Revertere! Attention and focus in macaronic devotional poems

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The theme for today's *journée d'études*, 'L'attention et la distraction dans la culture médiévale', gives me the opportunity to articulate the issue of attention, concentration and focus using a corpus of Middle English macaronic poems in their manuscript context. I follow on this point recent editors who have decided to provide readers with a full(er) experience of Middle English texts: George Shuffleton produced an edition of all the Middle English poems contained in Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, in 2008,[1] and more recently Susanna Fein has co-edited a trilingual edition of British Library, MS Harley 2253. Ardis Butterfield is currently completing a new volume of Middle English lyrics for Norton which will also attempt, in a more constrained format, to suggest the manuscript environment of the anthologized lyrics as well as their multilingual background.

I have compiled (see Appendix, p. 11-12) a review bibliography on poetry and code-switching during the Middle English period, beginning with a checklist of the printed editions of poems we shall be discussing. Despite some interest in *Piers Plowman*'s use of Latin quotations, and extensive work on macaronic sermons, no general study of macaronic poetry has been produced since Wehrle's 1933 seminal survey.[2] Historical code-switching studies have been at their most productive when dealing with multilingual business documents, mostly in the wake of Laura Wright's pioneering work in that field (see bibliography under . One issue, that of the notation of orality, will fall outside the scope of this very brief presentation, and we will thus ignore various attempts by linguists to argue that medieval lyrics as they were written down in manuscripts constitute *actual* utterances or dialogues.

The existence of highly complex multilingual lyrics or poems in late medieval England, especially those containing Latin elements, is an intriguing aspect of late medieval culture. It prompts the question of how these lyrics were routinely understood, and how they may have impacted the readers or listeners' level of attention. Explorations of present-day code-switching, the ways in which bi- or multilingual speakers switch from one language to another, provide some interesting insights in this conundrum.

Code-switching studies have focussed on the way in which multilingual individuals produce mixed utterances, keeping in mind that it is impossible for them to switch off completely any of the language they know. Indeed, when people are bi- or multilingual and use any one of their languages, part of their mental activity is devoted to 'pushing down' the other language(s) they are fluent in, in order to allow their preferred language to surface in their utterance. In that context, switching is a very common phenomenon. Proficiency is

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[1] See both editions in the TEAMS Middle English Texts series: George SHUFFELTON, ed., *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse* (Kalamazoo MI, Medieval Institute Publications, 2008) and Susanna Greer FEIN *& al*, ed., *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, 3 volumes (Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2014-2015).

[2] William Otto WEHRLE, 'The Macaronic Hymn Tradition in Medieval English Literature' (Washington DC, The Catholic University of America, 1933). This study is only held by five French libraries. A PDF file is available at https://archive.org/details/wehrle-1933-the-macaronic-hymn-tradition-in-medieval-english-literature

of course a factor promoting switches, as code-switching in modern speech mostly involves single words which are, as it were, supplied from the other language. In the context of Middle English lyrics, this may be the case for these tags which are not entirely perceived as Latin or Hebrew, such as *ave* or *amen*.

Emotional issues also sometimes prompt certain words or phrases to be switched. A second language may be used to distance oneself from painful contents, or, conversely, a speaker using a second language may select or disinhibit his mother-tongue for a specific communication. This issue of first and second languages is particularly tricky because as medievalists we observe code-switching on the page, and the scribes responsible with producing these texts have in many cases been primarily trained primarily as writers of Latin and insular French, and only later as scribes of English. I shall come back to the linguistic environment of code-switching in medieval England.

Interestingly, code-switching, however informal a phenomenon, complicates communication. When bilingual speakers hear or read one isolated word in their other language in the course of a dialogue or the reading a text, this slows down their recognition time. Reading a text in mixed languages, even by proficient users of all the languages involved, is slower than reading a single-language text. Paradoxically, one way of resolving this is by increasing the number of switches and making them more frequent. This last point is entirely counter-intuitive. One would assume that multiplying shifts from one language to the other would make it more difficult to understand the material, even in writing. Neuro-linguistic research, instead, shows that back and forth switches prompt bilingual or multilingual readers to activate two or more of their linguistic reservoirs simultaneously, so that they are more prepared when the next switch occurs. When applied to our material, this finding suggests that poems or lyrics where *some* Latin or French is intermixed into Middle English take more time to be taken in – and we know how medieval meditation relied on this slow mastication of texts.[3] The present-day code-switching rule that 'frequent code-switching in a corpus is easier to process than infrequent code-switching' also explains the systematic structure of many of our mixed language texts.

Code-switching as it is studied today by linguists is essentially a spoken phenomenon, which entails extraneous signals which accompany switches: facial grimacing, a change in pitch, in delivery speed. Strikingly, both or all languages involved in the switch tend to retain their initial phonological patterns. These are not borrowings, but actual switches from one language to the next. In our written corpus, this signalling function is largely taken over by rubrication. This has been pointed out time and again, and studied in particular by Machan in his work on *Piers Plowman* (Bibliography p. 12, #30). Simply underscoring Latin lines or words in red can be done after copying. Writing out Latin words or phrases in red requires more careful advanced planning: we are

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[3] The mastication of texts is a topos of monastic meditation, on this point see Jean LECLERCQ, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961). On the speed of reading, the most helpful reference for medieval studies remains Paul SAENGER, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), and Mary CARRUTHERS explains how texts are committed to memory through slow reading in *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (1992, second edition Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

familiar with *Confessio Amantis* manuscripts with long sections of Latin in red, either in the main column of writing or in the margins, arranged around the main Middle English text of the poem.

Since the 1990s, as is witnessed in the bibliography, linguists have focussed more and more on code-switching in medieval England, using documentary evidence as well as literary material. They have emulated researchers on present-day code-switching as they have tried to determine precisely the syntactic constraints associated with code-switching. As for present-day code-switching, they have established that switches are more frequent for syntactically peripheral elements, but that some syntactical pairing or instances of government can be observed. Adverbs are routinely switched, for instance. Historical linguists have also addressed the issue of the frequency of switches by trying to compare it to present-day figures. Medieval English administrative documents tend to include high numbers of isolated foreign nouns. By the late fourteenth century, they are very often written in a trilingual mode. Historians of the language, just like present-day code-switching specialists, suggest that rather than looking at these texts as containing repeated instances of code-switching, we should instead consider that they may be written in a new type of mixed code. This new mixed code could be copied by scribes who were not necessarily highly competent in all three languages, but it nevertheless challenges our notion of strictly separated languages.

