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The multilingual English household in a European perspective: London, British Library MS Harley 2253 and the traffic of texts

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Compiled largely in the 1330s, London, British Library MS Harley 2253 transmits a collection of materials in verse and prose, ranging from saints' lives, biblical paraphrase, and works of practical religion, to conduct literature, political satire, pilgrimage guides, a romance, lyric poetry in English (the 'Harley Lyrics') and French, and a selection of fabliaux.[1] It contains texts in each of England's main literary languages—Latin, French, and English—and, as such, it belongs to a small group of trilingual manuscripts whose origins, like those of Harley 2253, lie for the greater part in the West Midlands.[2] Beginning with his landmark identification of the scribe of Harley 2253 as a legal scrivener based at Ludlow, in the diocese of Hereford, Carter Revard in particular has done much to clarify the ways in which the manuscript anticipates the interests and capacities of elite householders resident in this region.[3] While no one patron has been identified for the Harley scribe and his book, its special combination of edifying and entertaining material and the orientation of the political poems that it transmits seem apt to meet the requirements of a narrow set of families living in or around Ludlow at the time of the manuscript's production, including the baronial lords of Richard's Castle, the Ludlows of Stokesay, and the Cheneys of Cheney Longville.[4]

Revard's detailed palaeographic work allowed for the dating and localisation of Harley 2253 with much greater precision than was typical in later twentieth-century manuscript scholarship.[5] Of special interest was Revard's establishment of the priority of three literary manuscripts surviving in the Harley scribe's hand, which allowed for the early establishment of a discrete scribal oeuvre that might be studied for evidence of its maker's developing tastes and methods.[6] In this chapter, I want to offer a contrasting account of

the intellectual and geographical scope of one of the Harley scribe's books. My contention will be that, at the same time as it implicates a West Midlands scribe and a West Midlands elite household audience, Harley 2253 also demonstrates the connections between these West Midlands elements and a pan-European network of textual transmission. The broad currency of French and Latin facilitates the book's participation in this network, which put its Ludlow audience into contact with a range of writings shaping the household experience throughout the medieval West. In what follows, I explore the relative connotations of Latin, French, and English across the texts compiled in Harley 2253 and demonstrate that the shifting associations of French in particular both enabled and inflected the cross-Channel traffic of texts. Most importantly, I argue that insular facility in French and Latin meant that the Harley scribe and his readers could conceive of themselves not only as passive recipients of texts from beyond England but also as active participants in the transfer of texts into and throughout the continent.[7]

The argument opens with a reassessment of the use of Latin, French, and English in the texts compiled in Harley 2253 that is inspired by recent work on late-medieval English multilingualism. In a preliminary analysis of one page in the book—f. 76r, which transmits three texts using all three of the book's languages—I emphasise the strategies of juxtaposition via which the expectations aroused by the deployment of Latin, French, and English in insular contexts are produced and might be manipulated. The special potential of French within this complex of possibilities is then demonstrated via analysis of French-English code-switching in two poems compiled elsewhere in the book. In 'Gilote e Johane', the introduction of a brief exclamation in English into the otherwise French text of this poem illuminates the possible uses of French to address an insular audience. In the Middle English 'Flemish Insurection', by contrast, the use of French words and French-derived lexis may be seen to evoke a continental French identity that is at odds with English attitudes and interests. After a run down of the international connections promoted by the Harley scribe's compilation choices and the vibrant Hereford milieu to which he belonged, I then return to f. 76r of Harley 2253 in order to elaborate a fresh reading of the page's final poem, 'Dum ludis floribus'. Here I will be arguing that the editorial tradition defining this trilingual text's appearance in print has obscured the vital evidence that it contains regarding the capacity of insular writers and readers to conceptualise their active participation in the pan-European traffic of texts.

Finally, I suggest two ways in which Harley 2253 may itself have functioned not only as a storehouse for texts produced elsewhere but also as a re-transmitter of material that was rarer or potentially original to the milieu that saw its production.

The relative connotations of Latin, French, and English

Approaches to multilingualism in medieval England have developed a great deal since the mid-twentieth-century editor of the Harley Lyrics, G. L. Brook, wrote that the mixture of Latin, French, and English in the texts compiled in Harley 2253 reflected a contest between the languages that was taking place in fourteenth-century England. 'The three languages were competing with each other in literary use', Brook asserted, 'and English had not yet gained the mastery'.[8] Such competitive models of England's multilingual past have now given way to a more generous understanding of the give-and-take between Latin, French, and English in insular contexts. In particular, we have become alert to the ways in which the connotations traditionally attaching to these languages are not intrinsic to them. The associations, for example, of Latin with learning, of French with courtliness, and English with homeliness are now most readily understood to result from these languages' constant juxtaposition in a shifting, trilingual language economy.[9] A corollary of this shift in perspective is the recognition that the relative connotations of Latin, French, and English in England will have been susceptible to deliberate manipulation.

F. 76r of Harley 2253 offers a particularly clear example of the processes by which meaning can attach to a language through switches in usage that operate both between texts, as works in French, Latin, and English are juxtaposed, and within them, in intra-textual code-switching. This page transmits three poems that share an interest in the experience of human love. The first, in English, is a meditation on Christ's Passion that approaches its topic via the conventional setting of the secular love lyric. Seeing blossoms spring and hearing birdsong, the speaker claims that

> A suete love-longynge
> Myn herte thourhout stong
> Al for a love newe. (53: 3–5)

For a tantalising moment, it seems that a woman's perspective on enamorment will be offered: 'My joie ant eke my blisse / On *him* is al ylong', the speaker asserts (53: 9–10, my emphasis). But in the

next stanza, the poem transforms into a heartfelt meditation on the crucifixion. Christ is figured forth on the cross—'Thurled fot ant honed / With grete nayles threo' (53: 13–14)—and the poem ends with requests for contrition and amendment.

The next poem on f. 76r is in French. It is more determinedly secular: 'Ferroy chaunsoun que bien doit estre oyé', the speaker of this text begins, 'De ma amie chaunterai qe m'ad deguerpié!' [I'll compose a song that much needs to be heard—I'll sing of my love who has left me!] (54: 1–2). The complaint is brought back into the orbit of 'When Y se blosmes spring' by its refrain. This takes the form of a prayer to God and Saint Thomas that the speaker's lady will be forgiven:

> Je pri a Dieu e seint Thomas
> Qe il la pardoigne le trespas,
> E je si verroiement le fas
> Si ele 'merci' me crye! (54: 8–11)
>
> I pray to God and Saint Thomas / That they forgive her her trespass, / And very truly will I give it / Should she 'mercy' beg me!

