Makeres of the Mind: Authorial Intention, Editorial Practice, and *The Siege of Jerusalem*

Timothy L. Stinson

Scholarly editing usually entails many acts, or at least claims, of supersession; a new edition is meant to supersede its predecessors, a reading from one source text supersedes that found in another, and an eclectic text supersedes the exemplars upon which it draws. Indeed it may be said that supersession is inherent in every act of editing, for no one sets out to edit a document or text having decided that there is nothing that needs to be replaced or improved upon. This situation naturally lends itself to debate, ranging in scope from an argument over a single word to agonistic struggles between advocates of competing schools of textual criticism. During recent decades, these debates have been shaped by the much larger discussion concerning the impact of digital media on every activity that is central to humanistic enquiry, including reading, writing, researching, publishing, and archiving, as well as the implications of what many assume will be the eventual supersession of the codex as both the primary tool and the default final product of most humanities scholarship. Much of this conversation concerns broad effects of this upheaval, from hyperbolic claims of the potential of digital media to liberate us from the chains of print to alarmed predictions of a decline in literacy and the enervation of attention spans required to read the complex arguments that print media have facilitated.

It is my goal here to conduct a much more focused examination of the impact of digital media on the editing of Middle English texts by examining a specific example, the fourteenth-century alliterative poem *The Siege of Jerusalem*. A case-based analysis will be helpful, for while there are overarching rationales for

Timothy L. Stinson (*timothy_stinson@ncsu.edu*) is Assistant Professor of English, North Carolina State University.

Abstract: Drawing examples from the alliterative poem *The Siege of Jerusalem* and the forthcoming *Siege of Jerusalem Electronic Archive* (SJEA), this article examines the impact of digital media on the editing of Middle English texts, particularly those that survive in competing manuscript witnesses, and argues that digital media promise an advantageous supersession of print that will bring us far closer to the material conditions and transmission of medieval texts than print ever has.

Keywords: *Siege of Jerusalem*, Mary of Jerusalem, authorial intention, manuscript studies, electronic editions, textual criticism.

10.1484/J.YLS.1.102108

and consequences of the transition to digital media in editorial work, these also change from text to text: just as editors might approach a text in a variety of ways using print technologies, so too are we faced with a number of possibilities when employing digital tools. I will consider these questions: How has the medium of print shaped the editing, criticism, and reception of *The Siege* and, conversely, how can these activities be reshaped by digital media? What significant new opportunities greet us when editing the poem in a digital setting, and how can these best be realized? Throughout this essay, I will draw upon my work on *The Siege of Jerusalem Electronic Archive* (SJEA), which John Ivor Carlson and I are editing for publication through the Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts. The SJEA will be a peer-reviewed online resource that provides colour digital images of all of the 231 extant manuscript pages containing the poem, linked to XML-encoded transcriptions of all of the texts. Each manuscript will be accompanied by a critical introduction comprising a physical and linguistic description, analysis of scribal habits, and bibliography. The outcome will be a set of interconnected best-text editions of each manuscript copy of the poem: the user of the archive will be able to work with any manuscript individually or to conduct comparative searches across the entire corpus of texts, critical materials, and encoded annotations of scribal features such as additions, deletions, and modifications of texts. A series of critical texts of what Ralph Hanna and David Lawton have identified as the *alpha* and *beta* versions of the poem, as well as a new critical text of the archetype, will be linked to these documentary materials.[1] Thus the scholar consulting the archive in its final form will have access to an eclectic critical text reflecting the intentions of the *Siege*-poet as well as to alternative textual traditions of the poem; these texts will be linked to full facsimile editions of the manuscript witnesses rather than apparatus that present documentary materials in partial and abbreviated forms. The initial version of the archive will also include digital images, a transcription, and a translation of John of Tynemouth's *Historia aurea*, a major source for the *Siege*-poet recently discovered by Andrew Galloway.[2] We plan for future expansions of the archive to include additional source materials.

[1] *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, Early English Text Society, o.s., 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the poem are taken from this edition. Hanna and Lawton provide a discussion of the relationships of the manuscripts at pp. lv–lxix, and provide a stemma at p. lxvii.

[2] Andrew Galloway, 'Alliterative Poetry in Old Jerusalem: *The Siege of Jerusalem* and its Sources', in *Medieval Alliterative Poetry: Essays in Honour of Thorlac Turville-Petre*, ed. by J. A. Burrow and Hoyt N. Duggan (Dublin: Four Courts, 2010), pp. 85–106.

Editing 'The Siege of Jerusalem'

The Siege of Jerusalem survives in nine manuscript copies:[3]

1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 656 (L)
2. London, British Library, MS Additional 31042 (A)
3. London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. ii (C)
4. London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian E. xvi (V)
5. Cambridge University Library, MS Mm. v. 14 (U)
6. Devon Record Office, Deposit 2507 (Ex)
7. San Marino, Huntington Library, MS Hm 128 (E)
8. London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 491 (D)
9. Princeton University Library, MS Taylor Medieval 11 (P)

To date there have been three published editions of the poem. The first, by E. Kölbing and Mabel Day, was published by the Early English Text Society in 1932[4] and remained the only widely available text of the poem until the appearance of Hanna and Lawton's edition in 2003. The Kölbing-Day text is limited in two important ways. First, the editors did not have the advantage of knowing of all of the extant manuscript witnesses. The Princeton manuscript was unknown at the time, not appearing on the market and coming to the attention of scholars until its sale by Sotheby's in 1952; the Exeter fragment, meanwhile, was unknown until its discovery late in the twentieth century in the course of repair work on a sixteenth-century memorandum book.[5] Second, the editors were not able to account for the source of the six hundred or so lines in the poem that were derived from the *Bible en françois*, a puzzle that was not solved until several decades later when Phyllis Moe, working on Cleveland Public Library, MS W q091.92-C468, which contains an English translation of the work, realized the connection.[6] Hanna and Lawton's excellent edition, also an EETS publication,

[3] Of these nine, six are complete or nearly complete, two are substantial fragments (P and V), and one (Ex) is a binding fragment containing a portion of one column of text on either side. The manuscripts are described in the introduction to *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Hanna and Lawton.

[4] *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by E. Kölbing and Mabel Day, Early English Text Society, o.s., 188 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932; repr. 2001).

[5] Michael Swanton, 'A Further Manuscript of *The Siege of Jerusalem*', *Scriptorium*, 44 (1990), 103–04.