These findings can be applied to instances of code-switching in macaronic lyrics, first looking at the way in which switches between English and Latin are signalled on the page. My first exhibit Ⓐ is Cambridge Trinity College, MS B.14.39, folio 24v, where two lyrics are copied one after the other, both including Latin: 'Saint Mary mother mild' DIMEV[4] 4708 and 'Of one that is so fair and bright' DIMEV 4198. I have provided a transcript of the first one, which is only extant in this particular manuscript. The Latin is rubricated in red in the manuscripts, and the layout suggests that it was copied in the same stretch as the English, with the scribe switching from black to red as he went. In 'Of one that is so fair and bright', which follows immediately below, only the first letter of each stanza is in red, and could have been inserted in retrospect. The contrast between my diplomatic transcription above the image and the reproduced printed version[5] as a long narrow column of text confirms that reading lyrics in print is not the same experience as encountering them in their natural manuscript habitat.

This lyric 'Saint Mary mother mild' typically checks out most of the code-switching boxes when it comes to syntactical analysis. In the first and last stanzas, most of the switched items are indeed noun phrases (Marian names or attributes), and then mostly adverbs (*potente, repente, volente, poscente,* also *constanter* and *fraudulenter*). The Latin Marian names are not always the traditional epithets but their meaning is transparent enough, e.g. *vere consolatrix* 'very consoling one' (line 38). The peripheral syntactic components are not limited to one-word

adverbs, they include ablative absolute constructions: *digno tu scandente* 'by rising, you who are worthy' (line 29), *victore triumphante* 'as a triumphant victor' (line 32).

ⓑ is the other extant witness of DIMEV 4198, 'Of one that is so fair and bright', British Library, MS Egerton 613, folio 2r (c. 1250). The layout identifies the lines and stanzas, stanzas are marked in the margin by pairs of strokes, there is no rubrication. The letters in the margin, B, A, and C, are there to rectify a mistake in the order of the stanzas: the one labelled B is out of sequence. The correct order requires you to read or sing the stanzas in the ABC order. The Egerton scribe originally made a mistake, but is intent on correcting it, just as he corrected line 7 - he had copied mistakenly the ending of line 16: *in luce*. This last mistake made sense on many levels. The two preceding Latin tags had similar rimes, *eva meretrice* and *de te genetrice*. *In luce* also provides a satisfactory ending to the sentence 'away with dark night, let the day come *in light*'. But his mistake needed to be rectified, as the day to come was a specific one: 'day *salutis*', 'the day of salvation'. This is a particularly interesting instance, because *salutis* is one of the very few Latin phrases in this lyric whose reading actually makes the sentence's meaning more logical. Most of the other Latin phrases can be readily omitted without any modification of the overall meaning. Grammatically speaking, the Latin insertions or switches consist mostly in appositions, mostly of Marian names, many of which are standard ones. A few Latin clauses describe Christ the son: 'whom you carried in your belly', 'the little one whom you breastfed'. Sometimes the Latin additions provide mere precisions: 'He shed his blood *on the cross*', 'we may come to him *in the light*'. The final Latin word is in the genitive: 'pit *of hell*' – but despite this grammatical connection, the phrase is not absolutely necessary in the economy of the sentence, as 'þe foule pit' is in itself already a transparent reference to hell.

The technique used here is completely different from that in other early lyrics, where the lines are divided into two and, from one stanza to the next, all the lines begin or end with Latin, with complete syntactical integration. In 'Of one that is so fair and bright', only the two genitives at the end of lines 7 and 8 perhaps require to be understood to salvage legibility: 'Let come the day of *salvation*', although the initial section of the line makes sense anyway as a general rejection of night. Line 8 without its Latin ending reads 'Þe welle springet hut of þe', 'the source springs out from you'. Understanding the Latin addition *virtutis* and placing it as a genitive of 'welle' allows for the *lectio facilior* 'the source *of virtue* springs out from you'. Similarly, line 5 'the world was lost' can be completed with '*because of Eve the sinner*'. Taking into consideration both lyrics so far, if they are read through while skipping the Latin, or without understanding the Latin at all, 90% of each text still makes complete sense.

Let us examine more closely lines 17-22 couplets from 'Saint Mary mother mild' DIMEV 4708 in Cambridge Trinity College, MS B.14.39.

> Ic am icaiht bo day ant naiht
>   *Dolore*.
> Ihesu, thorou thi muchele miht
>   *Omnia fecisti;*
> The holi gost in Marie liht
>   *Sicut voluisti.*

All of the Latin switches are oddly expendable, but the text does make more sense if the Latin is taken into account: the lyric reads almost seamlessly without the Latin: 'I am trapped both night and day. / Jesus, through your great power, / the holy ghost entered Mary' but makes more competent sense with it: 'I am trapped both day and night *in pain*. / Jesus, through your great power *you created everything*; / The holy ghost entered Mary *just as you wished*'. The very same technique is used in all of the three texts and fifty or so lines of macaronic Old English verse, and it is facilitated of course by the appositive syntax of OE verse. The English and the Latin are merely juxtaposed and the English does not require the Latin phrases to make continuous sense.

> Geunne þe on life *auctor pacis*   May he grant you in life *the giver of peace*
> sibbe gesælða, *salus mundi,*   peace and happiness, *the saviour of the world,*
> metod se mæra *magna uirtute…*   the famous lord *of great valour…*

Let us look briefly at two early political lyrics. Instance Ⓓ, 'Dieu, roy de magesté', in insular French and Latin, is taken from British Library, MS Harley 2253:

> Ore court en Engletere *de anno in annum*
> Le quinzyme dener, pur fere *sic commune dampnum.*
> E fet avaler que soleyent *sedere super scamnum;*
> E vendre fet commune gent *vaccas, vas, et pannum.*
> *Non placet ad summum quindenum sic dare nummum.*
>
> Une chose est countre foy, *unde gens gravatur,*
> Que la meyté ne vient al roy *in regno quod levatur.*
> Pur ce qu'il n'ad tot l'enter *prout sibi datur,*
> Le pueple doit le plus doner *et sic sincopatur.*
> *Nam que taxantur regi non omnia dantur.*

