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43rd International Congress on Medieval Studies

Sunday May 11, 2008 Session 558

“They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die”: Speech and Silence in Medieval Fairy Narratives

### The Texts

#### *Sir Orfeo*

There are three extant manuscripts containing *Sir Orfeo*. The oldest is Advocates 19.2.1 known as the Auchinleck MS. and dated *circa* 1330 (Bliss x). Harley 3810, is from about the beginning of the fifteenth century (Bliss xi). The third, Ashmole 61, was compiled over the course of several years; the portion of the MS. containing *Sir Orfeo* is *c.* 1488 (Bliss 1966, xii). The standard edition is by Bliss; the very approachable TEAMS edition edited by Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury is available online at: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/orfeofrm.htm>. The National Library of Scotland hosts a digital edition of the Auchinleck Manuscript. Eds David Burnley and Alison Wiggins. This is a digital edition, with manuscript images. The entire manuscript is available at <http://www.nls.uk/auchinleck/>. *Sir Orfeo* begins at <http://www.nls.uk/auchinleck/mss/orfeo.html>.

#### *Thomas of Erceldoune*

*Thomas of Erceldoune* is extant in five manuscripts, three written in the fifteenth century, and two in the sixteenth. Of the five, the earliest and the standard text, and the primary text for my discussion of *Thomas of Erceldoune*, is the version in the Thornton manuscript, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91. The watermarks and other paleographic evidence in the Thornton manuscript support a date “in the middle years of the 15th century” (Nixon 1980, 8). *Thomas of Erceldoune*, The most current edition is edited by Ingeborg Nixon, 1980–1983. The previous edition is *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune* ed. James A. H. Murray EETS # 61 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1875). Both editions contain all five versions of *Thomas of Erceldoune*. The facsimile (Brewer and Owen, 1975) of the Thornton manuscript contains a detailed description and analysis.

#### *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is the final of the four anonymously authored poems contained in the British Museum manuscript Cotton Nero A. x iii. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Pearl*, *Purity* (sometimes called *Cleanness*), and *Patience*, are all written in the same hand from about 1400, and are usually considered to be by the same author (Cooper and Pearsall 1988, 384). The standard edition of *SGGK* is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, eds. J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon; second edition edited by Norman Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925; second ed. 1967; reprinted 1985). Other editions include Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron’s edition of all the poems in Cotton Nero A.x iii *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, and William Vantuono’s edition of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

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