[6] Phyllis Moe, 'The French Source of the Alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*', *Medium Ævum*, 39 (1970), 147–54. See also *The ME Prose Translation of Roger d'Argenteuil's Bible en françois: Edited*

was in every way an improvement upon its predecessor. In addition to making the changes mandated by the newly discovered manuscripts and source text, the editors also added a more substantial introduction, expanded textual notes, a more thorough and convincing explanation of the genetic relationship of the manuscripts, a new and more accurate analysis of scribal and authorial dialects, and an appendix of extensive data documenting manuscript affiliations. Both editions rely upon L as the copy-text, but Hanna and Lawton truly establish a critical text, whereas Kölbing and Day remain much closer to the copy-text, making far fewer emendations. As part of their effort to re-create the archetype, Hanna and Lawton establish seven major textual divisions as authorial, as opposed to Kölbing and Day's presentation of the text in four parts, the divisions presented by the scribe of L. In addition, Hanna and Lawton divide the poem into quatrains, a division present in E and C but not in L or any of the other witnesses (although U features eight-line divisions). Michael Livingston's edition is the most recent, appearing the year after Hanna and Lawton's text as part of the TEAMS series published by the Medieval Institute. Livingston's text of the poem differs very little from, and is much indebted to, Hanna-Lawton's;[7] it is an edition meant for classroom use that is inexpensive, features ample explanatory notes, and contains a concise, clearly written introduction.[8]

Both of the most recent editions of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, then, have articulated a goal — in one instance to produce an eclectic critical text with accompanying scholarly apparatus, and in the other to produce a volume designed for students and teachers — and accomplished it using the print format. Moreover, both have done an excellent job of meeting their goals using that medium. As utterly indispensable as the print codex has been to the dissemination of texts and knowledge to date, however, there are tasks that printed critical editions cannot do nearly as well as digital ones. This has, of course, been pointed out many times in the relatively brief history of electronic editing. Perhaps the best formulation to date of the problems presented by printed critical editions is Jerome McGann's:

from Cleveland Public Library, MS W q091.92-C468, ed. by Phyllis Moe, Middle English Texts, 6 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1977).

[7] As Livingston openly and gratefully acknowledges: *The Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Michael Livingston, TEAMS Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), p. vii.

[8] In addition to the three editions discussed here, Thorlac Turville-Petre presented an edited text of lines 521–724, again using L as his copy-text, in *Alliterative Poetry of the Later Middle Ages: An Anthology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989).

> Brilliantly conceived, these works are nonetheless infamously difficult to read and use. Their problems arise because they deploy a book form to study another book form. This symmetry between the tool and its subject forces the scholar to invent analytic mechanisms that must be displayed and engaged at the primary reading level — e.g., apparatus structures, descriptive bibliographies, calculi of variants, shorthand reference forms, and so forth. The critical edition's apparatus, for example, exists only because no single book or manageable set of books can incorporate for analysis all of the relevant documents. In standard critical editions, the primary materials come before the reader in abbreviated and coded forms.[9]

The goal of the SJEA is to provide tools that take full advantage of the opportunities of electronic editing while avoiding those difficulties that derive from 'deploy[ing] a book form to study another book form'. It is certainly true that 'no single book or manageable set of books' could accomplish the same tasks as a digital archive like the SJEA. Even if one were to find a publisher cooperative enough to publish full transcriptions and notes for each manuscript in *The Siege of Jerusalem* corpus accompanied by the requisite 231 photographic plates of facsimile images, this would not result in a 'manageable set of books'. What scholar or publisher could afford such a set of volumes? And, more to the point, how would someone wishing to use this set as a tool manage to get around in it? It would be most unwieldy, and the indexing necessary to make the texts usable would add such bulk as to make it considerably more so. But of course, even if such a set of volumes were to be produced, digital critical editions offer many advantages that are not available in printed critical editions regardless of the available budget or the size of the volumes. Many of these, such as the relatively inexpensive availability of numerous images, improved search capabilities, the interconnectivity of hypertext, and the replacement of apparatus, concordances, and other scholarly tools with more user-friendly digital versions, have already been noted repeatedly and found wide acceptance. I wish to focus my discussion more closely on advantages that digital critical editions offer to editors of medieval texts surviving in multiple competing manuscript witnesses, as well as to users of such editions. Such a situation, common in the editing of Middle English texts,[10]

[9] Jerome J. McGann, 'The Rationale of Hypertext', in *Electronic Text: Investigations in Method and Theory*, ed. by Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 19–46 (p. 21).

[10] The other common situation is editing a work that survives in a lone manuscript. For a discussion of how digital media can facilitate this work, see John Ivor Carlson, 'Translating the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* into a Digital Medium: The Influence of Physical Context on Editorial Theory', *Arthuriana* 20. 2 (2010), 28–44. See also A. S. G. Edwards, 'Middle English Romance: The Limits of Editing, the Limits of Criticism', in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*, ed. by Tim William Machan, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1991), pp. 91–104.

poses specific problems and offers specific opportunities, and demands a tailored response from editors.

The Siege of Jerusalem is an attractive candidate both for publication in a digital format and for discussing the merits of digital editions more broadly. The manuscripts are richly varied and feature complex relationships both to one another and to the lost archetype from which they descended; but there are few enough of them to make such variation manageable in one edition. The poem is long enough to warrant publication as a stand-alone edition, but brief enough to make undertaking a project such as the SJEA feasible from a perspective of both economy and time. Among long-line alliterative poems, *The Siege* is second only to *Piers Plowman* in the number of manuscript copies, but it fits more clearly into 'the central tradition of Middle English alliterative verse',[11] making it particularly valuable to a study of that verse form. I will discuss three significant advantages offered by digital media for the editing of *The Siege* and conclude with a case study that provides examples of how the SJEA might facilitate study of the poem.

The first advantage offered by a digital archive like the SJEA is its capacity to maintain competing textual authorities rather than forcing an editor to 'resolve' them into an eclectic text or to choose a 'best' text, the primary options of the print era (although, of course, printed facsimiles are also possible). Medieval texts, and particularly vernacular literary texts, were created in a context in which the existence of simultaneous competing authorities, that is versions of a text that have been, to various degrees, recomposed through scribal intervention, was the norm. Even if we envision the simplest possible level of complexity concerning medieval textual transmission — the solitary scribe copying from a single exemplar — we find competing authority, for we have both the exemplar and the (invariably altered) scribal copy. But of course, things frequently were not that simple. In the relatively small group of nine manuscripts in the SJEA alone, for example, we have evidence that the scribe of C worked from at least two exemplars that contained substantially different versions of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, and he seems to have switched between them 'on an essentially free-choice basis' for more than half of the poem.[12] Furthermore, we know that not only was the narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem widely known and attested in other texts, but that the source texts of *The Siege*, which themselves survive in multiple copies today, had wide circulation in the era. This wide availability of

[11] *The Siege of Jerusalem*, p. xxxvii.

[12] *The Siege of Jerusalem*, p. lxvii. The scribe apparently had access to an exemplar from both the *gamma* and *delta* subarchetypes, which represent two textual traditions within the larger *beta* subarchetype.

source texts creates a secondary layer of authority; the scribes likely knew the narrative, as well as at least some of the source texts, and understood that the poem was a reworking of those sources.