The two stanzas above have two very distinct code-switching features. In the first one, meaning is impaired without continuous reading. 'Now proceeds in England *from year to year* / The tax of the fifteenth penny, *thus inflicting a common harm.* / And it brings down those wont *to sit upon the bench*, / And it forces common folk to sell *cows, utensils, and clothing.* / *Most unpleasant is it, therefore, to pay the entire fifteenth'.* In the second one, some meaning can be created from reading just the French (in Roman script): 'There is a thing contrary to faith *by which people are oppressed:* / To the king comes not half *of what's raised in the realm!* / Since he doesn't receive the whole *as it's granted to him*, / The people must pay more, *and thus they're cut short.* / *For the taxes that are raised are not all given to the king.'* [6]

By contrast, in Ⓔ 'On the evils of the times' DIMEV 4427, insular French and Latin are syntactically integrated and both indispensable throughout the lyric:

> Quant houme deit parleir, *videat que verba loquatur*;
> Sen covent aver, *ne stulcior inveniatur.*
> *Quando quis loquitur*, bote resoun reste þerynne,
> *Derisum patitur*, and lutel so shall he wynne.

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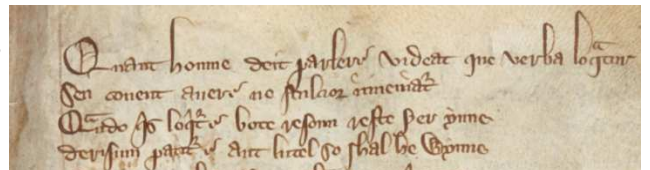
[6] Translation of both stanzas by Susanna Greer FEIN, in *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, vol. 3, #114. Online TEAMS Middle English Texts series at https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-harley2253-volume-3-article-114

In this manuscript, the languages are typically not identified by any markings, just, by the way, as in MS Harley 2253, where insular French, English, and Latin cohabit without any scribal distinction. This fluidity reminds us of the milieu in which all of these lyrics were copied – if not composed: monastic scriptoria, in which scribes were trained to write in Latin and French first, in English last. These scribes who read Latin introduce corrections only a highly competent reader of Latin will make.

We can examine two variants in 'Of one that is so fair and bright'.

> moder milde ant maidan ec *efecta*. MS B.14.39: Sweet mother and virgin too, *proven*
> Mayde milde. Moder. *es effecta*. MS Egerton 613: Sweet maid, a mother *you have proven*

In this variant, the scribe is unable to inhibit Latin, his primary writing language, and shifts early from Middle English into Latin. Sometimes, the use of abbreviations in English proves confusing:

> In car ant consail þou art best. *felix fecundita* MS B.14.39: In care and advice you are the best...
> Of kare <u>con</u>seil þou ert best. *felix fecundita*. MS Egerton 613: In consolation you are the best...

The meaning of both English sections are unsatisfactory, and editors have grappled with this line (there are only three witnesses). Most probably, scribes were thrown by the abbreviations of *and* and of the first syllable of *conseil* as 9*seil*, an abbreviation they were perhaps more familiar with in Latin than in English.

The ways in which linguists have approached historical code-switching is not entirely satisfying. Many of the explorations deal with syntactic aspects, and obscure basic semantic realities. Here are two instances of 'post-modification', taken from such an analysis, and deemed to suggest elaborate code-switching.

> Þuster nyth, and comth þe day / *Salutis*
> Fro the fynd he vs schyld, / *Qui creauit omnia*

The second Latin phrase, a relative clause ('He shelters us from the devil, *he who created everything*') is completely expendable, whereas we have seen that the first one is less easily discarded. I tentatively suggest that in this context 'away with night, and *comes day*', without a demonstrative article, is more acceptable as such in Middle English than *comes the day,* where the 'of salvation' tag is expected and required.

One interesting issue as to the expendability of Latin phrases is the fate of Latin refrains, which is perhaps the most common use of Latin in macaronic poems. Because they occur at the end of stanzas, one easily assumes that they can be literally sung away and dismissed as a mere musical appendix, whereas the body of the stanzas carries the actual meaningful contents. In the lyric 'The bird of four feathers' or 'Parce michi' (DIMEV 924), the Latin phase is not just used as a refrain, with the suggestion that it is a quotation—this would correspond to minimal insertion in terms of Latin refrains. The refrain is parsed, in the last stanza, with a repeated insistence on the word *Parce* itself.

> I set me down upon my knee
> And thanked this bird for her good learning.
> I thought to myself that this word *Parce*
> Was a reward against spiritual hurt.
> Now *parce*, lord, and spare me!

> This is a word that soon procures grace
> And *parce* grants god's pity
> And shows to us his blessed face.[7]

The same emphasis on explaining words is found in both *Deo gracias* lyrics in the Vernon manuscript.[8] One of the lyrics opens with 'my word is *deo gracias*' and also uses the phrase as a refrain. In the other lyric, the singer recalls how he requested from a priest an explanation of 'the word', and ends up thanking god 'with this word *deo gracias*'. On both occasions, the last line is '& thenk on *deo gracias*'. In all these instances, however brilliant the theological or allegorical Middle English contents of the lyric, the Latin refrain is not just a refrain, it becomes both the focus of discussion and a way of focussing attention. Similarly, in DIMEV 924, repeating the Latin word *parce* in the last stanza ensured the reader or singer's attention, just as the varied ways in which Latin refrains were articulated with the rest of the stanzas.

When rubrication was added, even a child's attention could be aroused. 'An ABC of the Passion' DIMEV 2494/2566, a Passion poem where wounds are literally inscribed on Christ's body, mentions matter-of-factly that red letters are the best way to make a child look at a manuscript with interest:

> Red letter in parchemyn
> Makyth a chyld good & fyn
> Lettrys to loke & se
> [Red letter on parchment makes a child to look at both good and fine letters.]

In this Passion poem, of course, *all* the letters are supposedly red, as Christ's wounds and blood are allegorized into a narrative of the Crucifixion, and these lines remind the reader or user of the manuscript of the paramount importance, in meditation practice, of these lyrics and prayers which can further the devotee's identification with Christ. In other copies of lyrics, *red letter* is more sparsely used to rubricate capital letters at the beginning of lines or stanzas, but especially Latin—these Latin tags which make all readers pay attention, not just children.

