere will y do so. Who so list [f. 137<sup>r</sup>]  
Yet though vnkyndnesse do me wo,  
Hure will y loue and drede.

Some hope that whan she knowith the case,  
Y trust to god that withyne short spase, Who so list 30  
She will me take a-gayne to grace;  
Than have y well a bydde.

And for trew louers shall y pray,  
That ther ladyes, fro day to day, Who so list 35  
May them rewarde, so that they may  
With ioy there lyues lede.

Amen pur charyte

## Sich fortune hath me set thus in this wyse

10.

Plate XVI

Although brief and without especial poetic merit, this quatrain is of integral importance to the manuscript, since it represents the joint scribal effort of two distinctive hands. One scribe writes the first two lines and another hand, which does not appear elsewhere in the manuscript, completes it. For further discussion of this, please refer to pp. 68-69 of this dissertation.

Sich fortune hath me set thus in this wyse,	[f. 137 <sup>r</sup> ]
Too loue yow best callyd be;	
You to serue, and trwly plese,	
As my desyre and hertus esse.	

<sup>2</sup> Deletion: 3 characters, illegible, after 'be'.

## Now wold I fayne sum myrthis make

11.

Plate XVII

The tone of the refrain in this poem is curiously intense; the fact that it rhymes with the following line adds to the speaker's insistence of sincerity. The refrain is occasionally at odds with its accompanying stanza, such as in ll. 1-4, where the refrain, 'hit wold be', answers the previous line, 'hit will nat be'. Readers are advised to refer to Plate XVII to see the illustration of a scroll which encapsulates the phrase 'A god when'. This reappears alongside poem 15 of this edition; Robbins suggests that this signature represents 'Godwin'.<sup>1</sup> This poem also appears in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 191 (SC 6667), where it has a musical setting.

Now wold I fayne sum myrthis make,		
All oneli ffor my ladys sake,	And hit wold be	[f. 137 <sup>v</sup> ]
But now I am so fferre from hir hit will nat be.		

Thogh I be long out of your sight,	And so will be	5
I am your man both day & night,		
Wherefor wold god as I loue hir that she lould me.		

When she is mery than am I glad,		
When she is sory then am I sad,	And cause whi	
Ffor he levith nat that louith hir as well as I.		

She sayth that she hath seen hit wreten		
That seldyn sayn is soon for-yeten;	Hit is nat so	15
Ffor in good feith saue oneli hir I love no moo.		

Wherfor I pray both night & day		
That she may cast care away,	And leve in rest	
And euer more wher-so-euer she be, to loue hir best.		20

And I to hir for to be trew,		
And neuer chaung hir for noon new,	Vn-to myn end	
And that I may in hir <i>servise</i> for evyr amend.		

A god when		25
------------	--	----

<sup>1</sup> Robbins, p. 629.

## Alas, alas, and alas, why

12.

Plates XVII-XVIII

A particularly woeful lyric, this poem deals more explicitly with death than others in the manuscript. The image of a heart that smarts at the pain of a beloved's absence (ll. 24-25) is a notable instance of the Findern lyrics' engagement with the physicality of lovesickness. Readers may be interested to inspect the alphabets and handwriting practice at the bottom of f. 138<sup>r</sup>, which may be observed on Plate XVIII.

Alas, alas, and alas, why	[f. 137 <sup>v</sup> ]
Hath Fortune done so crewely,	
Ffro me to take away þe seyte	
Of þat þat gewit my hert lyte?	
Of all þyng þat in erth yse,	5
To me hyt was þe most blyse	
Whan þat y was in presense	
To wham my hert doth reuerense,	
And euer schal, for well or woo,	[f. 138 <sup>r</sup> ]
Or drede of frende, or lyf all-soo;	10
Hit schal me neuer oþer a sterte,	
But ye to hand my hole hert –	
Saue whan I come to þe deth,	
That nedes oute moust þe brethe	
þat kepyth þe lyfe me <i>with-inne</i> ,	15
And þan fro yow most I twyne.	
And tyll þe day hit me owre,	
Ryȝt feythfully I yow ensure,	
þat þer schal no erly þynge	20
On my part make departynge.	
Thus ame I sett yn stable wyse	
To lefe and dure in yowre seruyce,	
Wyt onto faynyng of my hert	
Thow I fele neuer soo grete smert.	25

<sup>4</sup> 'gewit': an Old English word used in this context as 'that that made my heart light' and implies knowledge or memory of such happiness. See OED, 'wit', n.: 'denoting a faculty [...] memory'.

## Alas, what planet was y born vndir?

13.

### Plate XIX

This poem is unique for its description of the speaker's poor treatment at the hands of a lover's 'creuelte' (l. 9); 'in your *grace* y stand not *perfetely*' (l. 4). The image of the planet in the first line is refreshing, especially in relation to contemporary conceptions of the word 'planet', where planets were considered to influence or correspond with human experience in a 'designation of a planet's attributes'.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the speaker contemplates whether they have been born to share attributes with a particularly harsh or unfair planet.

Alas, what planet was y born vndir? [f. 138<sup>v</sup>]

My hert ys set thus veray feythfully,  
Thow y be heuy, *hit* ys no wondir  
That in youre *grace* y stand not *perfetely*,  
Than for to change, yet had me leuer dy. 5  
Thes paynes stronge, whiche y by force endure,  
As to loue long, y wote y am not sure.

And yeff my dethe come to me hasty,  
God cnowit *hit* ys by your *cruelte*;  
*Hit* lith in you al myght þe remedy. 10  
Of sorow y haue but to grete plente,  
I fayne no thyng as euer y sauid be.  
My ioy ys fled, my wittes done apeire,  
I lyve as yet but only in dispeyre.

Where-for y pray, as hertly as y can, 15  
In this grete nede that ye wil me comfort,  
And thencke y am your *seruant* & your man,  
Els most y for-sake al my disport,  
Where to bcome or whethir to resort.  
Ther ys in me for wo no certaynte, 20  
Ffor lacke of *grace*, thes parties shal y flee.

<sup>1</sup> MED, 'planet(e)', n. 1.



## Continvaunce

14.

Plates XIX-XX

The speaker in this poem is afflicted by the memory of their absent beloved. Their love is deeply graven in their heart (ll. 7-9) and they even imagine their beloved stood in front of them.

Continvaunce		[f. 138 <sup>v</sup> ]
Of remembraunce,	<i>With-owte</i> endyng,	
Doth me penaunce	Ffor <i>your partynge</i> .	5
And grete greuaunce		
So depe ye be	<i>Withyn</i> myn hert,	
Graven, parde,		
That afore mee	In thought couert.	10
Euer I yow see		
Thought I ne playn		[f. 139 <sup>r</sup> ]
My wofull payn,	But bere yt styll;	15
It were in vayn		
To sey agayn	Ffortune's wyll.	

## My self walkyng all allone

15.

Plate XX

This poem is particularly interesting for its means of composition; see pp. 67-68 of this dissertation for discussion of the darker ink that amends the deletions. It may be useful to refer to Plate XX to compare the inks used.

A god when

[f. 139<sup>r</sup>]

My self walkyng all alone	
Ffull of thoght of Ioy desperat,	
To my hert makyng my moone	
How I am the most infortunat,	5
And how Ffortune his cruell hate	
Hath to me caste & broght hyt soo	
That I am kome fro wele to woo.	
Ffro all gladnesse & comfort	
I am now broght in-to distres;	10
"Ffye on myrth & on disport";	
Thus seyth my hert for heuynes,	
Seyng þer is no sekyrnesse	
Of worldly welth ho takyth hede,	
Which ofte causyth myn hert to blede.	15
And thus I stond ffulfylt with sorow,	
With-in my mynd to my gret payne,	
Wepying both even & morow,	
With swollyn hert when I refrayne,	
With wofull teris which can nat ffayne;	20
Soo haue I lost my countenance,	
Of all the world to my plesance.	

<sup>6</sup> Deletion: 'ffate' before 'hate'.

<sup>21</sup> Deletion: 'Now' before 'Soo'.

<sup>22</sup> Deletion: 'My hoole comfort & my plesaunce' before 'Of all the word to my plesance'.

## Vp son and mery wethir

16.

Plate XXI

It appears as if the scribe is forced to use abbreviations at the end of stanzas 4 and 5 since they have reached the edge of the leaf. Lines 10-18 show a new perspective for the unique poems; a lover who has escaped the cruel grasp of the game of love. The simplicity of their language ('Now may y ete, drynke, and play', l. 14) mimics the relief of the speaker to rejoice in everyday activities.

Vp son and mery wethir    *Somer draweth nere*    [f. 139<sup>v</sup>]

Som tyme y lound, so do y yut,  
In stedfast wyse and not to flit,    A pitous thyng to here.  
But in danger my loue was knyht;

Ffor when y offerd my *seruice*,    5  
I to obbey in humble wyse,    In contynance and chere.  
As fer feuth as y coude deuise,

Grete payne for nought y dude endure,  
Al for that wyckid creature,    Ouer-threw al my mater.  
He and no mo y you ensure    10

But now y thancke of hys sond,  
I am escapid from his band,    And sure fro yere to yere.  
And fre to pas by se and land,

Now may y ete, drynke, and play,  
Walke vp and doune, fro day to day,    And laugh at there maner.    15  
And herkyn what this louers say,

When y shal slepe, y haue good rest,  
(Somtyme y had not al ther best),    Y bought *hit* al to dere.  
But ar that y cam to this fest,

Al that affray ys clene agoo,    20  
Not only that but many mo,    I thencke to hold me here.  
And sith y am escapid so,

But al the crue that suffren smert,  
I wold thay sped lyke *your* desert,    This song *with-owte* fere.    25  
That thay myght synge *with* mery hert

# Ffor to prente

17.

Plates XXII-XXIII

This poem is the messiest poem in the manuscript in terms of the thickness of the nib used and for the extent of blotting on the page (see Plates).

Ffor to prente, And after repente,	Hyt wer ffoly.	[f. 143 <sup>v</sup> ]
Other wass then troyth, Me wer ffull loyth,	Trewly.	5
I sweyte ffor ffente, Leste I be schent,	To a-pere;	
The remembrauns Off my plesaunce	Compyled here.	10
Off a starre Wyth-owte comparre,	Be lykenesse	15
In the beyne, That hyt ys euer	Most off swettnesse.	
And more orryaund, And pwere gloryaund	In bewte;	20
Off all othere, Hyt ys the modere	In my nee.	
In a cloud off blewe Hyt dyd never remewe	The spere,	25
But euer in on, Bryght hyt scwon,	Etremeyt clere.	30
But euere me mentte,	Wyth laughyng chere.	[f. 144 <sup>r</sup> ]

<sup>23</sup> Deletion: 'hyt' before 'hyt'.

<sup>25</sup> Deletion: 'chirh' before 'cloud'.

<sup>29</sup> Deletion: 'h' before 'hyt'.

<sup>30</sup> Deletion: 'T' before 'Etremeyt'.

<sup>31</sup> Deletion above line: 'But'.

On mo hyt blentte

Hyt to be-hold  
Was I never a cold,

The lonesom lere.

35

The stremes ther-off  
A-way droffe

Euer the rake;

A wylyd wynde  
Rosse be-hende

At my bake.

40

Hyt was so lowde,  
Hyt blew a clowd

Vp ryght.

45

Hyt was so blake,  
Hyt dyd over-lape

My seght.

But euer I pray,  
Boyth nyght and day,

When I may speke.

50

The clowd so deme,  
A-way to swym

In pesyss breke.

That I *may* se  
The starre so ffre,

Shynyng bryith

55

In the weste,  
That goyth to reste

Euerry nyght.

60

## In ffull grett hevenesse myn hert ys pwyght

18.

Plates XXIV-XXV

This poem is the first of three which discuss the destructive power of the tongue. Soon after this is a text attributed to Lydgate (ff. 147<sup>r</sup>-150<sup>r</sup>) which is followed by poem 19. Perhaps scribes read the Lydgate text and were inspired to compose this poem and create composite poem 19. This composition is possible since neither poem survives elsewhere. Furthermore, both scribes contribute other unique texts to the manuscript that subscribe to the other concern of the manuscript; lovesickness.<sup>1</sup> This may show that the scribes are sophisticated readers who align their compositions with the manuscript's overarching themes.

In ffull grett hevenesse myn hert ys pwyght, [f. 144<sup>v</sup>]  
And sadely wrypud mony a-ffowld,  
Wher-ffore wasse ryght lyght  
And warme that ys nowe ffull colde.  
Alle Ioy ffro myn hert ys bowght and sowld, 5  
Thorow rancour off thye wekyd worde  
That never a-gyne hyt may remorde.

Synglure *person* I doo non name,  
But alle the world in generall  
Swyfte off ffalsnesse, replete off blame, 10  
I ame off trewth, off malese regalle.  
But thus I ffynde moste in espescyall,  
Beste be trust, wythowghton any nay  
Sonest may them-selffe be-tray.

But iij thynges ther ben wryten off record, 15  
A man to be-ware a-boue all other:  
The pryncypall ffrust ys the world;  
A *monis* hown flechse ys a-nother;  
The defelle hym-*self* the thred brother,  
But who-so-euer be to blame 20  
A wold euerry-body wer the ssame.

Not ffor than so god me spede, [f. 145<sup>r</sup>]  
Be all the world I sett no talle,  
Ffor any thyng that euer I sed or dede

<sup>1</sup> See 'The 13 Scribes' section of this dissertation; scribes 10 and 11, pp. 55-56.

<sup>9</sup> Deletion of the whole next line: 'In wyth ffechyd wyth ffalsnesse replete off blame'.

<sup>14</sup> Deletion: 'st' before 'selffe'.

Vn-to thys owr securet or aperyall. 25  
But trust ryght thus wythowghton ffaylle,  
And that us euer my be-leff,  
The trewth in dede hyt-selff well preffe.

But the moste parte off my grevaunce,  
Ottherly hyt ffor to exspersse, 30  
Ffor to haue in my remembraunce  
Wyth-owghten cause that lythe en desterse,  
Trustyng to Ihesu, off hys ryghtewyssnesse,  
Tho send hys grace to subpouell & comfort  
Tho all that ys wyth wrong repourt. 35

And alle wykyd tongys, who-euer they be,  
The whych haue no grace to say wyll,  
That I may sse or euer I dey  
The sken ther-off a-wey to pull  
And, lord, my prayer ffor to ffull-ffyll, 40  
And shurtely shew they grace  
Tho comfort the trewth and all ffalshod defface.

Amen pur cherite

<sup>34</sup> Deletion: illegible single character before 'grace'.

<sup>36</sup> Deletion of the line above: 'And w wykyd who euer they be'.

<sup>39</sup> Deletion: illegible single character before 'a-wey'.

Ther is nomore dredfull pestelens than is tonge

19.

Plates XXVI-XXVIII

This is a composite text formed of extracts from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*.<sup>1</sup> Although these are of course canonical texts, the originality of combining them into a new text is in itself inventive, and unique to the Findern Manuscript.

1.

Ther is nomore dredfull pestelens [f. 150<sup>r</sup>]  
Than is tonge that can flatere & fage,  
Ffor with his corsyd crabbed violens  
He enfecteth folkes of euery age.  
Woo to tonges fronward of ther langauge, 5  
Woo to tonges false furyng and woode,  
Wheche of no person neur can say good.

2.

Wherfor me semethe it is wel syttyng,  
Euryche man other to commende  
And say the best alway in reportyng, 10  
Ffor in wel saying noman may offende  
Wherre men say wel god wyll hys grace send,  
Aftyr men ben men most theyre pryse vp reyse  
Aftyr there desaryng a louwe hem ordyspreyse.

3.

But where a thyng vtturly is vnknowe, 15  
Lette no man ther hastely be of sentens.  
Ffor ryghtful Iugeges setting on a roowe  
Of there wesdome and their high prudens, [f. 150<sup>v</sup>]  
Welle of tought haue some evedens -  
I mene all suche as gouerned be by grace - 20  
Or any worde out of therre ly3pys passe.

<sup>1</sup> The first three stanzas are from Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*. Marshall notes that Beadle and Owen inaccurately describe these stanzas as being from Book Two, when in fact they are from Book One, ll. 4621-4641, (Marshall, p. 440). Stanzas four to six are from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book Three, ll. 302-322, (Beadle and Owen, p. xxvii). Marshall transcribes stanza 7, since it is 'neither noted nor identified' by Beadle and Owen (Marshall, p. 441). It is possible that this stanza is an original composition, created in order to draw the composite poem to a close. The pencil numbers at the top of each stanza are most likely a later addition by Henry Bradshaw in 1866, since they match his pencil foliations throughout the manuscript.

<sup>19</sup> Deletion: 'wo' before 'tought'.



4.

O false tong, so oftyn here before  
Hast thou made mony on bryght of hewe,  
Sey 'welaway' the day that I was borne.  
And mony a maydes sorowe for to newe, 25  
And for the more part al is vntruwe;  
That men of yelp & hit were browght to preve  
Of kynde nounge a wauntur ys to leve.

5.

Avauntur and a lyer all is on,  
And thus I pose whoman graunteth me 30  
Here loue and feythe that other wolfe sche none,  
And I am sworne to holde hit secrete,  
I wys I am *a*-wauntur at the leste,  
And a lyere for I breke my be-hest.

6.

