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Leiden
The Netherlands

'Where of is mad al mankynde' : an edition of and introduction to the twenty-four poems in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102

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Citation

Verheij, L. J. P. (2009, October 21). *'Where of is mad al mankynde' : an edition of and introduction to the twenty-four poems in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14129>

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‘WHERE OF IS MAD AL MANKYNDE’
An Edition of and Introduction to the Twenty-Four Poems
in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 21 oktober 2009
klokke 16.15 uur

door

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geboren te Pernis
in 1931

Promotiecommissie:

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Cover: detail from Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 126, fol. 7r (Alain Chartier, *Le quadrilogue invectif*); from J. Huizinga (1919), *Herfsttij der middeleeuwen*, Amsterdam (repr. 1997), p. 56. Cover design: Femke Prinsen

90
The man be wyl that be eth affate done god
of counseil of double ententment (and) here
of rymitye and pzeney late And coryngly
fit by fals affent fims zong to zyno judgement
In enen here talke ze lede / Marche be good amfement
Agan knowe thy self lone god & here / Here god
and knowe thy selme of that oney puple hast con
namme / nocht for the lone of ten or the cime of zynge
not a comone in gzenamice / wylte vnto they was
Distamce / here .o. talke in enen here / wylten ffamoy
& ben gzenamice / man knowe thy self lone god & here /
The mannyre gzenamice of houe or lordshipe or
rite / the puple is gode & not gzenamice / the be
seget to gzenamice / Some the puple in vnto
In the wmaniments that go here and ze wole
lone in chapted knowe thy self lone god & here / the
man wot that hath wot / these wole here gode be
not his alle is gode be olectly hyn / and land & oze
& zyme & blis / God wole hane yetemng / pzenice of
men and cloth the leste chye / the geting the
holdng thy spending myo / Agan knowe thy self
lone god & here / The man of his othen hath no thing
man is gode and al god cont / God wole hane yetemng
of wylt & zynge hold it is wylt / man not wylt
alle god lent / and bothe thing not houe ful wylt
and znt thy soule is gode / yetemng / wite that wole
in lone & here / Some god for helle here / fflo fjo
gome & al hys fims ze lone god for heneu mee / zyme
hym thyn heit fjo / fleschly delis / fflo woldly here
ze zoftly myo / and foole e / and may not oze / In
begynnyng to be wylt / knowe thy self lone god & here /
And ze wole here thno molde ze ley / what man
myfnech hys soule to cancel / if hym be let of god
to be / the abletly / hym self / may to hane / fychesse

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Margaret Laing recently confessed that the founding father of the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, the renowned Angus McIntosh, at the prospect of that truly daunting project coined the phrase ‘hopeful hubris’. This was my sentiment exactly when I started out on my own enterprise of re-editing the twenty-four anonymous late-medieval poems in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102, more than a hundred years after Dr. Joseph Kail published his, the first edition.

As an incurable – and old-fashioned – romanticist, I have built my analysis of the Digby Poems around the figure of a medieval monk-cum-clerk whom over the years I have learned to appreciate as a man of many parts, and in some respects as a kindred spirit, in whom exultation and gloom, high beliefs and hard pragmatism had an equal share. I took on the project also in the hope of producing a study that would not only give satisfaction to myself, from whatever ambition, but would also open another attractive window for the interested reader upon the thinking, practices and conditions in late-medieval English society.

If these ambitions have in some measure been realized, it is only fitting that I acknowledge the debt of gratitude that I owe to my supervisor, Professor Rolf Bremmer of Leiden University. As long ago as 1998 he gave me the first scent of the Digby Poems as the subject for a graduation paper that in subsequent years developed into the present study.

An equal share of grateful thanks are due to my wife for sacrificing so much time otherwise enjoyed in relaxed retirement. I hope I will be given time to catch up on hours lost in past years.

I further want to thank Professor Michael Benskin, who took special time out to examine, and pronounce an opinion on, the scribal hand of the manuscript text *in situ* in the Bodleian Library. I also wish to express my appreciation for Dr. Margaret Laing’s advice on how best to tackle the problem of identifying the scribal dialect. Deep-felt thanks, finally, are due to Dr. Sándor Chardonnens, who helped me organize the glossary, and formatted the lay-out of the text, to Femke Prinsen for an inspired cover design, and to Rosanne Hebing for her contribution to the glossarial format.

Sometimes the unthinkable becomes reality. At about the same time when I wrote my edition of the Digby Poems, Dr. Helen Barr of the University of Oxford prepared her own study. When my text had to go into print, Dr. Barr’s edition was not yet available, so regrettably I can merely acknowledge its announced existence. I have no doubt that in due course a comparison of the two editions will produce profitable new insights, certainly on my part, and hopefully on the part of the interested reader.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>adj.</i>	adjective
<i>adv.</i>	adverb
<i>art.</i>	article
beg.	beginning
<i>comp.</i>	comparative
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction
<i>def.</i>	definite
<i>dem.</i>	demonstrative
ed(s).	editor(s)
EETS	Early English Text Society
es	extra series
fol(s).	folio(s)
<i>gen.</i>	genitive
<i>ger.</i>	gerund
<i>IMEV</i>	Brown & Robbins, <i>The Index of Middle English Verse</i>
<i>imp.</i>	imperative
<i>impers.</i>	impersonal
<i>indef.</i>	indefinite
<i>inf.</i>	infinitive
<i>interj.</i>	interjection
Kail	Kail, <i>Twenty-Six Political and other Poems</i>
<i>LALME</i>	McIntosh <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English</i>
l(l).	line(s)
LP	Linguistic Profile
ME	Middle English
<i>MED</i>	Kurath <i>et al.</i> , <i>Middle English Dictionary</i>
MnE	Modern English
MS	manuscript
<i>MWME</i>	Hartung <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500</i>
<i>n.</i>	noun
<i>NIMEV</i>	Boffey & Edwards, <i>A New Index of Middle English Verse</i>
<i>num.</i>	numeral
<i>OED</i>	Murray <i>et al.</i> , <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
os	original series
p(p).	page(s)
<i>pers.</i>	personal
<i>pl.</i>	plural

<i>poss.</i>	possessive
<i>ppl.</i>	participle
<i>prep.</i>	preposition
<i>pres.</i>	present
<i>pron.</i>	pronoun
<i>pt.</i>	past
<i>refl.</i>	reflexive
<i>repr.</i>	reprinted
<i>sg.</i>	singular
<i>St.</i>	Stanza
<i>sup.</i>	superlative
<i>transl.</i>	translator
<i>v.</i>	verb

Whiting Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings mainly before 1500*

wk. weak

For full bibliographic details see the bibliography

All biblical quotations have been taken from the Authorized King James Version