With *The Siege of Jerusalem*, then, we have a complex situation with respect to textual authority, and one that is inherent in the transmission of Middle English texts more broadly. An unfortunate consequence of printed critical editions is the tendency of, and indeed often the necessity of, elevating one extant version at the expense of all others. Vital traditions of recomposition and critical evidence of processes of transmission are thereby lost, or at best rendered 'infamously difficult to read and use', either through their displacement into apparatus or their (frequently tacit) expulsion from the final critical edition. *The Siege of Jerusalem* is a case where the need for preserving these traditions is especially pressing, for L, the version of the poem invariably chosen by editors as the base text, survives alone on one side of a bifurcated stemma. Thus editions have not only obscured the evidence of eight out of nine of the surviving manuscripts, but have done so when those eight form a separate tradition of the text. Hanna has argued that L, the only representative of the *alpha* tradition, 'is relatively isolated from all other copies', whereas *beta* 'was a "local text" circulating in areas reasonably proximate to the author'.[13] Moreover, there are separate textual traditions within *beta*, such as the 'southerly dispersal of *Siege*' represented by the *delta* group.[14] The SJEA attempts to preserve the simultaneity of competing authority and the resultant diversity of textual traditions by including each manuscript on equal footing. This is not to suggest, of course, that the manuscripts are equal for all tasks. L is indeed, as previous editors have demonstrated, the best text if our interest is authorial intention. But others have compelling traits to recommend them as well. For example, A, which we know was copied by Robert Thornton, provides important information about the habits of a scribe whose taste in texts is responsible for the survival of a significant portion of the extant corpus of medieval English alliterative verse.[15] Meanwhile the Huntington copy, one of the least desirable

[13] Ralph Hanna III, 'On Stemmatics', in Hanna, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 83–93 (p. 92).

[14] Hanna, 'On Stemmatics', p. 92.

[15] For a detailed discussion of the manuscript, see John J. Thompson, *Robert Thornton and the London Thornton Manuscript* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1987), and Ralph Hanna III, 'The Growth of Robert Thornton's Books', *Studies in Bibliography*, 40 (1987), 51–61. Michael Johnston offers a discussion of Thornton's habits and intentions as a compiler in 'Robert Thornton and *The Siege of Jerusalem*', *YLS*, 23 (2009), 125–62.

manuscripts if one's goal is the establishment of the authorial text, is probably the most fruitful if one's interest lies in studying extensive scribal recomposition and intervention.[16]

In making modern editions, however, the complexities of competing authority are not limited to those created by multiple medieval scribes and their texts. The meaning of the terms *author* and *authority* (and hence *auctor* and *auctoritas*, their etymological roots) have many nuances. The terminology of textual critics and medieval writers, along with everyday usage of the words, offer overlapping and sometimes competing interpretations. In order to sort out these meanings and how they influence editorial practice, it is perhaps best to begin with Mary Hamel's insights into how authorship was understood in the medieval era:

> Few if any Middle English texts, then, were 'original' in the sense 'not derived from something else'; the expectation was that any Middle English work would be derivative to a greater or lesser degree. The Middle English writer was most often, in fact, the direct translator of a single text in French or Latin or the compiler of several related texts in one or both of those languages.[17]

Multiple authors and authorities, then, were routinely present in single Middle English texts. This is certainly the case with *The Siege of Jerusalem*, where the poet is engaged in compilation and in translating from French and Latin, precisely the activities mentioned by Hamel. His authority is shared with that of the authors whom he translates and rewrites. The *auctoritas* of his sources is, of course, reflected in the usage of these texts by editors to emend scribal texts; those texts employed by the poet still possess not only relevance, but *authority* regarding what the final reading of a critical edition should be.[18]

[16] For a discussion of the extensive revision in this manuscript (much of which focuses on scribes other than the one who copied *The Siege*), see Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'Putting it Right: The Corrections of Huntington Library MS Hm 128 and BL Additional MS 35287', *YLS*, 16 (2003), 41–65, and the introduction to *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*, XI: *San Marino, Huntington Library Hm 128 (Hm and Hm2)*, ed. by Michael Calabrese, Hoyt N. Duggan, and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Cambridge: Published for the Medieval Academy of America and SEENET by Boydell & Brewer, 2008).

[17] Mary Hamel, 'The Use of Sources in Editing Middle English Texts', in *A Guide to Editing Middle English*, ed. by Vincent P. McCarren and Douglas Moffat (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), pp. 203–16 (pp. 203–04); Hamel is here quoting the *American Heritage Dictionary*.

[18] In the introduction to their edition, Hanna and Lawton note that 'we have been both inspired and constrained by the poet's sources, which very often identify for us that variant extant

In addition to this, we have in the corpus of *Siege of Jerusalem* manuscripts, as in many corpora of surviving medieval manuscripts, the work of scribe-authors who produced new sites of authority, and new narratives and narrative traditions, as they altered and recomposed the texts they copied. This is evident in the poem's *beta* tradition, where we have evidence not only of scribal recomposition, but of at least two traditions of transmitting distinct versions of the text, designated by Hanna and Lawton the *gamma* and *delta* subarchetypes. This already complicated notion of authority is made even more complex by the terminology of textual criticism and by the roles of editors. Fredson Bowers has famously written about 'multiple authorities', by which he means any documents with the potential to point towards an authorial reading, a related but clearly distinct usage of the term.[19] In this sense, of course, all of the manuscript copies of the poem possess authority; the meaning in this context differs from, but is still related to, the medieval usage. Finally, it must be considered that the editor also assumes a significant role of authority in choosing which readings or manuscripts best represent the goals of the edition at hand, even if the goal of that editor is to reveal authorial intention. Try as an editor might to arrive at such intentions, her own judgement is everywhere visible, even in actions as purportedly routine as transcribing manuscript materials (a task which, as anyone who has attempted it can tell you, is rife with moments of editorial uncertainty and occasionally demands fiat).

Digital media are much more flexible in handling the simultaneity of, as well as the nuanced distinctions of, the many overlapping intersections of authority in both medieval manuscript contexts and critical editions. Whereas printed critical editions tend to force documentary materials into a marginal position, usually in an apparatus or appendix, digital media make no such restrictions: an eclectic critical text can be comfortably accommodated within an archive alongside documentary and best-text editions, and advantageously cross-linked to the documentary texts. The SJEA not only maintains multiple authority by presenting all extant manuscripts, but accounts for multiple forms of authority within each documentary text through the use of style sheets. This builds upon an

in the corpus most likely to represent the author's response to the Latin or French he was reading' (p. xci). See, for example, the textual commentary to lines 25 and 27–28 (p. 92), where decisions regarding authorial readings and quatrain divisions, respectively, are influenced by consultation of *Vindicta Salvatoris*.

