

THE PUBLISHED WORKS OF BRIAN J. LEVY: AN ANALYTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

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To write a bibliography of a scholar as prolific as Brian Levy is no small undertaking. Within the list that follows there number monographs, editions, edited volumes, and numerous articles and reviews. Much of this output shows a tireless dedication to the often thankless task of structuring and presenting others' work to the wider world. Two items in his bibliography in particular exemplify this. First, Brian contributed to the MHRA *Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* for over twenty years, initially as author of the Early Medieval French Literature section, then as editor of the sizeable Romance and Celtic Languages and Literatures section. Subsequently, he edited with Paul Wackers eighteen volumes of *Reinardus*, the Yearbook of the International Reynard Society. He brimmed with enthusiasm when helping organize conferences, when chairing sessions, or when contributing to discussions, and was especially keen to engage with younger scholars new to the conference circuit. He would often encourage them to submit articles to *Reinardus* or elsewhere and offer help on the way to publication. Although not always recognized as one of the more distinguished roles of the modern-day academic, Brian quite properly saw his unforgiving editorial duties as central to his role as researcher and teacher.

Brian's publication record spans four decades. His earliest publication, 'Waltheof, earl de Huntigdon et de Northampton: la naissance d'un héros anglo-normand', traces the legend surrounding the figure of Waltheof, executed by William the Conqueror to make an example of the highest ranking nobleman implicated in the revolt of the North. Déjà vu, perhaps? Could he have foreseen, thirty-or-so years later, that along with Pierre Bouet he would so expertly weave together the splendid volume of scholarship on the history and legends of the most famous Anglo-Saxon nobleman dispatched by William? *La Tapisserie de*

Bayeux: l'art de broder l'histoire was to be Brian's last volume and was one of which he was immensely proud. Some five years in production, it is destined to become a seminal work in Bayeux Tapestry studies. As a single object, the Bayeux Tapestry encapsulates all the aspects of research that Brian concerned himself with over his career.

Brian's interests were nothing if not eclectic. His publications include editions of Old French and Anglo-Norman texts, intended both for the specialist scholar and for the student encountering these texts for the first time. His studies of a variety of aspects of these and other texts abound, although he always seemed to come back to the comic: who else could find a comic element in the Bayeux Tapestry or the Hereford Mappamundi? His interest in issues relating to performance and reception provided another constant throughout his career. This interest was not merely academic: he played a starring role in a number of dramatic pieces filmed at the University of Hull in the 1970s and 1980s, and very recently recorded a double CD of Old French pious and comic tales. At the end of his life Brian's interests managed to bring together his two great passions: medieval literature and culture on the one hand, and the cinema on the other. His course entitled 'The Middle Ages Go to the Movies', taught with Lesley Coote from the Hull English Department, was continually over-subscribed. Epic, beast epic, romance, comic fabliau, pious tale, lyric, historiography, the Great War, French cinema, filmic adaptations of medieval texts . . .

How to classify such an output? Listing a bibliography solely by publication date really shows little but its sheer volume and denies the reader the fullest opportunity to appreciate the range of Brian's work. To be thematic, then? Almost equally difficult, as there are a number of overlapping commonalities, and a number of publications could fit in more than one potential category. But this is the approach chosen here: Brian's main work is presented below under headings of 'Comic and Cautionary', 'Anglo-Norman Studies', and 'Epic and Romance'. There is a separate classification for 'Film Studies', and some work which does not sit happily in any of the above is considered 'Miscellaneous'. Brian's collaborations with Alan Hindley in teaching medieval French are collated as 'Language', preceding the list of 'Bibliographical', and 'Book Reviews'. Brian's output across these categories is evenly spread throughout his career. This bibliography at once demonstrates his intimate knowledge of a chosen field and his expertise in all facets of scholarly publishing, from the editing and translating of devotional and liturgical texts to the sexual perversion of the fabliaux, from the striking plot-line of the tale of *De l'Ermite et du Jongleur* to the cinematic deployment of *Ars poetriae* rhetoric in Robert Bresson's 1974 *Lancelot du Lac*.

This bibliography was intended to be a celebration of past, present, and future research. Brian's future projects were to include a monograph entitled *A Poet for All Seasons: Rutebeuf and the Literature of Thirteenth-Century France*, a critical bibliography of Rutebeuf scholarship, and further articles on the fabliaux and film studies. One collaborative project — a volume with Lesley Coote on the Middle Ages and the Cinema — will still go ahead. Although there are a number of items awaiting publication *in memoriam*, it is with great regret that Brian's bibliography is now all but complete, although his scholarly legacy will continue for many years to come.

Comic and Cautionary

Brian's first published work in this category is a teaching edition of twelve *Selected Fabliaux*, with notes by C. E. Pickford. Later publications concentrate on a single humorous aspect in the fabliau tradition: the role of the devil; the 'indecent cavorting' of victims led astray by dancing; severe illness; and the comic potential of family confrontations. To this can be added the associated vices of gambling and sexual deviancy and the role (often obscene) of animals in the comic tale alongside the 'bestly' behaviour of the human characters. Many of these aspects are brought together and explored in more detail in his seminal 2000 monograph, *The Comic Text*, a close analysis of key images which develop into the themes and motifs of the fabliaux — the 'small print' of the joke.

An early study considers fabliaux in insular exempla collections, notably Nicholas Bozon's *Metaphorae*. Brian latterly moved on to explore in more detail the question of narrative performance, bringing them to life with Adrian Tudor in *Ribaudie et Repentanche*, recorded readings of twelve fabliaux and three pious tales in an Old French language accessible to modern readers, with notes on possible performance. Brian insisted that these recordings were not linguistic aids but were to illustrate how a medieval jongleur or reader might 'tell a good yarn'.

