

Margaret Connolly, Holly James-Maddocks, and Derek Pearsall (eds), *Scribal Cultures in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Linne R. Mooney*. York: York Medieval Press, 2022. 388pp. €84.00/£60.00 (hbk) ISBN 978-1-843-84575-1

Over the course of Professor Linne Mooney's career, our understanding of late medieval scribal culture in England has changed dramatically: her work has provided us with insight into the habits of particular scribes, the production of books in certain locations, the circulation of types of texts, and usable editions of medieval texts. Yet, there is still much to be learned about how medieval scribes in England produced their work. For instance, under what kinds of circumstances would they collaborate? How would they interact with scribes and works from across the Channel? The thirteen essays collected in this volume dedicated to Professor Mooney take different approaches to questions large and small about scribes and manuscript production in England.

The volume is organised into four parts, along with an introduction by Margaret Connolly, a personal tribute by the late Derek Pearsall, and a list of Professor Mooney's publications by Daryl Green. In Part I, 'International Perspectives,' Martha Driver considers the French, Flemish, and English collaborations in books of hours that were made or adapted for English audiences. For Driver, a manuscript's Englishness can be created and change over time. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton provides a different international outlook, turning to early Middle Hiberno-English poetry. She pays particular attention to the documentary hands that record this early poetry, linking it to bureaucratic or civic contexts.

The title of Driver's essay, 'How English is it' is particularly thought provoking, reflecting a modern manuscript scholar's drive to localise and identify, a drive possibly not shared by the medieval reader. The same question echoes in Sebastian Sobocki's analysis of the handwriting of hands of signet clerks and the King's French secretaries, as well as Holly James-Maddocks' consideration of the foreign artists in the Trinity

Anthologies in Part II, 'Identities and Localities.' In his essay, Sobecki lays out the attributes of sixteen scribes associated with England's diplomatic bureaucracy in the first half of the fifteenth century. Ralph Hanna's chapter identifies the notary Thomas Aldfield (or, of Aldfield) as the scribe of a copy of the 'Lay Folks' Catechism.' Estelle Stubbs attributes a new item to the civic scribe John Marchaunt, a *Petition* from John Wyclif to the King, Parliament, and John of Gaunt, in order to speculate more broadly about Guildhall scribes' connections to religious, literary, and documentary culture. James-Maddocks fittingly turns to Trinity College, MS R.3.19 and MS R.3.21, two manuscripts discussed by the volume's dedicatee in her one of her essays.ⁱ James-Maddocks' analysis of the scribes, illustrators, and printers involved in the production and reproduction of the parts of the Trinity Anthologies convincingly demonstrates that they were unlikely to be produced as so-called shop copies. In so doing, she reimagines a slice of scribal activity in late medieval London.

Part III, 'Scribal Production,' looks at specific texts and their manuscripts; these essays examine both scribal practice and manuscripts more generally. Michael Sargent discusses various aspects of copies of the *Scale of Perfection* to demonstrate a 'rhizomorphic' (p. 196) relationship among copies, rather than a hierarchical one. In what is otherwise a useful essay, Sargent's chapter contains an unfortunate unit error in its description of page sizes: the areas are all said to be in mm², but actually reflect cm², and in one case m². A page area of 190mm² would indicate a manuscript about the size of a postage stamp, whereas the real area is 19,000mm². Joel Fredell turns to copies of the *Confessio Amantis*, analysing texts, images, layouts, and quire structures to assess the relationship of Morgan Library, MS M 690 to Gower's Ricardian recension of the poem. Like James-Maddocks, Margaret Connolly builds on another of Professor Mooney's articles;ⁱⁱ she not only

adds new witnesses to Lydgate's 'Kings of England' and an Anonymous 'Kings of England,' but also reflects on how modern editorial practice struggles to capture the physical, pictorial, and multilingual elements of the latter poem. Combining an interest in scribes and readers, and scribes as readers, Wendy Scase analyses the production of Dublin, Trinity College, MS 516, linking the scribe John Benet's practice to his reading of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*. The final chapter in this section by Susan Powell reflects some of Mooney's interests in editorial practice by attending to the Founder's Book of Tewkesbury Abbey and its antiquarian copies.