[19] Fredson Bowers, 'Multiple Authority: New Problems and Concepts of Copy-Text', *Library*, 5. 27 (1972), 81–115.

innovation developed in *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* publications, where style sheets allow users to choose a number of ways of viewing the text, including 'Diplomatic', which minimizes the judgement of the editor by displaying all scribal marks without editorial remark, 'Scribal', which presents the same text as 'Diplomatic' but calls attention to difficulties in the text through colour-coding conventions, and 'Critical', which increases the level of editorial intervention by showing the editor's judgement of scribal intention. Furthermore, the images of manuscript folios provide another level of access to authority for the user of the archive to explore, and the one freest from editorial manipulation and closest to the scribe's intentions and practices (although one that, of course, requires palaeographical skills). Digital media, then, are quite flexible in their ability to facilitate a representation of the many forms of authority present in critical editions of medieval manuscript materials in a way that would be impossible in printed volumes.

Closely tied to the ability of digital media to maintain competing textual authorities is their capacity for much greater flexibility in handling authorial intention, a feature that holds as much potential to enrich literary criticism as it does editorial practice. Recovering the intentions of the poet has been the explicit goal of previous editors of the poem: Kölbing and Day did so through light emendation of the manuscript deemed closest to the author's intended text, while Hanna and Lawton created a more eclectic text in pursuit of the same goal. The author's intentions have also been a dominant preoccupation of critics and the predominant theme of their criticism. The poem's early critics tended to dismiss the work on the grounds of the *Siege*-poet's alleged zeal for suffering and rank anti-Judaism; Dorothy Everett claimed that the poet's 'ghoulish relish for the horrible is so marked that one feels it may account for his having chosen the siege as his subject',[20] while Derek Pearsall saw in the poem 'an accomplished brutality of the visualizing imagination' and 'a crude and narrow vindictiveness'.[21] Recent critical opinion has been mixed concerning the poet's stance towards the violent subject matter of his source texts and how and why he deploys these in his own work, resulting in a rough division between those who see sympathy or antipathy on the part of the author. Christine Chism, for example, argues that the poet feels 'delight' at the sea of broken Jewish bodies upon which the horses trod after the

[20] Dorothy Everett, 'The Alliterative Revival', in *Essays on Middle English Literature*, ed. by Patricia Kean (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 58–59.

[21] Derek Pearsall, *Old English and Middle English Poetry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 169.

first Roman victory detailed in the poem,[22] and Roger Nicholson notes that the poem seems 'pollutized by anti-Semitism, in the intensity with which it imagines and realizes its vindictive design'.[23] Elisa Narin van Court counters that 'the poem exhibits a tenuous, but fully articulated sympathy towards the Jews',[24] and Alex Mueller agrees, finding in the poet's handling of his source materials a sympathy for 'the pitiable fate of the Jews' and 'disgust for the cruelty of the Roman conquerors'.[25]

Of course, the goals of editors and critics with respect to authorial intention are not identical; editors consider textual variants, source texts, and metrical constraints in order to determine the text the poet intended to write, whereas critical concern over the poet's views towards violence and Judaism is a very different matter. But it seems fair to assume that the decision of editors to create editions designed specifically to present the poet's intended text has had a significant effect on literary criticism, for the way in which most critics encounter the poem is mirrored in the way that they write about it — as a single text in a modern printed edition with the complexities of its transmission and physical textual states marginalized, and with the intentions of the poet depicted as the most prominent and important aspect of the textual tradition. The print medium does not inevitably and invariably shape the work of critics in this way, as is evident, for example, in Bonnie Millar's mindfulness of the manuscript tradition in her efforts to contextualize the poem[26] and (as I discuss further below) Michael Johnston's thoughtful approach to understanding how scribal compilers shaped reception. Throughout the poem's reception history, however, we have also seen persistent and widespread speculation about the poet's personal bias, and it is difficult to believe that these critics' prioritizing of the intentions of an anonymous poet is unrelated to the same priority in the printed editions of the poem that they cite in their arguments.

[22] Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 167.

[23] Roger Nicholson, 'Haunted Itineraries: Reading *The Siege of Jerusalem*', *Exemplaria*, 14 (2002), 447–84 (p. 457).

[24] Elisa Narin van Court, '*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-Century England', *Chaucer Review*, 29 (1995), 227–48 (p. 233).

[25] Alex Mueller, 'Corporal Terror: Critiques of Imperialism in *The Siege of Jerusalem*', *Philological Quarterly*, 84 (2005), 287–310 (p. 288).

[26] '*The Siege of Jerusalem' in its Physical, Literary and Historical Contexts* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000). Millar devotes the first chapter of her book to 'The Manuscript Contexts of *The Siege of Jerusalem*'.

This criticism has in effect invented a figure — the 'makere of the mind' from my title — and energetically imagined his proclivities while ignoring much of the material evidence we have of his poetry. The title of this article is meant to recall D. F. McKenzie's famous study 'Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices', in which the author demonstrates how bibliographers working with only one type of evidence (physical evidence from books themselves) arrived at a set of assumptions about printers that were limited in their helpfulness and accuracy.[27] I suggest a parallel between McKenzie's presentation of evidence of an 'incredible', but mostly unexamined, variety of practices in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century printing houses[28] and the rich but underutilized physical evidence of textual production and transmission found in the manuscript witnesses and source texts of *The Siege of Jerusalem*. McKenzie argues that a lack of knowledge about conditions in printing houses 'left us disastrously free to devise them according to need',[29] and demonstrates the survival of a wide variety of evidence, including press accounts, vouchers, and ledgers, that challenges previous assumptions regarding the daily operations of printing houses. Similarly, many critics of *The Siege* have worked with only one type of evidence (the printed critical edition) and have devised assertions about the poet that rest on assumptions while ignoring the surviving primary evidence. While the evidence provided by manuscript copies of the poem cannot definitively resolve debates about the author of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, it does promise to lead to new debates and discussions founded on historical documents and texts rather than assumptions about an unknown poet.

In the case of the extant body of criticism of *The Siege*, the almost exclusive focus on the poet's intentions amounts to a failure to consider the poem in a fully contextualized and historicized way; this is particularly the case with the lack of critical interest in manuscript contexts and textual variants, but has also been reflected in some studies through a lack of careful consideration of the relationship of the alliterative *Siege* to its source texts, as well as to the much larger Vengeance of Our Lord tradition to which the poem and its sources belong.[30] In

[27] D. F. McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices', *Studies in Bibliography*, 22 (1969), 1–75.

[28] McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind', p. 5.

[29] McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind', p. 2.