The Thomas addressed here may perhaps be Thomas Becket. Given the speaker's expressions of doubt regarding the intentions of his beloved, however, the saintly Thomas evoked in these lines more readily calls to mind the apostolic Doubting Thomas, who was depicted probing Christ's crucifixion wounds in a variety of medieval artistic contexts.[10] The repeated mention of Thomas's name throughout the poem thus draws the lover's protestations into the range of the preceding Passion lyric and further enriches the self-conscious apposition and blending of secular and devotional experiences developed further up the page in 'When Y se blosmes spring'.

While both 'When Y se blosmes spring' and 'Ferroy chaunsoun que bien doit estre oyé' explore love's complexities, they do so using rather different forms. The regular six-syllable line deployed in the English text contrasts in its simplicity with the more outlandish form of the French stanzas, each of which concludes with the bouncing refrain cited above.[11] These prosodic elements contribute to the poems' overall effects: the English text is sobering in its devotion where the French text is playful despite its undertow of resentment. Either text might have been written in the other language; Harley 2253 transmits examples of lively, antipathetic love poetry in English (e.g. 'Weping haveth myn wonges wet', Article 33) and French is deployed to express humble devotion and contrition

in the first text immediately following the poems transmitted on f. 76r, 'Quant fu en ma juvente' (Article 56). The juxtaposition of the French and English poems at the opening of f. 76r would thus seem to be a deliberate arrangement designed at once to drawn on and to reinforce possible differences between the expressive capacities of English and French. Whereas English here functions as the language of unpretentious religious sentiment, French is used to describe an impasse in a love relationship between a man and a woman. Seeing the poems one after the other heightens their impact by setting up a parallel between the different tones that they strike and the different languages in which they are written.

The contrast between the first two poems inscribed on f. 76r shows how the Harley scribe's compilation choices can create productive moments of juxtaposition between texts written in alternating languages.[12] The third and final text on this manuscript page demonstrates how such juxtaposition can be incorporated within one poem. Beginning 'Dum ludis floribus', it is a formal *tour de force* in which the commonplaces of the medieval lover's complaint are revived through a dazzling display combining Latin, French, and English. Whereas much macaronic poetry in the Middle Ages alternates between languages from line to line, here the mix is more fluid.[13] In the first four stanzas of this five-stanza poem, the rhyme words are always Latin but the rest of the line contains French and Latin in varying proportions. In the first stanza, for instance, the first line is entirely in Latin; the second and the third lines are entirely in French, except for the rhyme words; and in the fourth line, the text is split roughly into French and Latin halves. The speaker of this poem addresses a male acquaintance who, he thinks, is having more luck in his amorous adventures than he is:

> Dum ludis floribus velud lacivia,
> Le Dieu d'Amour moi tient en tiel angustia,
> Merour me tient de duel e de miseria,
> Si je ne la ay quam amo super omnia. (55: 1–4)
>
> While you play in flowers as if in wantonness, / The God of Love binds me in such anguish, / Holding for me a mirror of sorrow and misery, / Since I don't have her whom I love above all.

The impression created by the combination of French and Latin in these and subsequent stanzas is one of virtuosic improvisation. Over the next twelve lines, the speaker develops his bilingual complaint. He says that he burns so fervently for his lady's love that he must give up this world if he cannot prove worthy of

her (53: 5–8). Then he lays out the lady's superb beauty and her refinement, which, he says, transport him into ecstasy, 'Come est la lune celi inter sidera' [like the moon among the stars of heaven] (53: 14). But his love is not without a terrestrial edge. He closes with a prayer that is no doubt designed to appeal to the poem's inscribed male addressee:

> Dieu la moi doint sua misericordia,
> Beyser e fere que secuntur alia. (55: 15–16)
>
> May God grant her to me by his mercy, / To kiss and do the other things that follow.

Notwithstanding these witty pyrotechnics, it is the poem's fifth and final stanza that has generated the lion's share of the commentary on the text. I cite it here as it appears in Fein's edition (I will subsequently return to a textual problem posed by this passage):

> Scripsi hec carmina in tabulis.
> Mon ostel est enmi la vile de Paris.
> May Y sugge namore, so wel me is;
> Yef Hi deye for love of hire, duel hit ys! (55: 17–20)
>
> I've written these songs on a tablet. / My lodging's amid the city of Paris. / I may say no more, as seems best; / Should I die for love of her, sad it is!

Thus readers' attention is drawn to the text's status as a written artefact and to the writer's situation in Paris. The switch to English in the poem's last lines seems engineered to produce a particularly pathetic effect. It is as if the speaker, worn out by his artistic efforts, lets his mask slide, and, in this moment of surrender, utters a final, unvarnished account of his experience of unrequited love. After the exuberance of the poem's opening sixteen lines, the flatness of the English is striking. The flagrantly unambitious rhyme on 'is / ys' as well as the breakdown of syntax in the poem's last line neatly portray the writer's exhaustion. Grammatically, the final clause requires either a future or a conditional form conjugated with *will* or *would*: 'if I die for love of her it *will* or *would be* sad'. The only way to parse the poem's conclusion as we have it, I think, is as a sigh: 'If I die for love of her … Oh! This is a sorry business!'

Examining another fourteenth-century trilingual poem on frustrated love, Ad Putter observes how, there too, English is kept back for a last 'heartfelt plea', a move that he relates to a trend in medieval English epistolary culture whereby English postscripts were added to Latin and French missives apparently with the aim

of striking a more informal note.[14] But, Putter states, the conviction that English communicates genuine sentiment in a given poetic context is less the product of any value that the language holds per se than of what he calls the trilingual writer's 'deliberate art'.[15] This can be seen to reside, Putter argues, in the poet's purposeful 'exaggeration of the linguistic and socio-linguistic differences between Latin, French, and English'.[16] In her reading of 'Dum ludis floribus', Ardis Butterfield takes Putter's point a step further, suggesting that multilingual poems such as this might in fact create as well as reinforce impressions of appropriate language use.[17] Cleaving for now just to this text, we can certainly assert that the impression of truthfulness accruing to the final English lines of the poem relies upon their situation in contrast with the flashy macaronic performance that precedes them. If we encountered this couplet, say, scribbled in isolation on the flyleaves of Harley 2253, we would most likely find it less affecting, or perhaps even trite.

