

Two Thirteenth-century Latin "Ferienlieder"

Published below for the first time are two poems addressed by university students to their master, asking that he suspend classes for the holiday season. In the first poem, at Easter, the students say they are weary of studying and fasting; they wish to be free to confess and receive communion, and to see their families. In the Advent poem, after some invective against the Jews, they argue that Christ came to call exiles home; it would therefore be wrong of the master to hold his students in bondage. The poems are pleasing examples of medieval Latin light verse in the Goliardic tradition, relying on compact phrasing and inventive rhyme for their effect.¹

The Manuscript:

These verses are found in British Library, Cotton Ms. Vespasian D.v, part IV (hereafter *D*). This section of the manuscript, comprising folios 151-184, was originally a free-standing booklet, written in England in the mid-13th century (Russell and Heironimus 1935, 11).²

The booklet contains fifty-six Latin poems or parts of poems, mainly occasional verse relating to the papal court and elsewhere, and

¹ The first poem, for Easter, is referred to as "E"; the second, for Christmas, is called "C". I am grateful to Professor A. G. Rigg for his helpful suggestions.

² A full description of the manuscript is forthcoming in A.G. Rigg's series of articles on "Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies" in *Mediaeval Studies*.

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miscellaneous verse (including verse contests) probably associated with a grammar master in his teaching.³ There are poems written for events as early as 1227; the latest datable items are from the funeral of king's clerk Robert Passelewe, who died on June 6, 1252 (Russell nos. 148-149; see Russell and Heironimus 1935, 144). The manuscript was annotated by Matthew Paris, who died in 1259 (Townsend and Rigg 1987, 390 n. 15): it was therefore compiled during the mid-1250s. It is related to Cambridge University Library, MS. Dd.11.78, made up at least partly of the verses of Henry of Avranches, and compiled by Matthew Paris partly in his own hand (Townsend and Rigg 1987).

The poems edited below stand on fols. 179v and 180r. Fol. 179 is damaged, with part of the outside edge of the leaf torn away; both leaves are scuffed and worn, leaving some illegible gaps in the text. The poems are written without line or stanza divisions; spaces were left for coloured initials at the beginning of each half-stanza, and small guide letters are usually provided, but the initials were never executed

The Author:

The booklet was ascribed by an early modern hand (possibly Cotton or one of his librarians) to Michael of Cornwall, the rival of Henry of Avranches (Russell and Heironimus 1935, 11; for Michael, see Hilka 1926, 123-154). Russell dismissed this attribution and ascribed all the contents of *D* to Henry. There is no positive evidence for Henry's authorship of any of the poems (except for Russell no. 123, in which the

³ The poems in *D* are Russell and Heironimus, nos. 104-158, and a copy of Russell no. 20 (on the translation of Salisbury Cathedral), also found in CUL Dd.11.78. See Russell and Heironimus 1935, xix-xxii.

author calls himself "Henricus"). The argument rests largely on the association of *D* with CUL Dd.11.78; in each case, however, the collection may represent Matthew Paris's interests as a collector rather than Henry's as a writer. The authorship of any given poem in either manuscript must be established on its own merits.⁴ An argument against Henry's authorship of these poems is provided by the misuse of the term *mathesis*, according to a grammatical rule stated in a poem attributed to Henry (see below, C 3/5); but since that poem's authorship is not firmly established, and the misuse is so minor, the question of authorship must remain open.

It seems clear that the two poems had a common author, for they both use the nonce-word *displicina* "displeasing", unattested elsewhere, to rhyme with *disciplina* (E 10/4-5, C 13/1-2)

The Context

The poems derive from an arts faculty at a university. There seems to be more than one master about: the students appeal to their own master not to be more rigorous than the others (E 1/4-6). The master has under him a *lector* (E 5/1-3); this is probably a bachelor engaged in cursory lectures (Weisheipl 1964, 159). The curriculum alluded to in C 2/4-6 includes natural philosophy, "logic" (i.e. the trivium: see below *ad loc.*) and ethics; this corresponds roughly to the division of philosophy found for example in Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon*: natural, moral (including ethics) and logic (the trivium) (Hugh of St. Victor, Ed. Buttimer, 1935, 24; Weisheipl 1965, 65-66). In the next stanza (C 3) the student enlarges on the master's expertise in the arts: the

⁴ See the discussion of the authorship of the poems in *A* in Townsend and Rigg 1987, 386-7.

trivium, poetry, and the four mathematical arts of the quadrivium. The reference to poetry in the midst of the liberal arts was becoming old-fashioned by the early 13th century, as the universities rejected grammar in favour of logic (Curtius 1953, 480-84). The arts curriculum is also suggested by the geometrical language of C 5/1-3.