[30] For summaries of the extent and popularity of the Vengeance of Our Lord tradition, see Bonnie Millar, *'The Siege of Jerusalem'*; Chapter 5 of Michael Hebron's *The Medieval Siege*

the case of critical editions, however, such a focus seems not a failure of any kind, but rather a well-reasoned choice and a consequence of physical limitations of format and medium. If, indeed, your medium only permits one primary goal, and usually a single way of presenting the text, reconstruction of authorial intention is an attractive one, and the one that is most likely to be desired by the majority of the edition's potential purchasers and users. And, of course, the impact of editing on criticism has been reciprocated; demand for eclectic texts over diplomatic texts and documentary archives has shaped the kinds of editions that publishers are willing to produce and promote. The medium of the printed book itself, meanwhile, has limited access to primary materials; it is not that they are missing entirely from printed critical editions, but that they 'come before the reader in abbreviated and coded forms', thus making them difficult to use and positioning them as far less important than the author's intentions. Usually, this has not been a shortcoming of editors. Indeed the very editors who create the 'abbreviated and coded forms' that serve to suppress the physical contexts of manuscripts to footnotes and appendices and to collapse their competing voices often have the greatest appreciation for the riches contained in primary materials. This certainly seems to be the case with *The Siege of Jerusalem*, where tendencies to ignore the poem's manuscript contexts and source texts have been countered by a recent and productive trend toward considering their importance. Following the footnotes of these discussions back to the source, one discovers that this awareness often stems in part, if not directly, from Hanna's thoughtful articles, as well as from the admirable job that he and Lawton do of contextualizing the poem in the introduction to their edition. In many ways, the Hanna-Lawton edition stands as a testament to just how sophisticated and complex critical editions can be in the print format, and their work in establishing the intended text of the poet is an important achievement of editorial and literary detective work that will remain invaluable to scholars and future editors for many years to come.

It is thus a testament to the power of digital media to transform how we edit and transmit the poem that there remains much work to be done on this corpus of manuscripts, for we now have the possibility of making authorial intention a central goal of an archive or edition without reducing documentary materials and

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); the introduction to *Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Livingston; and the introduction to Stephen K. Wright, *The Vengeance of Our Lord: Medieval Dramatizations of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, Studies and Texts, 89 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1989).

scribal intention to abbreviated forms. In a digital medium, the meaning of 'encoded' forms has shifted, for the term now signifies more information, in the form of metadata, rather than less information in the form of abbreviation. Texts may be presented in multiple states, just as they circulated, and primary materials can be presented in a full and interactive manner. Thus the options available to us in creating printed editions remain, but we face far fewer limitations.

Finally, the use of digital media in editing Middle English texts reveals the long-standing and strongly contested debate between advocates of eclectic and best-text editions to be largely a result of the limitations of the print medium. This debate, which has at times been heated, collapses in the face of media that allow us to combine in one archive facsimile images, diplomatic editions, best-text editions of every manuscript in a corpus, and multiple eclectic critical texts, together with an interface that permits users of the edition to move from diplomatic to scribal to critical states of a text. A debate that once seemed counterproductive, since in fact best-text, diplomatic, and eclectic editions all had their places and merits in the print era, now seems futile since all of these may be combined in a mutually edifying manner in the context of one archive. In 1975, Fredson Bowers remarked that '[l]iterary critics, historians, general scholars, students of all kinds — these need as authoritative a reconstruction of a full text as the documents allow, not editions of the separate documents, except when the distance is so great as to make eclectic reconstruction impossible'.[31] Although Bowers acknowledges that facsimile editions are useful in some instances, one might have objected at the time that his argument does not recognize that, for example, historians interested in manuscript contexts or habits of scribal self-correction would probably be much better off with editions of separate documents, as would students studying medieval textual transmission or those brushing up their palaeography skills. Today, the SJEA could be of benefit to a great variety of 'critics, historians, general scholars, and students', whether their interest is manuscript transmission, Robert Thornton's habits, palaeography, or the disparity between the prestigious presentation of the poem in the Cambridge University Library copy and the unattractive and scrunched rendering of it in Vespasian E. xvi. At the same time, this does not preclude the simultaneous presence of eclectic texts in the archive, and indeed an eclectic text and its users will benefit greatly from the presence of the documentary materials.

[31] 'Remarks on Eclectic Texts', in *Essays in Bibliography, Text, and Editing* (Charlottesville: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia), p. 528.

Using the SJEA: A Case Study

Having articulated overarching benefits that digital media bring to the editing of Middle English texts generally and *The Siege of Jerusalem* in particular, I will turn now to an analysis of specific payoffs that the SJEA will offer in the study and criticism of one passage of the poem. The infamous scene in which a starving Jewish mother, Mary, kills and eats her own son serves as a good example for a number of reasons: it is one of the passages most frequently discussed by critics, it has a complex and much-studied relationship to its source texts, and it features interesting variants at both the archetype and manuscript level. The story of Mary, or Maria, was well known during the medieval era; Merrall Llewelyn Price has traced intermittent appearances in the late classical and early medieval periods followed by 'a continuous upsurge in the popularity of the motif' from the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries in works as diverse as chronicle histories, Dante's *Purgatorio*, *La Vengeance de Nostre-Seigneur*, the verse romance *Titus and Vespasian*, and religious dramas performed across the Continent.[32] In the alliterative *Siege of Jerusalem*, the episode precedes — and helps to precipitate — the Roman assault on and breach of Jerusalem's walls after a protracted standoff. It is one of several passages that vividly describe the suffering of the Jewish inhabitants immured within the city as famine sets in:

> On Marie, a myld wyf, for meschef of foode,
> Hire owen barn þat 3o bare brad on þe gledis,
> Rostyþ rigge and rib with rewful wordes,
> Sayþ, 'sone, vpon eche side our sorow is alofte:
> Batail aboute þe borwe our bodies to quelle;
> Withyn hunger so hote þat ne3 our herte brestyþ.
> Þerfor 3eld þat I þe 3af and a3en tourne,
> Entre þer þou out cam', and etyþ a schouldere.
> Þe rich roos of þe rost ri3t into þe strete
> Þat fele fastyng folke felden þe sauere.
> Doun þei daschen þe dore, dey scholde þe berde
> Þat mete yn þis meschef hadde from men layned.
> Þan saiþ þat worþi wif in a wode hunger,
> 'Myn owen barn haue I brad and þe bones gnawen,
> 3it haue I saued 3ou som', and a side feccheþ

[32] Merrall Llewelyn Price, 'Imperial Violence and the Monstrous Mother: Cannibalism at the Siege of Jerusalem', in *Domestic Violence in Medieval Texts*, ed. by Eve Salisbury, Georgiana Donavin, and Merrall Llewelyn Price (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), p. 272.