French in England and French from abroad

In an influential account of 'Dum ludis floribus', Seth Lerer asserts that the languages deployed in the poem's final stanza reflect pragmatic choices on the part of the text's imagined speaker:

> When the poet writes about the act of writing, he does so in Latin: in the language reminiscent of Martial's epigrams and of their refraction in the schoolroom lyric. When he announces his dwelling in Paris—and what we may take as his affiliation with the student life of the city—he does so in French. And when he announces, in that final couplet, that he may not speak anymore and that he would die for love, he does so in the rich colloquialisms of his clearly definable West Midlands English.[18]

The foregoing analysis of f. 76r of Harley 2253 suggests that the alternation of languages in a poem such as 'Dum ludis floribus' and the book that contains it cannot be completely understood in such terms. The possible associations of Latin, French, and English were much broader than those Lerer lists; it is their particular deployment within this poem that leads to the impression that their use in the last stanza of the poem is appropriate. The connotations that French might be used to conjure were especially broad. As is demonstrated by a recent volume of extracts assembled by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thelma Fenster, and Delbert Russell, French could be used self-consciously in medieval England to

engage a whole range of tones and generic expectations: now pious, now legalistic; now moralising, now lascivious; now documentary, now parodic.[19] French could also be evoked either as a language belonging in England or as a language used elsewhere that marked its speakers as foreign. This point can be clarified via consideration of two further instances of language mixing in Harley 2253. In both cases, comic code-switching opens fresh perspectives on the relative connotations of French and English and on the ways in which these languages could be combined to foster particular insular attitudes towards the French language and French speakers.

Written in French, 'Gilote e Johane' (Article 37) is a fabliau-like poem that narrates Gilote's conversion of her friend, Johane, to a life of hedonistic love-making. Although Johane initially upbraids Gilote for her immoral conduct, Gilote soon brings Johane around to her way of seeing things via an argument whose outrageous misappropriation of Holy Church's teaching makes her an obvious foremother of Chaucer's Wife of Bath.[20] Once Johane is convinced, the two women tour the town of Winchester offering advice to all comers. When they meet a woman who complains about her impotent husband, Gilote's sympathy spills over into English before she returns to French to suggest a predictably practical solution:

> Trop est femme desçu malement
> E forement trahy, qe tiel honme prent.
> Yl ne puet foutre ne fere talent.
> Alas, alas, for Godes deth, such womon ys yshent!
> Demayn quant vostre mary vet de mesoun,
> Je vous froy venyr un jeouene clerjoun,
> Qe de geu vous trovera grant foissoun,
> De meyne e de tresble e de bordoun. (37: 242–9)

> Too much is a woman badly deceived / And severely betrayed, who takes such a man. / He can't fuck or fulfill her desire. / Alas, alas, for God's death, such a woman is ruined! / Tomorrow when your husband leaves the house, / I'll have a young clerk come to you, / Who will compose for you an abundance of loveplay, / In the middle and the treble and the bass.

Gilote's English phrase, which would not be out of place in a moralising sermon on female licentiousness, encapsulates her wanton disregard for clerical authority and the deliciously self-serving nature of her own alternative morality. As it does in 'Dum ludis floribus', the switch into English in these lines serves to suggest the ardency of its speaker's emotion. But where in the

previously discussed lyric the effect is pathetic, here it is comic and parodic, and the sense that the juxtaposition of French and English is being self-consciously manipulated is heightened. The comic yield for this instance of code-switching might have been particularly great in the context of dramatic performance, which is how the work appears to have been met on at least one occasion. At its close, 'Gilote et Johane' is said to have been 'fet', or put on, at Winchester

> Le mois de septembre le jour quinsyme,
> Le an roy Edward vyntenuefyme,
> Le fitz roy Henry qe ama seinte Eglise. (37: 343–6)
>
> On the fifteenth day of September, / In the twenty-ninth year of King Edward [1301], / The son of King Henry who loved Holy Church.

It is easy to imagine the success that a performance of 'Gilote et Johane' could have enjoyed at Winchester. Revard suggests that the original audience of the piece comprised canon lawyers and their clerks, men whose language of business would have been French and who were likely to appreciate the clever subversions of marriage law developed by Gilote on her preaching tour.[21] As Revard also notes, the presentation of the text in Harley 2253 suggests that fresh renditions of the poem were anticipated in the elite household context with which he associates the book.[22] On ff. 67*r and 68r, the text is presented with rubricated paraphs and marginal rubricated initials that have been added apparently in order to indicate changes of speaker and thus to facilitate reading aloud.[23] Domestic performances that proceeded with the aid of these palaeographic markers might have been designed not simply to exercise participants' French but also to improve it.[24]

The text of 'Gilote e Johane' preserved in Harley 2253 allows us to imagine French being used to address two discrete insular audiences, one comprising legal professionals, the other elite West Midlands householders. The brief switch into English identifies these audiences as also belonging to a broader constituency of English speakers. In a study that surveys some similar instances of intra-textual code-switching, Christopher Baswell zooms in on a moment where French intrudes into the otherwise English text of *Kyng Alisaunder* preserved in the Auchinleck Manuscript, comparing this moment to the sudden recognition of *pentimenti*, or 'first thoughts', in a subsequently altered painting.[25] When intra-textual code-switching occurs, a multilingual text can reveal its origins. At

the same time, the notion of originality itself is troubled: are we to imagine Gilote speaking her own words, from the heart, when she speaks English, or is she or the actor playing her adopting English to affect such a move, or are someone else's words being cited, perhaps, as I have already suggested, the words of a preacher known to or imagined by the work's audiences?

For my current purposes, the main point to draw from the code-switching in 'Gilote and Johane' is that French is thereby revealed as a language that is found perfectly fit to address at least two discrete insular audiences that also knew English. An alternative function is accorded to French in 'The Flemish Insurrection' (Article 48). Written in English, this poem narrates the defeat of the French at the Battle of Courtrai on 11 July 1302. On this occasion, having first sacked the occupying French garrison stationed in their town, the burghers of Bruges rode out to Courtrai and, supported by civic militia from several Flemish towns, met and decisively routed the French knights who had been sent to destroy them.[26] The speaker of 'The Flemish Insurrection' takes great delight in describing the humiliation of the vanquished army. Sixteen hundred French horsemen met their end at the battle, he claims, and these men now 'leyyen y the stretes ystyked ase swyn!' (48: 42). The Frenchmen lost their steeds, he goes on, 'thourh huere oune prude' (48: 44). One means by which the poet aims to capture the haughty attitude of the French is through the use of French words and phrases in the English text that appear to be recent imports into Middle English. The French defeat was not avoided, we are told, not 'for al huere *bobaunce* [insolence] / Ne fore the *avowerie* [sanction] of the Kyng of Fraunce'; the French forces are mockingly depicted approaching Bruges '*pas pur pas* [step by step], / With swithe gret *mounde* [military force]'; and the French king is shown assembling his '*dousse pers* [gentle peers]' after the initial defeat of his bailiffs (48: 29–30; 35–6; 50, my emphasis). In the cases of *bobaunce*, *avowerie*, and *mounde* used to mean military force, the *Middle English Dictionary* lists citations from 'The Flemish Insurrection' among the words' earliest occurrences; the phrases *pas pur pas* and *dousse pers* look more clearly still to be determined imports from French.[27]