A collection of similar verses is found in a French manuscript of the early 13th century: Paris, BN, cod. lat. 11412.⁵ There are five poems for the Christmas holiday, four for Easter, and one unspecified; they were written by a student or students of a master Adolphus (no. 101 1/3), whom they describe as a master of the trivium and the quadrivium, in whose bosom philosophy rests (no. 101 st. 3). It seems that the material in these poems was reused and rearranged as needed, for some of the poems share lines or whole stanzas, and one item consists of the first stanza from one poem, the second from another, and a note at the end: "Superius scriptum est" (Blume and Dreves 1904, 92). Many of the themes found in the poems edited below recur in the Paris poems: the mockery of the incredulous Jew at Christmas (no. 104 st. 7/4-6, cf. C 5-8), the weariness of the students (no. 102 st. 5, no. 104 st. 10, etc.; cf. E 2/4-6, 4/4-6), the imagery of things damaged by overuse (no. 107 st. 5-6, cf. E 4/1-3), the students' desire to return home (no. 98 st. 10/5-6, cf. E 8/1-

⁵ See Hauréau 1981, 30-48; the verses are printed in Blume and Dreves 1904, 79-92. I refer to the verses by the numbers given them by Blume and Dreves, although their order bears no relation to the order in the manuscript. Three of the verses (nos. 98, 100, and 105) were printed by Du Méril 1854, 295-302. One of the verses in this manuscript (no. 100) also survived in a poetic anthology of the 14th century: the now-lost Herdringen manuscript. See Bömer 1908, 192-3 for a collation of the text with Blume and Dreves's and Du Méril's (which Bömer apparently did not realise derived from the same manuscript). The Herdringen manuscript was destroyed in 1940 (Rigg 1977, 283).

6), and in particular the lavish praise of the master (no. 98 st. 10/1-3; no. 100 st. 12; no. 101 st. 1, 3; etc.; cf. E 1/1-3, C 2-3). Other elements in the Paris poems are not found in those edited here: the promise to return after the vacation, and the promise to bring gifts (no. 98 st. 11; no. 101 st. 14).⁶

Paul Gerhard Schmidt has suggested that these *Ferienlieder* are descended from the songs of the *festum baculi*, the Feast of Fools, in which the younger clerics satirised their superiors (Schmidt 1974, 82). This view is supported by a *Ferienlied* in a treatise on versification by John of Garland, written c. 1260. Here the students threaten to lampoon the master if he refuses to release them; glosses in one MS suggest that the master will even be beaten (Mauri 1899, 56-58).⁷ The poem goes on to suggest that the master as well as the students should use the vacation for sexual pursuits (ll. 724ff), with some obscene word-play on *baculus* and *clavis*. The students who wrote the poems in *D* and those in BN lat. 11412 did not exercise anything like this degree of *licentia Decembrica*.

The Edition

In this edition, editorial emendations are indicated in the apparatus. Gaps in the text, where the parchment has been torn away or the writing has been marred or a guide-letter has been omitted, are supplied in pointed brackets; some of these are necessarily conjectural. The orthography follows that of the manuscript, including the distinction between "u" and "v"; punctuation and capitalisation are editorial.

The poems are written in the *Stabat mater* stanza: 2 x 8p8p7pp. They are rhymed "aab aab"; all rhymes are two-syllable.

⁶ For more poems by students seeking vacations, see Walther 1959, s.v. *Ferienlied*.

⁷ See ll. 716ff. Note the glosses in MS M to lines 712 and 716.

EASTER VACATION (Russell 150; Walther 14477)

D, fol. 179v.