Now loke thou yf they be ought to blame, 35  
Suche maner folke what I clepe hem what  
And hem *avaunte* of wemen and by name  
That *neuer* yet be hyght hem this nor that  
Ne knewe hem more than my olde hatte.  
No woundur is so god me sende hele, [f. 151<sup>r</sup>] 40  
Thowgh wemen drede *with* vs men to dele.

7.

A good god of hys high grace,  
Lo, what fortune is take hede;  
Where here lyketh sche marketh hir chasse.  
Now most I in servyse my lyffe lede, 45  
Bothe loue *serue* and eke drede,  
As he that is boonde and wol not be free  
Ryght so farithe hit now by me.

Explicith

<sup>36</sup> Deletion: 'I' before 'what'.

<sup>39</sup> Below this line there are two lines of alphabet practice which read: 'a b c d e f g h i k l m / 3 y y v t s u q p o n'. The 'm' is below the 'l' and the 'o' and 'n' are above the line.

Thys ys no lyf, a-las, þat y do lede

20.

Plate XXIX

Most speakers in Findern poems can be comforted by the return of their lover; this speaker is beyond all comfort and instead is waiting for death.

Thys ys no lyf, a-las, þat y do lede;	[f. 153 <sup>r</sup> ]
It is but deth as yn lyves lyckenesse,	
Endeles sorow assured owte of drede,	
Past all despeyre & owte of all gladenesse.	
Thus well y wote y am remedylesse;	5
For me no thyng may <i>comforte</i> nor amende,	
Tyl deith come forthe and make of me an ende.	

## My whofull herte plunged yn heuynesse

21.

Plates XXIX-XXX

The male speaker of this poem seems to have been spurned by his lover; he pointedly adds 'your' to the last line in order to place blame.

My whofull herte plunged yn heuynesse, [f. 153<sup>r</sup>]  
Complaynyng in sorow þus greuysly,  
Stondyng alone now mercyles,  
All yn discomforte full petusly.  
Y may well sygh *with*-oute remedy, 5  
For pete and mercy haith of me dysdeyne;  
Alas vnkyndenesse þus haith my herte slayne.

Wherefor fare-well my ioy & rote of my plesaunce, [f. 153<sup>v</sup>]  
Fare-well my lady þat y loue truly,  
Fare-well dyre herte, chef yn remembraunce, 10  
And euer schall vnto þe oure y dy,  
Fare wele or woo assured feithfully  
Yn will and þavte and neuer to repente;  
Alas *your* vnkyndenesse þus haith my herte schente.

Euer yn one *with* my dew attendaunce

22.

Plate XXX

This poem is a forthright exercise in devotion to a loved one; the speaker is dedicated to serving the beloved and to loving them unfalteringly.

Euer yn one *with* my dew attendaunce

[f. 153<sup>v</sup>]

To *serue* yow aboue any creature,

*With*-owten remembraunce of heuy varyaunce,

Schall be my ioie whylys þat my lyf maye dure.

To loue you beste *with*-outen repentaunce,

5

While þat y leue and þer-of be ye sure,

My nowne dyre herte, yis my ffull affyaunce,

Aboue all oþer formed by nature.

## Yit wulde I nat the causer faryd a-mysse

23.

Plates XXX-XXXI

The female speaker iterates the severity of her ‘payne and woo’ (l. 7) with arguably the most ominous last line of the unique poems; ‘It ys to me a verry dedly woo’ (l. 21). The ‘+’ signs are replicated from the manuscript and represent an error, where the first line (l. 8) should be inserted above the second ‘+’ line (l. 11).

Yit wulde I nat the causer faryd a-mysse, [f. 153<sup>v</sup>]  
Ffor all the good that euer y had or schall;  
Ther-for y take myn auenture I wisse,  
As sche that hath for-saken Ioyus all,  
And to all payne is bothe soiet & thralle. 5  
Lo, thus I stonde *with*-owten wordes moo,  
All voyde of Ioy an full of payne and woo.  
+ And had the worldyl at myne ovne ordynaunce,

Now ye that bathe in myrthe & plesaunce, [f. 154<sup>r</sup>]  
Haue mynde on me that woo sum-tyme *in* ease 10  
+ Whiche now is turned in-to al disease.  
Now glad wher sche that fortune so cowde please,  
That sche myght stonde in verry sycurnesse,  
Neuer to fele the stroke of vnkyndnesse.

Departyng ys the grownde of dysplesaunce, 15  
Most in my hert of eny-thing erthly,  
I youe ensure holy in remembraunce  
With-in my-self y thenke *hit* verryly,  
Wiche schall *contynu* with me dayly,  
Syns that 3e moste nedys departe me fro, 20  
It ys to me a verry dedly woo.

<sup>2</sup> Deletion: ‘I haue’ before ‘that’.

<sup>8/11</sup> These marks indicate that line 8 should be inserted above line 11.

Veryly  
24.  
Plate XXXI

In this simple ballade, the devoted speaker argues the extent of their faithfulness to their lover, who is possibly their husband or wife, due to the brief reference to marriage vows with 'well nor woo' (l. 8).

Veryly And truly	I schall nat fayne,	[f. 154 <sup>r</sup> ]
Whyle that y leue, I have you yeue	My hert <i>sertayne</i> .	5
Thus y am sette Neuer to lette,	Ffor well nor woo,	
You to <i>serue</i> , Tyll that y starue	Where-euer ye goo.	10
Contenew schall y, All-way trewly	Yn youre <i>seruyce</i> ,	15
There for to dye, Nat to tarye,	I you promyce.	

## As in my remembrauns, non but ye a-lone

25.

Plate XXXII

This poem emphasises emotional aspects of missing an absent lover; the speaker is made to 'sygh and playne' (l. 2) and uses the metaphor of raining eyes (l. 12). These phrases are presented alongside references to the speaker's heart being 'peryschid' (l. 10) and 'schent' (l. 14), as if the speaker considers them comparable symptoms of woe.

As in my remembrauns, non but ye a-lone, [f. 154<sup>v</sup>]  
Wiche me causithe bothe to sygh and playne.  
I haue no comfort - wher schall y make my mone?  
So for from you, that is all my payne,  
My dyscomfort I may hit nat refrayne 5  
Tyll y be sewre of youre hartys ese,  
Nothing but hit may my greuys pese.

All-wey to endure thus in woo,  
What wondyr is thou y sore complayne?  
Youre goodly hed hathe peryschid myn hert soo, 10  
Sythe of the trowthe I schall nat fayne,  
Hit causith my uyen oft for to rayne,  
When y thing on you and am absent,  
Ffor, alas, departyng hath my hert schent.

## A mercy, Fortune, haue pitee on me

26.

Plate XXXIII

This speaker of this poem addresses Fortune, and asks why they have been separated from their beloved. This is a unique perspective for the Findern poems, since they describe the plight of both themselves and their beloved, instead of focusing on themselves being left behind.

A mercy, Fortune, haue pitee on me, [f. 178<sup>r</sup>]  
And thynke that þu hast done gretely amysse  
To parte asondre them whiche ought to be  
Alwey in on - why hast þu doo thus?  
Haue I offendyd the? I, nay ywysse. 5  
Then torne thy whele and be my frende agayn,  
And sende me Ioy where I am nowe in payn.

And thynke what sorowe is the departyng  
Of ij trewe herte louyng feithfully,  
Ffor partyng is the most soroughfull thyng, 10  
To myn entent, that euer yet knewe I.  
Therefore, I pray to the right hertely  
To turne thy whele & be my frende agayn,  
And sende me Ioy where I am nowe in payn.

Ffor tyll we mete, I dare wel say for trouth, 15  
That I shall neuer be in ease of herte.  
Wherfor, I pray you to haue of me sume routh,  
And release me of all my paynes smerte,  
Nowe sith þu woste hit is nat my deserte.  
Then torne thy whele and be my frynde agayn, 20  
And sende me Ioy where I am nowe in payn.



# 1. The 13 Scribes

Kate Harris provides a thorough account of the manuscript's production, scribes and watermarks, which I consulted for her interpretation of scribal stints.<sup>1</sup> I conducted my own palaeographical study to create scribal profiles for the poems of this edition, the results of which show that I concur greatly with Harris on almost all scribes. Instead of using tables to present the scribal stints, I prefer to list them more discursively as individual profiles and to include full titles of the poems for clarity. I have provided the poem numbers from this edition and Plate numerals for comparison.<sup>2</sup> Some of the thirteen scribes copied poems into the manuscript aside from those in this edition. I have referenced these below for consultation within the facsimile and I have also recommended edited versions for consideration. Due to restrictions of length, I have opted for these scribal profiles over listing scribal alphabets. By way of compromise, I have listed distinctive letter forms for each scribe to aid comparison and comprehension of the reasoning behind assigning texts to particular scribes.

## Scribal Profiles

### Scribe 1

~

1. I may well sygh, for greuous ys my payne (Plate I)

This scribe's handwriting is notable for its extremely loose style, as well as for the occasional pen-stroke through the letter 'h'.

### Scribe 2

~

2. Where y haue chosyn, stedefast woll y be (Plate II)
3. As in yow resstyth my Ioy and comfort (Plate III)

---

<sup>1</sup> Harris, Appendix III, pp. 331-333.

<sup>2</sup> Roman numerals are employed to avoid confusion with poem numbers.

12. Alas, alas, and alas why (Plates XVII-XVIII)

14. Continvaunce (Plates XIX-XX)

Harris notes that there is ‘a fragment of writing in this hand’ on f. 21<sup>v</sup>, a stub.<sup>3</sup> The fragment reads ‘-fyre’, which matches the other poems since this scribe favours a distinctive long ‘r’, often followed by a curled flourish to represent an ‘e’, such as on the stub. They also make use of paraphs in poems 2, 3, and 12.

#### Scribe 3

~

4. What so euyr I syng or sey (Plates IV-VIII)

5. When Fortune list yewe here assent (Plate IX)

10. Sich fortune hath me set thus in this wyse (Plate XVI, ll. 1-2)

Harris suggests the first two lines of poem 10 as a possibility; I believe that it is certainly written in the hand of scribe 3 due to the similarities between the hands; this hand employs a slightly more angular script than others in the manuscript, which is heightened by the use of a thinner nib.

#### Scribe 4

~

6. What-so men seyn (Plate X)

7. My woo full hert, this clad in payn (Plate XI)

These two poems are linked visually by the use of brackets with looped edges. This hand is noticeably small and, though informal, is fairly neat in terms of regularity. Harris claims that the ‘Seven Deadly Sins’ (ff. 56<sup>v</sup>-58<sup>v</sup>) and Chaucer’s ‘Complaint Unto His Purse’ (f. 59<sup>r</sup>) are also in scribe 4’s hand.<sup>4</sup> I contest this interpretation, since a comparison of the formation of capital letters ‘F’ and ‘T’, among others, reveals

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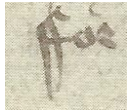
<sup>3</sup> Harris, p. 331.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. An edited version of the ‘Seven Deadly Sins’ can be found in ‘Political, Religious and Love Poems, from Lambeth MS. 306 and other sources’, ed. by Frederick James Furnivall, *EETS* 15 (1866), 244-248. For Chaucer’s ‘Complaint Unto His Purse’, see another Furnivall edition: ‘A Parallel-Text Edition of Chaucer’s Minor Poems’, 3 vols. *Chaucer Society* 1st. ser. 21, 57, 58. (New York: Johnson, 1880).

evident differences between scribe 4 and the other hand. For comparison, see below an 'F' from 'What-so men seyn' followed by an 'F' from the 'Seven Deadly Sins':

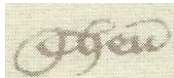


(Figure 18, enlarged)



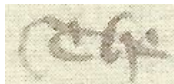
(Figure 19, enlarged)

Furthermore, see this 'T' from 'What-so men seyn':



(Figure 20, enlarged)

And this 'T' from the 'Seven Deadly Sins':



(Figure 21, enlarged)

I believe that the second hand from each of these examples writes both the 'Seven Deadly Sins' and the 'Complaint Unto His Purse', each of which are signed 'quod lewestoun' (f. 58<sup>v</sup>, f. 59<sup>r</sup>).<sup>5</sup>

#### Scribe 5

~

#### 8. Welcome be ye, my souereine (Plates XII-XIV)

This scribe employs capitals for the first word of every line. Their size and regularity are noticeable in comparison to the other poems.

#### Scribe 6

~

#### 9. Who so lyst to loue, God send hym right good spede (Plates XV-XVI)

---

<sup>5</sup> Harris considers the fact the 'Leweston' is not a local name, citing Hammond's suggestion that the rebus on ff. 137<sup>v</sup> and 139<sup>r</sup> (Plates XVII and XX) 'is perhaps the rebus of Lewestoun (luce-tun)', p. 303.

This hand is distinguishable from others for its application of tightly-curled flourishes. Along the left hand margin of Plate XVI, there is a curious set of illegible rounded forms, which could be a kind of decoration contributed by the scribe since the colour and shade of the ink is the same as that used in the text.

#### Scribe 7

~

10. Sich fortune hath me set thus in this wyse (Plate XVI, ll. 3-4)

It is interesting that this hand does not appear elsewhere in the manuscript, since it contributes such a small amount of text. Please see pp. 68-69 of this dissertation for detailed discussion of this quatrain.

#### Scribe 8

~

11. Now wold I fayne sum myrthis make (Plate XVII)

15. My self walkyng all allone (Plate XX)

The slanted style of Scribe 8 is notable, as well as the signature 'a god when'. This appears in poem 11 within a scroll, in poem 15 both at the top of the text as well as alongside it. In the latter, it is written within a scroll and accompanied by a fish on each side, below a sketch of a barrel. Robbins suggests that this represents the name 'Godwin', possibly the name of the scribe.<sup>6</sup> The use of two different inks in poem 15 is particularly interesting; see pp. 67-68 for further discussion.

#### Scribe 9

~

13. Alas, what planet was y born vndir? (Plate XIX)

16. Vp son and mery wethir (Plate XXI)

The words 'Crocit dyton' sit atop poem 13, with a notable correction to the second word, where 'dytyn' becomes 'dyton':

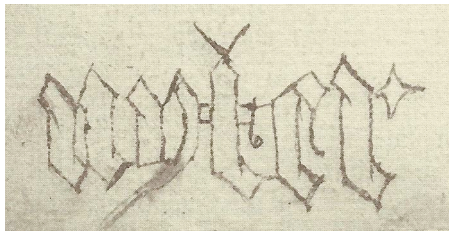
---

<sup>6</sup> Robbins, p. 629.



(Figure 22)

I believe that the shapes which surround these words are similar to the large 'unter' on f. 41<sup>v</sup>:



(Figure 23)

Harris offers several possible origins for this phrase, suggesting its likelihood as an indicator of scribe 9's name.<sup>7</sup>

Poem 16 is followed by the word 'desormais', or 'henceforth', below which is a set of three horizontal parallel lines. See pp. 79-80 for discussion of the possibility of this being a three-line stave of musical notation.

#### Scribe 10

~

17. Ffor to prente (Plates XXII-XXIII)

18. In ffull grett hevenesse myn hert ys pwyght (Plates XXIV-XXV)

Scribe 10 has arguably the messiest hand, with blotting, a thick nib and numerous errors in both poems. Please see pp. 65-66 for discussion of the corrections in poem 18.

#### Scribe 11

~

19. Ther is nomore dredfull pestelens than is tonge (Plates XXVI-XXVIII)

---

<sup>7</sup> Harris, p. 321.

23. Yit wulde I nat the causer faryd a-mysse (Plates XXX-XXXI)
24. Veryly (Plate XXXI)
25. As in my remembrauns, non but ye a-lone (Plate XXXII)

Harris posits that this scribe also added these poems: ‘Most glorijs quene reynyng yn hevene’ (f. 146<sup>r</sup>), ‘O Cryste Jhesu mekely I pray to the’ (f. 146<sup>v</sup>), Lydgate’s ‘The Wicked Tongue’ (ff. 147<sup>r</sup>-150<sup>r</sup>), Halsham’s ‘Tied with a Line’ (f. 151<sup>r</sup>) and ‘The Seven Wise Counsels’ (f. 151<sup>r</sup>-152<sup>r</sup>).<sup>8</sup> I concur with this suggestion, since they all share the same style of struckthrough ‘ll’, the distinctive ‘y’ descender and a considerable number of macron abbreviations.

#### Scribe 12

~

20. Thys ys no lyf, a-las, þat y do lede (Plate XXIX)
21. My whofull herte plunged yn heuynesse (Plates XXIX-XXX)
22. Euer yn one *with* my dew attendaunce (Plate XXX)

Scribe 12 has a more rounded style in comparison to scribe 11, which is comparable since they share leaves. Scribe 12 uses paraphs whereas scribe 11 does not.

#### Scribe 13

~

26. A mercy, Fortune, haue pitee on me (Plate XXXIII)

This scribe makes longer flourishes and otiose marks than any of the other scribes discussed here, and begins each stanza with an enlarged capital, though without decoration or rubrication.

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Most glorijs quene reynyng yn hevene’ and ‘O Cryste Jhesu mekely I pray to the’ can be found in *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*, ed. by Carleton Fairchild Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), pp. 56-57 and 191-192. Lydgate’s ‘The Wicked Tongue’ has never been edited from the Findern Manuscript, but since it appears in six other manuscripts (DIMEV, 1070), a version can be found in ‘John Lydgate: The Minor Poems, Vol. II: Secular Poems’, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, *EETS* 192 (1934), 839-844. Halsham’s ‘Tied with a Line’ is a six-line excerpt so has not been edited, but a full transcription can be found at DIMEV, 5411. ‘The Seven Wise Counsels’ has never been edited but a version can be found in Max Förster’s ‘Kleine Mitteilungen zur mittelenglische Lehrdichtung, VI’, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 104 (1900), 293-309 (pp. 299-301). The Findern version adds headings ‘Prudencia’, ‘Iusticia’, ‘Temporancia’, ‘Discrecion’, ‘Reson’, ‘Plesance Goode Wille’, and ‘Curtesie Nature’ above stanzas.