The French are also heard speaking a strangely Gallicised English. Thus when the French aristocracy meets to discuss the routing of the Bruges garrison, their promises of revenge slip into French. The count of Saint Paul swears 'Par la goul De [by God's throat]' that

> We shule facche the rybaus, wher thi wille be,
> Ant drawen hem with wilde hors out of the countre,
> By thousendes fyve! (48: 61–3)

Raul de Nel, count of Bologne, is then heard asserting that

> Nous ne lerrum en vie chanoun ne moyne
> [we won't leave alive either canon or monk]
> Wende we forth anon ritht, withoute eny assoygne [delay],
> Ne no lyves man. (48: 65–8)

The effect of this Gallic colouring is surely comic. It also extends beyond the lines of direct citation in French, inviting readers to hear the English portions of the line being spoken as it were in a French accent. Like the items of French lexis cited above, several of the French-sounding words attributed to the count of Saint Paul and Raul de Nel are, in the fourteenth century, also recent arrivals in English (e.g. *rybaus*, *assoygne*).[28]

Recent work on insular lexicography has stressed the difficulties faced by the editors of modern dictionaries who might attempt to distinguish between words having English, French, and Anglo-Norman origins. It would seem that our understanding of these languages tends to be more finely circumscribed than was the case for medieval speakers.[29] Nevertheless, the frequency with which identifiably French words are associated with hostile French characters in 'The Flemish Insurrection' suggests that, about the time this poem was being copied, these words were recognisable as distinctly foreign loan words. Indeed, it would seem from their use in this text that they could be apprehended as belonging not only to another language or register of language but also to another place: France, not England or Flanders.[30]

To claim as does Thorlac Turville-Petre that the three languages used in Harley 2253 'existed in harmony' and that they represent the interests not of three independent cultures but of 'one culture in three voices' is thus considerably to flatten out the matter of the book's multilingualism.[31] On the one hand, as in 'Gilote e Johane', the contrast of French and English can be productive of exclusive community sentiment within insular contexts. On the other, as in 'The Flemish Insurrection', the juxtaposition of these languages can be used to establish an insular identity that is opposed to continental French interests. That the revilement of the French in that last text is triangulated via the example of the burghers of Bruges points to the complexity of the cross-Channel networks of loyalty within the context of which the apparently proto-nationalist

sentiment developed in the English poem should be considered. The reading of Harley 2253 developed here is diametrically opposed to that finally proposed by Turville-Petre according to which the Harley scribe collected his materials with a view to representing them 'as fitting representations of national culture'.[32] Instead, I want to emphasise the flexibility of French in particular to foster communication both within and beyond England. French was an especially apt medium for trans-Channel traffic because it was capable of embodying both the ambitions and the antipathies that were bound up with contact of this sort.

International contacts

'Dum ludis floribus' trades heavily on the mystique attending international contacts. As it is presented in Fein's edition, the poem offers us the pleasurable illusion of being a fly on the wall in an expatriate English clerk's medieval Parisian cell. The interest manifest within this text in the world beyond Ludlow and Hereford is also perceptible in several of the other items compiled in Harley 2253, as, throughout the book, the Harley scribe's copying makes available for his readers a selection of texts affording them access to the latest continental trends.[33]

Several of Harley's items were pan-European 'hits', such as 'All the World's a Chessboard' (Article 109), a Latin prose allegory in which descriptions of the movement of pieces in the game provide the pretext for a devastating social critique from which not even the king escapes unscathed. The transmission of the 'Enseignements de Saint Lewis a Philip soun fitz' (Article 94) was likewise broad. The Harley scribe's copy of this work derives from a continental tradition of French texts purporting to preserve the deathbed advice of Louis IX of France (1214–1270); it was promulgated widely in the lead-up to the king's canonisation by Boniface VIII in 1297. Several of the other French texts copied by the book's main scribe also have continental analogues: a Goliardic poem on the joys of winter, 'Quant voy la revenue d'yver' (Article 20); two pieces treating the nature of women, 'Le Dit des femmes' (Article 76) and 'Le Blasme des femmes' (Article 77); and three fabliaux: 'Le Jongleur d'Ely e le roi d'Angleterre' (Article 75), 'Les Trois dames qui troverent un vit' (Article 75a), and 'Le Chevaler qui fist les cons parler' (Article 87). An interest in things French is made explicit in the paratextual material accompanying the works of practical religion transmitted in the book. Thus a vernacular

translation of *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is touted with the otherwise gratuitous advertisement that it has been put 'en fraunceis' (102: 1); a prayer on the Five Joys of Our Lady is presented as a gift sent directly from the Virgin Mary to Saint Maurice, bishop of Paris (Article 104); and a list of occasions for psalms is attributed to Saint Hilary, Archbishop of Poitiers (Article 111).

Other texts in Harley 2253 look to the East. 'Pilgrimages in the Holy Land' (Article 38), 'The Pardons of Acre' (Article 39), and 'The Land of the Saracens' (Article 95) invite readers to cast their minds beyond western Europe to imagine the topography and cultures of the Orient and their provision for Christian penitents. Still other texts look West. Among a selection of features exhibited by the Harley Lyrics that suggest a Welsh connection is John's comparison of Annot to the fictional characters Tegeu, Wyrwein, Cradoc, and Wylcadoun in 'Ichot a burde in a bour ase beryl so bryht' (Article 28: 43–5).[34] The Harley scribe's connections to Ireland are evidenced on the flyleaves of Harley 2253, which transmit accounts from County Meath.[35] Some traffic of text and manuscripts across the Irish Sea is also suggested by the presence of the French lament for Simon de Montfort (Article 24) in both Harley 2253 and an Irish Franciscan manuscript, now Dublin, Trinity College MS 347.[36]

These international engagements bear stressing alongside the more familiar national and regional affiliations of Harley 2253. The role played by the book as a resting place for English verse has long been recognised. The demonstration via dialectal study that the origins of the Harley Lyrics were dispersed throughout England was an early scholarly achievement, as was the realisation that the exemplars with which the Harley scribe worked must sometimes have been loose leaves of parchment.[37] It has long been recognised too that the concerns of many of the texts compiled Harley 2253 reflect their scribe's particular West Midlands context. The political poetry compiled in the book manifests a distrust of centralised authority and commemorates incidents of local importance, such as the Battle of Evesham (Article 24).[38] The manuscript collects the Latin lives of three local saints, Ethelbert, Etfrid, and Wistan (Articles 18, 98, 116), and its Midlands orientation is also evident in the Harley Lyrics' occasional location of their objects of desire out 'by West', anywhere 'From Weye […] into Wyrhale' [Wye into the Wirral] or 'Bituene Lyncolne ant Lydneseye, Norhamptoun ant Lounde' [between Lincoln and Lindsey, Northampton and Lound] (arts. 30: 37; 28: 27; 65: 17). Marilyn Corrie has shown

how the sharing of contents between Harley 2253 and another West Midlands trilingual miscellany, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 86, is representative of a 'localized literary culture' that flourished in the region in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[39] Finally, Michael Richter has uncovered important independent evidence of facility in Latin, French, and English among these books' potential readers. In his assessment of the documents surviving from the hearings associated with the canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe, bishop of Hereford (c. 1220–1282), held in 1307, Richter notes that many West Midlands clerics and secular elites delivered their testimony in Latin or French, suggesting their expertise in one or both of these languages as well as in their native English.[40]

