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A Parliament of URLs: Medieval Resources on the Web

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And out of olde bokes, in good feith,
Cometh al this newe science that men
lere.

The Parliament of Fowles
Geoffrey Chaucer

I n a November 2007 article in *The New Yorker*, Anthony Grafton, that intrepid chronicler of the footnote in particular and of humanistic scholarship in general, pondered at length the ballyhooed "universal library" being created as massive digitization projects such as *Google Book Search* devour recorded knowledge byte by byte.[1] While giddy with the possibilities that full-text searching and digital facsimiles offer to the researcher, Grafton sounds a cautionary note about the limits of what actually is accessible via the Web and our ability to find it: the "universal library, then, will not be a seamless mass of books, easily linked and studied together, but a patchwork of interfaces and databases, some open to anyone with a computer and WiFi, others closed to those without access or money."[2]

Though Grafton was discussing the Internet at large, he could just as aptly have been describing the far-flung sites, of widely varying quality and utility, now available to students of the Middle Ages, be they novice or expert. We will attempt to assemble the most useful of those Web sites to form a representative "parliament" for teaching and researching Medieval Europe at the college and university level. Our medieval parliament is arranged

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primarily by type of resource, proceeding first through gateways and portals, then indexes and bibliographies; encyclopedias and handbooks; biography and prosopography; dictionaries and lexica; text collections; manuscript catalogs, exhibits, and facsimiles; and finally paleography and manuscript tools. We then focus on sites divided roughly by four broad themes: art, architecture, and iconography; literature; history and chronology; and religion. All Web resources discussed are listed alphabetically at the end of the essay in a single Works Cited list. As with any elected body, no doubt some of the most worthy have been omitted from this parliament; the author invites calls for recounts and recalls at the address given below.

Gateways and Portals

Grafton notes that, with the abundance and variety of resources available electronically to scholars, the "real challenge now is how to chart the tectonic plates of information that are crashing into one another and then to learn to navigate the new landscapes they are creating."[3] Navigational assistance is sorely needed in medieval studies, an area that is not necessarily well served by the simple search box. In many disciplines, Internet search engine algorithms help to bring the most appropriate site quickly to the top of a results list. In contrast, a broad search does not always aid the beginning student of the Middle Ages. Medievalists have noted the increasing popularity of their field in the public imagination: a *Google* search for "Beowulf" or "Lancelot" will yield dozens of movie trailers, graphic novels, student projects, interactive games, and fan sites along with any scholarly efforts.[4] Without expertise in Old Norse or papal politics

or Carolingian thought, searchers must rely on standard markers for "quality" in a Web site: authority, timeliness, attribution, sponsorship, etc.—or on a wise Virgil as guide. Unfortunately, some of the most reliable directory sites have, not unlike poor Mr. Casaubon of *Middlemarch*, fallen victim over time to the very vastness they try to catalog.

The Labyrinth and the ORB may sound like a fun-filled dungeons and dragons-like adventure. But they have remained two of the most linked-to medieval studies sites since their inception in the early 1990s. *The Labyrinth: Resources for Medieval Studies,* housed at Georgetown University, is a directory arranged in 45 broad categories, such as Archaeology, Arthurian Studies, and Cosmology. Links have very short annotations, and most of the sites selected for inclusion are English-language. It was distressing to note, on a recent visit, how few *new* resources were listed. Although broken links were not much in evidence, many of the sites included have posted dire notices about last updates in the previous century. *The ORB: On-line Reference Book for Medieval Studies* was originally created by Lynn Nelson (University of Kansas) and housed at Rhodes College but has moved in recent years to the College of Staten Island. In its heyday, the *ORB* both hosted content created explicitly for the site and linked to external sites in several sections, including the following: the ORB Encyclopedia, which offered secondary works arranged by time period; the ORB Library, a collection of primary source texts, mainly in translation; the ORB Textbook Library, a series of longer works by experts; and the ORB Reference Shelf, arranging links to bibliographies and other tools by topic. The site architecture seems all a-muddle now, with

the same resources listed in multiple places in multiple ways. It is not encouraging to see that the About page for such a large site is marked "under construction" three years after moving to a new address. The overall lack of upkeep is unfortunate, since many of the original texts and translations hosted on the *ORB* could be useful to undergraduates and their teachers.

In contrast to these Haversham-like affairs, *NetSERF* presents an up-to-date, if busy, aspect. Supported to some extent by unobtrusive advertising, *NetSERF* has grown and evolved since 1995 to its current compilation of almost 2,300 links with a glossary of 1,500 terms. Links are arranged in broad categories such as Art, Religion, and Culture, and each resource is annotated with a full description, as well as a reassuring "last checked" date. Andrea R. Harbin (George Mason University), the site's editor, has always taken an inclusive approach that encompasses both popular and academic materials, mostly English-language. This omission of more specialized Latin or other foreign-language offerings makes *NetSERF* less useful for the graduate researcher but a welcoming and accessible portal for the beginning student.

Locating Secondary Literature: Indexes and Bibliographies

Academic libraries spend considerable sums on journal article collections and indexes, hoping that students will make these an early stop on their research journeys. In many cases, students do turn to library databases when *Google* fails to yield the required three or five peer-reviewed articles. How disappointed they must be, then, that the databases many libraries list as the "main" history index, *Historical Abstracts*, yields so few results for topics such as "the children's crusade" or "popes and Avignon." Alas, *Historical Abstracts* begins with "modern" history at 1450 CE, a pesky factoid that many students, and some faculty, may well be unaware of.

