

Redesigning the Medieval Book

An anthology of possible texts for use

You might wish to have some medieval text to include in your book or artefact. This is not required, but in case it is of interest to you, below are some excerpts of medieval texts which will be in books and pages on display in the medieval exhibition *Designing English*. Feel free to choose all or part or none, as suits your ideas. For each, the introductory note gives the slides on the 'mood board' which show copies of this or related works.

They are in Old English (roughly before 1066 and all that) and Middle English (after 1066) and in a few places in Latin. They are all printed here in the left-hand columns. In the right-hand columns we have given modern English translations of them. Please feel free to use either the original language or the modern translations, whichever you feel best suits your purpose.

As well as the pieces given in full here, you might also want to choose one of the other genres displayed on the mood-board, which are too large to produce here, or are more widely available elsewhere:

- histories and genealogies (slides 9-17)
- Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (slides 35-38)
- several calendars – of months, of star signs, of holy days and holidays (slides 18-24, 27-28)
- medical books and diagrams (slides 39-47)
- graffiti (slides 54-60)
- funeral monuments (slides 61-64)

The creation of the earliest English poetry

What is the earliest English poem? One contender is Caedmon's hymn to God the 'maker' or 'shaper' of the world. In Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* (completed 731), Bede tells the story of a humble man Caedmon, who lived in the monastery run by St Hilda at Whitby between 657-680, and who composed poetry in English, despite his lack of education. Bede's history was written in Latin but in many copies Caedmon's hymn is added in the margins or elsewhere in English (slide 11). Bede's history was itself translated in the late 800s into English (slides 9-10).

In ðeosse abbudissan mynstre wæs sum broðor syndriglice mid godcundre gife gemæred ond geweorðad, forþon he gewunade gerisenlice leoð wyrcan, þa ðe to æfestnisse ond to arfæstnisse belumpon, swa ðætte swa hwæt swa he of godcundum stafum þurh boceras geleornode, þæt he æfter medmiclum fæce in scopgereorde mid þa mæstan swetnisse ond inbryrdnisse geglængde ond in Engliscgereorde wel geworht forþ brohte. Ond for his leoþsongum monigra mona mod oft to worulde forhogdnisse ond to geþeodnisse þæs hefonlice lifes onbærnde wæron. Ond eac swelce monige oðre æfter him in Ongelþeode ongunnon æfeste leoð wyrcan, ac nænig hwæðre him þæt gelice don ne meahte forþon he nalæs from monnum ne þurh mon gelæred wæs þæt he þone leoðcræft leornade, ac he wæs godcundlice gefultumod ond þurh Godes gife þone songcræft onfeng. Ond he forþon næfre noht leasunge ne idles leoþes wyrcan ne meahte, ac efne þa an þa ðe to æfæstnisse belumpon, ond his þa æfæstan tungan gedeofanade singan.

Wæs he se mon in weoruldhade geseted oð þa tide þe he wæs gelyfdre ylde, ond næfre nænig leoð geleornade. Ond he forþon oft in gebeorscipe, þonne þær wæs blisse intinga gedemed, þæt heo ealle sceoldon þurh endebyrdnesse be hearpan singan, þonne he geseah þa hearpan him nealecan þonne aras he for scome from þæm symble ond ham eode to his huse. Þa he ða þæt ða sumre tide dyde, þæt he forlet þæt hus þæs gebeorscipe ond ut wæs gongende to neata scipene, þara heord him wæs þære neahte beboden. Þa he ða þær in gelimplice tide his leomu on reste gesette ond onslepte, þa stod him sum mon æt þurh swefn ond hine halette ond grette ond hine be his noman

In Abbess Hilda's monastery there was one brother particularly glorified and honoured with a divine gift, because he used to fashion lovely songs of religion and virtue, so that whatever thus he learned of divine letters from scholars, those things he after a moderate space of time he brought forth, in the voice of a bard with the greatest sweetness and inspiration and well-worked in the English language. And by his poems the minds of many men were kindled to spurn the world and serve the life of heaven. And many like him followed among the English and began to make pious poetry, but none could do it quite like him, because he had not learned things from men, nor was it even from men that he learned the craft of song, but he was divinely blessed and took the craft of song from God's gift. And he therefore he could never make lying or idle songs, but only songs about godly matters, or songs fitting for his pious tongue to sing.

The man was established in worldly life until the time when he was of advanced age, and he had never learned any songs. And so often when people were drinking and it seemed like a time for jollity and everyone was asked to sing something accompanied on the harp, when he saw the harp nearing him, he then arose for shame from that gathering and went home to his house. One time when he did this, he left the banquet-hall and he went to the stables, as he'd been told to guard that herd that night. When in due course he laid his body down and went to sleep, then some man came to him in his dream and hailed and greeted him and called him by his name: 'Caedmon, sing me something.'