> Of þe barn þat ȝo bare, and alle hire blode chaungeþ.
> Forþ þey went for wo wepande sore
> And sayn, 'alas in þis lif how longe schul we dwelle?
> ȝit beter were at o brayde in batail to deye
> Þan þus in langur to lyue and lengþen our fyne'.[33]

Some critics have found evidence of sympathy here, others of antipathy. In the process they have often devoted a significant amount of attention to the poet's reworking of his source texts.[34] Chism cites the passage as an example of how 'the poem targets Jewish mothers in bizarrely flamboyant ways', and notes that the siege 'targets the generative capacities of the Jews because those capacities reflect the most intimate and intractable sites of Jewish vitality'. She sees this as part of an agenda that is reflective of a 'gathering darkness of specifically late medieval anti-Judaisms'.[35] Nicholson strikes much the same tone, noting that '[w]ithin the frame of the episode there seems to be real sympathy, but to stay with that would be to miss the point — that the Jew is confined to the carnal and therefore trapped within the pattern of abhorrence that the poem traces'.[36] Narin van Court reads the passage very differently, noting that '[t]he *Jerusalem* poet reworks the rhetoric of his sources and renders the act a result of desperation in a sympathetic account that invites not disgust but sorrow from the reader'.[37] Mueller agrees, arguing that 'the *Siege*-poet does not use Maria's cannibalism to condemn the Jews', but rather 'alters his sources and provides sympathetic commentary through eyewitness testimony'.[38] It is notable that underlying all of these accounts is an interest in the poet's intentions and an attempt to employ his source texts in order to discern those intentions.

[33] This citation from Hanna and Lawton's edition of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, lines 1081–1100. It should be noted that, depending upon date of publication, some critics cited below used the Kölbing-Day edition, wherein the corresponding lines are numbered 1077–96. The passage in the two editions is substantially the same, although Hanna and Lawton make a number of emendations both to improve metre (e.g., replacing *smel* with the alliterating *rich* at l. 1089) and sense (e.g., choosing *layned* over *loyned* at l. 1092).

[34] The most thorough consideration is provided by Bonnie Millar, who devotes an entire chapter to the motif in '*The Siege of Jerusalem*' (chap. 3, pp. 76–104).

[35] Chism, *Alliterative Revivals*, p. 166.

[36] Nicholson, 'Haunted Itineraries', p. 481.

[37] Elisa Narin van Court, '*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Recuperative Readings', in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 151–70 (p. 158).

[38] Mueller, 'Corporal Terror', p. 301.

Before turning to how the SJEA might contribute to these conversations, it is necessary both to offer a brief summary of the source texts in question and to consider a recently discovered source that will impact future considerations of how the *Siege*-poet composed this section of his poem. Josephus's *Jewish War* is the ultimate source of much of the narrative in the poem, including the account of Mary's cannibalism, but in order to understand his role in the creation of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, we must also consider the complex roles of Hegesippus and Higden in transmitting Josephan texts. Josephus was widely known throughout medieval Europe, especially in the Latin translation created at the behest of Cassiodorus in the fifth or sixth century. Hegesippus's translation was also in circulation; completed around AD 370, it abbreviates Josephus, combining his text with materials from other early authors, including Sallust and Tacitus. The fourteenth-century English chronicler Ranulph Higden used both Hegesippus and a Latin translation of Josephus in his *Polychronicon*, making the transmission of this material in late medieval England quite complex. Before all of this came Josephus's Greek text, the one from which the Latin translators worked. The prologue to the *Jewish War*, in turn, informs us that the Greek text is Josephus's own translation from his composition in Aramaic.[39] In addition to this already intricate textual history, Andrew Galloway has recently demonstrated that the *Siege*-poet relied on the *Historia aurea* of John of Tynemouth, a compilation that included both Higden and Hegesippus. Tynemouth's text replaces what Hanna and Lawton believed to be 'not only the poet's use of Ranulph Higden's widely known historical compilation, which quotes from Jacob of Voragine, Josephus, and "Hegesippus," but also further contact with a direct Latin translation of Josephus himself, deftly woven in'.[40] In some ways, Galloway's discovery makes for a simpler and more direct explanation of passages such as the Marian episode quoted above, as he demonstrates that it is possible for the poet to have accomplished with one source what it would have taken at least three sources to explain. It also serves to streamline arguments regarding the poet's reworking of those sources, as it is clear that the *Historia aurea* has been closely followed in this part of the poem. At the same time, this new information further complicates our account of the textual transmission of this episode in that it adds yet another intermediary between Josephus and *The Siege of Jerusalem*.

[39] For this summary of Josephus's textual transmission, I am indebted to Millar, '*The Siege of Jerusalem*', pp. 60–63, and Hanna-Lawton's edition of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, pp. xxxvii–lv.

[40] Galloway, 'Alliterative Poetry in Old Jerusalem', p. 90.

One obvious way in which the SJEA can contribute to scholarly discussions of this passage is by providing access to the newly discovered materials by including images of those folios of Lambeth Palace, MS 10 that contain the relevant portions of Tynemouth's *Historia aurea* linked to a transcription and translation of the text. But I would like to suggest a more fundamental contribution that the archive can make over time by altering how source texts of the poem are handled and depicted, and consequently what uses scholars are able to make of these materials. A striking feature of most criticism of the passage cited above, as well as much other criticism of this poem, is how closely conceptions of why source texts matter and how they should be used mirror the rationales, methods, and format of printed critical editions. These usually at best contain brief excerpts of a few relevant passages of source materials in appendices. Not only is revealing the intentions of the poet the foremost goal of most critics, but, as in critical editions, the sources are consulted and valued only insofar as they can provide evidence and justification for assertions about these intentions. Just as this is a useful strategy for editors producing eclectic texts, it has also been a useful and productive strategy for critics, who have used it to contextualize and enrich our collective understanding of the poem; Chism and Narin van Court in particular have been instrumental in encouraging other scholars to see the possibilities of nuanced, historicized readings of the poem that attend to how the poet might have used his sources.

But consulting source texts in order to discern authorial intention can be *one* use among many that we make of them, and making sources available alongside documentary and critical materials has the potential to catalyse new paths of enquiry regarding the complex relationships of texts within the Vengeance of Our Lord tradition to one another. A useful model for understanding how sources have traditionally been represented in critical editions is the palimpsest. In the case of *The Siege of Jerusalem*, the surface of this palimpsest is an editorial reconstruction of the *Siege*-poet's intentions that modifies and partially obscures *The Siege* manuscript witnesses, the texts just below the surface. In the Marian passage, the next layer would be Tynemouth, discernable, but further fragmented and obscured by the activities of poet, scribe, and editor. Beneath this, texts recede further back into time — Higden, Jacobus de Voragine, Hegesippus, Josephus — and, as is always the case with a palimpsest, become increasingly difficult to discern. Early iterations of the SJEA will, admittedly, reflect the rationale of critical editions in that the direct evidence of one poem will be foregrounded, while source texts will be there by virtue of the fact that they are related to this poem. But just as we use digital media to maintain and represent the polyvocality of manuscript witnesses, so too can each layer of the polyvocal 'palimpsest' of

source texts be shown with equal clarity, and we intend to expand the archive over time to facilitate research of a number of these interrelated texts.