The cultural affiliations of Harley 2253 thus range broadly across contexts regional, national, and international. This should not surprise us: Hereford, the nearest large town to the Harley scribe's Ludlow, was a regional hub well used to looking beyond its borders. At the latest by the turn of the fourteenth century it had acquired the much fêted *Mappa Mundi* that affords its viewers a rich visual perspective on their place in the world.[41] The internationalism of the region has been described by Daniel Birkholz, who emphasises the mobility of Hereford cathedral's clergy and their frequent journeying between Hereford, Rome, and Avignon during the early 1300s, and who suggests that the Harley scribe acquired several of his texts thanks to his acquaintance with these well-travelled men.[42] To these researches can be added John Hines's exposition of the links sustained by trade and pilgrimage between the Harley scribe's West Midlands base at Ludlow and the continent. Hines notes that Ludlow's prosperity in the Middle Ages derived from its flourishing wool trade, which is known to have opened the town to imports of continental wine and pottery; Hines also points out the early fourteenth-century success of the town's Palmers' (i.e. pilgrims') Gild, which gained formal recognition and a royal licence to acquire property in 1329, around the time when the earliest work on Harley 2253 was getting underway.[43]

It is my contention that 'Dum ludis floribus' offers a more comprehensive reflection upon the reciprocal international contacts sustained by the Hereford milieu than has hitherto been recognised. Texts as well as goods could be shared across its border. In order to make this point, it will be necessary to go back to the manuscript text of the poem's last stanza. Above, I cited these lines as they

appear in Fein's edition; here I give them in my transcription from Harley 2253, f. 76r.

> Sc*ri*psit hec carmina in tab*u*lis
> Mon ostel est enmi la vile de paris
> May y sugge namore so wel me is
> ȝef hi deye for loue of hire duel hit ys.

The substantive difference between my text and the text printed by Fein is in the first word of the stanza, 'scripsit' [he has written] which, despite the clarity of the scribe's writing at this moment, Fein, following all previous editors of the poem, emends to 'scripsi' [I have written].[44] I think that the traditional emendation obscures the sense of the poem which, in its manuscript text, finally emerges not as a static record of its speaker's emotional state but as a mobile letter.

As it appears in the manuscript, 'Dum ludis floribus' ends with the reaction of the man addressed in the text's opening line, who speaks as the recipient of its first four stanzas. On this reading, the poem concludes bitterly. Whereas the first speaker had assumed that his addressee was having a better time of it, playing in flowers as if in wantonness, here it turns out that this second man, whom we discover in Paris, is faring just as poorly, if not worse. When he mentions tablets, the speaker of the final stanza may be wistfully imagining his friend taking a quiet moment to draft his poetic epistle in wax. Alternatively, he may be registering before his own eyes the sight of the wax tablet inscribed by his friend and sent to him at Paris.[45] Either way, the writer of the text's last stanza is not up to the flexible macaronic style of his correspondent. In his response to his correspondent's text, he composes a mere four lines, two in which Latin and French are separated out and, as his closing couplet, a simple utterance in English.

What the manuscript reading of 'Dum ludis floribus' contributes to our conception of the international connections evident in Harley 2253 is the idea that the English could imagine themselves not only as the recipients of texts from elsewhere but also as the authors of missives into the wider world beyond the Channel. An unamended reading of 'Dum ludis floribus' allows us to perceive that the traffic of texts between England and the continent could run both ways. According to one of the fictions made available in the poem, a virtuosic writer of macaronic verse could send his poetry from England into France, where it might stay, and take root. The final lines of 'Dum ludis floribus' might

also imply a more conscious attempt at reciprocation. One way of reading the last stanza of the text is as an attempt to write back to the author of the opening French-Latin macaronic. If the second speaker is thought to be an Englishman, we might assume that his stay in Paris has not yet enhanced his poetic skill to the point that he can rival his correspondent at home. Or the writer of the last stanza of 'Dum ludis floribus' might be imagined as a Parisian native. In that case, the text's conclusion might figure forth a continental poet who is engaged in a clumsy imitation of his insular friend. The English ego is flattered on this reading by the spectacle of a Parisian writer's clearly inferior macaronics and by his determined but ultimately unimpressive attempt to produce an English couplet.[46] Or again, what we might take from this brief poem and its indeterminate location of its speakers is the irrelevance both of geographic orientation and of native proficiency. For what is to say that the writer of the poem's first four stanzas is not himself already in France? In the world of this poem, writers are presented for judgement not in light of the language that they grew up speaking, or of the land in which they reside or write, but with regard to their varying abilities as the authors of ambitious, mobile, multilingual verse.

Two examples of the traffic of text through Harley 2253

Literary history provides corroboration for at least one of the new readings of 'Dum ludis floribus' that I have outlined insofar as there is a long record of not only Latin but also of French texts from England making the journey into the continent. The later thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman text of *Boeve de Haumtone* inaugurates a long tradition of storytelling throughout Europe that will see the romance rendered into Icelandic, Welsh, Irish, Middle English, and continental French, as well as Dutch, Italian, Russian, Romanian, and Yiddish.[47] *Le Livre des merveilles du monde* attributed to Jean de Mandeville (1356) enjoyed a similarly broad readership across the European vernaculars and, according to at least one recent commentator, seems most likely also to have taken its origins in England.[48] Consideration of the English origins of texts such as these involves a shift in perspective on England and the continent. In particular, as Simon Gaunt points out, we should recognise that the traffic of texts about the Île de France in the Middle Ages was not only centrifugal but also centripetal; texts flowed into as well as out of the metropolitan

region, their passage being facilitated by the broad currency of Latin and French.[49]

Given its role as the transmitter of 'Dum ludis floribus', it is gratifying to note that Harley 2253 can shed light on at least two instances of textual traffic from England into the continent. The first of these has already been explored in a ground-breaking article by Roy Pearcy.[50] In that work, Pearcy reviews the textual history of a group of Anglo-Norman fabliaux, two of which are transmitted in Harley 2253, 'Le Chevalier qui fist les cons parler' and 'Les Trois dames qui troverent un vit'. In so doing, he demonstrates that, rather than being degraded versions of pre-existing continental texts, as had previously been assumed, these two texts are more likely originally to have been written in England. Although Harley 2253 postdates the continental French manuscripts in which 'Le Chevalier qui fist les cons parler' and 'Les Trois dames qui troverent un vit' are also transmitted, Pearcy argues that the Harley texts testify to an older insular circulation of these works and that it is this tradition that the continental versions of the texts develop: the preponderance of digressions in the continental French texts marks them out as adaptations of earlier work. As Pearcy is well aware, his demonstration of the vitality of the Anglo-Norman fabliau has important cultural implications, not least as regards Chaucer's access to examples of the genre. Pearcy's work is especially useful for my current purposes because it illustrates how an English book such as Harley 2253 might potentially contribute to a network of textual exchange spanning time as well as geography.