## 2. Editorial and Critical History

The purpose of this chapter is to review and synthesise existing scholarship on The Findern Manuscript (CUL MS. Ff.I.6), with particular focus on textual presentation and discussion of the 26 poems which are edited within this volume. In order to understand critical trends and theories which surround the manuscript, it is pertinent to consider the presence of the poems within a variety of bibliographical contexts. I will discuss (in a loose chronological arrangement) some of the early edited collections of Middle English lyrics; the impact of Beadle and Owen's facsimile; arguments provided by sustained studies of the manuscript; theories of women's writing and the course of recent criticism. In doing so, I hope to expound moments of critical concurrence and opposition and also to highlight opportunities for future research. Furthermore, this chapter should illuminate the need to redress the fact that there is, to date, neither a scholarly or digital edition of the manuscript, nor is there a monograph study of its literary, linguistic or historical intricacies.

### Early editing

~

In 1845, six poems from the manuscript appeared in *Reliquae Antiquae*, edited by Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell.<sup>1</sup> Their objective was to present texts from 'ancient inedited manuscripts illustrative of the literature and languages of our forefathers in the middle ages'.<sup>2</sup> They state that their 'sole aim' is to render the poems available to others, and indeed Findern poems started to appear in other edited collections by the turn of the century, such as those by Ritson (1877) and Volmer (1898).<sup>3</sup> The next editor to adopt the poems was Carleton Brown. In 1939 he published a collection of fifteenth-century lyrics, and chose to include six Findern poems.<sup>4</sup> In the contents pages, the poems are listed under the heading 'Songs Against

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<sup>1</sup> *Reliquae Antiquae*, ed. by Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell (London: Smith, 1845). The lyrics they include are: 6, 9, 11, 14 and 15 from this edition, as well as Lydgate's 'A treatise for lauandres' (f. 164<sup>v</sup>) from the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Wright and Halliwell, p. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Wright and Halliwell, p. iv. The other collections are: *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution*, ed. by Joseph Ritson, 2 vols. (London: "Printed for Private Circulation", 1877) and 'Das mittelenglische Gedicht The Boke of Cupid: Bonner Beiträge zur germ. und rom.', ed. by W. Vollmer, *Philologie*, 17 (1898).

<sup>4</sup> Brown, pp. 273-277.

Virtue' and 'Songs of the Decadence of Virtue'.<sup>5</sup> The 1950s saw the greatest number of edited Findern poems thus far; R. H. Robbins included seven lyrics in his collection of poems from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in 1952, revised in 1955.<sup>6</sup> Henry A. Person edited a slightly different selection of six poems in 1953, and in 1954 Robbins published his study of the manuscript, and edited twelve Findern poems, all but one being unique items.<sup>7</sup>

All three editors present the poems clearly and create largely reliable transcriptions. Robbins lends his own titles to the poems, such as with 'His Mistress, His Comfort', poem 3 in this edition.<sup>8</sup> The speaker is in fact of ambiguous gender, and only refers to their subject in the second person as 'ȝe' and 'yow'.<sup>9</sup> Robbins is largely responsible for increasing awareness of the manuscript, but this editorial assumption of male authorship is out-dated. Henry A. Person advances this tradition, titling the afore-mentioned poem with his own invention; 'The Lover Wishes His Lady Recovery'.<sup>10</sup> This aspect of their editorial approach reinforces Bawcutt's recent defence of naming Middle English poems after their first lines, which I have adopted in my editorial style.<sup>11</sup> I also use 'they' to refer to speakers of ambiguous gender, in order to highlight the possibility of a female or male speaker. This early stage of the manuscript's critical history is vital for students of the manuscript, since two studies of the manuscript were borne of these editions. These studies are by Hammond (1908) and Robbins (1954), which are discussed later in this chapter.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Brown, p. xiv. He includes (with the poem number from my edition and pages from Brown's edition): 5 (pp. 259-260), 15 (p. 261), 18 (pp. 266-8) and 26 (p. 262), as well as (with facsimile folios and pages from Robbins' edition) 'Most glorius quene Reynyng yn hevene' (f. 146<sup>r</sup>, p. 56-57) and 'O Cryste Jhesu' (f. 146<sup>v</sup>, p. 191-192).

<sup>6</sup> *Secular Lyrics of the XIV and XV Centuries*, ed. by Rossell Hope Robbins, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955). Robbins includes lyrics 1, 3, 12, 20, 22, 25 (pp. 154-158) and 'Pees maketh plente', a common gnomic tag (f. 53<sup>v</sup>, p. 81).

<sup>7</sup> *Cambridge Middle English Lyrics*, ed. by Henry Axel Person (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1953). Person includes poems 1-3, 12-13, and 17 (pp. 31-34). Robbins (1954) includes 2, 6-8, 10, 13-14, 17, 21, 23-24 (pp. 632-642).

<sup>8</sup> Robbins, 1954, p. 155.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Person, p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. by Priscilla Bawcutt, 2 vols (Glasgow: Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 1998), p. 27-28.

<sup>12</sup> Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Chaucer: A Bibliographic Manual* (New York: MacMillan, 1908).



## The facsimile

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A seminal moment for the manuscript arrived when Richard Beadle and A. E. B. Owen published their 1977 facsimile edition with the Scolar Press. This is a vital juncture in Findern editing since it does not impose its own interpretative stance on the manuscript. Readers of the manuscript have much to gain from seeing the original scribal hands and encountering the texts in their intended chronology, which is why I have included copies of the facsimile texts of the poems in this edition in the Plates section. The introduction to the text has not been contested since then, a true testament to Beadle and Owen's edition. There is scope for a new facsimile edition of this facsimile, which is long out of print and could benefit from colour reproduction. The greatest success of the facsimile is that it increases scholarly access to the manuscript text, thus facilitating longer, broader studies.

## Sustained studies

~

Hammond's 1908 account of the contents of the manuscript is of importance to the critical history of the manuscript.<sup>13</sup> She suggested several ideas regarding the derivation of several scribal signatures, such as that of 'Lewestoun', which are still believed to be valid.<sup>14</sup> Robbins' 1954 study of the manuscript provided the first detailed account of the complete contents. He discusses some of the history of ownership, contextualised within the milieu of other households and manuscripts. Beadle and Owen's facsimile introduction included the first codicological account, which Kate Harris responded to in her 1983 study. She agrees that there are fifteen quires of varying lengths, but contests Beadle and Owen's account of their arrangement.<sup>15</sup> Harris' study is arguably the most important critical piece on the manuscript, since she provides such depth of research on scribes, codicology and watermarks. However, the conclusions she draws from her primary research, largely in relation to the circulation and compilation of the fifteen booklets, are not always successful. Ralph Hanna addressed this issue in his work in 1987. The crux of their codicological debate is that Harris believes that the manuscript was produced as a

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<sup>13</sup> Hammond, pp. 343-346.

<sup>14</sup> Harris, p. 303.

<sup>15</sup> Harris, p. 328. For Beadle and Owen's codicological diagram, see p. 6 of this dissertation.

whole, whereas Hanna prefers a theory of individual production in booklets, suggesting that it only became a manuscript as late as the time of professional binding. Harris argues in favour of singular production since scribal stints are spread across the various quires, which Hanna disputes, claiming that:

The presence of a single scribe in different portions of a manuscript does not a priori mean that he is not contributing to separate booklets, nor does the repetition of a paper-stock in different portions mean that all those portions are of a single origin and copied and planned and unified whole.<sup>16</sup>

I concur with Hanna's reading on the grounds that manuscript production over a century is likely to have been gradual, and evidence of the manuscript's production such as paper-stocks and scribal practice, even its general amateur quality, suggests a variety of situations, tastes and abilities. These sustained studies create an impression of the manuscript's contents, scribes, codicology and provenance, all of which remain debatable and possess scope for expansion.<sup>17</sup>

### Women's writing

~

The facsimile allowed scholars to note the nine signatures in the manuscript as well as the thematic focus on women's experiences of love and writing.<sup>18</sup> From this new access grew a variety of new critical pieces, mostly in the form of journal articles. The first, by Elizabeth Hanson-Smith in 1979, addresses female participation in the manuscript and expounds the possibility that women could have written the poems; that women copied favourite poems by others; or that men wrote the poems

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<sup>16</sup> Ralph Hanna, 'The Production of Cambridge University Library Ms. Ff. i. 6', *Studies in Bibliography*, 40 (1987), 62-70 (p. 63). It is useful to consider Hanna's other work on booklet theory entitled: 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Consideration', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 100-111.

<sup>17</sup> Other critical works of note are Ethel Seaton's 1961 study which posits that the manuscript was owned by Sir Richard Roos, see: Ethel Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos: C. 1410-1482, Lancastrian Poet* (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1961). Maureen Jurkowski delves into the genealogical aspect of the manuscript's history in *John Fynderne of Findern, Derbyshire: an Exchequer official of the early fifteenth century, his circle and Lollard connections* (DPhil thesis: Keele University, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Harris records the signatures on pp. 302-303.

empathetically.<sup>19</sup> She also suggests the possibility for study of errors and corrections in the unique poems.<sup>20</sup>

Sarah McNamer adopted the study of women's involvement in the manuscript, transcribing fifteen poems which she believed to be written by women.<sup>21</sup> McNamer is most successful in her transcriptions and analysis of poetic language, references and layout, while her theory of female authorship could benefit from expansion. Alexandra Barratt also edited a selection of the unique poems within a book about women's writing, which is currently in its second printing.<sup>22</sup> It is encouraging to see the poems included alongside other contemporary works, since the manuscript is not often the subject of comparative study. Pearsall fuelled the debate of women's authorship by including five of the unique poems in his *Chaucer to Spenser* anthology under the heading of 'Love-Poems (by Women?) from the Findern Manuscript'.<sup>23</sup> The subject of women's writing in the manuscript is contentious and complex; the main critic in favour of this is McNamer. The limitations of this project mean that I cannot explicate the debate. I can only suggest that studies that aim to celebrate the artistry and voices of the poems could be as effective as studies of genealogy and literacy in elucidating many of the manuscript's secrets. The need remains for a sustained analysis to add new information since Harris' 1983 study, including critical analysis of the poems. There are signs that work of this nature is forthcoming, which I discuss in the next section. In this dissertation, I have chosen to include a sustained study of my own which discusses the thematic and formal characteristics of the unique poems, since there is much to be learned about gentry culture and voice from this approach.

#### Recent studies

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Cindy Rogers focuses on returning study of the manuscript to consideration of the text as a whole, reading texts in order and as responses to one another. She claims that:

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<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, 'A Woman's View of Courtly Love: The Findern Anthology, Cambridge University Library MS Ff.I.6', *Journal of Women's Studies in Literature*, 1 (1979), 179-194.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 181.

<sup>21</sup> McNamer, pp. 303-310. These are poems 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Barratt, pp. 288-293. She chooses poems 6-8 and 23.

<sup>23</sup> Pearsall, pp. 402-405.

[...]textual and codicological clues left in the manuscript enable a careful reader to reconstruct the play of texts within the manuscript, allowing for interpretations of the texts that hear the resonate connections between them.<sup>24</sup>

This approach has certainly been fruitful for Rogers, since she draws out connections between the unique and canonical texts which have previously been undiscovered. Her work reveals a greater level of understanding and communication between the scribes and compilers of the manuscript. A study by Simone Marshall, who reads all of the marginalia in the manuscript, is of particular use, especially in combination with Rogers' approach in order to produce a well-rounded conception of the text.<sup>25</sup> Of note also is Linda Olson's recent chapter, since she largely summarises existing criticism on the manuscript.<sup>26</sup> Richard Beadle reviews her work, among the other chapters of the volume, and is unimpressed by her piece due to the fact that she does not offer any new research.<sup>27</sup> In order for new scholarship to advance, there is a great need for a scholarly edition of the manuscript, including accounts of provenance, collation, marginalia and scribes. Only then can critics respond to the manuscript without the need first to edit their selected texts. I intend for this dissertation to contribute to this proposal, since I have provided the first edition of all the unique lyrics which survive in the manuscript.

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<sup>24</sup> Rogers.

<sup>25</sup> Marshall, p. 439–442.

<sup>26</sup> Linda Olson, 'Romancing the Book: Manuscripts for "Euerich Ingliche"', in *Opening up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches*, ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Maidie Hilmo and Linda Olson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 95–151.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Beadle, 'Review of Opening up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 113, no. 2 (2014), 227–230.

### 3. Textual Connections

With forty hands noted in the most recent survey, the leaves of the manuscript present a curious and varied scribal system.<sup>1</sup> There is a presence of scribes with an ascertainable skill level who copy canonical texts by Chaucer, for instance, and others who are revealed as amateurs through their idiosyncratic command of ink and margins. Hands that belong to this second set of scribes tend to appear at the end of quires, filling blank spaces with sequences of short lyrics pertaining to the tradition of courtly love. It is therefore possible that these anonymous, unique and amateur-scribed lyrics could be autographs, composed or recalled directly onto the paper. An alternative possibility is that the corrections and deletions are editorial; a scribe could copy a poem of their choice from an exemplar, and improve it to fit their own tastes. It is therefore plausible that these ‘errors’, frequently corrected and removed from edited poetry collections, could be either part of authorial composition, scribal errors or editorial corrections. An analysis of deletions and corrections, as well as of links between canonical and unique texts, will prove that the readers and compilers of the manuscript are not mutually exclusive.

Harris, Hanson-Smith and McNamer offer insightful studies which agree that men and women of the Findern family (and their friends) actively participated in the creation of the manuscript, but which vary on the extent of such involvement. Hanson-Smith suggests that ‘close linguistic analysis of dialects, errors, and omissions’ would prove a useful contribution to growing evidence that Findern women wrote the poems.<sup>2</sup> I will therefore approach instances of deletions, errors and their corrections across a selection of the unique anonymous poems included in my edition in order to examine the processes of their composition. A key research aim in doing so is to ascertain the extent of inter-textual connections. If the deletions within the texts appear to be authorial or editorial, rather than scribal, then this is an exciting revelation, which draws closer to an understanding of the texts and their collaborative, household origins.

Consideration of the poems in question is ordered by their perceived style and

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<sup>1</sup> Harris, p. 332-333. This chapter builds on my previously published work: ‘~~Authorial or Scribal – Both?~~ The Significance of Deletions in the Findern Manuscript’, *The Birmingham Journal of Literature and Language*, vol. V (2013), 4-11.

<sup>2</sup> Hanson-Smith, p. 181.

purpose of deletion and correction. The so-called ‘errors’ are defined as such by the scribes themselves in the moment of correction when text is struck through and replaced. Robbins and Harris are the primary documenters of corrections in the manuscript, and McNamer has suggested that some emendations are authorial. I propose some different readings of these corrections and will also comment on deletions which are not cited in the works of the three critics. Any direct quotations from the poems, unless quoted within the context of a critic’s writing, are my own transcription with a parenthetical reference to the poem and line number within this edition. The study begins with errors that may be suggested as literary emendation.

The poem entitled ‘My woo full hert this clad in payn’ (poem 7) follows the speaker’s realisation of their ironic current position – their loneliness without their lover is augmented by the fact that there is also no one present to ‘complan’ (l. 7) to about it. The deletion in question relates to the rhyme scheme, where the line ‘nay ioy ffor well or w’ (l. 14) is struck through and the replacement ‘Y loue hym & no moo’ is inscribed above the line:

None butt he may me susteyn  
he is my comfort in all payn

Y loue hym & no moo  
~~nay ioy ffor well or w~~

(Poem 7, ll. 13-5)

Harris posits two possibilities to motivate the correction, suggesting that it could have been ‘necessitated by an error of memory, or it may have been a considered emendation, probably to avoid a repetitious line’.<sup>3</sup> Pearsall supports the second option and agrees that the replacement’s function is to ‘avoid the repetition of the rhyme-word’.<sup>4</sup> These theories of emendation are likely to be correct, since the textual evidence shows specific attention to the rhyme scheme. This is present in the indented layout and the fact that the rhyme is formed of twelve unique rhyming words, which Barratt terms a ‘technical *tour de force*’.<sup>5</sup> It is probable that the unfinished ‘w-’ of the deletion would have formed ‘wo’, which would have been its second usage and thus anomalous to the rhyme scheme as it would repeat an exact rhyme word employed in the previous line.

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<sup>3</sup> Harris, p. 308.

<sup>4</sup> Pearsall, p. 403.

<sup>5</sup> Barratt, p. 289.