So far, we have only examined fairly ordinary instances of code-switching, when Latin phrases were in their great majority used as appositions. My only examples of robust syntactic and semantic integration were Ⓓ 'Dieu, roy de magesté', British Library, MS Harley 2253 and Ⓔ 'On the evils of the times' DIMEV 4427, both c.1340 at the latest, where code-switching takes place between insular French and Latin. The trilingual codices which conserve these lyrics were most probably monastic productions, and even if outside commissioning has been suggested in some instances, the primary readership for these compilations was highly literate and very familiar with Latin.

Similar instances of language integration are found in the fifteenth century. Example Ⓘ, the *Ballad set upon gates of Canterbury,* dated from 1460, contains Latin tags which are not systematically positioned, suggesting that they will impair or slow down information intake, even for experienced readers of Latin. The first line ends

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[7] My translation. Edited by Susanna Greer Fein in *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998) and online at https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/fein-moral-love-songs-and-laments-bird-with-four-feathers.

[8] Both edited by Carleton BROWN, see Carleton Fairchild BROWN and Geoffrey Victor SMITHERS, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), ##96 and 99.

with a Latin noun, *afflixione,* which is fairly transparent, and could be read over as a Latinate borrowing, but the *Ballad* also features rare instances of code-switching between subject and verb:

> In the day of faste and spirituelle *afflixione*
> 2   The celestialle influence on bodyes transytory
> Set asyde alle prophecyes, and alle *commixtione*
>   Of iujementys sensualle to ofte in memory.
> 5   I redeuced to mynde the prophete Isay,
>   Consideryng Englond to God in grevous offence;
> With wepyng ye, this text I fonde in this story:
> 8   '*Omne caput languidum, et omne cor merens.*'   Isaiah 1:5

>   '*Regnum anglorum regnum dei est*'
>   As the Aungelle to seynd Edward dede wyttenesse.
> 11   Now *regnum Sathane,* it semeth, *reputat* best.
>   For *filii scelerati* haue broughte it in dystresse –
>   This preuethe fals wedlock and periury expresse –
> 14   Fals heyres fostred, as knowethe experyence,
>   Vnryghtewys dyshertyng with false oppresse,
>   Sic, '*omne caput languidum, et omne cor merens.*'

> 17   *A planta pedis,* fro the pore tyler of the lond   Isaiah 1:6
>   *Ad verticem* of spiritualle eke temporalle ennoynted crown,
>   Grace ys withdrawe and Goddys mercyfulle hand...

Reputat (line 11) is in Latin, just like its subject *regnum Sathane*, but separated from it by a brief parenthetical clause in English. On the next line, the subject of the Middle English verb is in Latin: '*filii scelerati* (treacherous sons) have brought it [= the English kingdom] into distress'. The enjambment at lines 17-18 implies that 'the poor tiler' must be read continuously with the location phrase *ad verticem* on the next line.

Unfortunately, there is no medieval manuscript witness for this ballad, which is only known via a seventeenth-century printed transcription, and we have no way of knowing whether the Latin words were rubricated at all in the medieval exemplar. The only information we have is that this spectacular feat of macaronic writing was copied alongside a late Yorkist *Brut*. Linguists and historians alike have argued that the text's phrasing is particularly demanding for a political bill. This poster ballad exemplifies the Latin fifteenth-century paradox. During these years, archives show a general demise of trilingual administrative documents, and a rise in the exclusive use of English for documentary purposes. Yet, at the same time, Latinate phrases abound in poetic texts, whether those by Lydgate, the Scottish *makars*, or even anonymous creations such as this pamphlet.

In many fifteenth-century poems, Latin retains its focussing function. The lyric *Revertere*, DIMEV 2453, under ⌧, is extant in three witnesses and describe how a young man's hunting expedition is cut short:

> Mi leg was hent al with a brere
> ¶ Þis brere forsothe yt dyde me griif
> 14 And soone yt made me to turn aȝe
> For he bare written in euery leef
> This word in latyn Revertere

[My leg was all torn with a briar / This briar truly caused me pain / And soon make me turn around / Because it bore on every leaf / The word in Latin: *Revertere* (turn around)]

The bush's leaves are inscribed, literally, with an instruction which makes itself felt not just by verbal repetition, but by scratching and wounding the narrator's leg.

Further down in the poem, the Latin imperative is commented upon and immediately reiterated in Middle English:

¶   Reuertere is as myche to say
26 In englisch tunge as turne aȝen
      Turne aȝen man y þee pray
      And þinke hertili what þou hast ben

[*Reuertere* is just like saying / In the English tongue, turn around. / Turn around, man I pray you, / And think sincerely about what you have been.]

Plates ⊠ and ⊡ illustrate two of the three witnesses for the *Revertere* lyric: commonplace books, with their characteristic ledger format. In the fifteenth century, commonplace books were sometimes kept by ecclesiastics, but not always so. Both copies display the same format and simple layout, without any rubrication, but with schematic brackets signalling rhyming patterns. Both commonplace-book owners' familiarity with Latin is manifest, as the word *revertere* is abbreviated in the colophons and running title. The only marker setting the word apart from its Middle English surroundings is that is almost invariably capitalized.

The Latinate culture of the fifteenth century is particularly manifest in the Charters of Christ, which mimic actual legal documents.[9] In MS Harley 2382 under ⊠, a copy of *The Long Charter of Christ* (B version, DIMEV 6650-6), the text's apparatus is elaborate. Folios bear folio numbers—a rarity in fifteenth-century English manuscripts—and running titles. Important sections in the text are marked by marginal Latin titles, e.g. *Carta Christi* ('the Charter of Christ'). These titles are often abbreviated. Squiggles in the margin indicate stanza breaks. All Latin text is systematically underscored in red. On folio 114r, *textus* in the left-hand margin marks a biblical quotation (Lamentations 1:12), indeed a Latin text worthy of identification. As the number of Christ's wounds is mentioned in text, a highly abbreviated note indicates the occurrence in the margin: *nota de vulneribus christi* ('N.B.: about Christ's wounds'). The phrase underscored in red in the text, *Sciant presentes et futuri,* was the standard opening for a Charter. It is followed immediately by a Middle English literal translation: 'Wetyn *thou* here & tho *that* be to come...'.