Then he answered and said, 'I don't know how to sing and for that reason I went out from

nemnde, 'Cedmon, sing me hwæthwugu.'

Ða ondswarede he ond cwæð, 'Ne con ic noht singan ond ic forþon of þeossum gebeorscipe uteode ond hider gewat, forþon ic naht singan ne cuðe.'

Eft he cwæð, se ðe wið hine sprecende wæs, 'Hwæðre þu meaht singan.'

Ða cwæð he: 'Hwæt sceal ic singan?'

Cwæð he, 'Sing me frumscaft.'

Ða he ða þas andsware onfeng, þa ongon he sona singan in herenisse Godes, scyppends, þa fers ond þa word þe he næfre gehyrde, þara endebyrdrnisse þis is:

Nu we sculon herigean heofonrices weard,
meotodes meahte ond his modgeþanc,
weorc wuldorfæder, swa he wundra
gehwæs,
ece drihten, or onstealde.
He ærest sceop eorðan bearnum
heofon to hrofe, halig scyppend;
þa middangeard moncynnes weard,
ece drihten, æfter teode
firum foldan, frea ælmihtig.

Ða aras he from þæm slæpe, ond eal þa þe he slæpende song, fæste in gemynde hæfde, ond þæm wordum sona monig word in þæt ilce gemet Gode wyrðes songes togeþeodde. Ða com he on morgenne to þæm tungerefan, þe his ealdormon wæs. Sægde him hwylc gife he onfeng, ond he hine sona to þære Abbudissan gelædde ond hire þæt cyðde ond sægde. Ða heht heo gesomnian ealle þa gelæredestan men ond þa leorneras, ond him ondwardum het secgan þæt swefn ond þæt leoð singan, þæt ealra heora dome gecoren wære, hwæt oððe hwonon þæt cumen wære. Ða wæs him eallum gesegen swa swa hit wæs: þæt him wære from Drihtne sylfum heofonlic gifu forgifen. Ða rehton heo him ond sægdon sum halig spell ond godcundre lare word, bubudon him þa, gif he meahte, þæt he in swinsunge leoþsonges þæt gehwyrfde.

this feast and went hither, because I did not know how to sing at all.'

Again he said, he who was speaking with him, 'Nevertheless, you must sing.'

Then he said: 'What should I sing?'

He said, 'Sing me creation.'

When he had this answer, then he began immediately to sing in honour of God, the maker, these verses and words which he had never heard, whose order is this:

Now should we honour heaven's
guardian,
the might of the measurer and His mind's
thinking,
the work of the Father of Glory, as He, for
those wonders,
the eternal Lord, established a beginning.
He shaped first for the sons of the earth
heaven as a roof, that holy shaper;
then the middle earth, mankind's
guardian,
the eternal Lord, made afterwards,
solid ground for men, the almighty Lord.

Then he arose from that sleep, and everything he had sung while sleeping he held fast in mind, and he soon to those words many words of songs worthy of God. Then in the morning he came to the town reeve, who was his alderman. He asked which gift he brought, and he led him right away to the Abbess and spoke to her and told her. Then she ordered all of the most learned men and scholars to gather, and she told to say what he'd dreamt and to sing that song, so that they could judge what it was and where it had come from. Then everybody saw it for what it was: that it had been given to him as a heavenly gift from God. When they spoke to him and told some holy Scripture and words of godly teaching, then they ordered him, if he could, to weave it into melodious song.

Wicked days: the Peterborough chronicle of the 1100s

In the Anglo-Saxon era, monks compiled a chronicle year by year of the great events of the era. At Peterborough Abbey, this carried on after the Norman Conquest until 1131 (slide 12). Then in 1154, one of the monks resumed the chronicle, continuing it from 1131 onwards, adding more to the same old book. This is known as *The Peterborough Chronicle*. The chronicle is often terse and lacking in detail, but at times – whether by accident or by design – this feels understated and powerful; and the moments of detail have a powerful effect by contrast. The account of the civil strife and violence of the mid 1100s, while King Stephen and Queen Matilda fought, is powerful. (In the later 1200s, somebody else added a chronicle of English history in Norman French, *Le Livre de reis de Britanie*, in the margins.)

Millesimo CXXVII

Ðis gære for þe king Stephne ofer sæ to Normandi; and ther wes underfangen, forþi ðat hi uuenden ðat he sculde ben alsuic else the eom wes, and for he hadde get his tresor; ac he todeld it and scatered sotlice. Micel hadde Henri king gadered gold and syluer, and na god ne dide me for his saule tharof.