Fortunately, several excellent commercial indexes cover history and all other aspects of the medieval period. *Iter: Gateway to the Middle Ages and Renaissance,* a cooperative effort inaugurated by the Renaissance Society of America and the University of Toronto, includes several discrete databases ranging from the highly specialized, such as a registry and iconographic index of baptismal fonts, to the indispensable Iter Bibliography. Based on Sirsi Corporation's library catalog software, the Iter Bibliography contains almost a million records for articles drawn from more than 1,600 journals, book chapters, reference works, reviews, and other publications dating back to 1784.

With its coverage of Renaissance topics, *Iter* encompasses a wider time period than Brepols' *International Medieval Bibliography (IMB)*. But *IMB*'s comprehensive coverage of Europe from 400 to 1500, as well as medieval North Africa and the Middle East, is unsurpassed in the scope of foreign-language sources it indexes. Although *IMB* extends back only to 1967, the database offers precise, specialized subject terms and includes custom search fields such as manuscript source or century. Long a leader in developing CD-ROM products for medievalists, Brepols has recently unveiled Web-based versions of many tools on its BREPOLiS platform. A new companion database to the *IMB*, *Bibliographie de Civilisation Médiévale,* based on the bibliography periodically published in the journal *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale,* offers indexing of more than 40,000 books published from 1958 to 2003. The *Bibliographie* is fully integrated with the *IMB*, allowing simultaneous searching of both databases.

In comparing a sample search for "anchorites" in the *Iter* and *IMB* databases, their different character was immediately apparent. *IMB* offered twice the number of hits in a wider variety of works; many citations were to foreign-language publications. *Iter* returned all English-language references, including several to articles in important reference works such as Scribner's *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (1982-89). Both *Iter* and *IMB* have recently added a new

OpenURL function that allows subscribing libraries to set up custom links to full-text articles from the citations in each database. Libraries supporting extensive medieval programs—and with available funds for subscriptions—should make room for both on their digital reference shelves.

However, one need not empty out pockets for every medieval index. One of the most important free sites is Margaret Schaus's *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index* (formerly Medieval Feminist Index). Since 1996, this index has gathered more than 17,000 journal articles, book collections, and book reviews on all aspects of gender in the Middle Ages, embracing topics such as sexuality and the family as well as women. Records for each citation are very full, including geographical area covered, primary source documents studied, tables or illustrations included, and the institutional affiliation of the author. Some entries also include publisher-supplied abstracts. Recently, more than 300 records were added for dissertations published between 1992 and 2002.

Covering all periods of British history, the *Royal Historical Society Bibliography* provides free access to more than 433,000 citations from nearly 600 journals, as well as books. Though not precisely an index or a bibliography, *The Medieval Review*, formerly Bryn Mawr Medieval Review, offers in-depth scholarly reviews of more than 2,300 books published since 1993. Designed as an e-mail distribution list, the *Review*'s archive allows one to search the full text of past reviews to locate titles that might deal with specific themes or topics.

Encyclopedias and Handbooks

Perhaps the most accessible academic reference work for American students, Scribner's *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (1982-89), has not yet been placed online by Gale Cengage Learning. Until that work has been digitized, libraries should consider Oxford University Press's *Western Civilization*

Collection add-on for the *Oxford Reference Online* platform, which includes the three-volume *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (1991) and two-volume *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* (2000; an English-language version of *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du Moyen Age*, 1997).

Brepols delivers a fully searchable *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, an important reference work that offers more than 36,000 signed articles from nearly 3,000 scholars, on its BREPOLiS platform. The publisher has added many features to aid researchers who are less than confident in their German, including headwords in English and a nice function that allows users to highlight a word in an entry to see its English equivalent. The growing *International Encyclopaedia for the Middle Ages* offers new peer-reviewed articles and revised bibliographies to supplement the *Lexikon*. Libraries can subscribe to both encyclopedias individually or together as a package. Both are well integrated with other Brepols resources by quick links that allow users to search terms in the *International Medieval Bibliography*.

Kevin Knight's New Advent site hosts the 1913 edition of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Though long superseded by two newer editions, this work is still valuable for scholarly treatment of historical themes and biographical sketches, in addition to essays on specific saints and church figures, religious establishments, and Christian theology. While it is adequate for facts and dates, students should be cautioned about relying on a work where the biases of an earlier time inform the essay, as in the entries on Judaism and Islam.

Biography and Prosopography

General encyclopedias offer biographical profiles of the noteworthy and notorious, but it has always been more difficult to find the stories of the masses. Prosopography, the study of collective biography, has benefited greatly from the growth in computing power and in database tools,

and a few projects on the Web now allow one to sift through mounds of source material for nuggets of personal information on family, patronage, and business relationships. King's College, London, offers free access to two astonishing examples of the depth of detail that can be wrung from documentary sources. *PASE: Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* and *PBW: Prosopography of the Byzantine World* draw on thousands of source documents to produce records for more than 11,500 and 10,000 individuals, respectively. *PASE* aims to "cover all the recorded inhabitants of England from that late sixth to the end of the eleventh century" and incorporates data from more than 2,000 source texts. The first segment, released in 2005, covers 597–1042, while a second release, currently in progress, will bring coverage forward to the end of the twelfth century. *PBW*, successor to an earlier CD-ROM effort (Ashgate, 2001), currently covers the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with more than 60,000 "factoids" drawn from seals, monastic archives, and other historical documents. In both resources, one can search for persons using criteria such as sex, status, geographic location, offices held, occupation, possessions, and education. Each record is linked to the source texts, giving bibliographic details about the manuscript and published editions. Being able to find, for instance, six named swineherds from Anglo-Saxon England, and to see details regarding manumission for one, land grants to two others, and the beatific vision of a third leaves the reader a little dizzy. These databases bring the minutiae of the past right onto one's laptop; they should prove fertile fields for future scholars to till.