There is a purposeful relationship between the unique, indented rhyming words and abstract nouns within the body of the poem. For instance, the word ‘payn’ is repeated three times (ll. 1, 8, 14) in deliberate emphasis of the central themes of pain and discomfort, which manifest both emotionally and physically. The use of different words to end each rhyme lends prominence to these recurring themes (‘payn’, ‘comfort(e)’), drawing the reader’s eye to repeated iterations of the poem’s key emotion but maintaining variety in the lexical choices for the rhyme. In this case, the correction replaces ‘ffor well or w(o)’, a quotation from wedding vows, with ‘Y loue hym & no moo’. McNamer suggests that, in light of this emendation, only one phrase from vows remains later on in the poem: ‘tyll dethe departe us’ (l. 17).<sup>6</sup> However, it is possible to read the emended replacement as a more nuanced evocation of marriage than its predecessor, a direct quotation from contemporary vows. To say ‘Y loue hym & no moo’, where ‘moo’ is ‘other’ or ‘more’, implies the extent of faithfulness which is implicit during the ceremony without quoting a standard phrase from the vows.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that the scribe is editing the poem since the correction signifies nuance; the emendation subscribes to the rhyme scheme and offers an arguably more personal portrayal of fidelity. The final line of the poem, ‘ever to contenwe so’, furthers this notion of loyalty. It reminds the reader of the eternal continuance of the vows, even in the physical absence of the husband. Although punctuation is absent from the poem, it still seems pertinent that there is no punctus or pen rest at the end of the poem; the line continues on.

This perceptive editorial awareness is present in other anonymous poems within the manuscript. One example is ‘In ffull grett hevenesse myn hert ys pwyght’ (poem 18), a moral lament which focuses on imagery of a heavy heart. The line ‘In wyth ffechyd wyth ffalsnesse replete off blame’ (l. 10) is struck through and replaced by ‘Swyfte off ffalsnesse replete off blame’. It is possible that the scribe made the common copying error of eye-skip due to the repetition of ‘wyth’ and a word which begins with an ‘f’. However, ‘fecchen’ is defined as ‘to seek to get’ or ‘search after’ and possesses negative connotations, such as in ‘fecching’ as ‘the action of going after and getting (a person or thing); abduction’.<sup>8</sup> This concept could fit in with the

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<sup>6</sup> McNamer, p. 297.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth W. Stevenson discusses traditional vows in medieval England in his work entitled ‘Marriage Liturgy: Lessons from History (Eastern and Western Rites)’, *Anglican Theological Review*, 68, 3 (1986), 225-240.

<sup>8</sup> MED, ‘fecchen’ (v.) and ‘fecching’ (ger.).

line, creating an idea that actively seeking after ‘ffalsnesse’ is a blameworthy act. The repetition of ‘wyth’ seems clumsy, thus it is possible that the scribe chose to maintain ‘replete off blame’ but preferred the second version of the line. This decision could have been reached in three situations: if the scribe is the author composing onto the page; if the scribe is attempting to recall the work from memory; or if they are copying another’s writing but prefer to alter it. It is important to note that any of these scenarios implies a literary ability on the part of the scribe; they initiate a textual improvement.

It may be useful to consider a second deletion in the text (l. 36), which Harris does not mention in her study of the poem. The content of the line is difficult to transcribe due to the amateur cursive hand, but it is possible to deduce that the short line which opens the final stanza is struck through and replaced by a longer line. The line may have been lengthened in order to complete the metre in adherence to the rhyme royal present throughout the poem, or even simply that the scribe corrected their writing in favour of the second attempt for other undisclosed literary reasons.

A third poem, entitled ‘My self walkyng all allone’ (poem 15), provides ‘substantive alterations’.<sup>9</sup> Robbins describes the poem as ‘a Complaint against Fortune’.<sup>10</sup> The first correction is the replacement of ‘ffate’ with ‘hate’ (l. 6):

And **h**ow Ffortune **h**is cruell ~~ffate~~ **hate**  
**H**ath to me caste & broght **h**it soo

(Poem 15, ll. 6-7)

Despite the fact that ‘ffate’ is an iteration of the poem’s theme, McNamer believes that this is ‘poetic improvement’, as it ‘eliminates the redundancy’ of employing both fortune and fate, instead opting for ‘hate’ as an alternative concept.<sup>11</sup> I agree that the choice of ‘hate’ over ‘ffate’ is an editorial decision to evoke a different notion. Beyond this, I suggest that the substitution could also serve to highlight an alliterative line (see bold characters above) that may not be evident without the aspirate ‘hate’. Furthermore, the later deletion in the poem of ‘Now’ in favour of ‘Soo’ could be for similar reasons. The line reads:

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<sup>9</sup> Harris, p. 308.

<sup>10</sup> Robbins, 1954, p. 616.

<sup>11</sup> McNamer, p. 282.



~~Now~~ Soo haue I lost my countenance

(Poem 15, l. 21)

Although ‘Soo’ is perhaps a less immediate open to the line than ‘Now’, it does create sibilance, which builds on the pace of the rest of the line. This is contrasted with the marked slowness of the next line, the last of the poem, which also features a deletion:

~~My hoole comfort & my plesaunce~~ Of all the world to my pleasaunce

(Poem 15, l. 22)

Thus, ‘Soo’ initiates the gradual deceleration of the two lines towards the conclusion of the poem, the sense of which is then consolidated by ‘all the world’. McNamer argues that ‘comfort’ (l. 22) is edited out of the line since it has been employed previously in the poem.<sup>12</sup> However, these anonymous poems make frequent use of repetition, particularly the word ‘comfort’ (see poems 3 and 7, for example). Therefore, it seems clear that the scribe who emends the poem prefers the second version as a grander conclusion with a stately rhythm for increased impact.

A point of critical contention in the poem is the fact that the hand of correction may not be the same hand that originally entered the poem into the manuscript. Harris corrects Carleton Brown (a previous editor of the poem), stating that he ‘judged (inaccurately) that this last emendation was the work of a different hand’.<sup>13</sup> Brown may have been influenced by another significant factor, and a sure reminder of the necessity to study primary materials – the fact that all the corrections are added in a different, darker ink. I believe that both hands are of the same scribe. This may be ascertained by using the letter ‘h’ as a point of comparison between the two hands.<sup>14</sup> Throughout the body of the poem and in the correction ‘hate’, both instances of the letter ‘h’ employ similarly curled ascenders and descenders. A further example to suggest the hands are the same is the word ‘pleasaunce’ (l. 22), which is written in both the struck-through line and its replacement. Both depict the letters ‘p’ and the long ‘s’ with an angled descender in the same style. The darkness of the corrective ink, as Harris states, implies that the corrections were made ‘some time after the poem was

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>13</sup> Harris, p. 308.

<sup>14</sup> See Plate XX.

copied into the manuscript'.<sup>15</sup> The inking of the corrections appears to be thinner, so it is possible that the nib of the pen had been cut in order to sharpen it. Therefore, the lighter, thicker text of the poem in contrast to the thinner, darker text of the corrections suggests the same handwriting of a scribe who has returned with renewed pen and ink.

It is possible to expand on Harris's idea of a scribe returning to correct 'My self walkyng all allone'. Of course, the ink is darker and must have been added later, but we should also consider the possibility that the scribe returned with a change of ink later that day, or the next, even some time in the future. This speculation cannot be established with certainty, but to wonder about this example reveals possibilities for scribal habits and contemporary attitudes towards the physical text. If the scribe returned to the poem much later after writing it then does it mean that they were a member of the Findern household with permanent access to the manuscript? Could the scribe have been a visitor invited to leave a poem behind, almost in the style of a comment in a modern day guestbook? Hanson-Smith notes:

Some of the purported 'scribal' errors in fact seem very likely the type of miscue made by an author who had previously drafted the poem and might still be finding the lines running through her or his head.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, we can combine Hanson-Smith and Harris's perceptions of the text. I propose that the darker ink is evidence of considered meditation on the poem and representative of an environment which provides freedom to return to it. It is notable that this poem appears within a grouping of folios which have scribal alphabets dotted around, as well as other ink markings which could be pen trials. This indicates an area of the manuscript with an informal approach to scribal activities and a tendency towards several forms of writing practice. It is difficult to ascertain whether the scribe is the author, but it is certainly a thought-provoking discovery to see that they exert editorial influence at a later date.

'Sich fortune hath me set thus' (poem 10) offers a broader perspective on the idea of scribes returning to texts to add to them. The poem consists of a single quatrain in two different cursive hands. It appears in particularly faint, thin ink at the end of the

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<sup>15</sup> Harris, p. 308.

<sup>16</sup> Hanson-Smith, p. 181.

page after a much longer carol. Harris claims that the first two lines are written by a scribe who also copied two other texts in the manuscript: ‘What so euyr I syng or sey’ (poem 4) and ‘When Fortune list yewe here assent’ (poem 5).<sup>17</sup> The first two lines read:

Sich fortune hath me set thus in this wyse  
Too loue yow best callyd be

(Poem 10, ll.1-2)

Harris does not mention that a word is struck through several times at the end of the second line. The original word is illegible; it appears to consist of three letters. However, this minor error gains significance due to the fact that the next line witnesses a second scribe recommence writing the stanza. It seems that, for an unknown reason, the first scribe did not want to, or could not, complete the stanza. So the deletion is the last record of their engagement in the poem, and perhaps a sign of finality, even frustration; an inability or lack of desire to continue. The second scribe writes in a much more compact hand, concluding the stanza with:

you to serue and trwly plese  
as my desyre and hertus esse

(Poem 10, ll. 3-4)

The second scribe must have felt compelled in some way to finish the stanza. For instance, the third and fourth lines rhyme with the first line; the second scribe adopts the rhyme of their predecessor. The second line does not rhyme with the others, forming the ‘b’ of the ‘abaa’ scheme, but this is most likely only due to the aforementioned deletion; the line is incomplete. The second scribe completes the stanza with a sense of finality; ‘as my desyre and hertus esse’ both matches and concludes the sentiment described in the first two lines. This correspondence between two amateur writers is telling of their literary environment and highlights the fluidity between authorial and scribal roles that pervades the manuscript. While other examples in this chapter suggest editorial participation, this poem is suggestive of authorship due to its brevity and thoroughly amateur contents. It appears very much as if the first

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<sup>17</sup> Harris, p. 325.

scribe lost inspiration and that the second attempted to round it off with their own input.

These examples are of course speculative in relation to evidence from the material text, but to study them in relation to the manuscript's collation provides a clearer idea of amateur composition. It was common for space anywhere on the page or spare paper either side of a quire to be filled with other texts by amateur scribes. McNamer writes:

They are very likely to be original compositions, written at a time when the manuscript had declined enough in value and become private enough in character to encourage experimentation by amateur poets.<sup>18</sup>

This shift in perceived prestige is present elsewhere in the Findern Manuscript, where a butcher's bill and an inventory of clothes (f. 70<sup>r</sup>), as well as brief documentation of 'a rekenyng between Iohn wylsun and mester fyndyrn' (f. 59<sup>v</sup>), are recorded on available paper. Harris notes that the previous poem of this discussion, 'In full grett hevenesse myn hert ys pwyght', is added at the beginning of 'original quire xiii'.<sup>19</sup> A further anonymous poem in the same hand is also written in this space. This means that these poems are entered into the manuscript in places we expect to see amateur compositions, or at least poems copied by amateur scribes. They are unique to the manuscript and the scribes also contribute other texts within the miscellany. So, to note that the corrections appear in the style of authorial or editorial emendations rather than scribal errors is to contribute to this body of evidence that the poems are either amateur compositions or edited by members of the household.

A brief study of the Devonshire Manuscript (London, British Library, MS Add. 17492) is relevant to an understanding of the Findern poems. Heale suggests that some of the poems written by women of Anne Boleyn's court were jointly composed within a 'pastime of social exchange' and as part of 'after-dinner games'.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that 'Sich fortune hath me set thus' is comparable to the 'game' of poetry as represented in the composition of Devonshire lyrics. It is certainly more basic and lacking in dramatic Tudor context, but nonetheless it does depict a certain attitude of

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<sup>18</sup> McNamer, p. 284.

<sup>19</sup> Harris, p. 325.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Heale, *The Devonshire Manuscript: A Women's Book of Courtly Poetry* (Toronto: Iter Inc. and Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012), p. 19 and p. 25.

collaboration in the creation of manuscript texts. Harris notes that poem 10 is ‘casually entered in the manuscript’, which further supports the idea of the manuscript as encouraging creativity among amateurs; the notion of playing with poetry and the idea that perhaps the occasional reader, who does not contribute elsewhere in the manuscript, can become a scribe, an editor and even a poet.<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, it is pertinent to consider the relationship between the unique lyrics and the canonical texts of the manuscript. Certainly, they share themes and, occasionally, scribes, but are there other factors which bind them? If so, could we learn more about textual connections? Cindy Rogers’ research on the manuscript suggests so; her argument in relation to poem 2 of this edition and Chaucer’s ‘Complaint Unto Pity’, which precedes it, is particularly illuminating. In this edition, I have linked the first two stanzas of poem 2 with the final quatrain, for reasons I expound in the headnote. Rogers discusses how the quatrain, which begins ‘Ye are to blame’ (l. 1), is not in fact addressing the absent second person ‘you’, but ‘the very present, very loquacious male voices of the previous ten pages’.<sup>22</sup> This transforms the meaning of the quatrain:

Ye are to blame to sette yowre hert so sore,  
 Seþyn þat ye wote that hyt rekeyrles,  
 To encrece yowre payne more & more,  
 Syn þat ye wote þat sche ys merceles.<sup>23</sup>

Rogers notes that is no longer ‘indistinct and opaque’, but instead ‘sharp’; a ‘tart reply’ to the previous complaints of the Chaucer text.<sup>24</sup> She also notes that it is deliberately brief and ‘doggerel’ in order to construct further contrast.<sup>25</sup> This kind of link is thoroughly original research, which provides a new reading of the manuscript. The scribes who add poems into odd gaps and spaces become critical readers, who comment and compose responses. I would like to contribute a further example of this, which can be found in the first poem of this discussion, ‘My woo full hert this clad in payn’ (poem 7). It is written in a space beneath Chaucer’s ‘The Complaint of Venus’ (ff. 68<sup>r</sup>-69<sup>r</sup>). It begins directly beneath the last six lines of the Chaucer text and is written in a different hand. The Chaucer texts ends with what I have transcribed below from f. 69<sup>v</sup> (Plate XI):

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<sup>21</sup> Harris, p. 308.

<sup>22</sup> Rogers.

<sup>23</sup> Beadle and Owen, ff. 15<sup>r</sup>-17<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Rogers.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

And eke to me it is a grete penaunce  
Syth ryme in englyssh hath such skarcstee  
To folwen word be word the curiosite  
Of Graunson flour of hem þt make in Ffraunce

(ll. 79-82)

This discusses the French poet Granson, who employs a single rhyming word in poems; Chaucer claims that it is a shame that this is not replicated in English poetry. It is interesting to note that the unique poem directly below this text (poem 7) employs a single rhyme for the body of the poem, and another rhyme for the indented column. Here, the scribe emulates the rhyme scheme that is recommended by Chaucer. This is significant because, instead of the scribe simply requiring any available space to copy or compose a text, they are in fact responding to Chaucer's work. The scribe could either see this as a fitting place to write down a poem that they enjoy, or they encounter Chaucer's poem and feel inspired to compose their own. There is great scope for a thorough study of this kind of connections in the text, which may be forthcoming by Rogers. It provides a refreshing conception of the manuscript's composition, and also paints a more detailed picture of the intentions and capabilities of the scribes.

This analysis of deletions in the Findern poems shows that editing occurs for several reasons; the main motivation involves lending variety to the verse in terms of rhyming words, lexical choices as well as rhythms and sounds. We can also note that these literary decisions are bound together with contextual traces that can be gleaned directly from the manuscript page. The study of lyric placement within quires, attention to ink and shifting scribal hands allows us to form a picture of the manuscript page as a material meeting-place to exchange ideas and possibly the site of instantaneous poetic composition. Therefore, the provincial Findern Manuscript gleefully intertwines and blurs the categories of 'scribe', 'editor' and 'author', championing participation above all. The manuscript may have diminished in value over time for its owners due to amateurish qualities, but for the study of textual networks it becomes a precious relic.

Human aspects such as scribal mistakes or editorial improvements alert the modern reader to the people involved in the creation of medieval texts. Some scribes strike a single line deletion while others scribble through it thoroughly, leaving an

illegible trace of the error. These changes occur in a single moment of mistake, or of inspiration, during the creative process and are vital evidence of the people behind the text. Even today these manuscript deletions can be misread and corrected by the modern editorial pen. Palaeography is not an objective science; we must iterate the significance of the primary source. It is important to preserve these somewhat messy relics in the transition from manuscript to printed text or digital medium. They hold textual clues which illuminate the social life of the text, the world surrounding the material manuscript and the people who composed, scribed and compiled it.

## 4. Literary Criticism

The unique Findern poems are discussed in relation to their provenance and collation, but rarely are they analysed for their intrinsic poetic qualities. They are also not anthologised frequently, which Rogers blames on the power of de-contextualisation to separate the poems from their intended meaning as a group.<sup>1</sup> Reading the poems within their context is a journey through literary tastes, introspection and perspectives felt across one hundred years. This chapter will discuss the poems of this edition in relation to the thematic elements and layouts which both individualise them and bind them together.