Þa þe king Stephne to Englaland com, þa macod he his gadering æt Oxeneford. and þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Serebyri, and Alexander biscop of Lincol and te canceler Roger, hise neues, and dide ælle in prisun til hi iafen up here castles.

Þa the suikes undergæton ðat he milde man was and softe and god, and na iustise ne dide, þa diden hi alle wunder. Hi hadden him manred maked and athes suoren, ac hi nan treuthe ne heolden. Alle he wæron forsworen and here treothes forloren, for æuric rice man his castles makede and agænes him heolden and fyl登 þe land ful of castles.

Hi suencten suyðe þe uurecce men of þe land mid castelweorces; þa þe castles uuaren maked, þa fyl登 hi mid deoules and yuele men. Þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god hefden, bathe be nihtes and be dæies, carlmen and wimmen, and diden heom in prisun and pined heom efter gold and syluer untellendlice pining; for ne uuæren næure nan martyrs swa pined else hi wæron. Me hinged up bi the fet and smoked heom mid ful smoke. Me hinged bi the þumbes other bi the hefed and hengen bryniges on her fet. Me dide cnotted strenges abuton here hæued and uurythen it ðat it gæde to þe hæernes. Hi

1137.

This year King Stephen went over the sea to Normandy and was welcomed there, because the people there thought that he would behave like his uncle and predecessor, King Henry, and because he had a lot of money and he dished it out and scattered it about foolishly. Henry had saved up gold and silver and spent none of it for the good of his soul.

When King Stephen came to England, he held a gathering at Oxford and there he captured Bishop Roger of Salisbury, and Bishop Alexander of Lincoln and Roger the Chancellor, his nephews, and threw them all in prison until they surrendered their castles.

When his powerful enemies thought that he was a weak and soft man and didn't enforce the law, then they all started on various horrors. They pledged allegiance and they swore oaths to him, but they didn't keep their word truthfully. They were all perjured and lost their reputations, for every rich man built castles and then stood against him. They filled the land with their castles.

They deeply oppressed the poor people of the land by building works on their castles. And when they'd built the castles, they filled them with devils and evil men. They took hold of anyone they thought had worldly goods, men or women, and threw them in prison and tortured them with unspeakable pains to get their gold and silver. No martyrs were ever pained as much as they were. Some hung by their feet and choked with smoke. Some hung by their thumbs or head with heavy metal amour used to weigh down their feet. Some had knotted cords tied round

diden heom in quarterne þar nadres and snakes and pades wæron inne, and drapen heom swa. Sume hi diden in 'Crucethur' – ðat is, in an cæste þat was scort and nareu and undep, and dide scærpe stanes þærinne and þrengde þe man þærinne ðat him bræcon alle þe limes. In mani of þe castles wæron 'Lof' and 'Grin': ðat wæron rachenteges ðat twa oþer thre men hadden onoh to bæron onne, þat was sua maked, ðat is, fæstned to an beom – and diden an scærp iren abuton þa mannes throte and his hals, ðat he ne myhte nowiderwardes, ne sitten ne lien ne slepen, oc bæron al ðat iren. Mani þusen hi drapen mid hungær. I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder ne alle þe pines ðat hi diden wrecce men on þis land; and ðat lastede þa xix wintre wile Stephne was king, and æure it was uuerse and uuerse.

Hi læiden gæildes on the tunes æure um wile, and clepeden it 'Tenserie'. Þa þe uurecce men ne hadden nammore to gyuen, þa ræueden hi and brendon alle the tunes, ðat wel þu myhtes faren al a dæis fare, sculdest thu neure finden man in tune sittende ne land tiled. Þa was corn dære, and flesc and cæse and butere, for nan ne wæs o þe land. Wrecce men sturuen of hungær. Sume ieden on ælmes þe waren sum wile rice men. Sume flugen ut of lande. Wes næure gæt mare wrecched on land ne næure hethen men werse ne diden þan hi diden; for ouer sithon ne forbaren hi nouthar circe ne cyrceiærd, oc namen al þe god ðat þarinne was and brenden sythen þe cyrce and al tegædere. Ne hi ne forbaren biscopes land ne abbotes ne preostes, ac ræueden munekes and clerekes, and æuric man other þe ouermyhte. Gif twa men oþer iii coman ridend to an tun, al þe tunscipe flugæn for heom, wenden ðat hi wæron ræueres. Þe biscopes and lered men heom cursede æure, oc was heom naht þarof, for hi uueron al forcursæd and forsuoren and forloren.