For finding *current* scholars, Brepols offers the International Medieval Institute's *International Directory of Medievalists Online*, a compilation of more than 15,000 specialists from seventy different countries. Users can search the database by field of study, as well as name or institution.

Dictionaries and Lexica

Brepols provides a growing suite of lexicographical aids in the *Database of Latin Dictionaries*. This resource is designed to complement and interact with other Brepols resources such as the *CLCLT* (described below) and incorporates some of the most important dictionaries for medieval and patristic Latin, including du Cange's great *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatus* (1883-87). Researchers can search by any part of the headword, and view images of the digitized page from the source dictionary. The thrifty should note that du Cange's *Glossarium* is freely available in PDF format from Stanford's *Medieval and Modern Thought Text Digitization Project*, an eclectic collection of public-domain reference and historical works, treatises on California botany, and linguistic studies.

Some other noteworthy free projects that digitize or update older dictionaries include the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, an ongoing update for the edition published between 1977 and 1996; the University of Ulster's *eDIL: Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language*, which presents the Royal Irish Academy's *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (1913-76); and the Northvegr Foundation's version of *Zoëga's Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (1910), among other lexica and grammars. Single-language grammars and handbooks are to be found in abundance; a noteworthy example is Peter S. Baker's *Electronic Introduction to Old English*, which features chapters on pronunciation, grammar, and paleography.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is invaluable for any college campus and the *OED Online* is worth every penny of its subscription price. Two complementary projects for Middle and Old English offer at least some access for free. Both represent the strange transformation of dictionaries that occurs when computing is married to lexicography. Like the OED, both the *Middle English Dictionary* (1952-2001) and the *Dictionary of Old English* (1986-in progress) are based on evidence

from collections of historic texts. Unlike the OED, both these projects have placed portions of their digitized source texts online so that researchers can search through them for words and phrases.

> **Faculty might worry that access to pretty, but decontextualized, images makes historical artifacts the equivalent of an iTunes download.**

The *Middle English Compendium*, hosted at the University of Michigan, presents not only the *Middle English Dictionary* itself, but also a bibliography of sources and the beginnings of a fully searchable collection of source texts, the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse. Corpus features almost 150 fully searchable works, including those by Chaucer, Langland, Malory, and Wycliffe, along with shorter anonymous works. The *Dictionary*, based on an analysis of more than three million selections on slips and offering almost 55,000 entries, is an impressive scholarly monument.

The *Dictionary of Old English* is gradually being published on microfiche and, more recently, on a cumulative CD-ROM for A-F. But the source texts are available to subscribers of the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* project. The goal of the project is to capture at least one copy of every surviving text from Old English, including prose and poetry, inscriptions, saint's lives, sermons, laws, charters, wills, and land grants. The editors estimate that the project currently consists of more than four million words of Old English and another million of Latin. Researchers can search for fragments or whole words or make use of a new "word wheel" tool to view a browsable index of words in the database.

The *ARTFL Project* at the University of Chicago was one of the first to deliver sophisticated lexicographical tools and large text corpora via the Web. Though originally *ARTFL*'s emphasis was on lin-

guistic analysis of the French language with its proprietary PhiloLogic software, the project has expanded over the years to include Italian and other languages. Some resources hosted at *ARTFL* are freely available, and some may be accessed by subscribers only. For the French language, medievalists will be most interested in *ARTFL*'s collection of historical dictionaries and in the Textes de Français Ancien (TFA) database of twelfth-to-fifteenth-century texts, including works by Chrétien de Troyes and Guillaume d'Orange. For Italian, the Opera del Vocabolario Italiano (OVI) database (freely available to registered users even without an *ARTFL* subscription) offers a searchable corpus of 1,875 texts used in the creation of the *TLIO: Tesoro della Lingua Italiana della Origini* dictionary, which, when complete in 2021 (the 700th anniversary of Dante's death) will provide a historical dictionary of the Italian language up to the time of Boccaccio.

Text Collections

The thousands of Latin, Old French, and Italian texts that have been placed online may seem an incredible bounty for scholars. But, for most students, only English translations will serve. Paul Halsall's *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, developed as a part of the *ORB*, provides access to locally hosted documents in English as well as external links to other projects. In recent years, Halsall has stripped a number of the external links due to the difficulty of maintaining them. The *Medieval Sourcebook*, one of several interconnected sourcebook sites that Halsall (formerly of the University of North Florida) has created, is in three main sections. Selected Sources presents a chronological and geographical arrangement of numerous selections from primary source materials; Full Text Sources offers complete works in translation; Saints' Lives covers ancient, medieval, and Byzantine hagiographical sources. Additional links to Law Texts and to Maps appear in the navigation panel. The *Sourcebook*-hosted texts are in plain HTML; most of them are drawn from public domain editions

or translations and include bibliographic details as well as recommended readings for additional information. A companion site, *Byzantium: Byzantine Studies on the Internet*, provides texts as well as teaching materials and image galleries. It is hard to overstate the size and scope of the collections in the *Sourcebook*. In comparison, the *Online Medieval and Classical Library* offers only about thirty medieval works in translation, though the emphasis there is more literary than historical, with works such as the *Song of Roland*, *Njal's Saga*, and *Orlando Furioso*.

In contrast to sites that provide simple English translations, text centers like that at the University of Virginia or Oxford provide handy gateways to scholarly electronic editions. The *University of Virginia Electronic Text Center* provides access to many texts digitized locally, as well as links to commercial sites that can be accessed only by members of the UVa community. Though the strength of the Center collections lies primarily in American literature and history, visitors to this site will find a large collection of works in Middle English, including the York cycle of plays, *Pearl*, *Everyman*, and selections from Chaucer. James J. O'Donnell's edition of Boethius in both Latin and English with extensive notes is also available here, as is a pilot project of texts in Middle High German. At the time of this writing, the Center was in the process of migrating to a new University Libraries Digital Collections site, though most materials can still be found on the link provided below.