Part IV contains two essays on Chaucerian manuscripts as its title 'Chaucerian Contexts' implies. Daniel Mosser's contribution contains the newest assessment of manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* that contain other texts, finding that few of those other texts appear in multiple manuscripts. The appendix contains a useful list of all those additional works in verse and prose, Latin, French, and Middle English. Certain poems classified as Middle English verse are actually multilingual, such as *De amico ad amicam* and its *Responsio*. Acknowledging these multilingual texts might draw out other trends in Chaucerian manuscripts. Horobin's chapter—the last scholarly contribution to the volume—is not strictly Chaucerian. Horobin newly identifies the hand of Trinity College, MS R.3.15 as that of Stephen Batman, and considers Batman's Chaucerian manuscripts. However, Horobin looks beyond Chaucer to Batman's interest in *Pierce the Ploughman's Creed*. Together with Powell's essay in the previous section, Horobin attends to the material and scribal afterlives of medieval texts.

Throughout the volume, several themes cut across the four sections: transnational connections, the canonicity of texts, the procedures of modern editors, the interactions between manuscript and print, and the vitality of certain book producing locations all reoccur. The

essays take the reader on a tour of a vast array of scribal habits, locations, and productions. Despite these overlaps, there is a curious lack of cross referencing in the essays. Just one footnote refers to another essay in the volume: Mosser references James-Maddocks' new conclusions about Trinity College, MS R.3.31 (p. 292, n.26). However, an index of manuscripts highlights that certain manuscripts feature in several essays. The essays overlap too in their citations. Of course, Professor Mooney's work appears frequently, as it should in such a volume. Her contributions to our understanding of late medieval scribal culture provide the very foundation for some of the new work published here. Additionally, references to A.I. Doyle, N.R. Ker, and Kathleen Scott occur frequently. The chapters share to their implicit palaeographical method. Interestingly, Margaret Connolly's introduction, Hanna's essay, and Pearsall's afterword all refer to the idea that recognising hands is intuitive: they point to the apparent instant recognition of familiar handwriting on letters and envelopes (pp. 17, 71, 330). Connolly and Hanna cite Doyle on this point, while Pearsall quotes Professor Mooney. Whether or not readers accept this idea, what the contributors show is that recognising hands, medieval or modern, comes from a wide experience with many manuscripts. But it is the conclusions, rather than the methods, of palaeography, that are the volume's focus. Those chapters that showcase their palaeographical depth like Sobecki's and Horobin's are particularly welcome for allowing their readers to see what they see. Throughout, the essays are generously illustrated, with a staggering total of seventy-two images of manuscripts, almost all in colour, and one map. These images are essential to the palaeographical arguments at the heart of several chapters. The wealth of illustrations is no doubt due to welcome recent changes by specific libraries to allow the free reproduction. Given this high volume of illustration, the lack of

images in certain essays discussing specific scribal hands is somewhat lamentable.

Scribal Cultures in Late Medieval England builds on, is indebted to, and celebrates the work of its dedicatee. Her scholarship has taught us much about scribes in England and writing in Middle English. The contributions offered here add further to our knowledge of texts, scribes, authors, and manuscripts, both the familiar and unfamiliar. With a high level of detail and learning, these chapters range widely. While this volume will not answer all our questions about medieval scribal cultures, and indeed they demonstrate just how much there is left to learn, they provide new areas of investigation, new insights, and new questions about what and how we should study medieval English books.

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ⁱ Linne R. Mooney, 'Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, Manuscripts R.3.19 and R.3.21,' in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall*, ed. by A.J. Minnis (York Medieval Press, 2001), pp. 241–66.

ⁱⁱ Linne R. Mooney, 'Lydgate's "Kings of England" and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings,' *Viator* 20 (1989): 255–89.