War sæ me tilede, þe erthe ne bar nan corn, for þe land was al fordon mid suilce dædes. and hi sæden openlice ðat Crist slep, and His halechen. Suilc, and mare þanne we cunnen sæin, we þoleden xix wintre for ure

their head, tightened till it gnawed into their brain. They put them in close quarters with adders and snakes and poisonous toads and killed them that way. Some were put in the Excruciator – a short, narrow, shallow chest, stuffed with sharp stones that squashed the man inside and broke all his limbs. In many castles were the Praise-Me and the Grinner: they were chains so heavy that it took two or three men to carry one, formed and fastened to a beam; and they put a sharp iron around a man's throat and neck so that he couldn't sit or lie or sleep in any way, but they had to carry those irons. Many thousands died of hunger. I cannot and must not tell all the horrors and all the tortures that they did to the poor people of this land. And that lasted for nineteen winters, while Stephen was king, and it grew ever worse and worse.

They laid taxes on the towns again and again and they called it 'Tenser'. When the poor men had no more to give, they robbed and burnt down all the towns, so you could go a whole day's journey and you wouldn't ever find people in towns or fields tilled. Then the corn grew dear, and the meat and cheese and butter, for there was nobody working the land. Poor men starved of hunger. Some who once were rich men begged for charity. Some fled the country. There was never more hardship in the land. Heathens of other faiths never did worse than these rich men did, for all too often they didn't spare the churches or graveyards but they took all the rich goods from them, then burned down the church and everything else. They didn't spare bishops' property, or abbots' or priests', but robbed monks and clergy, and everybody robbed anybody weaker. If two or three men came riding into town, all the townsfolk fled from them, thinking they'd be thieves. The bishops and scholars excommunicated them, but that was nothing to them, for they were already cursed, compromised and damned.

Wherever we ploughed the soil, it yielded up no corn, for the land was all destroyed by their misdeeds. And people said, openly, that Christ and His saints had fallen asleep on their watch. Such and worse things can we say we suffered nineteen winters for our sins.

Through all this evil time, Martin was the

sinnes.

On al þis yuele time heold Martin Abbot his abbotrice xx wintre and half gær and viii dæis mid micel suinc; and fand þe munekes and te gestes al þat heom behoued and heold mycel carited in the hus, and þopwethere wrohte on þe circe and sette þarto landes and rentes and goded it suythe and læt it refen, and brohte heom into þe neuuæ mynstre on Sancte Petres Mæssedæi mid micel wurtscipe: ðat was *anno ab Incarnatione Domini Millesimo CXL, a combustione loci XXIII*. And he for to Rome, and þær wæs wæl underfangen fram þe Pape Eugenie; and begæt thare priuilegies, an of alle þe landes of þabbotrice and an oþer of þe landes þe lien to þe circewican, and, gif he leng moste liuen, also he mint to don of þe horderwycan. and he begæt in landes þat rice men hefden mid strengthe: of Willelm Malduit, þe heold Rogingham þæ castel, he wan Cottingham and Estun; and of Hugo of Walteruile he uuan Hyrtlingbyri and Stanewig and *lx sol* of Aldewingle ælc gær. and he makede manie munekes, and plantede winiærd, and makede mani weorkes and wende þe tun betere þan it ær wæs; and wæs god munec and god man, and forþi him luueden God and gode men.

Abbot in Peterborough, for twenty winters and half a year and eight days, with hard work his lot. And he found a way to feed the monks and monastery's guests as much as they needed and he did great charity there, and still managed to rebuild the burnt-down church, to get it properties and tenants to support it, and to endow and roof it. And he led the monks into that new Minster with great ceremony on St Peter's Day 1140 AD, twenty-three years after the fire had burned the old church. Then he went to Rome and was welcome there by Pope Eugenius, and there was granted legal protection for the properties which funded the abbacy and the sacristy of the church. (Had he lived longer, he'd have won protection for the cellarer's funds too.) He recovered properties that rich men had taken from the church by force: from William Mauduit of Rockingham Castle, he won Cottingham and Easton; from Hugo of Walterville he won Irthlingborough and Stanwick, and secured a grant of sixty shillings from the income at Aldwinkle each year. He ordained many monks and planted a vineyard and did a lot of building works and made the town of Peterborough better than it was before. He was a good monk and a good man, and other good men and God loved him for this.

An almanac: signs of the Zodiac and life on the farm

From the Middle Ages well into the twentieth century (as in Elizabeth Bishop's poem 'Sestina': *Complete Poems*, p.123), almanacs gathered up the calendar, astrology, meteorology, medicine and fortune-telling – which were all related in the wisdom of the almanac. This is just some of the information on an almanac made in 1389 (the calendar reveals) and probably in Worcestershire (to judge by the local saints in the calendar). It is in six separate pieces, each folded differently, some arranged by month, some in other ways by the ideas and information they give (slides 20-22). Other almanacs were set out month by month and folded into books which could hang from a girdle (slides 23-24). Others were eventually printed, as by Benjamin Franklin in colonial Philadelphia, and as imitated in Edmund Spenser's Elizabethan poem *The Shepherdes Calendar*.