The name *Oxford Text Archive (OTA)* can confuse first-time visitors, as it seems to imply a large collection on-site. Founded more than thirty years ago, the *OTA* serves as a clearinghouse for text encoding and digitization initiatives in the humanities. By searching the *OTA* catalog, one can determine if someone has already created a digital edition of, for example, Froissart's *Chronicles* or Lamprecht's *Das Alexanderlied* (yes, in both instances). Some texts can be immediately downloaded; in other cases, one is directed to the text creator for access.

From a directory of current digitization projects to a register of "borrowed" texts from ten centuries ago, The *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* project is sui generis and difficult to categorize. An important cooperative effort that has the potential to shed new light on the intellectual currents of medieval England, the project's aim is to identify all written sources—both English and Latin—that were incorporated into, quoted, translated, or paraphrased in Anglo-Saxon documents up to the time of the Conquest. Currently, the project database includes 28,000 records analyzing almost 1,150 texts, approximately half in English and half in Latin. Visitors can search or browse by Anglo-Saxon or "source" author so that one can, for example, find surviving texts that quote Virgil. It gives one pause to retrieve so effortlessly in a fraction of a second information that scholars have previously spent lifetimes poring over library catalogs, manuscripts, and scholarly monographs to obtain.

Manuscript Catalogs, Exhibits, and Facsimiles

Technology has changed so very much about the way scholars locate material. And yet, even though we now can search across 60 million library records in seconds via OCLC *WorldCat*, it is sometimes most helpful to have a pithy summary of the holdings, arrangement, and finding aids of a particular library, rather than thousands of separate records describing individual titles or volumes. Paul Oskar Kristeller's *Latin Manuscript Books before 1600* describes libraries in Europe and the United States, listing published and unpublished bibliographies, catalogs, and finding aids available for their manuscript collections. Sigrid Krämer has added resources and updated the material for a fifth edition, 2003, now available online. At the same time, large national research libraries are working as fast as they can to convert those shelves of separate, discrete, buckram-bound tomes and microfilm reels into online union catalogs that can be searched at one go. Such a merged result is the *British Library Manuscripts Catalogue*.

Technology has also been used to create union catalogs of manuscripts from a single region or area. The long-lived *PhiloBiblon* project at the University of California, Berkeley, consists of three separate bibliographies of all known texts and manuscripts in early Spanish, Portuguese, and Catalan, combining manuscript descriptions with information on modern published editions. Closer to home, the online catalog of the *Knights of Columbus Vatican Film Library* at Saint Louis University allows one to identify holdings at the largest collection of Vatican manuscripts on microfilm outside Rome (handy, too, since the Vatican Library itself will be closed until September 2010).

As organizations such as the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries and the European MASTER project developed new standards for manuscript cataloging in a digital age, it became apparent that, rather than merely *describing* the manuscript artifact, one could *display* a digital facsimile to give the user a more complete idea of the object itself. These "second generation" catalogs usually display only selected images from a subset of works, though their hosts often plan to digitize at least one representative image from every manuscript in the collection, as is the stated goal of the *British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*. The Pierpont Morgan Library's *CORSAIR* at first appears like a generic library catalog until one finds links not only to several thousand images but also to venerable reference binders of additional information compiled by Morgan archivists over several decades. Perhaps the most ambitious of these hybrid databases is the *Digital Scriptorium*, a union catalog begun a decade ago at UC Berkeley and now housed at Columbia University. Currently, the database contains more than 24,300 images from 5,300 medieval and Renaissance manuscripts housed at Berkeley, Columbia, New York Public Library, the Huntington, University of Texas, Notre Dame, and several dozen other institutions. The *Scriptorium's* designers have obviously taken great care to create an easy-to-use and engaging interface, even including step-by-step instructions for incorporating the images into PowerPoint slide shows.

Other libraries and museums have taken the route of mounting a separate online exhibit of manuscript "highspots," rather than illustrating the bibliographic catalog. One of the earliest of these was the Bibliothèque Nationale's *The Age of King Charles V* (1338-80), which offered more than a thousand images arranged in themes such as Wars, Hunting, or Liturgy. The *Hill Museum and Manuscript Library* of Saint John's Abbey and University, founded in 1965 with the mission of preserving early manuscripts, offers, in addition to their more traditional catalog, an online exhibit of almost a thousand manuscript images. New York Public Library features an online gallery of more than 2,100 medieval and Renaissance manuscript leaves in the *NYPL Digital Gallery*. The *Cambridge Illuminations*, a selection of manuscripts from a 2005 show at the Fitzwilliam Museum, offers an animated tutorial on the steps to creating an illuminated manuscript on vellum.