### Thematic elements

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In Butterfield's discussion of the lyric form, she posits that later household manuscripts such as Findern and Fairfax 16 'take the lyric more seriously'.<sup>2</sup> The notion she presents, that the Findern Manuscript shows a 'taste for love poetry and its anthologising properties', is an apt lens through which to inspect the unique poems.<sup>3</sup> The most common property of the poems is the motif of lovesickness which afflicts numerous speakers. In poem 20, the speaker voices their despair in a statement typical of Findern poems:

Thus well y wote y am remedylesse  
For me no thyng may *comforte* nor amende

(ll. 5-6)

In the case of this poem, the speaker calls upon death to 'make of me an ende' (l. 7), but speakers usually cite an absent lover as both the cause of their pain and the source of their remedy, such as in poem 3; 'As in yow resstyth my Ioy and *comfort*' (l. 1) and poem 7; 'Ffor lakke of syght, nere am I sleyn' (l. 4). However, despite the fact that the lover (who is always absent for undisclosed reasons) is the crux of the conflict and its resolution, the speakers are not quick to blame their beloved for their own pain.

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers.

<sup>2</sup> Ardis Butterfield, 'Lyric', in *Medieval English Literature 1100-1500*, ed. by Larry Scanlon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 95-111 (p. 106).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



Instead, Fortune, the personified scapegoat for many speakers' woes, is the culprit. McNamer expounds this poetic usage of fortune as a 'third party' distinct from the 'conventional courtly love lyric'.<sup>4</sup> She notes that:

In the Findern lyrics, Fortune's will is not identified with the will of either of the lovers. She is personified as a distinct and formidable figure who wields tremendous power over the speaker.

Poem 15 is exemplary of this device:

And how Ffortune his cruell hate  
Hath to me caste & broght hyt soo  
That I am kome fro wele to woo.

(ll. 6-8)

The refrain of another poem pleads with Fortune to 'haue pitee'; 'torne thy whele and be my frende agayn' (poem 26, l. 6). McNamer argues that the prevalence of Fortune in the Findern poems is suggestive of female authorship, since the sense of 'deep resignation' in the poems could be representative of the kind of 'mundane' confinement of women of the provincial gentry.<sup>5</sup> She presents a compelling case, stating that:

In the typical male-voiced lyric, the speaker's strategy is to effect external change: he laments his plight in the hopes that his mistress will hear his pleas and relieve his pain. In the Findern lyrics, it is assumed that external circumstances are fixed: the poet's project is thus to effect internal change which will make such circumstances bearable.<sup>6</sup>

This is an insightful way to explicate how the Findern poems deviate from conventional lyrics, and is certainly a tempting explanation of the many presentations of female experience throughout the manuscript. McNamer cites the power to continue loving as how the (possibly female) speakers deal with such adversity. I hope to expand on this line of argument to show how other coping practices in the poems are suggestive of female voice. Many of the lyrics have speakers of ambiguous gender, yet which are suggestive of a woman addressing a man since they are the ones

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<sup>4</sup> McNamer, p. 293.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 294.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 295.

left behind. As in Donne's conceit of the stiff twin compasses, the Findern speaker is almost always the 'fixed foot', while their beloved moves away and extends the reach of the compass. Of course, the suggestion of a female voice does not necessitate female authorship. But, due to the fact that the Findern poems employ imagery which is so specific to contemporary female experience, it is important to note the possibility that women could have written these lyrics, speaking from genuine experience. An example of such female experience is the importance placed on letters and receiving news of their absent beloved, which becomes a source of solace. Speakers in the poems do not always rely on courtly tropes, and occasionally employ more original imagery, such as the elation gained from receiving news of their love:

Whanne I haue of you sume tiding,  
Gret joye *I have*, with-oute failing,

(Poem 8, ll. 21-2)

The same poem references 'Seynt Martyn' (l. 34), which Barratt claims could suggest that 'the husband was fighting in France', since Saint Martin of Tours is patron of France and was a Roman soldier.<sup>7</sup> The reference in the poem is as follows:

By Seynt Martyn, and ye knew my *greyveaunce*,  
The whiche I suffred *with* long continuance,  
Dreding ye were of my woos roghtlesse:

(ll. 34-6)

Saint Martin was also known for the healing power of his letters. The first instance which instated his renown for such letters is documented by Sulpitius Severus, who claims that a father placed a letter from Saint Martin onto his ill daughter's chest, which healed her 'quartan ague'.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, perhaps the speaker is making reference to Saint Martin in relation to their desire to receive news from their absent lover, which would heal their 'paine' (l. 46). This is especially relevant when they mention that they have been suffering for some time from the worry that their lover might not care about their woe (seen in ll. 35-6). The speaker's earlier longing for 'tiding' (l. 21), as well as this possible reference to epistolary healing, is demonstrative of the

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<sup>7</sup> Barratt, p. 291.

<sup>8</sup> Sulpitius Severus, 'The Life of Saint Martin', in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, trans. by Alexander Roberts, 11, 2, p. 32.

power of language which is felt throughout the Findern poems. For example, several speakers are frustrated by the fact that, since their lover is absent, they also have no one to complain to about their loneliness. One such example is found in poem 7:

Then thogh I wold me owght complan  
Of my sorwe and grete payn,  
Who shold *comforte* me do?  
(ll. 7-9)

The cathartic process of committing emotions onto the manuscript page is another possible means of finding comfort in the poems, which is implied in the volume of poems which deal with such themes. The power of language is also presented negatively in the manuscript, as with the destructive nature of the tongue, seen in poem 19 as well as ‘A wikked tong wol alway deme amis’ (ff. 147<sup>r</sup>-150<sup>r</sup>).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the speaker in poem 6 bemoans men who ‘make butt game’ and use ‘dowbilnys’ (l. 8) in language:

Ther othis to bede,  
Ther lyvys to lede,      New fangellnys.  
And proferith mede,  
(ll. 10-12)

This may suggest how the speakers experience both sides of language; they want to hear news of their lovers, and feel better for complaining, but dislike falseness when they place such emphasis on language for their personal comfort.

Poem 11 is unique, as it is from the perspective of a man who has left his lover behind. In contrast to the female or ambiguously voiced lyrics, he simply reiterates clichés of fidelity (‘Thogh I be long out of your sight / I am your man both day & night’, ll. 5-6) and prays ‘That she may cast care away’ (l. 19). He does not refer to his wish to hear from her, and his reference to the fact that his lover is suffering due to his absence shows that the pain of longing is ascribed to women, since what he feels is more akin to worry. This poem shows how different the experience of absence is from the other perspective. We can see how the afore-mentioned poems deal with loneliness through moments of consolation (such as letters, poetry, complaining), which differs from Findern’s male experience of loneliness.

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<sup>9</sup> Although it has not been edited from the Findern Manuscript, a version of this Lydgate poem can be found in MacCracken, 1961, pp. 839-844.

Furthermore, many of the poems cite quotations from marriage vows, which may be another source of relief from isolation. McNamer claims that the lyrics act as 'serious assurances of their marital fidelity in the face of extended separations from their husbands'.<sup>10</sup> The expression 'tyll deth departe us to' (l. 17) from poem 7 carries the implication of marriage which is reiterated in several other poems with the phrase 'Ffor well nor wo' (poem 24, l. 8). McNamer sees this as further evidence of female authorship, asking 'Could it be that what we are hearing in these lyrics are echoes of [...] the marriage vow?'<sup>11</sup> It is convincing to read these references to vows as a means by which the speaker is able to feel a binding connection between themselves and their absent beloved.

This form of consolation is present in a vital theme of the poems; the 'hert'. The word 'hert' is used to refer to a lover; 'My fayre swete hert, ye cause me to compleyn' (poem 1, l. 3) as well as to the speaker's own heart. Perhaps this is a deliberate lexical connection, using the same word for a lover and their own heart establishes a comforting bond. There is a reference to two hearts in poem 26 which confirms this:

And thynke what sorowe is the departyng  
Of ij trewe herte louyng feithfully

(l. 8-9)

The heart is the source of some of the most original pieces of imagery in the poems; in poem 7 there is a striking image of a 'woo full' heart 'clad in payn'. Other poems depict the heart as a gift; 'But ye to hand my hole hert' (poem 12, l. 12) and a site of permanence; 'So depe ye be / Graven, parde, / *Withyn* myn hert' (poem 14, ll. 7-9). The heart is also often presented as physically wounded, which is bound up with the theme of feeling lovesickness as a physical affliction, such as in poem 15, where the heart is caused 'to blede' (l. 15) and later is 'swollyn' (l. 19). A final interesting usage is in poem 18 where the heart is the centre of a transaction; 'Alle Ioy ffro myn hert ys bowght and sowld' (l. 5). It is possible that the heart features so regularly in the poems because, firstly, it is a useful literary device which can be personified and dramatised and because, secondly, it is a reminder of a personal connection. It is

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<sup>10</sup> Sarah McNamer, 'Lyrics and romances', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, ed. by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 195-209 (pp. 199-200).

<sup>11</sup> McNamer, 1991, p. 297.

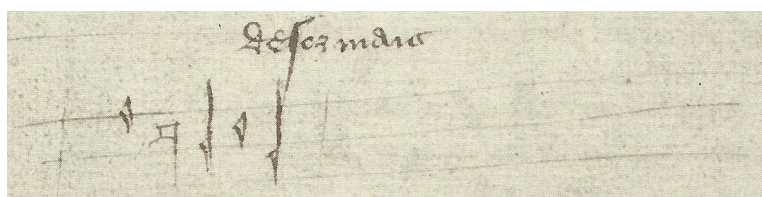
possible to read the heart as the unifying motif of the unique poems, since it conveys a sense of real experience and pain, which is not transferable in stock imagery of courtly love.

### Format and layout

~

The unique poems make frequent use of brackets and indented columns of text. Poems 6 and 7 employ this device with especial skill, with brackets also used in poems 9, 11, 14, 16, 17 and 24. In poem 7, Barratt delights in the possibility of reading both columns as separate poems.<sup>12</sup> This is why I have preserved the use of columns in this edition, since it maintains an alternative form of creativity in the poems beyond the use of language. A second column creates a separate voice similar to an envoi through which the speaker can convey a more succinct message. Some of the afore-mentioned poems which use indented phrases employ a refrain or burden, rather than a new piece of text for each line. This highlights a note of musicality which runs through the manuscript, whereby some of these poems may have been sung, or even danced to.

There has not been an exploration into the Findern Manuscript's musical attributes, which seems unusual due to the large presence of lyrics as well as two short pieces of music. At the end of poem 16, there are some odd illegibly faint words, followed by three horizontal parallel lines, with five shapes drawn across them:



(Figure 24)

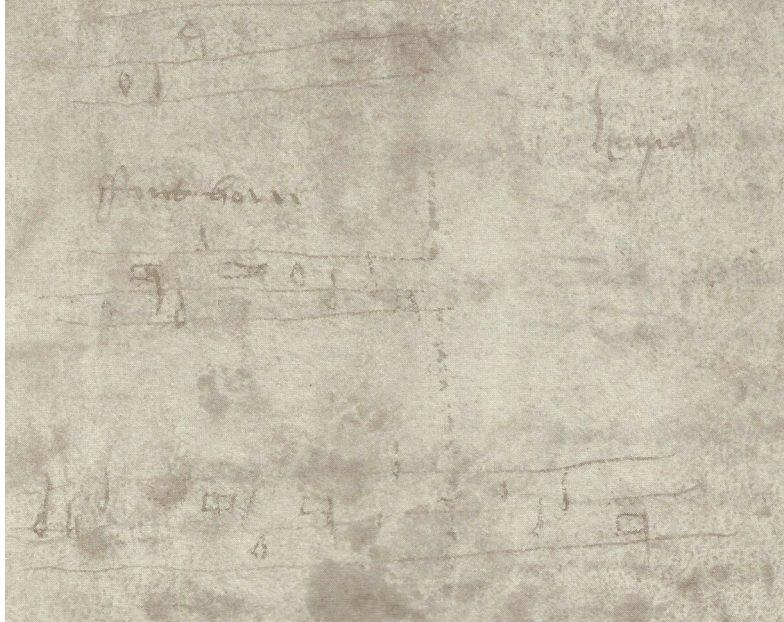
I believe that this is music since their hollow shapes conform to contemporary mensural notation.<sup>13</sup> This means that the notes are, respectively; a semibreve, a longa, a minima, a semibreve and a minima. These note values loosely match the syllable

---

<sup>12</sup> Barratt, p. 288.

<sup>13</sup> I consulted Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900–1600*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1961).

count of the refrain in the poem above, so could this be the tune to sing along with? It seems likely, since a word above the music reads 'desormais', or 'henceforth', which could be a direction for readers. There is another, longer piece of music a few leaves later, on f. 143<sup>r</sup>, which uses the same hollow formations:



(Figure 25)

Unfortunately, the page before this is a stub, which may have held clues to any accompanying text. This music is important to note as it is another signifier of the oral tradition present throughout the manuscript in refrains, burdens and short lyrics. The music could be written down by a scribe who has heard or read it and enjoyed the melody sufficiently to make a note, or it could have been composed originally. Perhaps it would be useful to conduct an interdisciplinary approach to this musical aspect of the manuscript, in order to learn more about how it would have been used and enjoyed in the household.

Greene's edition and discussion of Middle English carols defines the burden as distinct from the refrain since, although both are 'repeated elements', the burden does not form part of the stanza.<sup>14</sup> This is part of creating a strong voice with a message that extends beyond the shape of the main versification, and which reaches out for the reader to repeat aloud. This insistence on sharing a message is representative of the manuscript as a whole.

---

<sup>14</sup> Greene, p. cxxxiii

## Conclusion

~

The Findern Manuscript is a collaborative, familial oeuvre determined to convey a cathartic message of female experience, of love and of the literary tastes of a particular set of people at one point in time. The unique poems are occupied by isolated voices and solitary expressions of individual experiences. Yet all of them are bound together within the leaves of one manuscript; they create a lasting dialogue with one another through responses to canonical texts, poetic emulation and shared passion for the lyric form. This edition and commentary is intended to contribute to the increasing interest in the Findern Manuscript, an unassuming anthology which is simultaneously a valuable remnant of communal literary participation, a tantalising relic of female aspirant writing and an exemplary yet unique collection of Middle English poetry.

# Plates



14 20  
 I may well say for drene, ye my payne  
 drole to drete from yoll the sodenly  
 my faire felow, hyst ye damps and to playn  
 for lacke of yoll yfande full pyn  
 alle yn dystempe, et alben yomay  
 yest yn my mynde my lady pynne  
 Alas for ever drete, hath me slayn

ffore well my mythe & chese of my pyn  
 my yoy ye drete, unto henn offe  
 I yll y again to yoll may pyn  
 so for the tyme y am but pynles  
 hyst to as yome, et yche that ye hyst  
 et yoll hyst ye god, et yche ymay not fayne  
 Alas for ever drete, hath me slayn

ye not chystandynge for all my drete  
 hyst shall be taken, yche pyn  
 And thanks hyst ye to me, but as pyn  
 for yoll to yf, yche as yote, drole mye yche  
 et yll nand chane, but hyst yf yche  
 et alle my mythe to be hyst, et yche  
 Alas for ever drete, hath me slayn



Plate II

f. 20<sup>v</sup>

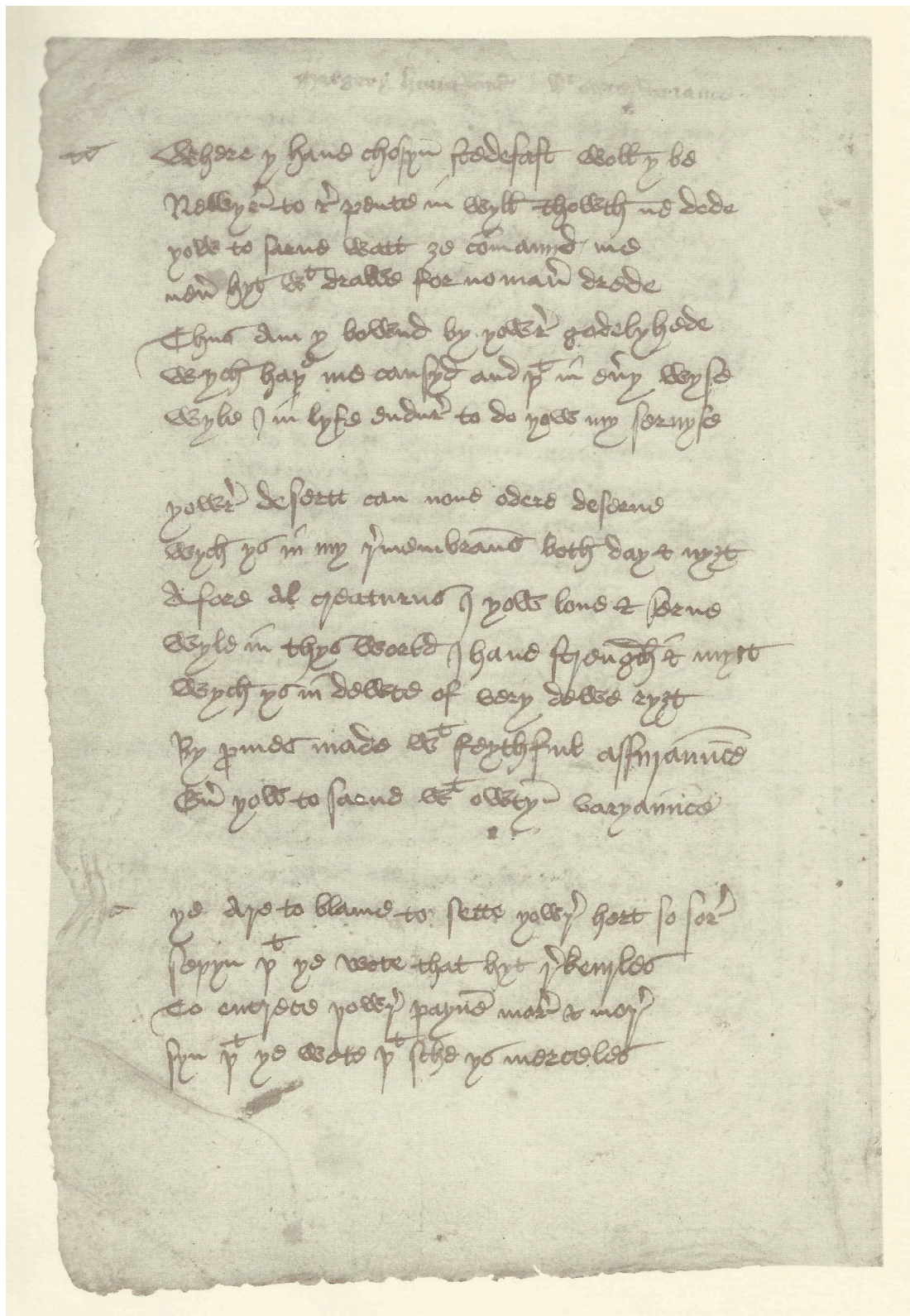




Plate III

f. 28<sup>v</sup>

Do in yowre yesterys my joy and confort  
 yowre dyssele ys my mortal payne  
 Come god send me sache repyte  
 I may confort myn hert in every dayne  
 So but ye may me susteyne  
 Of my greif be ye mynde  
 But ye sone amedement of yowre ayale