The excerpts here cover astrology (slides 20-21) and brontology, fortune-telling based on thunder (slide 22). As well as, or instead of, using this information from this almanac, you might want to make an almanac with calendars and practical information of your own.

Sol in Aquario.

The sonne ys here in his syne:
that is seson for to reyne
and for to snewe and for to frese,
and also schewyng for to lese.
As the picher turneth up-so-doune,
so chaungith the wedrus in this seysoune.

Sol in Piscibus.

As the fisses beth in her mynde
to leve in waturs in ryghte kynde,
so is the soune in this tyme
kynde seson for to reyne
and wete and moiste for to be:
so is the soune in his degre.

Sol in Ariete.

Al the long wyntur tide
the Ram lyes on his left syde,
and whanne his tyme comen is
he turneghth that other side ywis;
so gynneghth the sonne here wexith strong
and the day to wex long.

Sol in Tauro.

The bole in the neke is strong ywis,
more than the dam ys;
so is the sonne now welstrongar,
and the day wel muche longar.

Sol in Geminis.

As these bene bothe yliche long,
that han schild and schafte in honde,
so is the hete and the chele:
and that is syngne of worldus wele.

Sun in Aquarius.

The sun is here in his star sign:
That is then the season for rain
And for snow and for friezing,
And also it shows it's a time for losing.
As the pitcher turns upside-down,
So the weather turns in this season.

Sun in Pisces.

Just as fishes have it in mind
To live in water like their natural kind
So is the sun at this time
In its natural season to rain
And wet and moist to be:
That's the sun's natural property.

Sun in Aries.

All the long winter tide
the ram lies on its left side,
and when his time has come,
indeed to his other side he'll turn;
so here starts the sun to grow strong
and the day to grow long.

Sun in Taurus.

The bull is strong in the neck, and how –
more than is the female cow;
so the sun is now truly stronger,
and the day is truly much longer.

Sun in Gemini.

As these twins with shield and spear
and both as tall as each other here,
so are the heat and the cold:
that's a sign that all's right with the world.

Sol in Cancro.

The crabbe goth backwarde whanne he goth
and sprad out his longe toth;
so doth the sonne in this tyme
whanne he cometh to that syne.

Sol in Leone.

The lyon is strong best byfore ypith,
whoso wol undorstonde arith;
so is the sonne in his comyng
atte moneth bygynnyng.

Sol in Virgine.

The mayden yelt no froyt in toune,
ne the erthe in this sesoune,
for it is al growen byforne,
fruyght on trees, gras and corne.

Sol in Libra.

The weye is bothe liche long
and beth bothe ylyche strong;
so is the day and the nyth:
ever as the weye, thei beth ydyth.

Sol in Scorpione.

This worme hat scorpion –
addur byhynde, byfore dragon;
byfore and byhynde venyme;
so is the sonne in this tyme.

Sol in Sagittario.

The arew smytus thorow the clothe:
that makus mony one wel wrothe;
so doth hawlus and stormus ille
and colde wedur and schowrus grille.

Sol in Capricornio.

The capricorn, as we fynde,
hath berde byfore and wolle byhynde.
That beste withoute lesyng
wol take his mete ascendynde.

* * *

De Tonitruo.

Docet ista tabula quid significat in quolibet
mense, hoc modo.

Januarius.

Ventos validos, habundanciam frugum et
bellum.

Sun in Cancer.

The crab moves backwards when he walks
and spreads out his long claws;
so does the sun at this time
when it comes to this starsign.

Sun in Leo.

The lion is a strong beast here on show,
if you would like to know;
so is the sun at his coming
at this month's beginning.

Sun in Virgo.

The virgin gives her fruit to none,
nor does the earth in this season,
for it has already been borne,
the fruit of trees, grass and corn.

Sun in Libra.

The weights are both alike long
and are both alike strong;
so are the day and night:
like the weights, they're balanced right.

Son in Scorpio.

This insect is a scorpion:
an adder's tail and head of a dragon'
front and back, all venom;
so is the sun at this time.

Sun in Sagittarius.

The arrow pierces through the cloth:
that makes many people cross;
so do terrible hail and storms
and cold weather and showery harms.

Sun in Capricorn.

The capricorn, as we find,
has a beardy face and a woolly behind.
That beast – this is true enough –
eats its food while standing up.

* * *

Of thunder.