Tempting as it is to linger among lotus leaves such as these, exhibits often entertain without enlightening. Faculty might worry that access to pretty, but decontextualized, images makes historical artifacts the equivalent of an iTunes download: as the leaf is pulled from the codex, so the song is pulled from that quaint olde "album." Dianne Tillotson wrote of students' fragmented experience of resources on the Web, "There is no lengthy engagement, no logical thread, no development of argument."[5] As Martha Driver noted in an essay on digitized manuscripts, "The problem for the more advanced scholar is that these are mainly selected pages to tantalize the viewer rather than entire texts to be studied."[6]

Some Web-based projects have attempted to represent an *entire* manuscript or codex digitally. *Early Manuscripts at Oxford University* was built from 1995 to 2000 in a project to digitize almost eighty complete works from Balliol, Bodleian,

Corpus Christi, Jesus, Magdalene, Merton, and St. John's colleges. Though the site is somewhat plain by today's flashy standards, each work has a brief description, and the images can be enlarged and paged through in sequence. *CESG: Codices Electronici Sangallenses* offers 144 complete codices from the Abbey of St. Gallen, a UN World Heritage site in Switzerland. Here, one can page through the entire work, zoom in and out, and even view the bindings in great detail. The *Roman de la Rose* project is a collaborative effort housed at Johns Hopkins that allows one to compare six different manuscripts of the poem (since more than 300 survive, the site is a prototype with big ambitions). But the site moves beyond exquisite facsimiles in that it also provides searchable transcriptions of three of the manuscripts, so that one can compare texts, in addition to artifacts.

An exciting new project from Adam Matthew Digital is *Medieval Travel Writing*, which offers digital facsimiles of travel narratives dating from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries. The collection emphasizes travels to the East and includes manuscripts and early printed works from Prester John, Sir John Mandeville, Marco Polo, and others, drawn from a score of research libraries, including Yale, the British Library, the Bodleian, and Lambeth Palace. The interface is beautifully designed, allowing users to page through the manuscript images and to save images as PDFs. One can browse documents by shelfmark, author, or owning library; a number of auxiliary tools, such as a chronology, bibliography, slideshow tool, and introductory essays, make for an inviting environment for exploration and discovery.

The grail does seem to be a complete integration of manuscript images and transcriptions, scholarly notes, bibliography, and criticism into one scholarly electronic edition. Because of the very large image files required, and the resulting need for large computer memory, the first of these tended to be released on CD-ROM rather than as Web

publications. Peter Robinson's *Canterbury Tales Project*, the *Electronic Beowulf*, and the *Piers Plowman Electronic Archive* all have minimal Web presences that offer only glimpses of the glories of their CD-ROM contents. Perhaps the best-known of such ambitious projects to make a successful leap to the Web is the British National Archive's *Domesday Book*, which incorporates searchable text with images from the Editions Alecto CD-ROMs (2002). Less accessible to casual browsers is the *Charrette Project*, housed at both Princeton and Baylor, an archive of Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, which allows one to compare the passages in nine different manuscript versions.

Paleography and Manuscript Tools

Images of documents are of little value to students who cannot decipher them. *Medieval Writing* offers a basic introduction to hands and types of documents, with some exercises. More helpful to the advanced student is Olaf Pluta's *Abbreviationes Online*, a database of more than 70,000 abbreviations used in Medieval Latin, with examples in various letter hands and citations to examples. Students can look up all the abbreviation variants for a particular word, or find a full word from the abbreviation in hand. Brepols' *In Principio: Incipit Index of Latin Texts* aids researchers in identifying works from their opening words, the incipit, with more than a million examples drawn from manuscript collections worldwide. Since manuscripts often lack the modern conveniences of a title page or table of contents, incipits are helpful in identifying the author or text at hand. For locating scholarship about various manuscripts, the *Bulletin Codicologique*, published in the journal *Scriptorium* from the Centre d'Étude des Manuscrits in Brussels, now offers free online access to its cumulative index back to 1946.

Themes

ART, ARCHITECTURE & ICONOGRAPHY

Until relatively recently, researchers who wished to consult the *Index of Christian Art* (*ICA*), a meticulous compilation of themes and topics in artworks up to approximately 1500, had to travel to the Index's home at Princeton University, or to one of the four paper copies in Los Angeles, Washington, Utrecht, and Rome. Now, more than 37,000 *ICA* records, approximately 30 percent of the paper indexes created since the project's inception in 1917, are available through a Web-based subscription service. Covering thematic and iconographic elements in more than 57,000 manuscripts, metalwork, sculpture, glass, painting, and other works, *ICA* allows users to search or browse by manuscript, artist, school, style, and date, as well as by work subjects. A real delight is the ability to navigate quickly from an item record to a digital image (though some 30 percent of these images are suppressed from Web display due to copyright restrictions).

Although the *ICA* is unmatched in its depth and scope, several free Web sites also offer iconographical indexes to illustrations found in early manuscripts or art. Named for the mysteriously humanoid mandrake plant, the *Mandragore* database catalogs more than 120,000 works from the Western and Asian manuscript collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale, allowing users to browse through a thematic hierarchy composed of topics such as botany, geography, and parapsychology and occultism. Approximately 30,000 images are viewable online. *Manuscripta Mediaevalia*, a union catalog of materials in collections from Heidelberg, Munich, Berlin, and other European locales, includes an iconographic database of 2,500 images that allows one to navigate through a subject hierarchy of themes such as nature or classical mythology. Since 1996, Alison Stones (University of Pittsburgh) has led the *Lancelot-Graal Project*, an effort to analyze and compare the representation of specific episodes in the Grail cycle across various illuminated manuscripts. During 2007, three com-

parative pages were posted for episodes regarding the sea, Merlin, and the false Guinevere.

Professor Stones has also been a guiding force in several projects that treat religious architecture and ornament. Online studies of *Chartres* and *Vézalay* provide almost 4,000 and 92 images, respectively. *Chartres: Cathedral of Notre-Dame* is an especially robust example of a site devoted to one building, with elevations, maps, diagrams, and illustrations of ornamental details, in addition to photographs. The early multimedia effort *Amiens Cathedral Web Site*, at Columbia University has not stood the test of time quite as well; while some of the images and computer renderings are quite beautiful, they are slow to load and include broken links and very little in the way of background or documentation.