Harley 2253 may also hold the key to another instance of insular participation in continental textual traditions. Whereas the Harley scribe's copies of the fabliaux discussed by Pearcy postdate their extant continental copies, his version of 'All the World's a Chessboard' is the earliest known copy of the work to have survived.[51] Given that so many of the poems compiled in Harley 2253 can be shown to take their origins outside the West Midlands, it is possible too that the Latin prose allegory was composed elsewhere. But the connections of the work to the milieu that produced Harley 2253 are tantalising. Like so much of the political poetry in the book, 'All the World's a Chessboard' expresses a deep-rooted distrust of those who either have power or crave it. In this brief Latin allegory, the movements of each of the chess pieces are listed and are found to parallel dishonest manoeuvring at all levels of society. Thus the queen's capacity for unlimited movement is said to reflect the greed

of womankind; the rook's movement in straight lines is found to reflect the ideal behaviour of judges, who are said unfortunately to have become corrupt; and the knight's consecutive movement across both vertical and horizontal planes is held to reflect the wily means by which men of his rank extract taxes from their subjects (109: 18–28). Even the king does not escape entirely from criticism:

> In isto autem ludo REX vadit ubique et capit undique directe, in signum quod rex omnia iuste corrigat et in nullo omissa iusticia obliquari debet. Set quicquid agit rex iusticia reputatur, quia quicquid principi placet legis habet vigorem. (109: 14–16)
>
> Furthermore, in this game the KING moves everywhere and takes from all directions directly, to indicate that a king corrects everything justly and that in no case ought justice be omitted and shunted aside. But whatever the king does is regarded as justice, because whatever suits the prince has the rigor of law.

In its apparent distrust of royal whim, 'All the World's a Chessboard' shares a decentralising stance developed in several of the political poems compiled in Harley 2253, including the 'Song of the Husbandman' (Article 31), 'Trailbaston' (Article 80), and 'Against the King's Taxes' (Article 114), as well as 'The Flemish Insurrection'.

Another point that 'All the World's a Chessboard' has in common with much of the poetry in Harley 2253 is its anticipation of a trilingual readership. The main language of the allegory is Latin, but key words to do with the game of chess are in French, leading to the elaboration of a pun apparently designed to appeal to an insular audience. If the lowly are to be pitied in their humble position, the promotion of a pawn in its eighth rank is allegorised as follows:

> Et tunc de *poun* fit *fierce*, et tunc incontinenti capit cum maximo dominio, et tres punctos pertransit, quia, ut dicitur in Alexandro, 'asperius nichil est humili cum surgit in altum'. (109: 31–41)
>
> And then from a *poun* he becomes a *fer*s, and then immediately he takes with greatest power and traverses three squares because, as is said in Alexander, 'nothing is harsher than a humble man when he rises'.

The pun here is on two of the meanings of the word *fers* in England—'chess queen' and 'fierce'—the second of these meanings being rendered subsequently in the passage by a comparative form of the Latin adjective *asper* ('fierce').[52]

In Harley 2253, 'All the World's a Chessboard' is presented without paratextual comment. In later copies, where it is not also presented anonymously, the text is attributed either to pope Innocent III (1198–1213) or to John of Wales (fl. 1259–1285), a Franciscan friar who spent time at Oxford and Paris and who was active on the side of the baronial revolt narrated in two of the political poems compiled in Harley 2253, the 'Song of Lewes' (Article 23) and the 'Lament for Simon de Montfort'.[53] It is thanks principally to the belated incorporation of 'All the World's a Chess Board' into John's *Communeloquium*, a compendium of preaching materials, originally compiled c. 1270, that the prose allegory gained a foothold on the continent. H. J. R. Murray notes the existence of the work in the *edito princeps* of the *Communeloquium*, which was printed in Cologne in 1472, as well as in several subsequent printed books; he also adduces the survival of manuscripts in which French and Italian translations of the text are preserved, apparently independently of the *Communeloquium* frame.[54] The presence of 'All the World's a Chessboard' in Harley 2253 allows us to ascertain the availability of the Latin allegory in the West Midlands quite early, from the 1330s at the latest.

It is unclear whether the Harley scribe's copy of 'All the World's a Chessboard' served as an exemplar for subsequent copies of the work, but early in its reception history, Harley 2253 seems to have fallen into the hands of another scribe. The man that wrote a series of recipes for making coloured ink and instructions for keeping metal implements sharp on f. 52v of Harley 2253 (Arts. 10–17) was presumably also able to copy texts from the manuscript.[55] Leaving aside the speculation that such an observation might incite, it must suffice for now to note that this early copy of 'All the World's a Chessboard' shows just how close a West Midlands readership could come to the cutting edge of a budding European textual tradition.

The late-medieval transmission history of 'All the World's a Chessboard' neatly reflects the dual outlook of Harley 2253 as the text attaches both to pope Innocent III, whose appeal was international, and to John of Wales, whose appeal, at least in name, was more provincial and westerly. Harley 2253 likewise turns its readers' gaze both out across the Welsh Marches and into the East, to the continent, and beyond. By copying texts that were popular throughout the medieval West, the Harley scribe involves its readers in a shared cultural experience that, following Jacques Le Goff, we might think of as European. Le Goff argues that it makes

sense to conceive of the High Middle Ages as the era when the idea of Europe was born even if evidence for the medieval perception of this development is slight. It is during this time that disparate geographical regions in the West begin to fall into sync with each other, Le Goff points out, building cities, founding universities, sending soldiers on crusade, and subscribing to a set of ideals, practices, and rites whose norms might be defined and shared in writing: chivalry, courtesy, love, marriage, pilgrimage, feudal monarchy, and so on.[56]