<...> nis uir preclare, <1>

cuius sensus tamquam mare

redun<dant in> medium:

nichil posco singulare,

set, +additor+, <rogo, quar>e

mestes unus omnium?

Omnes tue potestati <2>

<sumus> ultro subiugati,

non uerentes alium;

sed iam <sumus> fatigati:

non ualemus ultra pati

scolas et ieiunium

<La>borando <i>eiunare, <3>

ieiunando laborare,

duplex est supplicium

<I>sta duo simul stare

malum nobis generare

posset pre<iu>dicium

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Equus diu stimulatus, <4>
arcus diu sinuatus
minus <habe> t uirium;
ita diu fatigatus
torpet sensus hebetatus,
<mar> cescit ingenium

Non est ergo rationis <5>
quod iam dudum non imponis
lectori silentium;
passos iugum Pharaonis
festum resurrectionis
inuitat ad gaudium

Resurgentem nobis quare <6>
negaretur adorare
Christum Dei filium?
Si uis pharaonizare,
transituro Rubrum Mare
patet exterminium

Ut sit tuus grex securus <7>
 corpus Christi suscepturus,
 corpus tam eximium,
 ne quis tangat nisi purus
 petat quisque confessurus
 sacerdotem proprium

Visi fratres et sorores <8>
 parentesque cari ores
 et leta natalium
 sensus reddent forciores,
 quos et ipsum ad labores
 reparabit otium

<Q>uid diffundor in sermones? <9>
 Tot allegant rationes
 pro pace scolarium,
 vt suspendas lectiones
 et ad tempus nobis dones
 quiescendi spacium

Ergo, cleri flos diuine, <10>
 respirare parum sine
 quos uexauit studium,
 ne iam tue discipline
 nobis fiant displicine,

uergentes in tedium. Amen

CHRISTMAS VACATION (Russell 151; Walther 8821) D, fol. 180r.

<I> n aduentu redemptoris <1>
 qui peccatum transgressoris
 morte luit propria,
 dic, magister, quicquid noris:
 non uacabit auditoris
 tibi diligencia

Vt colamus festum pure, <2>
 non est opus ut nos cure
 distrahant scolastice;
 scimus tamen quod <de> iure
 te coronat flos nature,
 logices et hetice

Probat enim res et thesis <3>
 quod in summa summus presis
 tripartite logic<es>;
 <..>i formam dat poesis,
 quatuorque mox mathesis
 superaddit <.> <ic> es

- looks like 'S' before 'i'

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Nosti quidem hec et plura, <4>
nosti facta, nosti iura,
nosti <sac>ram <p>aginam;
<s>ed nos maior trahit cura
parientem mente pura
uenerandi dominam

O Iudee, pectus dirum <5>
quo declinat <s>e in gyrum
linearis ueritas!
<N>egas uerum quia mirum,
negas quod concepit uirum
intacta uirginitas

Sinus parit hunc illesus; <6>
hic est potus, hic est esus
suorum fidelium;
<h>ic est Christus, hic est Ihesus,
lapis sine manu cesus
de terra uiuentium

Hic est lapis angularis <7>
 quem effudit stella maris
 in ualle miserie
 <C> aue, nisi conuertaris,
 ne ab ipso conteraris,
 fili diffidencie!

Lapis a te reprobatur, <8>
 set a deo re probatur
 argumentis operum
 <p> er que nobis declaratur
 quod in ipso renascatur
 spes et uita pauperum

<I> nde tibi, mater Christi, <9>
 consecrantur dies isti,
 que dum patrem filia
 sine culpa concepisti,
 sine pena peperisti
 Datur pax et gloria!