This table teaches what thunder portends,
depending which month it comes in, thus.

Thunder in January.

Strong winds, an abundance of crops, and war.

Februarius.

Mortem multorum hominum et maxime divitum.

Marcus.

Habundanciam frugum et ventos validos atque lites et prelia.

Aprilis.

Humidum et fructuosum annum et mortem iniquiorum hominum.

Mayus.

Inopiam frugum et famem in illo anno.

Junius.

Habundanciam frugum et varias hominum infirmitates.

Julius.

Bona annona et fetus pecorum peribit.

Augustus.

Prospera astare sibi. Sed res publice peribunt, et multi homines egrotabuntur.

September.

Habundanciam frugum et mortem potentium hominum.

October.

Ventos validos, bona annona sed fructus arborum inopiam.

November.

Habundanciam frugum et jocunditatem.

December.

Habundanciam frugum et annone; pacem et concordiam in populo.

Thunder in February.

The deaths of many men, especially rich ones.

Thunder in March.

An abundance of crops and strong winds, and conflicts and battles.

Thunder in April.

A humid and a fertile year, and the deaths of wicked men.

Thunder in May.

Shortage of crops and hunger that year.

Thunder in June.

An abundance of crops and varied diseases for people.

Thunder in July.

A good harvest, and the lambs will die.

Thunder in August.

Good things to follow it. But the government will fall, and many men will fall ill.

Thunder in September.

An abundance of crops and the deaths of powerful men.

Thunder in October.

Strong winds, good harvest but a scarcity of fruit on the trees.

Thunder in November.

An abundance of crops and jollity.

Thunder in December.

An abundance of crops and harvest, peace and concord among the people.

Medical remedies and charms from the 1400s

In the 1400s, increasingly many people had the skills and materials to write. They often gathered up practical writing such as medical remedies and jotted them in homemade books of their own or on the flyleaves of other books (slides 54-55). Some of the remedies were gathered by doctors making books for themselves, others by laymen and women making notes of the practical medical tricks they had tried and tested. Some are grounded in herbal cures that still work; some descend from academic medical theory; others seem to be folklore and superstition. The strangest are very strange indeed. *Don't try this at home.* The exhibition *Designing English* will include some charms (slides 54-56) and medical books (slides 39-47). Some of them, gathered from the manuscripts by students from Oxford, are being printed in a book *Revolting Remedies from the Middle Ages*: <http://www.bodleianshop.co.uk/revolting-remedies-from-the-middle-ages.html>. A sample is here.

For the toache.

Wryt theys wordes yn a lofe or in Buttur or yn an appull: + *loy + eloy + zedelay*. Gef the syke to ette and iii *Paternoster*, 3 *Aves* and a *Crede*, seyth the wryter and the pacient. *Et sanus erys statyme.*

* * *

For the fevers.

Take 3 Obleys and wryte *Pater est Alpha et Omega* upon that one. Make a poynt, and let the seke ete that the first day. The 2 day, wryte on the other Obley *Filius est vita*, and make 2 poyntes, and gif the seke to ete. And on the 3 day, on that other, *Spiritus Sanctus est remedium*, and make 3 poyntes, and gif the seke to ete hit. And the first day let the seke sey i *Paternoster* er he hete it; and the ij day ij *Paternoster* er he ete it; and the thridde day iij *Paternoster* and i *Crede*.

* * *

To staunche blod.

Wryte thes letteres yn levys of parchment and bynd hem bytwyne thy thyes; and yf thou honiyst hyt nought, take and wryte hem in a knyf, and therwith sle a swyn, and the rennyng therof schal be myche the lasse. Thes beth letteres: *p g T P e n o x a g n N m.*

For the toothache.

Write these words in a loaf or in butter or in an apple: + *loy + eloy + zedelay*. Give them to the sick person to eat, and let the writer and the patient say three *Our Fathers*, three *Ave marias* and a *Creed*. *And you'll get better right away.*

* * *

For fevers.

Take three Eucharistic wafers and write *The Father is Alpha and Omega* on one. Make one dot on it. And let the sick person eat it on the first day. The second day, write on the other Wafer *The Son is life*, and make two dots on it, and give it to the sick person to eat. And on the third day, on the other one, write *The Holy Spirit is the remedy*, and make three dots, and give it to the tick person to eat. And the first day let the sick person say one *Our Father* before he eats the wafer; and the second day, two *Our Fathers*; and the third day, three *Our Fathers* and the *Creed* once.

* * *

To stop bleeding.

Write these letters on leaves of parchment and bind them between your thighs; and if you don't believe it, go and write them on a knife, and slay a pig with it, and the bleeding from that will be much less than you expect. These are the letters to write: *p g T P e n o x a g n N m.*

* * *

Medicine for a man that is costlyf.