Harley 2253 and multilingual English books like it deserve consideration in the context of this broader cultural trend because their particular combination of materials affords us a privileged perspective on the balancing of local and European commitments in a range of specific contexts. The multilingualism of the Harley scribe and his audience allows for the bridging of these interests, not only for the practical reason that pan-European texts are written in pan-European languages but also because Latin and French supported modulating modes of address within England: texts copied in French or Latin in England might be directed to audiences that were immediate and insular or more vaguely located in the French and Latin *Sprachräume*: in the rooms, as they say in German, in which these languages were used. Insular and continental audiences for texts in French and Latin could overlap. As we have seen, the polyvalence and broad currency of French did not always work in favour of continental cohesion. Still, English facility in Latin and French allowed direct participation in the traffic of texts throughout Europe, including the capacity to add to the total store of circulating materials by authoring and re-transmitting insular works of importance and influence. Harley 2253 gives us a valuable sense of how one West Midlands household might have thought about and participated in this traffic of texts. While Harley 2253 will remain interesting for modern scholars on account of the intimate perspective that it offers on the cultural lives of one group of West Midlands householders, the bigger picture in which they were investing in the 1330s was trans-Channel, Latinate, and Francophone.

Notes

Draft versions of this chapter were presented to the English departments at the Universities of Lausanne and Cambridge as well as at a session organised by Raluca Radulescu at the Leeds Medieval Congress in 2017.

I am grateful for the feedback that I received from my audiences on each of these occasions.

1 See *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. Susanna Fein, with David Raybin and Jan Ziolkowski, 3 vols (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications 2014–15). Unless otherwise indicated, citations from the manuscript's texts and their translations will be given by article and line number from this source.

2 For a brief catalogue of these manuscripts, see Tony Hunt, 'Insular Trilingual Compilations', in R. Jansen-Sieben and H. Van Dijk (eds), *Codices Miscellanearum: Brussels Van Hulthem Colloquium 1999* (Brussels: Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique, 1999), pp. 51–70.

3 See Carter Revard, 'Scribe and Provenance', in Susanna Fein (ed.), *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 21–109.

4 Revard's analysis of the commitments displayed in the political poetry compiled in Harley 2253 has played an important role in his assessment of the possible connections between Harley 2253 and these families. On this topic, see, most recently, Carter Revard, 'Political Poems in MS Harley 2253 and the English National Crisis of 1339–41', *Chaucer Review*, 53 (2018), 60–81. On the connections between Harley 2253 and both the Mortimer family and the Hereford cathedral episcopacy, see too *Facsimile of British Museum MS. Harley 2253*, ed. N. R. Ker, EETS o.s. 255 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. xxi–xxiii.

5 It is noteworthy that Revard's work anticipated by several years both Linne R. Mooney's identification of Adam Pynkhurst as Chaucer's scribe and the outcomes of Mooney's 'Late Medieval English Scribes' project, to cite but two recent developments in palaeographic study. See Linne R. Mooney, 'Chaucer's Scribe', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 97–138, and www.medievalscribes.com.

6 The other literary manuscripts written by the Harley scribe are London, British Library MSS Harley 273 and Royal 12. C. xii. The broader implications of Revard's work on the Harley scribe's oeuvre are addressed in Susanna Fein, 'Literary Scribes: The Harley Scribe and Robert Thornton as Case Studies', in Margaret Connolly and Raluca Radulescu (eds), *Insular Books: Vernacular Manuscript Miscellanies in Late Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 61–79.

7 Where it stresses the extra-regional connections of Harley 2253, this chapter intersects with Radulescu's contribution to *Household Knowledges*, in which Radulescu demonstrates how Cambridge, University Library MS Ff.2.38 both reflects and contributes to developments taking place on a national scale in the intertwined discourses of kingship and penitence.

8 *The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of MS. Harley 2253*, ed. G. K. Brook (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1948), p. 26. Brook's comments relate specifically to 'Dum ludis floribus', whose trilingualism is discussed below.

9 On this point, see, for example, William Tim Machan, 'French, English, and the Late Medieval Linguistic Repertoire', in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Carolyn Collette, Maryanne Kowaleski, Linne Mooney, Ad Putter, and David Trotter (eds), *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100-c.1500* (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), pp. 363–72.

10 My reading of the poem's reference to St Thomas echoes that advanced in Nancy Vine Durling, 'British Library MS Harley 2253: A New Reading of the Passion Lyrics in their Manuscript Context', *Viator*, 40 (2009), 217–307 (281).

11 Noting the irregular metre of the French verse of this poem, David L. Jeffrey and Brian J. Levy comment that the text seems to be a 'deliberate play-on-metre rather than the work of a mere amateur or incompetent'. In the prosody of the work they perceive 'a conscious (sometimes, perhaps, even perverse) seeking after variations of structural dimensions'. Cited in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. Fein, II: 433.

12 On the Harley's scribe's organisation of his materials and his production of such local effects more generally, see further Susanna Fein, 'Compilation and Purpose in MS Harley 2253', in Wendy Scace (ed.), *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 67–94.

13 Compare the survey in Elizabeth Archibald, 'Macaronic Poetry', in Corinne Saunders (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), pp. 277–87.

14 Ad Putter, 'The French of English Letters: Two Trilingual Verse Epistles in Context', in Wogan-Browne *et al*. (eds), *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain*, pp. 397–408 (404). For examples of multilingualism in medieval English epistolary culture, see Herbert Schendl, 'Code-Choice and Code-Switching in Some Early Fifteenth-Century Letters', in Peter J. Lucas and Angela M. Lucas (eds), *Middle English from Tongue to Text* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 247–62.

15 Putter, 'The French of English Letters', p. 407.

16 Putter, 'The French of English Letters', p. 408.

17 See Ardis Butterfield, 'Translating Fuzziness: Countertexts', *Common Knowledge*, 19 (2013), 446–73, discussing Putter's reading of 'Dum ludis floribus' at 454n25. This is the third of three essays by Butterfield discussing fuzziness and the perception of languages in the Middle Ages. For the other two essays, see *Common Knowledge*, 18 (2012), 255–66, and 19 (2013), 51–64. See too Butterfield's seminal work

on Anglo-French literary relations, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language, and the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

18 Seth Lerer, 'Middle English Literature and the Idea of the Anthology', *PMLA*, 118 (2003), 1251–67 (1258).

19 See Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Thelma Fenster, and Delbert Russell (eds), *Vernacular Literary Theory from the French of England: Texts and Translations, c. 1120-c.1450* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016).

20 On this point, and for a lively rhymed verse translation of the poem, see Carter Revard, 'The Wife of Bath's Grandmother: Or How Gilote Showed Her Friend Johane That The Wages of Sin Is Worldly Pleasure, And How Both Then Preached This Gospel Throughout England and Ireland', *Chaucer Review*, 39 (2004), 117–36.