Reading the Marian scene in John of Tynemouth is instructive because it simultaneously offers evidence of how the *Siege*-poet reworked his sources and how Tynemouth reworked Higden, the *Legenda aurea*, and other sources. While the *Siege*-poet borrowed rather directly from this passage, as Galloway has shown, he also borrowed selectively (perhaps a necessity given the length of Tynemouth's account), and the passage varies significantly in tone between the two works. Whereas in the alliterative *Siege* Mary is introduced simply as 'On Marie, a myld wyf', without further description to contextualize who she is, in Tynemouth Mary is depicted as famous, and her deed notorious: 'Tunc contigit illud factum tam horrendum quam famosum Marie alienigene' (Then occurred that deed, as horrific as notorious, of the famous Maria, not a native of the city).[41] In addition to being notorious, the Mary found in John of Tynemouth's chronicle is an outsider (*alienigene*), and is much more actively opposed to the men who break in her door. In the chronicle, she consumes her child not only due to hunger, but also as an act of revenge against these predators: 'veni igitur, esto matri cibus — predonibus furor, et sceleris fabula — Redde vel semel matri quod ab ea sumpsisti' (come, therefore, be food for your mother — a source of wrath for the predators, and a fable of crime: return once more to the mother what you have taken). While the *Siege*-poet has elected to elide Mary's notoriety and her active resistance of the 'predators' through her act of cannibalism, John of Tynemouth has borrowed his text verbatim from his sources; the first passage quoted above is taken unaltered from Higden, while the second is identical to the *Legenda aurea*. The inclusion of such sources in the SJEA offers the opportunity not only to understand how the story of Mary's cannibalism was altered by the *Siege*-poet, but also how the narrative had its own life and transmission history across many centuries, and how reception and intervention occurred at many moments in its textual life, with the *Siege*-poet's reworking of it being just one such moment.

While there has been some focus on the *Siege*-poet's use of his sources, only scant attention has been paid to manuscript contexts of the poem, including script, *ordinatio*, how the texts alongside which the poem was placed affected reception, and the textual variants found both within individual manuscripts and in the subarchetypes. As discussed above, this is likely due in large part to the format of printed critical editions. Such editions lack the ability to convey an

[41] Quotations and translations of John of Tynemouth are from Galloway, 'Alliterative Poetry in Old Jerusalem', pp. 90–91.

adequate sense of the appearance of manuscripts, prioritize authorial intention above other goals, and offer only partial and encoded accounts of manuscript readings. But there are questions that we may (and should) pose of a poem like *The Siege of Jerusalem* that do not rely on a recovery of its author's intended text: How was the text received and perceived by its audiences? How was reception shaped by the material presentation of the manuscript, including such features as script and layout? How did textual variants and the texts surrounding the poem reflect how the poem was understood by scribes and shape how it was interpreted by readers? Because the SJEA features complete cross-searchable transcriptions of all manuscript witnesses accompanied by colour images, it encourages and facilitates researchers wishing to pursue such questions. For example, an analysis of variants found in the Marian scene reveals the considerable impact that scribal texts might have on the interpretation of the passage, as the following excerpt from A makes clear:

> O saynt Marie a Milde wyfe for meschefe of fude
> hir awen barne that scho bare Made brede one the gledis
> Scho ruschede owte ribbe and rygere with rewefull wordis
> Sayse Enter thare þou owte come and Etis the rybbis
> and sone appone Ilke a syde oure sorowe es newe
> alle withowttyn þe burghe oure bodyes to quelle
> and withIn es hungre so hate that nere oure hertis brystis
> and therefore 3elde þat þou 3afe and a3ayne torne
> Enter þare þou owte come and Etis the childe
> the smelle rase of the roste righte in the strete
> that fele Fastande folke felide the sauoure
> and downe thay daschen the dore and hastely thay askede
> why that þat mete in þat Meschefe was fro men laynede
> than sayde that worthiliche wyfe in ane wode hungre
> Myn awen barne es my brede and I the bones gnawe
> 3itte hafe I sauede 3ow some and a syde fechide
> Of the barne þat scho bare bot than thaire ble chaungede
> and furthe wente þay with woo wepande full sore
> and sayde allas in this lyfe how lange schall we lenge
> 3itt were it better at a brayde in batelle to dye
> than thus in langoure to ly and lenghthyn oure pyn.[42]

[42] BL, MS Add. 31042, fol. 63^{r}. This transcription reflects Thornton's capitalization practices; further details of the script such as expansions and barred letter forms (*h* and *l*) are indicated in

Several variants found here are unique to this manuscript and have a significant impact on how a reader might interpret this passage. First, the passage begins 'O saynt Marie', which is apparently an invocation to the Virgin (this does not seem to be the cardinal *o*, as Thornton elsewhere uses *one* throughout).[43] As such the mother remains nameless, and thus a reader might be less inclined to infer that in this passage 'Mary the nurturer becomes Mary the devourer', thereby reversing 'Christian transubstantiation into cannibalism with vicious precision'.[44] Second, the line beginning 'Enter thare þou owte come' (l. 1088) is doubled in this manuscript alone, and the reading 'and Etis the childe' is also found only in this manuscript; in all other witnesses, the mother eats a shoulder of the child. In the line reading 'and downe thay daschen the dore and hastely thay askede', the b-verse is likewise unique, as other witnesses have some version of 'dey scholde þe berde' (l. 1091). Again, it is easy to imagine how these changes might guide a reader towards an interpretation that differs significantly in tone from the edited passage above. Emphasizing that the mother is eating her 'childe' rather than 'a schouldere' reminds us of both her motherhood and the humanity of the child who is being consumed. Meanwhile the men who break down the door are cast more favourably here, for they simply ask 'hastely' why meat had been hidden from them before fleeing — 'with woo wepande full sore' — when they comprehend the scene before them. In the other manuscripts, conversely, these men threaten Mary with death, as they do in Tynemouth (via Higden): 'Sed nidor incense carnis sediciosos allexit, qui in domum irruentes, nisi carnem prodat, mortem minantur' (But the odor of the burned flesh drew the rebels, who, rushing into the house, threatened her with death, unless she produce the meat).[45]

Variants in other manuscripts suggest additional readings. The scribe of E, for example, produces a text full of interesting, and often perplexing, alternate readings. Thus in this passage 'marion' is a 'mydwyf'[46] rather than a 'milde' (i.e.,

the transcription found in the SJEA. Thornton does not indicate a caesura in his copy of the poem.