Despite all the professional and expert use of Latin in the text's apparatus, all Latin lines in the text of the *Long Charter of Christ* are systematically translated in Middle English. A reader who does not understand Latin can peruse the text continuously and acquire the meaning of the poem, but their attention will be piqued

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[9] The Charters are best read in Mary Caroline SPALDING's edition, *The Middle English Charters of Christ*, (Bryn Mawr College, 1914). Their documentary dimension was more recently commented upon by Emily STEINER, *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature*, (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Jill Averil KEEN, *The Charters of Christ and Piers Plowman: Documenting Salvation* (Peter Lang, 2002).

by the Latin tags and phrases, both around and within the text: these Latin prompts also function as visual markers of authority.

The Late Middle English period has left us with a considerable macaronic/mixed language/code-switching literary corpus. The syntactic integration of Latin and vernacular languages, either insular French or Middle English, appears to be at its strongest at the beginning of the period, when trilingual anthologies are produced mostly in monastic contexts, and during the fifteenth century—despite the contemporaneous decline in the production of trilingual legal and business documents at the end of the Middle English period. The issue of the intelligibility of Latin phrases must be further pursued to confirm their code-switching nature, but our initial foray does suggest that these tags and their signalling may contribute to heightening the focus of the silent and aloud readers/singers/hearers of this macaronic devotional material.

Revertere! Attention and focus in macaronic devotional poems

❧ Poems – printed editions

[1] Bledsoe, Jenny C. 'A Late Medieval Macaronic Prayer Roll: UPenn MS Roll 1563'. *Notes and Queries* n.s., 63.2 (2016): 196–99.

[2] Brown, Carleton Fairchild, ed. *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932.

[3] ———, ed. *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939.

[4] Brown, Carleton Fairchild, and Geoffrey Victor Smithers, eds. *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

[5] Duncan, Thomas G., ed. *Medieval English Lyrics and Carols*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013.

[6] Fein, Susanna Greer, ed. *Moral Love Songs and Laments*. TEAMS Middle English Texts Series. Kalamazoo MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998.

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Revertere! Attention and focus in macaronic devotional poems

Ⓐ Saint Mary mother mild DIMEV 4708 [1 witness] Cambridge Trinity College, MS B.14.39, f. 24v

Seinte Mari moder milde mater salutaris feirest flour of eni
felde uere nuncuparis þorou ihesu crist þou were wid childe.

þou bring me of my þouhtes wilde. potente þat maket me to
deþe tee repente.
Mi þounc is wilde as is þe ro luto gratulante. ho werchet me ful
muchel wo illaque favente bote yef he wole wende me
fro. ic wene myn herte breket a two fervore ic am icaist bo day ant
naist dolore.
Ihesu, þorou þi muchele mist omnia fecisti þe holi gost in Marie
list sicut voluisti. for þi he is icleped ur drist. ihesu bring my þouht to
crist constanter þat it be stable. ant nout chaungable fraudanter.
Ihesu Crist þou art on loft digno tu scandente hevene ant erþe þou
havest iwroust victore triumphante. monkun wid þi bodi
aboust, þou noldest lesen hym for noust nec dare ant yeve þi blod
þat was so god tam gnare.
Suete levedi, flour of alle uere consolatrix þou be myn help þat
I ne falle, cunctis reparatrix mildest quene ant best icorn. nist ant...

Seinte Mari moder milde,
2   *Mater salutaris* ;
Feirest flour of eni felde
Vere nuncuparis.
5   Thorou ihesu crist thou were wid childe
Thou bring me of my thouhtes wilde
Potente,
8   That maket me to dethe tee [go]
Repente. [suddenly]

Mi thounc is wilde as is the ro
11   *Luto gratulante.*
Ho werchet me ful muchel wo
Illaque favente.
14 Bote yef he wole wende me fro,
Ic wene myn herte breket a two
Fervore.
17 Ic am icaiht bo day ant naiht
Dolore.

Ihesu, thorou thi muchele miht
20   *Omnia fecisti* ;
The holi gost in Marie liht
Sicut voluisti.
23 Forthi he is icleped ur driht,
Ihesu, bring my thouht to Crist
Constanter,
26 That it be stable ant nout chaungable
Fraudanter.

Jhesu Crist, thou art on loft
29   *Digno tu scandente* ;
Hevene ant erthe thou havest iwrouht
Victore triumphante ;
32 Monkun wid thi bodi abouht,
Thou noldest lesen hym for nouht,
Nec dare
35 Ant yeve thi blod that was so god
Tam gnare. [with so much art]