Anglo-Norman Studies

Further work on Nicholas Bozon can be found throughout Brian's work in Anglo-Norman Studies. In 1981 he published *Nine Verse Sermons* by Bozon, detailed commentaries on a series of short poems. Each poem takes a moralizing theme — divine light, heaven and hell, gossiping women, the vanity of material things — which most likely originated as one of Bozon's sermons.

After collaboration with D. L. Jeffrey on *The Anglo-Norman Lyric*, the edition, translation, and full commentary of fifty poems — devotional and liturgical texts, homilies, and social and domestic pieces — Brian returned once more to Bozon. 'Images mondaines et allégorie édifiante chez Nicole Bozon' underlines the preacher-poet's very Franciscan ability to link his homilies to material elements of secular life. Of particular importance is his allegorical imagery of the hunt, of the banquet, and of a knight's arms and armour. Such carefully penned illustrations of the preoccupations and obsessions of Anglo-Norman society are also revealed in "Honor" et "honneur": *Le rôle du château-foyer dans deux romans lignagers anglo-normands* and in 'The Image of the Viking in Old French and Anglo-Norman Literature', studies of insular romance texts.

Epic and Romance

Brian collaborated with Alan Hindley to bring together *The Old French Epic: An Introduction*, a survey of themes and motifs in the *chansons de geste*, illustrated by selected extracts with detailed commentaries. This same collaboration also produced an edition of a romance text: Jehan Renart's *Le Lay de l'Ombre*. Brian also published 'Les Trois Fonctions dans le rythme narratif de la Tapisserie de Bayeux' in *La Tapisserie de Bayeux*, the volume he prized so much. Battle was joined over the epic features of the Bayeux Tapestry by C. Dodwell and Brian happily added further material to the debate in this examination of trifunctionality and epic patterning.

Film Studies

In recent studies — reminiscent of other work on the performance of the fabliaux — Brian considers the way in which the Middle Ages have been filmed or, as he understood it, framed by twentieth-century directors with contemporary agendas. The various images, objects, and motifs deployed in *Les Visiteurs du soir* (Michel Carné, 1942) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (Michael Curtiz, 1938) are also brought to an undergraduate audience through 'The Middle Ages Go to the Movies' a series of teaching materials using the Web, incorporating films (old and new), medieval texts, images, and social background. This combination of media was prefigured in 1986 by *An Epic Production*, a video presentation of the *Chanson de Roland* offering also an explanation of the selection and use of illustrations.

Language

Arguably the publication which will be long used and reused by students and scholars is the *Old French–English Dictionary*, produced with Alan Hindley and Frederick W. Langley. The fruit of early experiments with new technologies (see below), the dictionary is the first of its kind and was met with enthusiasm by colleagues worldwide. The dictionary provides a suitable legacy for Brian, for it is eminently practical, not seeking to emulate or challenge Tobler-Lommatzch or Godefroy but to fill a long-standing gap for anglophone students of Old French as a first port of call.

New Technologies

New technology is an important and perhaps less obvious theme running through Brian's work. In the listings below are a number of publications or references to further work in a different medium: the *biblia pauporum* of today's digital age. As early as 1986, Brian was working on a computer-assisted Old French / English Dictionary, and the cognate language tutor *MedFrench* has been invaluable to undergraduate and graduate students alike. With the advent of the World Wide Web, Brian created and maintained the Web site of the International Reynard Society and also Misericordia International.

Brian's teaching using technology received national acclaim. His 'The Middle Ages Go to the Movies', taught with colleague Lesley Coote, were delivered through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Blackboard™, and he was in demand to demonstrate their good practice at other universities. Such innovative use of e-learning has helped to bring medieval studies into the twenty-first century and attracted a new generation of young scholars to follow in his footsteps. As I wrote in the conclusion to my MA dissertation, supervised by Brian:

Facsimiles and texts with click-on translations and glossaries may well open the doors of the Middle Ages for many would-be medievalists. Just as the 'new technology' of stained glass windows made the old stories come alive for the populace of medieval yesterday, now our new technologies can also enhance the understanding and admiration of a new populace today. In fact, it may be as well to consider the eye strain caused by reading text on screen akin to the neck strain surely felt by the faithful, craning up to decipher sections of window, as well as to remember the growth and success of that 'new technology'.¹

¹ Kate L. Boardman, 'Modern Technology and Medieval Studies: Can Multimedia Enhance the Study of Medieval Manuscripts' (MA Dissertation, University of Hull, 1995).

Conclusion

This 'updating of the text', a global re-evaluation of Anglo-Norman Studies, Epic, Romance, and the Comic and Cautionary of the fabliaux for those who are to follow Brian, is a contribution to medieval studies as important as each individual work listed below. It is indeed sad that *La Tapisserie de Bayeux*, intended to be a 'grand ouvrage de luxe' is not — as was originally intended — accompanied by a CD-ROM providing scrolling and zoomable images, glossaries, histories, commentaries, and comparative material all in the most up-to-date and accessible frame possible. This would have provided a symbiosis of images, text, performance, technology, epic, comic, language, marginal decoration, and filmic quality to summarize perfectly Brian's career and publication record. It would also have given Brian, ever the distinguished scholar with a boyish sense of humour and excitement, another toy to show off.

Comic and Cautionary

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- ‘Or escoutez une merveille! Parallel Paths: Gautier de Coinci and the Fabliaux’, in *Gautier de Coinci, Les Miracles de Notre Dame: Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming)

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