21 See Carter Revard, '*Gilote e Johane*: An Interlude in B. L. MS. Harley 2253', *Studies in Philology*, 79 (1982), 122–46 (139–42).

22 See Revard, '*Gilote e Johane*: An Interlude', 126–7.

23 On the contexts of late-medieval English household drama and dramatic reading, see further Carter Revard, 'Courtly Romances in the Privy Wardrobe', in Evelyn Mullally and John J. Thompson (eds), *The Court and Cultural Diversity* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 297–308.

24 Noting similarities between the text of another of the poems in Harley 2253, 'Quant voy la revenue d'yver' (Article 20), and Walter de Bibbesworth's *Tretiz*, a popular French vocabulary treatise, Revard makes a preliminary exploration of the potential usefulness of 'Quant voy la revenue d'yver' in the context of French instruction. See Carter Revard, 'A Golliard's Feast and the Metanarrative of Harley 2253', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83 (2005), 841–67 (847–9).

25 See Christopher Baswell, 'Multilingualism on the Page', in Paul Strohm (ed.), *Oxford Twenty-First Approaches to Literature: Middle English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 38–50 (43–4).

26 For historical background, see John Scattergood, 'Authority and Resistance: The Political Verse', in Fein (ed.), *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, pp. 163–201 (171–4).

27 See MED s.vv. *bobaunce*, *avou(e)rie*, and *mounde* (3f).

28 See MED s.vv. *ribaud(e)* and *essoine*.

29 On this point, see David Trotter, 'Deinz certeins bounds: Where Does Anglo-Norman Begin and End?' *Romance Philology*, 67 (2013), 139–77. Several of the French words and phrases italicised in the preceding paragraphs are also listed in the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* in texts predating Harley 2253 by a significant margin.

30 On the apprehension of recent French loans in the poems compiled in Harley 2253, see too Seth Lerer, '"Dum ludis floribus": Language and Text in the Medieval English Lyric', *Philological Quarterly*, 87 (2008), 237–56 (241–3).

31 Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England and the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290–1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 181.
32 Turville-Petre, *England and the Nation*, p. 217.
33 My commentary on the following texts draws on the editorial notes in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. Fein.
34 See A. T. E. Matonis, 'The Harley Lyrics: English and Welsh Convergences', *Modern Philology*, 86 (1988), 1–12 (6–8).
35 On the flyleaves and their significance for the history of Harley 2253, see Susanna Fein, 'The Four Scribes of MS Harley 2253', *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 16 (2013), 27–49 (36–8).
36 On cultural contact between Ireland and the West Midlands, see further John J. Thompson, 'Mapping Points West of West Midlands Manuscripts and Texts: Irishness(es) and Middle English Literary Culture', in Scace (ed.), *Essays in Manuscript Geography*, pp. 113–28.
37 See G. L. Brook, 'The Original Dialects of the Harley Lyrics', *Leeds Studies in English*, 2 (1933), 38–61; and Stuard H. L. Degginger, '"A Wayle Whyt Ase Whalles Bon": Reconstructed', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 53 (1954), 84–90. Subsequent dialectal analysis has raised the possibility that some of the English poems in Harley 2253 were already grouped together in the exemplars used by the Harley scribe. See Frances McSparran, 'The Language of the English Poems: The Harley Scribe and His Exemplars', in Fein (ed.), *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, pp. 391–426.
38 See Scattergood, 'Authority and Resistance', pp. 178–85.
39 Marilyn Corrie, 'Harley 2253, Digby 86, and the Circulation of Literature in Pre-Chaucerian England', in Fein (ed.), *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, pp. 427–43 (441).
40 See Michael Richter, *Sprache und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Untersuchung zur mündlichen Kommunikation in England von der Mitte des elften bis zum Beginn des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1979), pp. 171–217.
41 See P. D. A. Harvey, 'Mappa Mundi', in Gerald Aylmer and John Tiller (eds), *Hereford Cathedral: A History* (London: Hambledon, 2000), pp. 557–62.
42 See Daniel Birkholz, 'Harley Lyrics and Hereford Clerics: The Implications of Mobility, c. 1300–1351', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 31 (2009), 175–230.
43 See John Hines, *Voices In The Past: English Literature and Archaeology* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. 85–8.
44 As noted in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. Fein, II: 435. A digital facsimile of Harley 2253 is hosted at www.bl.uk/manuscripts.
45 The miniature wax tablets discovered at Swinegate in York in the early 1990s look to have been inscribed both with a poem and with a letter, among other texts. See Michelle P. Brown, 'The Role of the Wax

Tablet in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in Light of a Recent Find from York', *British Library Journal*, 20 (1994), 1–16.

46 Retaining the traditional editorial reading of 'Dum ludis floribus', Birkholz suggests that the whole text might be read as the product of a French poet who, at the close of his work, is moved to '[experiment] with the robust verses of Herefordshire'. See Daniel Birkholz, 'Biography after Historicism, The Harley Lyrics, The Hereford Map, and the Life of Roger de Breynton', in Elizabeth Scala and Sylvia Federico (eds), *The Post-Historical Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 161–89 (167).

47 On the sixteenth-century Yiddish version, and for further bibliography, see Thelma Fenster and Margot B. Valles, 'Elia Levita's Yiddish Bovo D'Antona: Pulp Fiction for Women?' in Philip E. Bennett, Leslie Zarker Morgan, and F. Regina Psaki (eds), *The Epic Imagination in Medieval Literature: Essays in Honor of Alice M. Colby-Hall* (University of Mississipi: Romance Monographs, 2016), pp. 161–77.

48 See Michael J. Bennett, '"Mandeville's Travels" and the Anglo-French Moment', *Medium Ævum*, 75 (2006), 273–92.

49 See Simon Gaunt, 'French Literature Abroad: Towards an Alternative History of French Literature', *Interfaces: A Journal of Medieval European Literatures*, 1 (2015), 25–61.

50 See Roy Pearcy, 'Anglo-Norman Fabliaux and Chaucer's Merchant's Tale', *Medium Ævum*, 69 (2000), 227–60.

51 Much work remains to be done on the genesis and early transmission of this text. For preliminary analysis, see Lynn Thorndike, 'All the World's a Chess-Board', *Speculum*, 6 (1931), 461–5.

52 Compare MED entries s.vv. *fers* (n.) and *fers* (adj.). On this pun, see too *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. Fein, III: 355.

53 See Revard, 'Political Poems in MS Harley 2253', 66.

54 See H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), pp. 559–60.

55 On the work of this scribe, see Fein, 'The Four Scribes of MS Harley 2253', 33–6.

56 See Jacques Le Goff, *L'Europe est-elle née au Moyen Âge?* (Paris: Seuil, 2003).