Suete levedi, flour of alle,
38   *Vere consolatrix,*
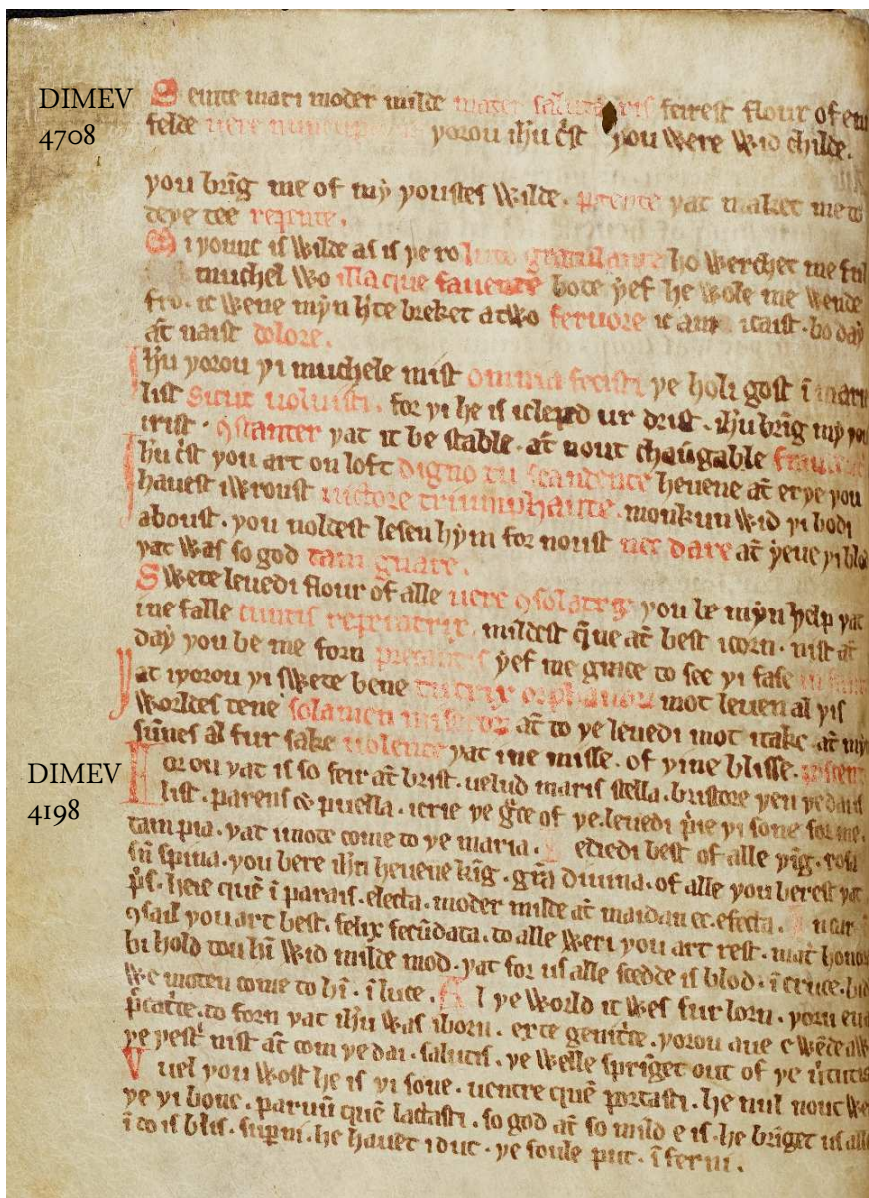Thou be myn help that I ne falle,
Cunctis reparatrix !
41 Mildest quene ant best icorn,
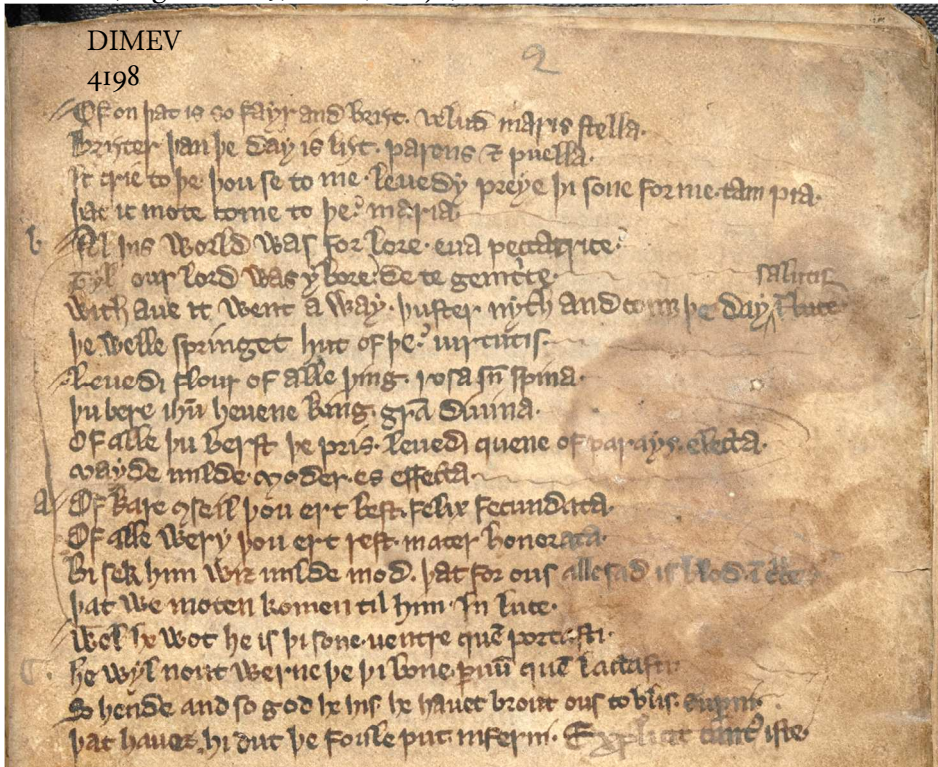Niht ant day thou be me forn
Precantis !
44 Yef me grace to see thi face
Infantis !

That I thorou thi suete bene,
47   *Tutrix orphanorum,*
Mot leven al this worldes tene,
Solamen miserorum;
50 Ant to the levedi mot I take,
And myn sunnes al fursake
Volente,
53 That I ne misse of thine blisse
Poscente.

DIMEV 4198

//Of on þat is so fayr and briȝt. velud maris stella.   Diplomatic transcription
2   Bryȝter þan þe day is liȝt. parens & puella.
     Ic crie to þe. þou se to me. leuedy preye þi sone for me. tam pia.
     Þat ic mote come to þe ⁖ maria
5 b //Al þis world was forlore. eua peccatrice ⁖
     Tyl our lord was ybore ⁖ de te genitrice.
     With aue it went away. Þuster nith and comȝ þe day in luce \salutis/
8   Þe welle springet hut of þe ⁖ uirtutis.
     //Leuedi flour of alle þing. rosa sine spina.
     Þu bere Ihesu heuene king. gratia diuina.
11   Of alle þu berst þe pris. leuedi quene of parays. electa
     Mayde milde. Moder. es effecta.
  a //Of kare conseil þou ert best. felix fecundita.
14   Of alle wery þou ert rest. mater honorata.
     Bisek him wre milde mod. þat for ous alle sad is blod. in cruce.
     Þat we moten kome til him. In luce.
17   //Wel he wot he is þi sone. uentre quem portasti.
  c . He wyl nout werne þe þi bone. paruum quem lactasti.
     So hende and so god he his. he hauet brout ous to blis. superni.
20   Þat hauet hi-dut þe foule put. inferni. Explicit cantus iste.