Tak and roste oynones, and ley to his navele, ymenged with may botre; and make hym wortes of hockes and of stanmarche, percilie of violet; and gyf hym ete therwith sour bred, and drynke smal ale; and gyf hym a subposotorie of a talwe candele in hys fundement. And so use it, for thou be hol.

* * *

For love.

Take thi swetyng yn a fayr bason and clene and afterwarde put hyt yn a wytrial of glas, and put therto the shavyng of the nedder party of thy fete and a lytyl of thy ounedong ydryet at the sune, and put therto a more of valurion. And take to drynke, whane that ever ye will, and he schall love the apon the lyght of thyn yene. And thys ys best experiment to gete love of what creature that thou wolt. And Y, Gelberte, have yproved that ofte tymys, for trewth.

* * *

For to be invysybell.

Take an erthen pote and bore yt full of holys, and put therin a frosh, that ys blake spekelede, and stope yt faste, and sete yt in a pysmere hyll, ther many rede pyssmers be, and come agen at the 3d dayes ende, and then take the bonys, and goo to a rynnyng water that renneth, and caste them in, and that bone that gothe ageyn the strem, kepe yt and wynde yt in sylke and closse yt in a rynge, or out of a rynge, and bere yt with the, and thou schalt goo invysebell. Also, yyf thou towche a whoman with the forseide bone, sche schall folowe thy wyll and be at thi comaundment. *Probatum est.*

* * *

Medicine for a man who is constipated.

Take and roast onions, and lay them on his navel, mixed with unsalted butter; and make him a vegetable stew made of mallow plants, horse parsley and parsley of violet; and give them to him to eat with sour bread, and give him light ale to drink; and give him as a suppository a tallow candle up his bottom. And do all this, so that you get better.

* * *

For love.

Catch your sweat in a nice clean basin and afterwards mix it with sulphuric salt, and add to it some shavings from the back of your feet and little of your own dung dried in the sun, and add a root of the herb valerian. And take a swig whenever you want, and he'll love you as soon as he catches your eye. And this is the best proven method to win love from whoever you want. And I, Gilbert, have proved this many times, truly.

* * *

To be invisible.

Take a china pot and drill it full of holes, and put inside it a black speckled toad, and close it tight, and put it on stop of an anthill, where red ants live, and come back at the end of the third day, and then take the bones, and go to a stream that is flowing, and cast the bones in, and whichever bone moves in the opposite direction to the stream, keep it and wrap it in silk, enclose it in a ring, or outside a ring, and carry it round with you, and you will be invisible. Also, if you touch a woman with that bone, she'll do your desires and be at your command. *It is proven.*

Christmas carolling in the 1400s

Carols in the Middle Ages were not just for Christmas; they were performed all year round, but just more often at Christmas when people gathered together convivially. What distinguished carols was their structure fit for singing in social groups: they have verses sung by a soloist, while the rest of the group listened or maybe even danced round the soloist in a ring; then they have a chorus, known as the 'burden', which the rest of the group repeated between each verse. (Geoffrey Chaucer tells of two churchmen, who might be lovers, singing a carol: one sings the verses and the other man "bore to him a stiff burden"; this might be an innuendo.)

The exhibition will include a collection of seventy-four such carols copied on paper by two friends or colleagues in Norfolk in the late 1400s (slide 29-30) as well as a roll for performing a play from medieval Norfolk (slides 31-33). The exhibition will be running during December and early January.

(1)

"Nowell, nowell, nowell!"
This is the salutacyon of the angel Gabryell.

Tydynges trew ther be cum neu,
Sent frome the Trynyte,
Be Gabryell to Nazareth, cety of Galile.
A clen maydyn and pure virgyn
Thorow her humylyte
Hath conceyvyd the person secunde in Deyte.

*This is the tewyn for the song foloyng. Yf so be that
ye wyll have another, it may be at yowre plesur,
for I have set all the song.*

(2)

Bryng us in good ale, and bryng us in good
ale,
For Our blyssyd Lady sake, bryng us in good
ale.

Bryng us in no browne bred, fore that is mad of
brane,
Nor bryng us in no whyt bred, for therin is no
game,
But bryng us in good ale!

Bryng us in no befe, for there is many bonys,
But bryng us in good ale, for that goth downe
atonys,
And bryng us in good ale!

(1)

"Noël, Noël, Noël!"
This is the salutation of the angel Gabriel.

Tidings true have come anew,
Sent from the Trinity,
By Gabriel to Nazareth, city of Galilee.
A clean maiden and pure virgin
Through her humility
Has conceived the second person of the Deity.