Seche ye to me ye heryest pynelamne  
 I can be yowth in any statys  
 Myne hert hangyng yow in balyne  
 Tyl I have knokkele & be yowre fyn  
 I god in yowre hath lyste done thys ony  
 Of yowre dyssele to have allygante  
 And to be yowre of all yowre gybante



42 5/7  
 I praye god & praye zongo my garden blessed  
 I praye god & praye of noce to fore  
 I praye god byf I praye god I praye  
 And eam I praye al po bynges lous  
 I praye my sonne of you walt lous  
 It hit poe walt to lous pryd  
 And take quibloste upon my lous  
 I praye more of grace you I praye god

7  
 What so ever I praye or praye  
 my wylle is good to praye here with

a Now see that wylle of lous lous  
 of counsell now I praye on more  
 To tell you now is more entent  
 honts lous made late his parliament  
 And sent for lous of amy lous  
 I praye mawds and myf I praye lous lous  
 myf lous lous lous of lous lous  
 and marchant myf lous lous  
 myf lous lous lous I praye lous lous  
 Of myf lous lous lous lous lous



Plate V  
f. 51<sup>v</sup>

And all the company p. l. on the  
 Then had the change fallen be  
 And when they were assembled  
 off of the more for the place  
 W. in a castle for the strange  
 And as y. l. by them a man  
 of hand a with great company  
 of men all women that were  
 And in the is the of the  
 down a ballad of the mass  
 for good friends of the folk to all  
 p. where assembled in the hall  
 and some of the best by the company  
 King that is by some do the place  
 O god of love with lords hart and son  
 down the god a man and lord  
 So p. may to the lady and to me  
 the this plament most in a  
 as p. with me in the  
 So only with p. l. of the  
 And after he is in the



Plate VI

f. 52<sup>r</sup>

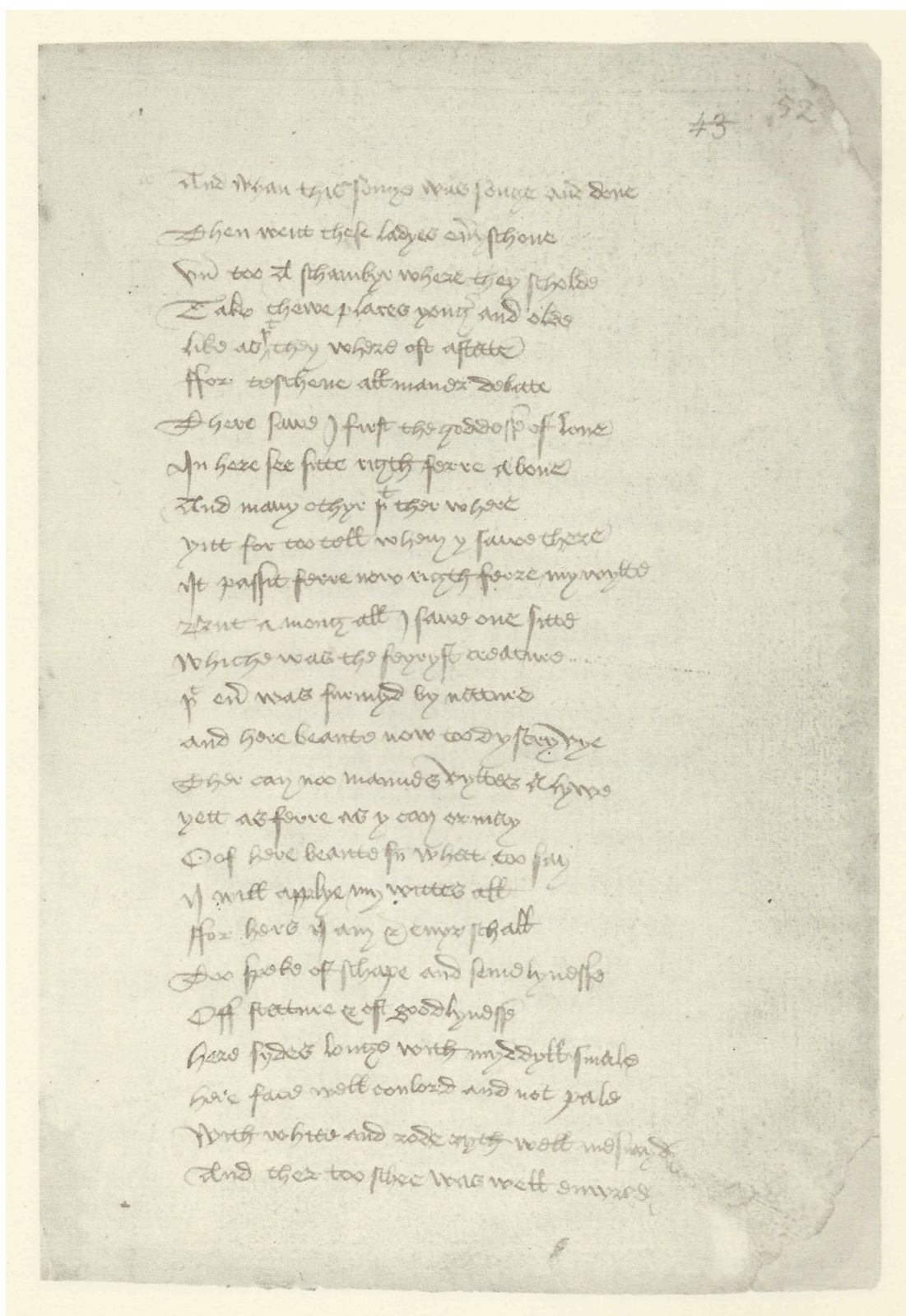




Plate VII

f. 52<sup>v</sup>

And fode in only mannes tye  
 Thre goodly yong and frethe of frede  
 and too feke of condicion  
 And no man fynde in no region  
 One of so grette gentylhousse  
 Of curteysie and lowlyhousse  
 Of treweport and delynned  
 And maprovede of all pleasur  
 All so welles of secretenesse  
 And the wery werynesse of feefawysse  
 Of onest morth fete corde with morth  
 Soo dannaes and founge and othre fute  
 Soo well assured in hie hert  
 That none il wordes from hys tholdes fete  
 And that this on hys y for my mynde  
 And lost all othre thyng by hys  
 As touchyng too thes londre all  
 Whysse on hys canse fast ban call  
 and for too tell thow all en playnter  
 on fete too me the matre quoynted is  
 for us too hys i toke none hys  
 And mynyed none canse to proper  
 y dourne my self me by self allud  
 And into a corner gan too gow  
 And thes fete me dourne a while  
 And hys till for too conpyle



Plate VIII

f. 53<sup>r</sup>

44 53  
 In too thyng lady mych wode so fawe  
 and in hore dayng so belondare  
 And res-hif if yo y hif too hyre z podes  
 Byeffort of whiche was thine mde

10 O fonderoyne pence off all gentillnesse  
 Doo whome I have and onye more shall be  
 I rowe pmaner servant with all man humilitione  
 What poyne I have or whitt ad neffice  
 yett zoe shall enye fynde fuche fowth end me  
 y I shall doo thatt may be yore plesur  
 If god of his gte hif me so a darre

And yow pray at lough as if can  
 goe into my fawne if hif myth yow plesse  
 And if zoe hif too zoward thine yowere mde  
 I have myth hif faw be were in hore dafte  
 for by my teouth y wille not yow displese  
 for all the good p en I hifde or shall  
 zoe my gode wille wifit en me to fite

And if I have pade my thynge a myse  
 doo pade me I yow be pef and pray  
 for as wifh as en y ow too bliffe  
 My wille is gode what en y wite or fay  
 So thou hif fawge thou hif a bliffut day  
 for the p is the floure of womanhood  
 de for covn loyfe the fawge and rode



Plate IX

f. 53<sup>v</sup>

it When fortune hath yere here affert  
 what is too done p may be too  
 shew shapeth nought from her entent  
 for as she will it goes thow to

She passeth by her magement  
 she by afferte the <sup>poor</sup> people all too  
 When frowne

it Sea hys in wy one of timent  
 Dying the worlde hath too and too  
 shew is my schort ainfament  
 she hys comyth to late it go  
 When frowne

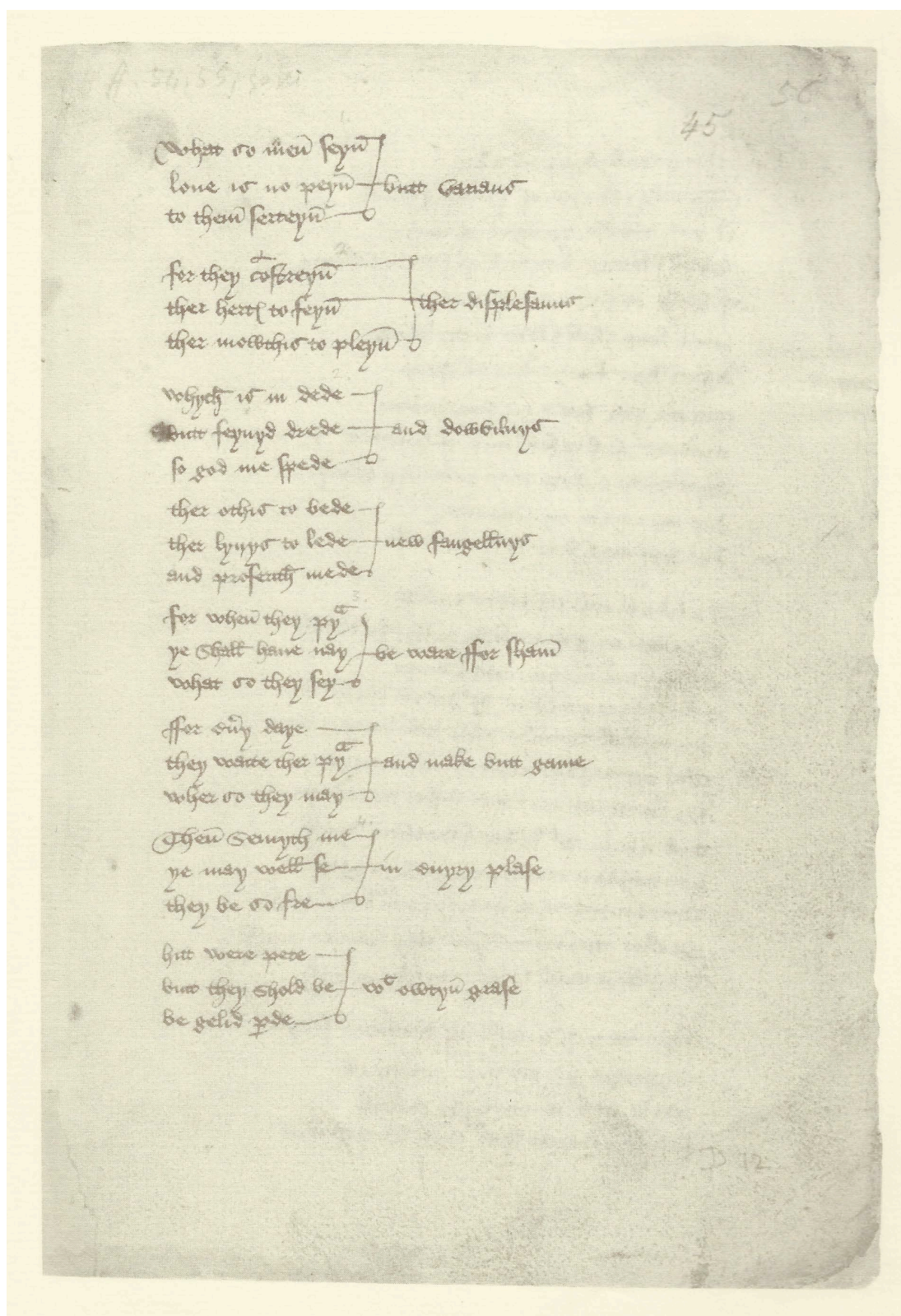
Qued tibi me in

Pierre malouy plente	] And the fore
Plente malouy payde	
Payde malouy ples	
Ples malouy pount	
Pount malouy pous	

sorte polin



Plate X  
f. 56<sup>r</sup>





Hath of endytymyng all the subtilite  
 Wele mye breaſte oute of my ~~re~~ remembrance  
 And eke to me it is a grete penance  
 Syth tyme in englyſſh hath ſuch ſtate ſtee  
 To ſolwen word be word the curioſite  
 Of ſearcheſon floure of hem y<sup>t</sup> make in ſeames  
 Why was full hert that did in vaine my long aſſeue greuyth me ſo  
 Were nat welte vobte do not ſeyn  
 For lacke of ſyght nere and y<sup>t</sup> ſleyn  
 All joy myne hert hath in diſſeign  
 Then thought I wold me vobte complaine  
 Of my ſorow and grete payn  
 Ther is no thyng can make me to be ſayn  
 But the ſyght of hym agayn  
 Done was he may me ſubeyne  
 He is my comfort in all payn  
 To hym I wold be reſpoynd  
 And ouer his vobte in ſeign  
 My hert ſhall I nat fro hym reſpoynd  
 I gane hito hym w<sup>t</sup> care conſpoynd  
 That cauſe my wo  
 I loue hym & no moore  
 My joy ſhall nat be  
 Iſt deſt deſte no to  
 Ouyr to contente o

on *CD*



f. 135<sup>r</sup>

Soyons ie ne m'ay deute d'un  
Co. de te y toone de mont. ne. Genn  
Je voutit toant repente redressé



Plate XIII

f. 135<sup>v</sup>

Whanne I came of you, I have tiding  
 Greet hope with me, for I have  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 But yet may not myn. Hence nisse  
 Depart from me til you come

To you my hope and my worthy promise  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 Of tiding, I have to me, I have to me  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me

What was more of me, but repentance  
 God was to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 Mercy of, I have to me, I have to me

By, I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me  
 I have to me, I have to me, I have to me