Like *Amiens*, most architecture sites have been developed as a teaching tool or have been placed online by the monuments themselves, as with the site for *Westminster Abbey*. There are also numerous popular and scholarly sites dedicated to specific styles and forms, such as Painton Cowen's *The Rose Window* or *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*, a site devoted to British stained glass. What is needed is an online Baedeker to gather all these disparate resources together in a systematic way. As one writer has complained, "There are plenty of images out there of medieval buildings, sculptures, paintings, or manuscripts, but there is currently very little coherence in their presentation. They offer a scattered resource, and of highly variable quality."[7]

For subscribing institutions, *ARTstor* may offer the department store-like comprehensiveness to answer this boutique fatigue. A growing collection covering all time periods and types of art, with more than 550,000 images drawn from a hundred collections, *ARTstor* provides systematic indexing with fields such as creator, date, place, title, and keyword. Medievalists will be most interested in 25,000 manuscript and early book images from the Bodleian, images of Gothic and Ro-

manesque architecture from the National Gallery of Art, and works from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Cloisters collection. H. W. Wilson's *Art Museum Image Gallery*, with more than 155,000 images, currently has a numbers edge over *ARTstor*. Although the subject indexing is not always ideal for thematic analysis (e.g., to search for ivories of the Virgin Mary, one must search specific episodes, such as "annunciation," "Bethlehem," or "nativity"), this resource has the handy feature of allowing simultaneous searching in index databases for art publications.

LITERATURE

Anniina Jokinen does not have an advanced degree, nor is she a college teacher. But, chances are, her literature site draws more students than have ever hung on the honeyed words of readers of this journal. *Luminarium* is a visually beautiful anthology of English literature supplemented by lush illustrations, music, biographies drawn from public-domain reference works such as the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and links to freely available works of criticism. The Medieval section treats, among others, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, Malory, the Paston letters, *Everyman*, and selected plays and lyrics. Jokinen has recently added the Luminarium Encyclopedia, a collection of essays redacted from standard reference works, on topics including medieval cosmology and Margaret of Anjou. This site is so well maintained and organized that it is understandable that Jokinen uses unobtrusive advertising to help support the effort; in many ways, *Luminarium* is more thorough than similarly themed commercial products.

On a more academic note, there are several remarkable sites, in addition to those projects mentioned above, that present newly created scholarly editions of literary works, as well as digitized versions of out-of-copyright texts. University of Toronto's *Representative Poetry Online* (*RPO*) offers poetry from all periods that can be browsed from an interactive time

line, by first or last line, and by author or title, together with a keyword search and concordance for all texts. *RPO*'s edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* offers the transcribed text, interlinear modern translation, and clickable notes to glosses and alternate line readings. Other poems on the site include those of Caedmon, Bede, Chaucer, Gower, and Langland, as well as *Beowulf*.

Volunteer scholars associated with the Consortium for the Teaching of the Middle Ages (TEAMS) have created a valuable collection, *TEAMS Middle English Texts*, many of which are not generally included in student anthologies. Though freely available on this site, most are also published in a print series from the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University. Texts, which include the ballads and poems on the Arthurian and Robin Hood legends and nonliterary works such as the *Ancrene Wisse*, are each complemented with a thorough introduction, notes, and apparatus.

Institutions with subscriptions to selected components of *Literature Online* from ProQuest's Chadwyck-Healey imprint can offer students an abundance of medieval English poetry and drama. Though in latter years ProQuest has augmented and emphasized the reference and critical tools in this product, one of its greatest strengths from its inception has been the core of more than 350,000 works of literature in fully searchable text. The second edition of the English Poetry collection aims to include all works from 1100 through 1900, drawing on works listed in the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (*NCBEL*; 1969–72). English Prose Drama and English Verse Drama also draw on the *NCBEL* and offer works dating from 975 to 1700. Since most resources in *Literature Online* have persistent links, faculty can easily construct a reader of recommended texts by adding hypertext links to their course management software or Web page.

For most "Great Books" of the medieval period, faculty will not need to create

a custom set of links. Chaucer, Boccaccio, and *Beowulf* are all honored by lovingly tended sites that are informative and authoritative while at the same time engaging and even entertaining. Dante is perhaps the best served of these luminaries, thanks to two separate projects directed by Robert Hollander (Princeton). The *Princeton Dante Project* (*PDP*) concentrates on the text of the *Divine Comedy*, together with translations and linguistic aids, as well as Dante's other works. The *Dartmouth Dante Project* (*DDP*), older by a decade, is devoted to more than seventy commentaries on the *Commedia*, published from the fourteenth century through 2007. The *PDP* offers a clever navigation tool that allows users to move easily between the Italian and English translation, a sound file of the poem being read, biographies and definitions from Paget Toynbee's *Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante* (1914), and notes for the same line of text. Contextual links are also provided to the *DDP* for commentaries on specific cantos or sections.

The *Decameron Web, Beowulf in Hypertext*, and the *Geoffrey Chaucer* page, all designed for undergraduate study, offer similar features such as searchable texts and translations, commentaries and glosses, character and plot summaries, background essays, illustrations and maps, and links to supplemental bibliographies. For the specialist, the *Chaucer Bibliography Online* indexes articles and books published 1975 to the present.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

Who knew that history could be a hit? When Lars Brownworth (Stony Brook School, Long Island) posted his *12 Byzantine Rulers* lectures on iTunes, they quickly became one of the most popular podcast downloads, leading to a wry profile in the *New York Times*.[8] Brownworth, who is pursuing a master's degree in medieval history, covers 1,200 years, from Diocletian to Constantine XI Palaeologus.

Brownworth's warm and genuine style ("I will probably butcher the pronunciation of any Greek names") contrasts nicely with the potentates and pageantry under discussion.