_____

//Of on þat is so fayr and briȝt, *velud maris stella,*   Edition
2   Bryȝter þan þe day is liȝt, *parens & puella,*
     Ic crie to þe 'þou se to me, leuedy preye þi sone for me *tam pia'*
     Þat ic mote come to þe, *maria!*
5 //Of kare conseil þou ert best, *felix fecundita!*   ■ *var.* MS B.14.39: In car ant consail þou art best. *felix...*
     Of alle wery þou ert rest, *mater honorata.*
     Bisek him wre milde mod, þat for ous alle sad is blod *in cruce*
8   Þat we moten kome til him *in luce.*
     //Al þis world was forlore *eua peccatrice*
     Tyl our lord was ybore *de te genitrice.*
11   With aue it went away. Þuster nith and comȝ þe day *salutis,*
     Þe welle springet hut of þe *uirtutis.*
     //Leuedi flour of alle þing, *rosa sine spina,*
14   Þu bere Ihesu heuene king *gratia diuina.*
     Of alle þu berst þe pris, leuedi quene of parays *electa,*
     Mayde milde moder *es efecta.*   ■ *var.* MS B.14.39: moder milde ant maidan ec *efecta.*
17   //Wel he wot he is þi sone *uentre quem portasti.*
     He wyl nout werne þe þi bone, *paruum quem lactasti.*
     So hende and so god he his, he hauet brout ous to blis *superni*
20   Þat hauet hi-dut þe foule put *inferni. Explicit cantus iste.*

C The Old English macaronic poem Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 201. After [15] & [23]

Geunne þe on life *auctor pacis*	May he grant you in life *the giver of peace*
sibbe gesælða, *salus mundi,*	peace and happiness, *the saviour of the world,*
metod se mæra *magna uirtute…*	the famous lord *of great valour…*

D Dieu, roy de magesté [Anglo-Noman and Latin] BL, Harley 2253 – Printed [8] #114

Le quinzyme dener, pur fere *sic commune dampnum.*	Une chose est countre foy, *unde gens gravatur,*
E fet avaler que soleyent *sedere super scamnum;*	Que la meyté ne vient al roy *in regno quod levatur.*
E vendre fet commune gent *vaccas, vas, et pannum.*	Pur ce qu'il n'ad tot l'enter *prout sibi datur,*
Non placet ad summum quindenum sic dare nummum.	Le pueple doit le plus doner *et sic sincopatur.*
	Nam que taxantur regi non omnia dantur.

E On the evils of the times DIMEV 4427 [6 witnesses]

BL, Royal 12 C XII, f. 7r (c.1320-1340)

Quant houme deit parleir, *videat que verba loquatur;*
Sen covent aver, *ne stulcior inveniatur.*
Quando quis loquitur, bote resoun reste þerynne,
Derisum patitur, and lutel so shall he wynne.
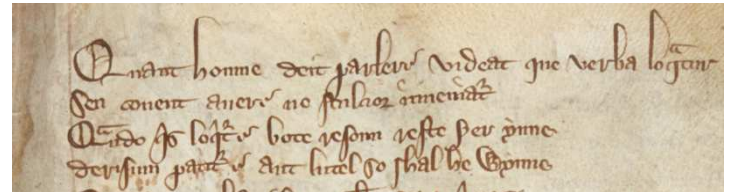
F Post-modification   DIMEV 4198 c.1250   vs   DIMEV 216 15th c.

Þuster nyth, and comth þe day / *Salutis*   Fro the fynd he vs schyld, / *Qui creauit omnia*

G A tretyse of Parce michi domine DIMEV 924 [6 witnesses] MS Bodley 596, f. 21v (c.1422) – After [6]

I fond there breddes with fedres schene,
8 Many on sitting upon a rowte.
O brid therby sat on a brere —
Hir fedres were pulled! Sche myght not fle!
11 She sat and song with mornyng chere:
   '*Parce michi, Domine!*'
Bodleian Library, MS Douce 322 fol 15r detail ⇨

H An ABC poem on the Passion - DIMEV 2494/2566 [3 witnesses] Quoted [13]

Red letter in parchemyn
Makyth a chyld good & fyn
Lettrys to loke & se.

I Ballad set upon the gates of Canterbury, 1460 [ms now lost, 17th c print] Printed [11] #88

In the day of faste and spirituelle afflixione
2   The celestialle influence on bodyes transytory
Set asyde alle prophecyes, and alle commixtione
Of iujementys sensualle to ofte in memory.
5   I redeuced to mynde the prophete Isay,
Consideryng Englond to God in grevous offence;
With wepyng ye, this text I fonde in this story:
8   'Omne caput languidum, et omne cor merens.'   Isaiah 1:5