*This is the tune for the following song. If you want
another, then you may, at your pleasure, for I
have set music for the whole song.*

(2)

Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale,
For Our blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good
ale.

Bring us in no brown bread, for that is made of
bran,
Nor bring us in no white bread, for that is just
no fun,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no beef, it has many bones,
But bring us in good ale, for it slips down all at
once,
And bring us in good ale!

Bryng us in no bacon, for that is passyng fate,
But bryng us in god ale, and gyfe us inought of
that,
And bryng us in good ale!

Bryng us in no mutton, for that is ofte lene,
Nor bryng us in no trypys, for thei be sydom
clene,
But bryng us in good ale!

Bryng us in no eggys, for ther ar many schelles,
But bryng us in good ale, and gyfe us nothyng
ellys,
And bryng us in good ale!

Bryng us in no butter, for therin ar many herys,
Nor bryng us in no pygges flesche, for that wyl
mak ys berys,
But bryng us in good ale!

Bryng us in no podynges, for therin is all Godes
good,
Nor bryng us in no veneson, for that is not for
owre blod,
But bryng us in good ale!

Bryng us in no capons flesch, for that is ofte
dere,
Nor bryng us in no dokes, for thei flokd in the
mere,
But bryng us in good ale!

(3)

A song in the tune of "And I were a mayd etc."

Swet Jhesus is cum to us
This good tym of Crystmas;
Wherfore with prays syng we always,
"Welcum owr Messyas!"
Hey now now now!

The God Almyght and kyng of lyght
Whose powre is over all,
Gyve us of grace for to purchas
Hys realme celestyal.
Hey *etc.*!

Bring us in no bacon, for that has too much fat,
But bring us in good ale, and give us enough of
that,
And bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lean,
Nor bring us in no tripe, for that is seldom
clean,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no eggs, for there are many shells,
But bring us in good ale, and give us nothing
else,
And bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no butter, for it is covered in hairs,
Nor bring us in no pig flesh, for that will make
us bears,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us no meat puddings, for they have all
God's good,
Nor bring us in no venison for men of peasant
blood,
But bring us in good ale!

Bring us in no game birds, for they are very
dear,
Nor bring us in no ducks, for they flock on the
mere,
But bring us in good ale!

(3)

A song to the tune of "If I were a virgin etc."

Sweet Jesus has come to us
At this good time of Christmas;
So with praise, let's sing always
"Welcome, our Messiah!"
Hey now now now!

God Almighty, king of light,
Whose power is over all,
May he give us grace to buy a place
In his realm celestial.
Hey *etc.*!

When Hys aungels and archangels
Do syng incessantly,
Hys principates and potestates
Maketh gret armony.
Hey *etc.*!

The cherubyns and seraphyns
With ther tunkykes mery,
The trones al most musycall
Syng the heevenly Kery.
Hey *etc.*!

(4)

A song upon "Now must I syng etc."

"Nowel, nowel, nowel!", syng we with myrth.
Cryst is come wel with us to dwell
By hys most noble byrth.

Under a tre in sportyng me
Alone by a wod syd,
I hard a mayd that swetly sayd,
"I am with chyld this tyd."
Nowell *etc.*

Gracyusly conceyvyd have I
The son of God so swete.
Hys gracyous wyll I put me tyll,
As moder Hym to kepe.
Nowell *etc.*

Both nyght and day I wyl Hym pray
And her Hys lawes taught,
And every dell Hys trewe Gospell
In Hys apostell fraught.
Nowell *etc.*

Soone must I syng with rejoysyng,
For the tym is all ronne,
That I schal chyld all undefyld
The Kyng of Hevens sonne.
Nowell *etc.*

When His angels and archangels
Sing incessantly,
His pryncedoms and His Powers
Make great harmony.
Hey *etc.*!

The cherubim and serpahim
With their tunics merry,
The thrones all most musical
Sing the heavenly *Kyrie*.
Hey *etc.*!

(4)

A song to the tune of "Now must I sing etc."

"Noël, Noël, Noël!", we sing with mirth.
Christ has come well with us to dwell
Through his most noble birth.

In the shade while I there played
Alone by the wood side,
I heard a maid who sweetly said,
"I am with child this tide."
Noël *etc.*

"By grace received, I have conceived
The Son of God, so sweet.
His gracious will I shall fulfil
As mother Him to feed."
Noël *etc.*

"Both night and day to Him I'll pray
And hear Him teach His laws,
And every word of the Gospel heard
And by the Apostles borne."
Noël *etc.*

"Soon I'll sing with rejoicing,
For my pregnancy is done,
And I shall yield, while undefiled,
The King of Heaven's son."
Noël *etc.*