<E> x premissis, o magister, <10>
 cui parem nescit Hyster,
 ego te cum sociis
 rogo supplex semel, bis, ter,
 ne permittas ut contrister

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in tantis sollempniis

Perit quod quiete caret, <11>
nec est uerum, nec apparet
habenti scienciam,
quod rex summus exularet
nisi nos ut reuocaret
exules ad patriam

Sciens quando, sciens quare <12>
sit dignatus exulare
summi rex palatii,
si nos hic uis mancipare
tanti causas irritare
uideris exilii

<E>rgo tua disciplina <13>
ne sit nobis displicina,
qui iam fastidiuimus
<q>uicquid sapit in doctrina
tam mundana quam diuina,
libertatem petimus

NOTES TO TEXT:

EASTER:

1/1 If the master is Henry of Avranches, a possible reading would be "<Andega>uis", since Henry is thought to have taught in Angers (Russell and Heironimus 1935, 101). More likely is "<Ratio>nis" (suggested by an anonymous reader).

1/5 The word *additor* is unattested. Is the author addressing his master as "adder" (of knowledge), perhaps implying that the master teaches arithmetic? Perhaps the word is to be emended to "auditor" (cf. C 1/5): "I, your student, ask why you alone of all the masters should make us sad." Because of the loss of the next two words in the MS, I hesitate to emend the clear reading of the MS to fit a conjectural context.

1/6 *Mestes*: from *maestare*, to make sad (one instance in Lewis and Short).

4/2-3 Cf. Ovid, *Ep. Her.* 4.91-92. This is proverbial; (Whiting 1968, B478).

7/5-6 The obligation to make confession once a year at Easter to one's own priest (*proprius sacerdos*) was canonised in the famous chapter *Omnius utriusque sexus* of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

10/2 *Sine*: imperative of *sinere*.

CHRISTMAS:

2/5 *Nature* i.e. natural philosophy.

2/6 *Hetice* i.e. ethics.

3/1 "Tripartite logic" i.e. the trivium. For the use of the term "logic" to denote the whole trivium, see Weisheipl 1965, 65-6 (Hugh of St. Victor); Balbus 1460, s.v. *logica*.

3/4 Read "<Metri>i"? Or perhaps "<Tibi>i": cf. Michael of Cornwall, ed. Hilka, ll. 112f.: ".. cui metrum cominus uni / Se totum subicit, nulli sine quo subici scit." "To you alone meter is wholly subject; without you it cannot be subject to anyone else"; so here "Poetry submits its form to you."

3/5 *Mathesis*: Thirteenth century grammarians differentiated between *matesis* (with the penultimate syllable long and not aspirated), meaning magic or divination, and *mathesis* (with the penultimate short and aspirated), meaning a mathematical art or the quadrivium. In a grammatical poem attributed to Henry of Avranches, this distinction is summarized: "Ostentat mathesis quod sit fugienda matesis (sic)" (Heironimus and Russell 1929, 19 in corrected pagination, l. 8v/3); cf. Balbus, *Catholicon*, s.v. *Matesis*: "Scire facit mathesis, set divinare matesis" (Hugh of St. Victor, Ed. Buttmer, 1935 II.iii, 25-26). The present poem uses the long-penultimate form to mean the quadrivium.

3/6 Read "<physic>es"? I.e. "Soon mathematics adds the four (arts) of physics". For *physica* = "the quadrivium" see Weisheipl, "Classification", 63-64 (Isidore of Seville); 67.

6/1 *Sinus* = womb (cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.256).

6/6 Cf. Is. 53: 8.

7/1 Cf. Is. 28: 16; 1 Pet. 2: 6-8.

7/6 Cf. Eph. 5: 6.

10/1-2, 4-5 A similar rhyme "magister", "minister", "trister" and "bis ter" is found in Michael of Cornwall, ed. Hilka, ll. 759-62.

12/4 *Mancipare*: cf. Balbus, 1460, s.v.: "Mancipo . . . id est servire uel in seruitutem redigere uel mancipium facere . . ." This is the opposite of the classical meaning of the word, "to transfer ownership"

CRITICAL APPARATUS:

EASTER:

1/1 <...>nis] Russell misread <Pre>sul (Russell and Heironimus 1935, xxii).

1/4 singulare] singululare MS.

1/5 rogo] *scripsi*.

3/5 malum] manum MS.

6/5 Rubrum] rubum MS.

7/1 Ut] Et MS.

7/5 confessurus] confessusurus MS.

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CHRISTMAS:

1/5 auditoris] adiutoris **MS.**

13/3 fastidiuimus] fastiduimus **MS.**

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