Plate XIV

f. 136<sup>r</sup>

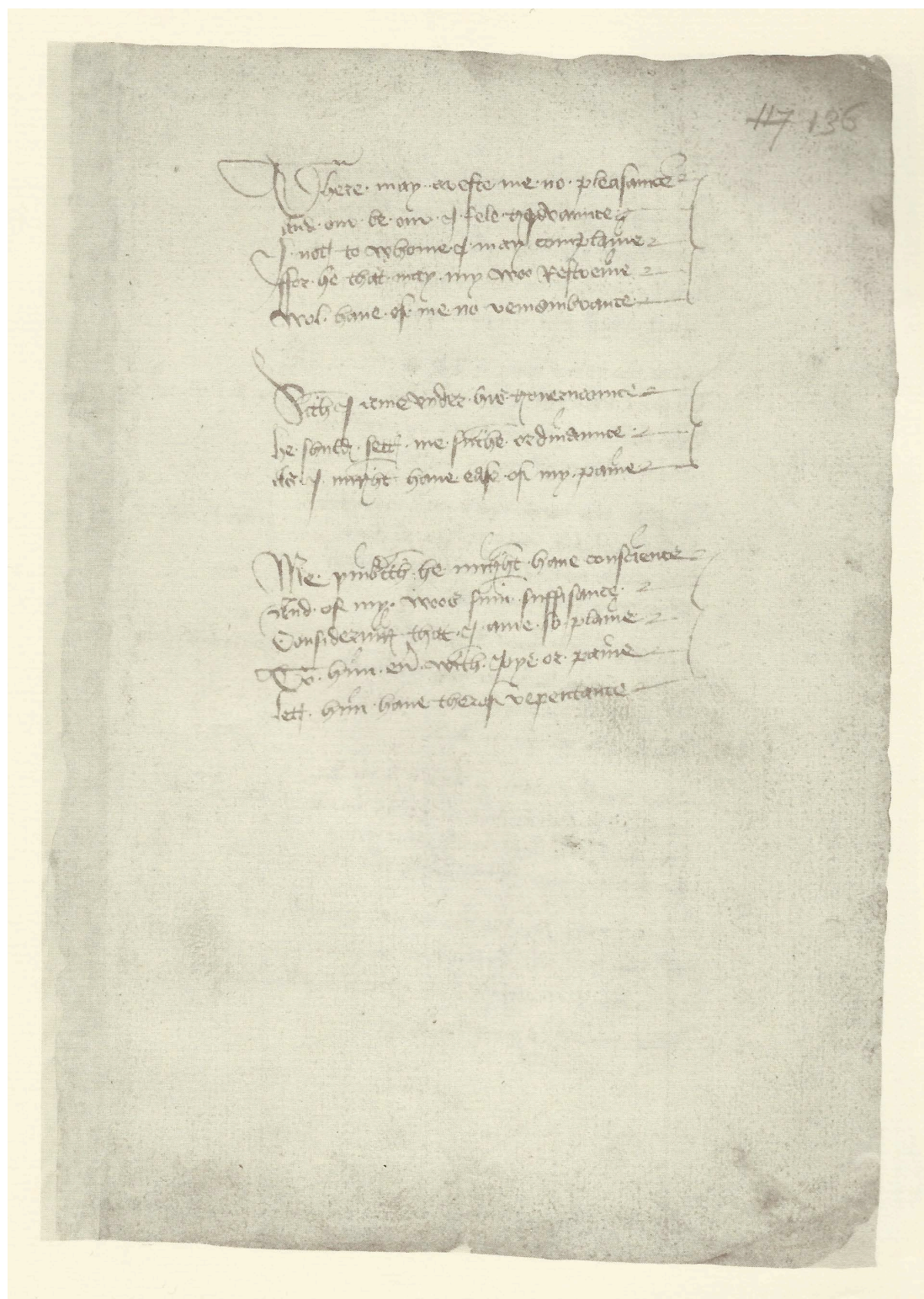




Plate XV  
f. 136<sup>v</sup>

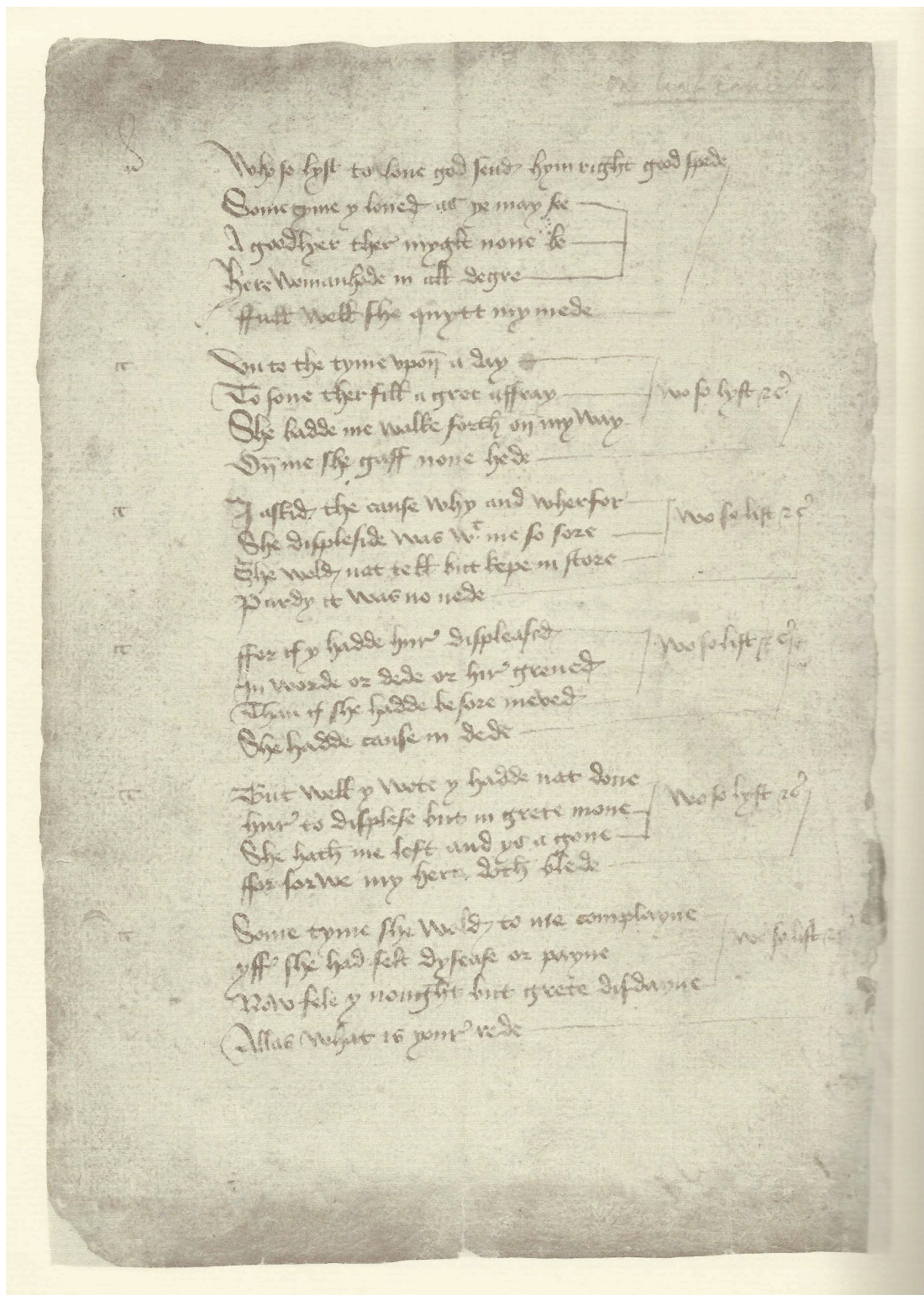
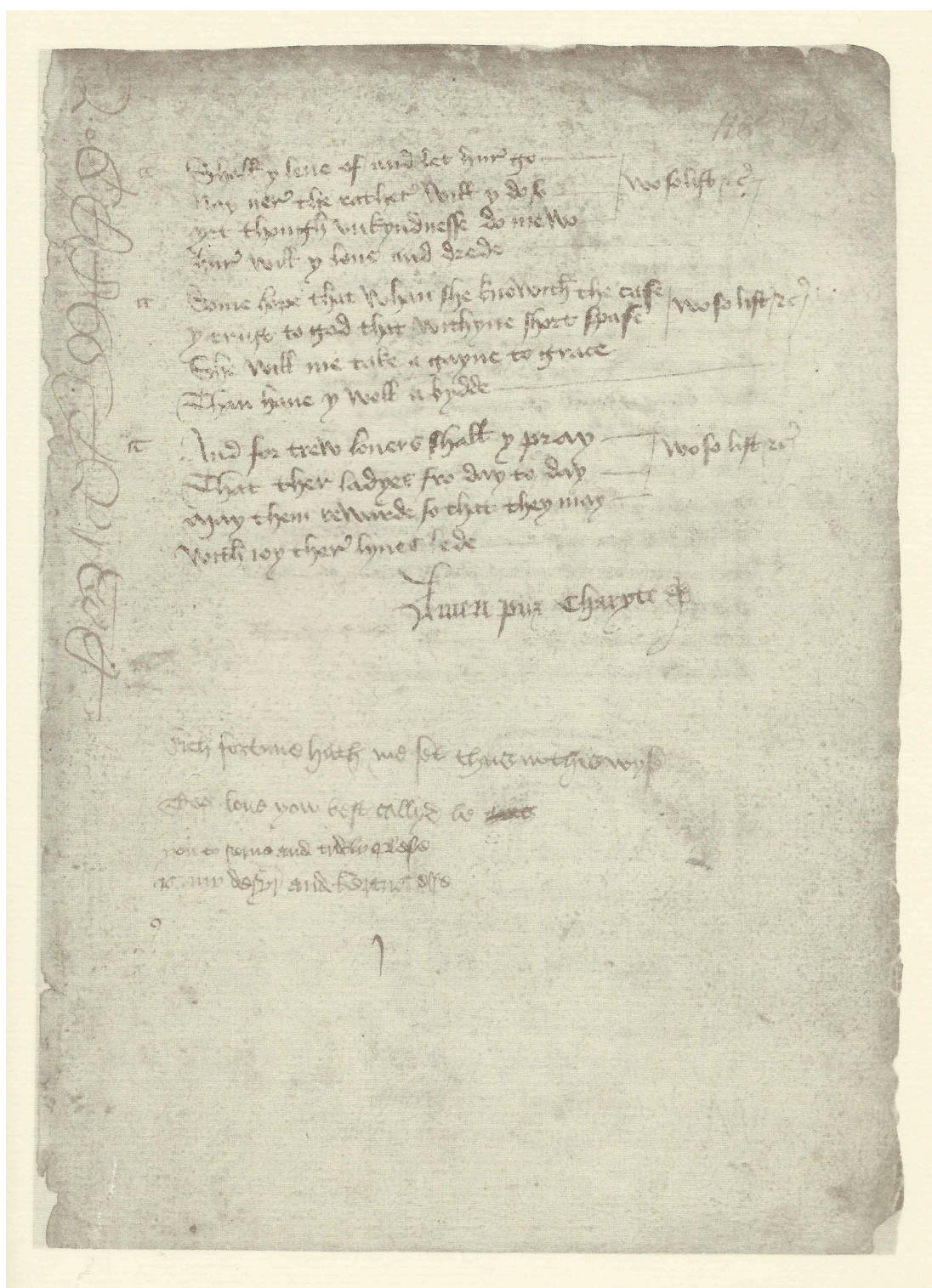




Plate XVI

f. 137<sup>r</sup>





I doo word I haue omni myghte make  
 Not ouer for my ladye sake \_\_\_\_\_ and me wold be  
 But now I am so ffepp from me. she wold nat be  
 Though I be long out of your sight  
 I am your man both daye & nyght \_\_\_\_\_ And as wold be  
 Wherfor wold god as I loue her that she londe me  
 When she is merry than am I glad  
 When she is sad then am I sad \_\_\_\_\_ And canse canse  
 For he leueth nat that longet her. as next as I.  
 She saith that she hath seen her nyghten \_\_\_\_\_ But is nat so  
 That olden fayr is good for yeten \_\_\_\_\_ But is nat so  
 For in good ferre fane onch her I looe no moe  
 Wherfor I pray both nyght & day  
 That she maye cast awaie \_\_\_\_\_ and leue myght  
 And enue more wher to ed she be to lone her best  
 And I to my for to be tyde  
 And neuer charyng her for neede \_\_\_\_\_ I on to my end  
 And that I may in her cause <sup>for</sup> euer amend

In god when  
 Q

Alas alas and alas why  
 hath fortune dand so cruelly  
 fro me to take away p<sup>r</sup> p<sup>r</sup>te  
 Of p<sup>r</sup> p<sup>r</sup> excellent my hart lyte

Of all p<sup>r</sup> p<sup>r</sup> put in or to p<sup>r</sup> p<sup>r</sup>  
 do me lyt as p<sup>r</sup> most blyse  
 When p<sup>r</sup> p<sup>r</sup> was in p<sup>r</sup>sonde  
 do I than my hart gett p<sup>r</sup>sonde

m<sup>r</sup> f. 1







I las wgas plantet vras y bownd  
 my hoo yd see thno vras feryfully  
 thow y be gom h yd no wound  
 thas m yond the y stand not yfely  
 chan for to change yot had me lody  
 thos paynde stonke wgs y by fact dmd  
 do to lone lant y wote y am not fm

And yoff my dethe come to me gasty  
 God enow h yd by yd anolte  
 go lity m yon al mytt yd dmd  
 Of fow y gano bue to thert plente  
 I fayne no tynnt ad ad y fande b  
 I yd yd yd floy my wote done apen  
 I lye do yot but only m dypoy

wgs for y yd do herty ad y can  
 In thul thert nede thas yd wot me colore  
 And thence y am yd fmit t yd m  
 Els mof y fery faly al my dypare  
 wgs to brynde or wgs thert to fery  
 thas yd m me for we no certaynte  
 for lade of thas thas par tues shal y floy

& Croon. & Dyon. &

Conturbancia  
 Of remembrance  
 Deth mo pndance  
 Dnd grotol pndance  
 So daps yd be  
 thand pndance  
 thas d fery m  
 thas d fery m

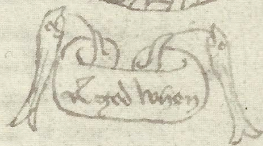


Thougt I no playn  
my desynll payn  
It was in eyen  
To for agayn f. Fortmes eyen

120

It was when

My self walkyng all helone  
fult of dreghth of joy desperat  
To my hert makyng my moone  
And I am the most ynfortunat  
And hark fortme his quene state  
That to me after a beryghth po  
That I am comys to woe



For all gladnesse & comfort  
I am woe brought in to dysport  
For on myghte & on dysport  
Thus seyth my hert for heryng  
Seyng of is no redress  
Of worldly woth he takyng gods  
Whiche ofte chastyng mynd gert to blode

And thus I stand fult of woth  
Woth in my mynd to my gret payn  
Weynyng both chastyng morall  
Woth fult of woth. Whon I pass  
Woth wofull tope. Whiche chastyng  
fult of woth. I lost my comynge  
And thus I stand fult of woth

Of all the world to my pleasure



Plate XXI

f. 139<sup>v</sup>

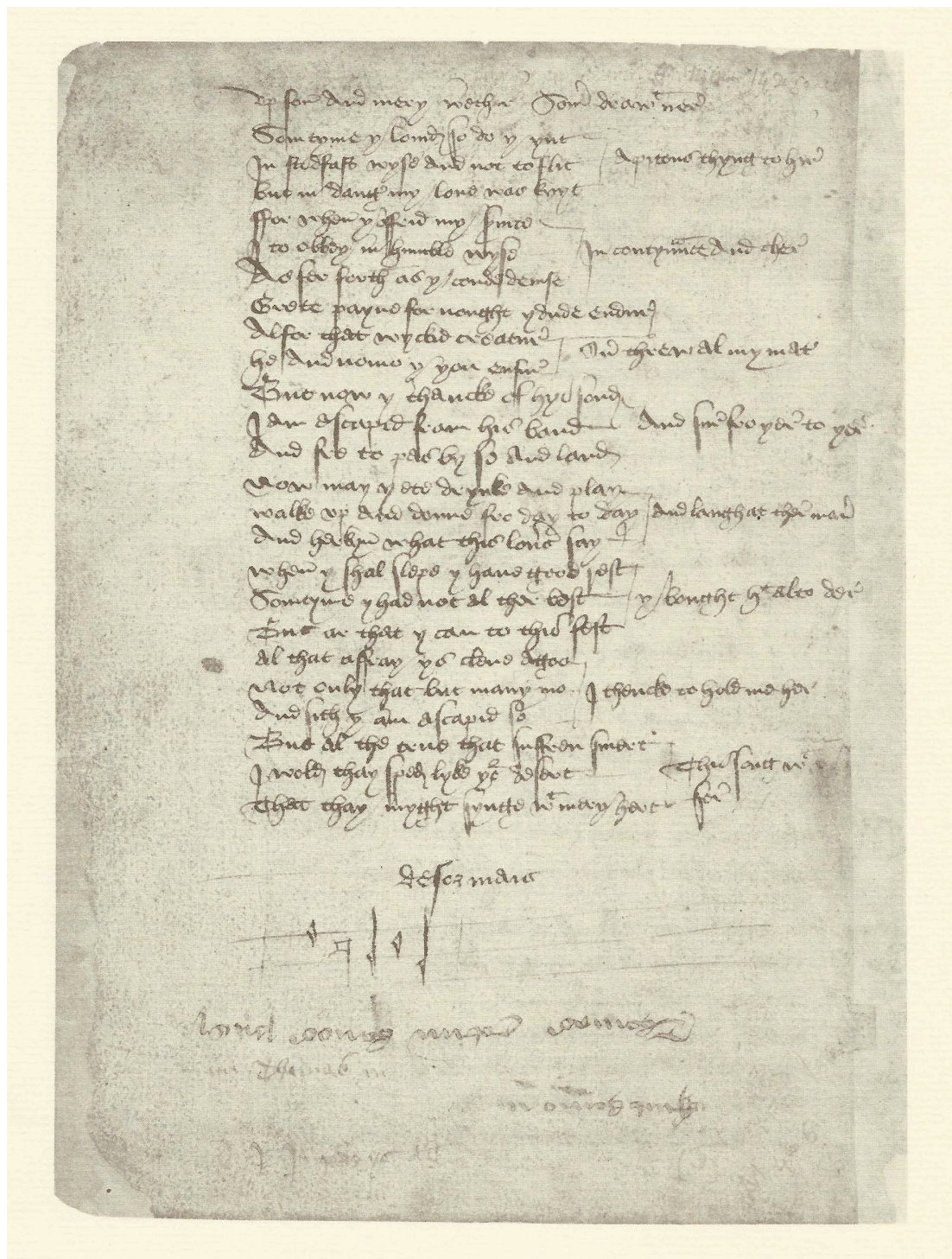
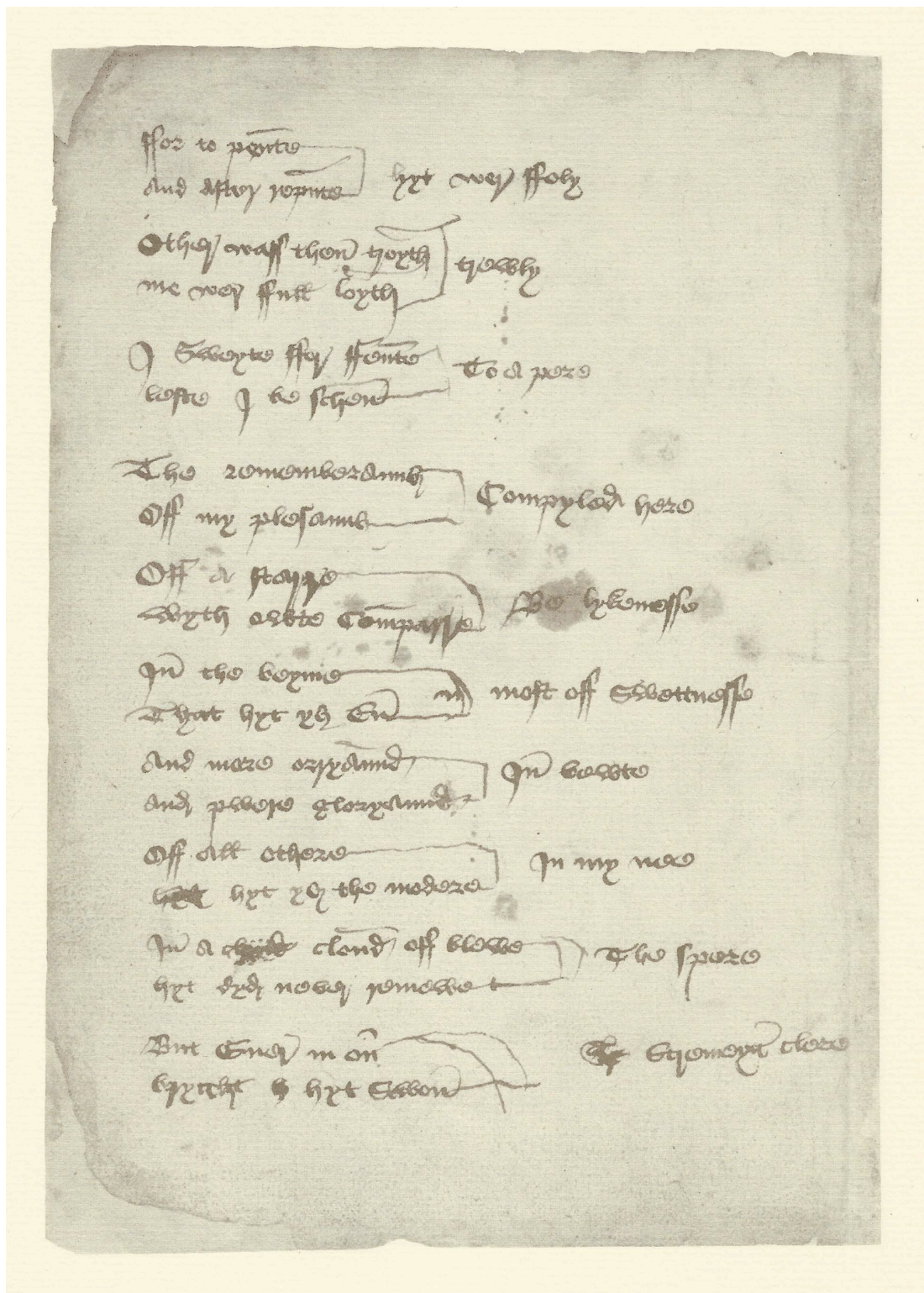