Both Greenwood Publishing and Facts On File have tried their hand at accessible history as well, with databases targeted to beginning undergraduates or high school students. Greenwood's *Daily Life through History* is based on content drawn from the award-winning *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life* (2004) with the addition of more specialized titles such as *Daily Life in Chaucer's England* (1995), *Daily Life in Medieval Europe* (1999), and *Daily Life in the Medieval Islamic World* (2005). Facts On File's *Ancient and Medieval History Online* offers approximately fifty essays in the Medieval Europe Learning Center section, where much of the content is drawn from the publisher's *Encyclopedia of the Medieval World* (2005); there are also segments for Africa and Asia in the medieval period. Both databases feature reference essays on people, events, places, and themes, supplemented by primary sources in translation, short bibliographies of recommended sources, time lines, maps, and illustrations. When compared side by side, the Greenwood title, with its emphasis on folklore and "people's history," appears slightly more sophisticated. Some of the same information can be gleaned from freely available sites on specific topics, if one has the time to harvest from such a wide array as *Medieval English Towns* or the *Medieval Technology Pages*.

Primary source documents abound, and the Western European Studies Section (WESS) of ACRL provides the gateway *EuroDocs* to help find them. Now migrated to a wiki environment, *EuroDocs* lists almost a hundred individual resources, many of which are not covered in this review, in its Medieval and Renaissance Europe section. English translations of source material on law and politics can be found at the *Avalon Project at Yale Law School*, and *De Re Militari*, the Society for Medieval Military History, hosts approximately a hundred texts on warfare and battles.

For those with Latin skills and a research interest in twelfth- and thirteenth-century England, the *DEEDs Project* (Documents of Early England Data Set), housed at the University of Toronto, is revelatory. Founded in 1975 by Michael Gervers, *DEEDS* is a database of more than 9,500 dated property documents from approximately 150 cartularies, or charter houses. Each document has been marked up for fields such as personal name, type of transaction, standard diplomatic forms, and other aspects. This very large data set is designed to aid researchers in dating undated charters, a particular problem with British sources. A unique tool on the *DEEDS* site allows researchers to paste or type in text from an undated charter for comparison to those in the database in order to try to establish a probable date for it.

For wider time periods and types of documents, the British National Archives, Public Record Office, makes an increasing number of primary source materials, such as wills, petitions, and charters, available online through its *Documents Online* site. While some documents can be freely viewed online, most cost £3.50 to download. *British History Online*, a joint endeavor of the Institute of Historical Research and the History of Parliament Trust, makes available many primary documents originally published in nineteenth-century source collections. Though some sources, such as later parliamentary papers, are available to subscribers only, medievalists will especially appreciate the free access to the Victoria County History series (1899-), which is very rich in details concerning religious establishments, archaeology, and other local topics, and the *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066-1300* (1962-).

Tanner Ritchie Publishing, known for its print source collections on Britain and Ireland, has recently launched a subscription service, *Medieval and Early Modern Sources Online* (*MEMSO*). The current *MEMSO* release offers approximately 500 titles, including the *Calendar of State Papers* for the Tudor period. An intriguing new feature now available for only a few

titles is the ability to open the published, edited text alongside a digital scan of the original manuscript; one can also search inside the full text of any publication. Many of the resources in *MEMSO* are a bit too late for medieval studies, but it does include the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* from the reigns of Henry III through Henry VI (1216-1452). Though the *Calendar of Patent Rolls* is available for free at a site hosted by the University of Iowa Libraries, there one must open each page as a separate PDF file.

The essential *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (*MGH*), which since 1826 has collected charters, legal treatises, letters, commentaries, works of literature, and other documents from central European history, is a massive set of dense Latin texts arranged in series and subseries. In 2004, the *MGH* project itself launched *dMGH*, a pilot digital version that aims to place most older volumes online by 2010. The texts are scanned images that can be paged through, but the ability to resize the pages is somewhat limited and navigation can be awkward, unless one needs only to quickly consult a few pages from a known citation. In contrast, the Brepols version of the complete *Monumenta*, which has migrated from CD-ROM to the BREPOLiS platform, offers a number of searching options and allows easy multivolume browsing, printing, and convenient linking to its Latin dictionaries database.

Brepols may help with the vocabulary, but does anyone really know what time it is? For sorting out different dating schemes, one can consult Peter Binkley's *Medieval Calendar Calculator*, based on *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History* (1945), for dates of Sundays or weekdays, as well as major fixed and movable feast days for years between 500 and 1582. *Ian's English Calendar* calculates regnal years, as well.

The Institute de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (IRHT) offers several databases related to the history of manuscripts and books. Denis Muzerelle has created two particularly useful ones, available at the IRHT's *Ædelis* site: Millesimo is an interactive chronology covering the years 395–962, complete with animated year-by-year maps. Calendoscope is a synchronized schedule of liturgical calendars drawn from several hundred different sources.

RELIGION

In the early 1990s, Chadwyck-Healey (now a part of ProQuest) and Brepols each launched a CD-ROM collection of works by church fathers. Each was an essential corpus for serious students of the history of Christianity (or, indeed, for the medieval period, *any* history), but there the resemblance ended. Chadwyck-Healey chose to digitize J. P. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* (1844-55, 1862-65), which includes writings from Tertullian through Pope Innocent III, 200-1216. The CD-ROM *Patrologia* was not cheap and became even more dear when reformatted as a Web-based database. But what is a fair price for a thousand years of texts? Using the *Patrologia*, one can easily navigate to a specific volume or work and search across volumes of the full text for Latin or Greek terms. Users who also subscribe to *Acta Sanctorum* can check definitions seamlessly, using Brill's edition of Niermeyer's *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*.