[43] I wish to thank Michael Johnston for first calling my attention to this invocation, which he noticed in the course of his research on 'Robert Thornton and *The Siege of Jerusalem*'.

[44] Chism, *Alliterative Revivals*, p. 161.

[45] Galloway, 'Alliterative Poetry in Old Jerusalem', pp. 90–91.

[46] Hm 128, fol. 214^{r}. This strange variant is also found in MS E at the line corresponding to *The Siege of Jerusalem*, l. 901, where it is part of a catalogue of atrocities committed by Nero. The manuscript informs us that he murdered 'his modire & his mydwyf'. In the Marian passage, E alone has this reading, however, whereas at l. 901 the reading is found in LUE.

gentle or well-born) wife and — in contrast to the overtones of A — the dehumanization suffered by her son when he becomes foodstuff is emphasized, rather than mitigated, when the remains that she producers for the intruders are described as 'a gobat red yroosted'. Manuscript variants also frequently occur in agreement in such a way that a subarchetype offers a different tone or emphasis. For example, in the final line of the passage we have been analysing, *alpha* alone (i.e., L) reads 'þan þus in langur to lyue [⁖] & lengþen our fyne', with all *beta* manuscripts reading 'pyne' or 'peyne' in place of 'fyne', a reading that Hanna and Lawton note 'is certainly the *durior*, in fact almost too good a, reading'.[47] Just before this passage, meanwhile, only D and E, two manuscripts from the *delta* subarchetype, preserve what is likely the reading of the *Siege*-poet's source when they record that the citizens in Jerusalem had no food for forty days; Mary's decision to eat her own son after only four days of hunger, as the other manuscripts read, might of course give a very different impression to readers.[48]

The corpus of manuscripts promises other productive avenues of study as well. As Michael Johnston has demonstrated with his careful study of Robert Thornton's collocation of texts in MS Add. 31042, scribal compilers could significantly influence textual reception through the variants they recorded or suppressed (either intentionally or unknowingly), the order in which they placed texts in miscellanies, and the incipits with which they introduced those texts. Johnston considers all of these features, and his argument that Thornton positions *The Siege of Jerusalem* in a manner that intentionally 'sells the poem as a piece of unqualified anti-Jewish propaganda'[49] provides a good example of how scholars might use the surviving manuscript evidence to understand medieval reception history, including how scribes were active agents in shaping and altering texts. Although the SJEA will initially include only images of those portions of manuscript witnesses containing *The Siege of Jerusalem*, digitization of these manuscripts in their entirety is a future goal of the editors. Furthermore, it is our hope that texts and images from the SJEA will be used in conjunction with other digital editions either already published or under development, such as the *Piers*

[47] *The Siege of Jerusalem*, note to l. 1100, p. 146.

[48] Hanna and Lawton note that most manuscripts of the French source, the *Bible en françois*, read 'par xl. iorz', and that the emendation to 'fourty' is 'simply commonsensical' (p. 145). While this reading is not unanimously attested by *delta* manuscripts, many variant readings throughout the poem are; see *The Siege of Jerusalem*, Appendix C, p. 170, for examples.

[49] Johnston, 'Robert Thornton and *The Siege of Jerusalem*', p. 128.

Plowman Electronic Archive edition of Hm 128,[50] a manuscript in which the text of *Piers Plowman* ends on the same folio where *The Siege of Jerusalem* begins, or John Carlson's forthcoming electronic edition of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, which is found in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91, the only other known manuscript copied by Robert Thornton.[51] Because all of these editions contain full transcriptions encoded in TEI-compliant XML,[52] with textual features such as expansions, abbreviations, erasures, and corrections encoded and searchable, they are together beginning to form a sizable body of texts that can be mined in order to study such topics as alliterative metre, patterns of scribal correction, and distributions of dialect, both within and across manuscripts.

Conclusion

In the essay 'Producing Manuscripts and Editions', Hanna diagnoses problems in contemporary practices of editing Middle English texts and discusses potential alternative forms that editions may take. Among the topics he covers is the inherent tension between the expectation that modern readers have that an editor will render a singular, canonical text and the plurality of the manuscript materials with which editors grapple, a tension that is clearly evident in editing *The Siege of Jerusalem*. First published in 1992, on the eve of the explosive growth of the World Wide Web during the mid-1990s, Hanna's essay does not mention digital media or their potential fundamentally to alter editorial theory and practice. It clearly outlines limitations in editorial practices that may be redressed through such media, however, and envisions alternatives that they may help us to realize:

> '[T]he editorial issue' should become, what varieties of mediation can modern textual consumption allow so as to address its public constituency, with its desire to canonize medieval works in forms consonant with those customary for presenting 'modern scripture' while still remaining in palpable contact with the extraordinary evidential plurality of manuscript culture? Most modern readers require the singularity of A Text

[50] *The Piers Plowman Electronic Archive*, XI: *San Marino, Huntington Library Hm 128 (Hm and Hm2)*.

[51] This edition is also slated to be published through SEENET, although no release date is available at this time.

[52] 'TEI' refers to the Text Encoding Initiative, 'a consortium which collectively develops and maintains a standard for the representation of texts in digital form'. Guidelines and further information about the consortium, its activities, and its aims are available at <http://www.tei-c.org> [accessed October 2010].

> and, indeed, [...] canonicity in some sense demands one. But the manuscript situation in an equally absolute way requires some greater access to 'the evidence' than standard formats based on collation forms derived from print books allows: the text is only a series of human products, every bit as mediated in their own differing ways as the standard modern edition, each historically situated and incapable of being understood outside that situation.[53]

While digital media cannot provide 'palpable contact' with manuscripts, at least not in a literal sense, they can relieve us of the dilemma of choosing between 'A Text' and 'contact with the extraordinary evidential plurality of manuscript culture', for they facilitate experiencing both in an interconnected and mutually supporting way, as we plan to demonstrate with the SJEA. As such, they promise makers and users of scholarly editions an advantageous supersession of print, and one that will bring us far closer to the material conditions and transmission of medieval texts than print ever has.[54]

[53] Ralph Hanna III, 'Producing Manuscripts and Editions', in Hanna, *Pursuing History*, pp. 63–82 (pp. 74–75) (first publ. in *Crux and Controversy in Middle English Textual Criticism*, ed. by Charlotte Brewer and Alastair Minnis (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 109–30).

[54] I am grateful to the Bibliographical Society of America and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for fellowships. Hoyt N. Duggan has been a nonpareil mentor and friend, while John Ivor Carlson has been an able and helpful colleague and co-editor. Andrew Galloway generously shared early drafts of his work on John of Tynemouth with me. Thanks too to Michael Johnston and the readers for *YLS* for thorough and helpful comments.