Plate XXII

f. 143<sup>v</sup>









In first yett he conesse myn hert y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>er</sup>ysse  
 And shadde myn myn a fowle  
 They fere shadde myn hert  
 And cryme that y<sup>e</sup> nesse first told  
 Alle for the myn hert y<sup>e</sup> b<sup>er</sup>se and b<sup>er</sup>se  
 Thore vancom off the myn hert  
 That nesse a myn hert may remorde

Structure p<sup>er</sup>son I doo now name  
 But alle the world in generall  
 For myn fowle myn hert p<sup>er</sup>ysse  
 Shadde off fowle myn hert p<sup>er</sup>ysse  
 Lame off hert off make myn hert  
 But thus I fynde moste in p<sup>er</sup>ysse  
 Beste be myn hert myn hert  
 Sonst may them be fowle be myn

But in thynke the ben myn hert  
 A man to be myn hert a bone all other  
 The myn hert myn hert y<sup>e</sup> the world  
 A myn hert myn hert y<sup>e</sup> a myn hert  
 The doctore myn hert the myn hert  
 But the so myn hert be to blame  
 A world myn hert be to blame



But the master paye off my g<sup>o</sup>uance  
Othly he say to exp<sup>o</sup>ss  
for to have in my remembrance  
Othly othly canse that hee and the  
Dyrt to pay off hee and the  
The and hee to paye to comfort  
The all that hee with some report  
w<sup>o</sup>ss

~~And all enquired who and they too~~

And all my best comfort who enjoy they be  
The which gave me space to say my best  
That I may see or enjoy I they  
The which they off a way to post  
And told my paper for to finish first  
and shortly show their grace  
The comfort the which and all finished before

amen myshenno



Chastee the reice and of wysdome dothe this  
 wordeth your heving from all that dome any

Explicit

There is noman dredfull postolone  
 Than is tonge that can flatter & fage  
 For with his cursed crabbes wolens  
 He infecteth folk of eney age  
 Woe to tonge freward of thes langages  
 Woe to tonge false fureyn and woods  
 Whiche of no pson non can say good

Wherefor me semethe it is wel sytting  
 Eynche man other to comende  
 And say the best alway in reportyng  
 For in wel sayng noman may offende  
 Where men say wel god will hye grace send  
 After men ben men most theye prysse w raysse  
 After thee deservyng a lonwe hem everysprysse

But wher a thyng verry is vnderowd  
 Lette noman thee hastoly be of somens  
 For kyghtful iugege settyn on a roo the



Plate XXVII

f. 150<sup>v</sup>

Of thei wifdoms and thei high gundons  
Welle of ane thought hane some evadens  
I mene all fuchs as genned be by heare  
Or any worde out of thei dappys paffe

4.

O falſe tong ſo often hee befor  
Haſt thou made mone on bryght of hewe  
Sei welaway the day that I was boene  
And mone a mayde ſorow for to newe  
And for the more part al is contrarie  
That men of yelpe I hit neir brought to preche  
Of kynde nonne dwamture yō to leve

5.

Dwamture and a lyer all is on  
And thus I poſſe whoman granteth me  
Hee ſons and ſeythe that othe wolle ſhe non  
And I am ſworne to holde hit ſecce  
I wote I am dwamture at the laſte  
And a lyer for I breke my be hofte

6.

Now loke thou yf they be ought to blame  
Suche main ſolke I what I clepe hom what  
And hem dwamture of women and by name  
That non yet be hought hom this nor that  
For I knowe hom more than my olde hatto

A b c d e f g h i k l m  
n o p q r s t u v w x y z



Plate XXVIII

f. 151<sup>r</sup>

129 151  
No wounding is so god me sende helpe  
Though women drede w<sup>th</sup> men to dolo

A good god of hye hys graco  
To what fortune is take hys  
Wher her lyeth she marketh her chaffe  
Now most I m<sup>e</sup> t<sup>e</sup>rryfe my lyffe l<sup>e</sup>de  
Bothe l<sup>e</sup>ne f<sup>u</sup>ne and also drede  
Do he that is boonde and not not be free  
Ryght so farthe hit now by me

Explicit

The more I goe the further am I be hynde  
The further be hynde the more my waye ende  
The more I see the worse con I fynde  
The higher love the lother to wunde  
So thus fortune not I or othe m<sup>e</sup> fortune  
Thangh I goe l<sup>e</sup>nsse t<sup>e</sup>ed am I w<sup>th</sup> a l<sup>e</sup>ne

Prudencia

By sapience temper thy courage  
Of hasty J<sup>e</sup>s d<sup>e</sup>ante thy passions  
Differre vengeance tyl thy weathe aswage  
Reverence the good for thair condicions  
Forsythe patiently the transgressions  
Of men discomfild redressing thair error  
More preferyng or than do Rigour



Plate XXIX

f. 153<sup>r</sup>

131  
153  
Achilles frende the egge was born  
the plat therof was softe and penyable  
wounded of y<sup>e</sup> egge was mortall ynwekyng  
the fatal plat was medycynall  
and thof so be of feith y<sup>e</sup> le stable  
were y<sup>e</sup> gode hope told god for my part  
quere but dede pldynok y<sup>e</sup> is no fable  
On unto y<sup>e</sup>me for lacke of mercy

thou ys no hyf a lde y<sup>e</sup> y<sup>e</sup> de lde  
it is but deth as y<sup>e</sup> lyves lydoness  
Endles sorow affyced dnto of dnto  
past all despayre & dnto of all gldeness  
thou wote y<sup>e</sup> wote y<sup>e</sup> am Remedyless  
for me no thynge nedy dnto nor amende  
thyl deth come fyth and make of me duende

my wylfulle hope plouged y<sup>e</sup> hemyness  
dampnyng in Soudw y<sup>e</sup> wylfulle  
standynge alone now mayntes  
all y<sup>e</sup> dnto dnto full potensly  
y<sup>e</sup> wylfulle fyge as onto y<sup>e</sup> wylfulle  
for y<sup>e</sup> wote and mayntes dnto of me dnto  
alas wylfulle y<sup>e</sup> wote dnto my hope flayne



Plate XXX

f. 153<sup>v</sup>

O gospy saye wille my rege & pte of my plesures  
 saye wille my lady & y lene tynly  
 saye wille dyo hys ches yu yentelshemes  
 and ony pte wille wille yu ony y dy  
 saye wille of wille assyde-faithfully  
 yu wille and pte and now to pte  
 Alas yu ambrydness yu harty my hys pte

And yu and wille my den actondemes  
 to sue yu abone my pte  
 O wille yentelshemes of hys wille  
 O haly de my rege wille yu my hys mays dyo  
 to lene yu hys wille yu wille yentelshemes  
 wille yu lene and pte de yu pte  
 my wille dyo hys yu my full assyde  
 Alas all of pte yu wille

It wille yu that the cause fave d myss  
 For all the good & hane that ou i had or shall  
 the for y take myn amette y wille  
 do the that haly for fave d myss  
 And to all pte is bothe seot & thralle  
 Lo the y stonde wille wille wille  
 All wille of pte an full of pte and wille  
 + And had the wille at myn wille wille



182  
 Now ye that bathe in myrthe & plesures  
 Have mynde on me that was sum tyme & safe  
 Whiche now is tressed in to al disease  
 Now glad wher the that fortune so conde please  
 That the myght stande in verrey hewnesse  
 Hence to fole the stroke of vndernesse

Departing ye the grounds of dysplesures  
 Yet in my hart of eny thynge orthly  
 I you ensue hery in remembrance  
 With in my self I thowde to receyve  
 Muche shall cary with me dayly  
 Some that go moste nedye departs me fro  
 Et ye to me a verrey dely woo

Veryly  
 And truly I shall war fayne

Whyle that I lene  
 I have you yone I my hart stayne

Thus I am sette  
 For to sette I for well nor woo

You to sue  
 Yet that I staine I wher en ye doo

Comenow shall I for youe fynes  
 All way truly I for youe fynes

Ther for to dyo  
 Not to fayne I for youe fynes



As my remembrance non but ye a lone  
 Which me causeth both to wepe and playne  
 I have no comfort wher shall I make my mone  
 So far from you that is all my payne  
 My dyscomfort I may hit nat refreyne  
 Still I be serve of your hartys ope  
 Nothing but hit may my grevys pose  
 All way to endure thys in mee  
 What wonder is thow I sore complayne  
 Your goodly god hath so purged myn hert so  
 Syth of the trowthes I shall nat fayne  
 Hit causeth my moun oft for to rayne  
 When I thynk on you and am absent  
 For a las departing hath my hert spent



154-155  
 Mercy fortune haue pitee on me  
 And thinke that y<sup>e</sup> hast done cruelly amysse  
 To parte a soude them whiche ought to be  
 Alwey in on why hast y<sup>e</sup> doo thus  
 Hane I offendyd the / I now pray so  
 Then tome thy whole / and be my frend a dayn  
 And sende me Joy wher I am now in payn

And thinke what sorowe is the departyng  
 Of y<sup>e</sup> trewe herte, longyngh feithfully  
 For partyngh is the most sorowfull thynge  
 To myn entent that eu<sup>e</sup>r yet knewe I  
 Therfor I pray to the hith<sup>r</sup> hertely  
 To tome thy whole & be my frend a dayn  
 And sende me Joy wher I am now in payn

For tyme I mete I dare wel say for trouth  
 That I shall need be meake of herte  
 Wherfor I pray you to haue of me some thought  
 And releafe me of all my paynes sweete  
 Nowe sith y<sup>e</sup> wotte hit is nat my defaute  
 Then tome thy whole And be my frend a dayn  
 And sende me Joy wher I am now in payn

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# Manuscript Contents

The contents of the manuscript are displayed in the order they appear using the following format:

*Title* (If this is an anonymous or unique text, this is the first line and transcription is my own) – Author (where known)  
Book, Lines (If it appears as an extract from a larger text)  
Folio numbers (According to Beadle and Owen's facsimile, derived from Bradshaw)

All unique items are prefixed by an asterisk.

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ff. 3<sup>r</sup>-5<sup>r</sup>
2. *Confessio Amantis* – John Gower  
Book Four, ll. 1114-1244  
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3. *Confessio Amantis* – John Gower  
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4. *The Complaint unto Pity* – Geoffrey Chaucer  
ff. 15<sup>r</sup>-17<sup>r</sup>
5. *As ofte as syghes ben in herte trewe*  
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6. *For lac of sight grete cause I haue to pleyne*  
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7. *\*I may well sygh for greuous ys my payne*  
f. 20<sup>r</sup>
8. *\*Where y haue chosyn stedefast woll y be*  
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9. *\*Ye are to blame to sette yowre hert so sore*  
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10. *The Boke of Cupide* – Sir John Clanvowe  
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11. \*As in yow resstyth my Ioy and comfort  
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12. *The Parlement of Foules* – Geoffrey Chaucer  
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14. *What so euyr I syng or sey*  
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15. \**When Fortune list yewe here assent*  
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16. *Pees maketh plente*  
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18. *As I walkyd apon a day*  
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21. *Anelida and Arcite* – Geoffrey Chaucer  
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23. *The Complaint of Venus* – Geoffrey Chaucer  
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24. \**My woo full hert this clad in payn*



- f. 69<sup>v</sup>
25.    \**The parcellys off clothys at fyndyrn*  
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  26.    \**Battellys*  
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  34.    \**Welcome be ye my souereine*  
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  35.    \**Who so lyst to loue god send hym right good spede*  
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  36.    \**Sich fortune hath me set thus in this wyse*  
f. 137<sup>r</sup>
  37.    *Now wold I fayne sum myrthis make*  
f. 137<sup>v</sup>
  38.    \**Alas alas and alas why*

- ff. 137<sup>v</sup>-138<sup>r</sup>
39.    \**Alas what planet was y born vndir*  
f. 138<sup>v</sup>
40.    \**Continvaunce*  
ff. 138<sup>v</sup>-139<sup>r</sup>
41.    \**My self walkyng all allone*  
f. 139<sup>r</sup>
42.    \**Vp son and mery wethir*  
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- [f. 143<sup>r</sup> is blank]
43.    \**Ffor to prente*  
ff. 143<sup>v</sup>-144<sup>r</sup>
44.    \**In full grett hevenesse myn hert ys pwyght*  
ff. 144<sup>v</sup>-145<sup>r</sup>
- [f. 145<sup>v</sup> is blank]
45.    \**Most glorius quene reynyng yn hevene*  
f. 146<sup>r</sup>
46.    \**O Cryste Jhesu mekely I pray to the*  
f. 146<sup>v</sup>
47.    *The Wicked Tongue* – John Lydgate  
ff. 147<sup>r</sup>-150<sup>r</sup>
48.    \**Ther is nomore dredfull pestelens than is tonge*  
Composite text: three stanzas from Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, three stanzas from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and one unknown stanza, possibly an original composition  
ff. 150<sup>r</sup>-151<sup>r</sup>
49.    *The mor I goo the further am I behynde*  
f. 151<sup>r</sup>
50.    *By sapience temper thy courage*  
ff. 151<sup>r</sup>-152<sup>r</sup>
51.    \**A Complaint for Lack of Mercy* – John Lydgate  
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52.    \**Thys ys no lyf a las þat y do lede*  
f. 153<sup>r</sup>
  
53.    \**My whofull herte plunged yn heuynesse*  
ff. 153<sup>r</sup>-153<sup>v</sup>
  
54.    \**Euer yn one with my dew attendaunce*  
f. 153<sup>v</sup>
  
55.    \**Yit wulde I nat the causer faryd a mysse*  
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56.    \**Veryly*  
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57.    \**As in my remembrauns non but ye a lone*  
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58.    *The Pain and Sorrow of Evil Marriage – John Lydgate*  
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59.    \**Now god þat syttyst an hygh in trone*  
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60.    \**O þou fortune why art þou so inconstant*  
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61.    \**Off yeff tis large in loue hayth gret delite*  
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62.    \**A Tretise for Lauandres – John Lydgate*  
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64.    \**A mercy fortune haue pitee on me*  
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