Dubbed "God's Plagiarist" by his biographer, Migne was at times less than scrupulous in his choice and production of texts. Modern scholarly editions of the same authors are slowly being produced in series such as the *Corpus Christianorum* and *Sources Chrétiennes*. It is these modern editions that Brepols chose to offer in its *Library of Latin Texts (CLCLT)*, originally called the Cetedoc Library of Christian Latin Texts. In 2002, Brepols expanded the scope of the database to include classical works in Latin as well as modern Neo-Latin, so that the database now ranges from antiquity to 1962. Even though the Web version, at 53 million words, is the largest compilation of Latin texts available, searches run very quickly; the English search interface is much easier to use that the original CD-ROM com-

mands (in Latin). Brepols has added many other features over the years that demonstrate its commitment to scholarly quality, such as background notes on each text, full integration with its Latin Dictionaries database, and tools to aid in working with extremely large search results, such as charts of search term occurrences by time period. While the content of the *Patrologia* is complete and fixed, *CLCLT* is updated twice a year with new texts.

Institutions that have purchased the *Patrologia* will want to consider acquiring the companion database, *Acta Sanctorum*, the Société des Bollandistes' exhaustive day-by-day collection of saints' lives and associated scholarship that was compiled over a three-hundred-year span. The *BHLms: Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Manuscripta*, which indexes Bollandist manuscript studies and editions published in *Analecta Bollandia* or related series, is available online from the Université Catholique de Louvain.

Brepols offers several additional research databases for religious studies on the same platform as *CLCLT*. The *Archive of Celtic-Latin Literature (ACLL)*, new in 2007, offers 400 Latin works from Breton, British, Irish, and Scottish authors, including Columbanus and St. Patrick, as well as compilations of saints' lives. *Ut per litteras apostolicas (Papal Letters)* is a growing collection of actual letters and critical analysis. The current release covers materials from Clement V to Gregory XI (1305–1378) and offers a fascinating glimpse into matters sacred and secular. *Europa Sacra* is an intriguing project to digitize information on the clergy and on religious institutions from 1100 to 1500. It currently offers basic information on more than 13,000 prelates and 1,300 bishoprics, archdioceses, and patriarchates. These church records are revealing, as they include not only geographical location and foundation and dissolution dates, but also patronage and institutional wealth.

An important recent free release from Columbia University is *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, a scholarly edition of compiled church

law. For the Eastern Church, Dumbarton Oaks offers a Byzantine *Hagiography Database* of approximately a hundred saints' lives in Greek; users can browse by subject terms such as weather, sexuality, or agriculture. In addition to the *Patrologia Latina*, Migne published 160 volumes on the Greek Fathers; this *Patrologiæ Græcæ (PG)* is available in a digital edition that is not a searchable database but browsable PDFs of the original volumes.

For those with little Latin and less Greek, there are a number of freely available English editions of the Church Fathers online. Calvin College's *Christian Classics Ethereal Library (CCEL)* is by far the most extensive and well-organized collection, complete with Philip Schaff's editions of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers and the still useful *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Most texts are available in multiple formats for onscreen consultation or PDF printouts.

It is sad to note that one former Web stalwart, the *ECOLE Initiative*, a collection of essays and reference materials about the early church, was "frozen" in 2007 and will no longer be maintained. Fortunately, other long-lived projects continue from strength to strength. The peripatetic *Monastic Matrix* began as a computer file at Mount Holyoke College in the 1970s and has since migrated to the Web while changing home bases from Yale to St. Johns to the University of Southern California. A collaborative scholarly effort, *Monastic Matrix* documents women's religious communities in medieval Europe. It

is arranged in several sections, the largest being the Monasticon, a database of about 3,200 establishments that can be explored by place; name; saint, person, or idea to which they were dedicated; or by time period. Records for each community, listing published primary sources, describe its foundation details, notable heads, religious order, and assets. Other sections of the site include source documents in English translation, approximately 1,700 secondary sources, 650 biographical profiles, 600 images, a glossary, and a comprehensive bibliography. The site shines with the generosity of time and intellect that has gone into its creation and confirms one's faith in the promise of the Web for collaborative research, teaching, and learning.

URLs Longa, Paper Brevis

The Web is wide, and we could continue our peregrinations to find additional sources for medieval maps, music, philosophy, numismatics ... but we are already in danger of being lost in a very large and dark wood (or falling off the edge of a flat World Wide Web). Grafton concludes that the "Universal Library" is a phantasm, that online resources will "illuminate" printed records, but not "eliminate" them.[9] Still ... even now I can find in *Google Book Search* important reference works from the last century, such as August Potthast's *Bibliotheca Historica Medii Aevi* (1895-96), the British Museum's *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts* (1900), even scattered volumes of *Patrologiæ Græcæ*. There may be a quorum in this parliament yet.

Endnotes

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Ruhr-Universitat, Bochum
http://www.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/philosophy/
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Acta Sanctorum
ProQuest
http://acta.chadwyck.com/
Contact publisher for pricing.

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CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)
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Bibliothèque Nationale
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Columbia University, Media Center for Art
History
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Amiens.html

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Facts On File
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Anglo-Norman Dictionary
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Brepols
http://www.brepolis.net/
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Art Museum Image Gallery (CH, Feb'06, 43-3121)
H. W. Wilson
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University of Chicago
http://humanities.uchicago.edu/orgs/ARTFL/
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ARTstor Inc.
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42Sup-0500)
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http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/
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index.html or http://tinyurl.com/37fmbj/
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Andrea R. Harbin
http://www.netserf.org/

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Contact publisher for pricing.

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http://the-orb.net/

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Contact publisher for pricing.

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Kings College, London
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