'Regnum anglorum regnum dei est'
As the Aungelle to seynd Edward dede wyttenesse.
11   Now regnum Sathane, it semeth, reputat best.
For filii scelerati haue broughte it in dystresse –
This preuethe fals wedlock and periury expresse –
14   Fals heyres fostred, as knowethe experyence,
Vnryghtewys dyshertyng with false oppresse,
Sic, 'omne caput languidum, et omne cor merens.'
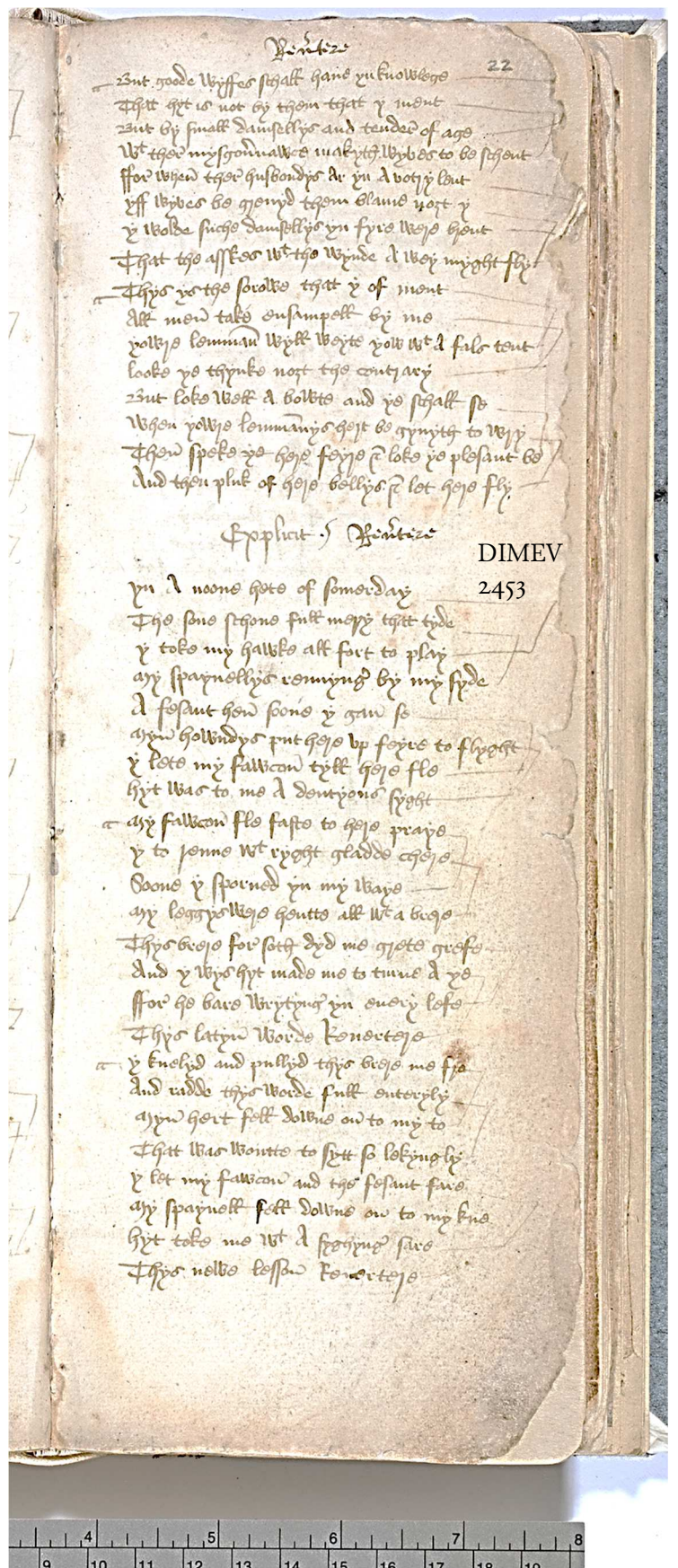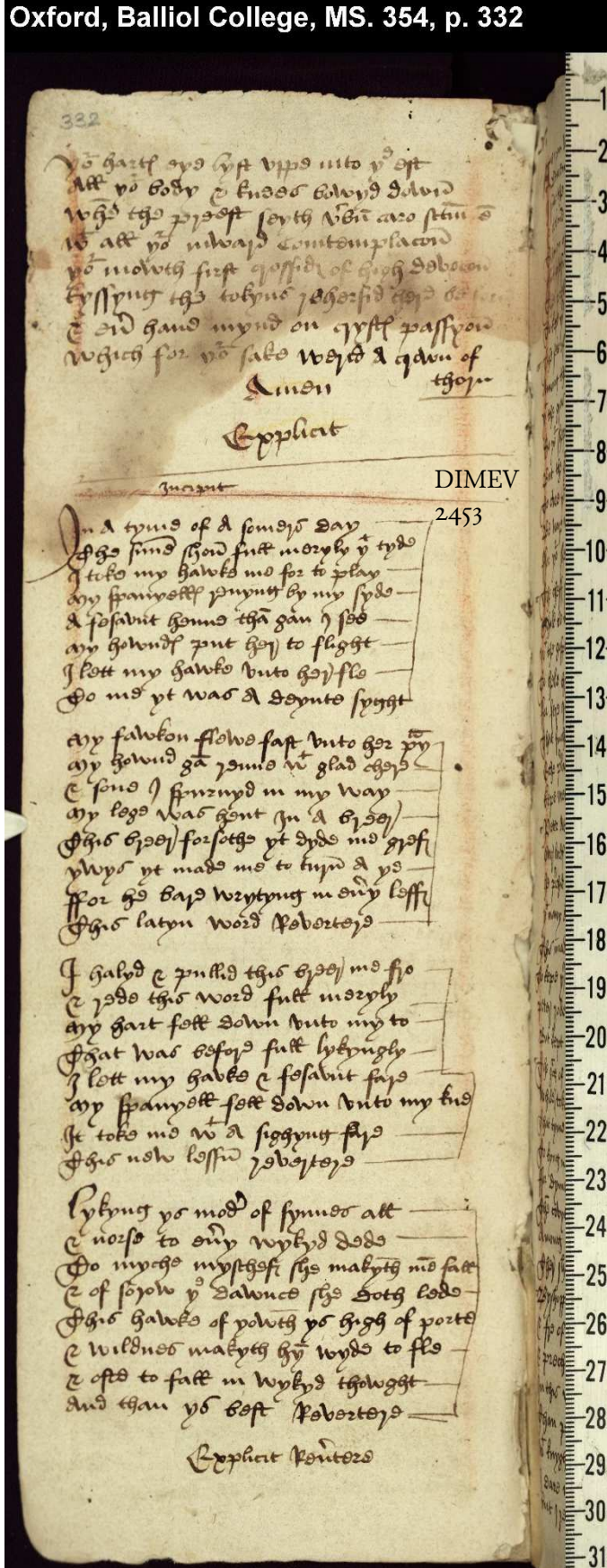
17   A planta pedis, fro the pore tyler of the lond   Isaiah 1:6
Ad verticem of spiritualle eke temporalle ennoynted crown,
Grace ys withdrawe and Goddys mercyfulle hand…

Mi leg was hent al with a brere

¶ Þis brere forsothe yt dyde me griif

14 And soone yt made me to turn aȝe

For he bare written in euery leef

This word in latyn Revertere

¶ Reuertere is as myche to say

26 In englisch tunge as turne aȝen

Turne aȝen man y þee pray

And þinke hertili what þou hast ben

K ⇩ Richard Hill's commonplace book, c. 1500 (short)

L ⇩ Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.9.38, c. 1500, f. 22r

Oxford, Balliol College, MS. 354, p. 332

DIMEV 2453

DIMEV 2453

RUNNING TITLE ➔

Testamentum christi

114

↑
FOLIO NUMBER
C VI

nota de
vulneribus christi

textus

Carta christi

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam atten
dite & videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus.

∴ Ye men that goth forth bi þe way
beholde & se bothe nyght & day
and redeth apon this parchemyn
yf any sorowe be as gret as myn...   = Lam 1:12

Sciant presentes & futuri
∴ Weten þu here & þat be to come...